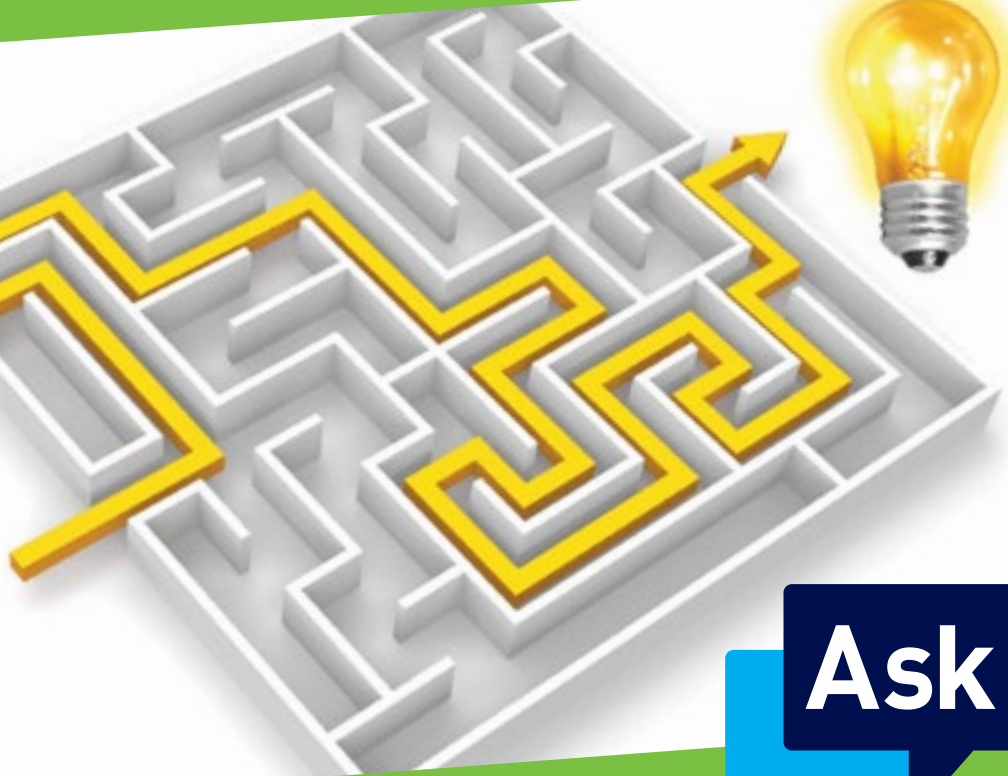




BIRMINGHAM CITY
University

Disability Support: A Guide for Applicants



Ask



EUROPEAN COMMUNITY
European Social Fund

0121 331 7777
<https://icity.bcu.ac.uk/ask>

Our commitment to you

Birmingham City University is committed to inclusive policies and practices and this is reflected in the support we offer disabled students. This support is provided to all disabled students by the Disability Advisers and Mental Health Advisers - full or part-time, undergraduate or postgraduate - and is available throughout your period of study here.

The University aims to provide an accessible environment and a range of support services to enable disabled students to participate fully in all activities of the University. We believe a person is only disabled when confronted by negative attitudes and environmental barriers. We are working towards creating a positive, supportive and inclusive learning environment across all the University's sites and faculties.

Who we are

The support for disabled students is comprised of the Disability Support Team and Mental Health Advisers. We have:

- Mental Health Advisers
- Disability Advisers
- A Dyslexia Adviser
- A Pre-Entry Disability Adviser
- An administration team



What can we do for you?

The Disability and Mental Health Advisers (MHAs) offer:

- A confidential appointment and drop-in service
- Screening, full assessment and support for students with dyslexia and specific learning difficulties
- Advice and guidance to your Faculty about the specific adjustments you will need for exams, assessments, teaching sessions and course materials and information
- Advice on and support with applications for Disabled Students' Allowances (DSAs) or other funds
- Advice for unfunded disabled students (such as International students) on funding disability support
- Study support workers e.g. mentors or study skills support
- Advice about enabling equipment and software
- Information about campus accessibility, car parking and many more individual support requirements
- Advice, information and support if you have concerns about your own or someone else's mental health and wellbeing
- Suggestions about referral resources e.g. counselling services, informal support networks, statutory mental health services, helplines, etc.

We also:

- Assist the University in responding appropriately and positively to the support requirements of disabled students
- Provide advice and support to staff working with disabled students
- Deliver staff training on supporting disabled students, including disability and mental health awareness
- Develop and contribute to University policy and guidelines on supporting disabled students and students with mental health difficulties.



Please note: While Birmingham City University will make every reasonable effort to provide the support and services described and to help you make best use of them, budgetary and other constraints on our resources make it impossible for us to guarantee that all services will be available to all students at all times without restriction.

Disclosure

Information about your disability will be held securely and confidentially on databases and in hard copy within the Student Services Department. This information is deemed to be sensitive personal data under the Data Protection Act (DPA) 1998 and is only used to advise you about the support that may be available.

Exceptions may arise where the service has a legal obligation to share information, for example, if there is serious concern about risk to your health and wellbeing or that of a third party. Even then we would usually seek your consent first. You have the right to access any information held about you and you will be advised of the procedures for this.

Funding your support - Disabled Students' Allowances What are they?

Disabled Students' Allowances (DSAs) can help pay for any extra costs you may incur whilst studying as a direct result of your disability or health condition. They are not means-tested and you do not have to pay them back.



What are DSAs used for?

DSAs can help pay for specialist equipment (such as a computer and assistive software), a non-medical personal helper (such as a study skills tutor or a mentor), extra travel costs you have to pay because of your disability or health condition, and other course related costs. DSAs cannot pay for personal support, such as shopping, cleaning and help with personal hygiene. For this you need to contact the social services department where you live. More on this later.

Who can apply?

Full-time or part-time undergraduates, postgraduates on taught courses and students on research –based courses can apply for Disabled Students' Allowances (if you are a part-time student your course must last at least a year).

There is more information about DSAs in a booklet called 'Bridging the Gap', which you can find at the address below. Remember, the Disability Support Team is always available to help you with your application.



How do I apply?

If you are applying to Student Finance England for financial assistance with fees and living costs, you will complete a PN1 form. On that form, you will be asked if you want to be sent an application for Disabled Students' Allowances.

Tick this box and you will receive a form on which some of your details will have been filled in for you. You simply need to fill in the rest and send it back with evidence about your disability (more on this later).

If you are not applying for financial assistance with fees and living costs, but you do want to apply for DSAs, you can find further information on applying and download an application form at:

www.gov.uk/disabled-students-allowances-dsas

Or request an application form by telephoning
Student Finance England: **0300 100 0607**

If you are not applying for any other student finance, make sure you download the full version of the DSA application, not the short version.

DSAs information for students from Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland can be found at

Wales: **www.studentfinancewales.co.uk**

Northern Ireland: **www.studentfinancenir.co.uk**

Scotland: **www.saas.gov.uk**

Republic of Ireland: **www.studentfinance.ie**



I am an NHS funded student, am I still eligible for DSAs?

If you are doing a health course (e.g. nursing, radiography, midwifery) and you are eligible for an NHS bursary, you will need to apply for Disabled Students' Allowances once you have set up your Bursary Online Support System (BOSS) account.

You can get more information from
<http://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/Students>

If you are applying to do a social work course, you should apply to the relevant student finance body (see list in previous section) for DSAs, even if you will be receiving a social work bursary.

Will I need to provide evidence of my disability?

Yes. If you have a **disability, medical condition, illness or a mental health condition**, you will need to provide medical proof - for example, a letter from an appropriate medical professional. Please note that you may have to pay for this. The letter should include a short history of your condition, any diagnosis, how long you have had these difficulties, any treatment or interventions you receive, and how it affects you on a daily basis.

If you have a **specific learning difficulty such as dyslexia**, you must provide evidence in the form of a diagnostic assessment report from a psychologist or suitably qualified specialist teacher. If you had a diagnosis before you were 16, it may need to be updated. In addition, letters from school or college about support you needed whilst studying there will not be acceptable evidence for the purposes of applying for DSAs. Please contact the Disability Support Team as soon as possible so we can arrange an assessment for you once you have enrolled.



What happens next?

Having sent off your completed DSAs application, if you are eligible for DSAs you will be asked to arrange an appointment with an accredited Access Centre to have an 'assessment of needs' to establish exactly what support you require. The Disability Support Team can help you arrange this.

For a useful 'roadmap' of the process for applying for DSAs, please see www.yourdsa.com/dsa/roadmap.

Personal Support

If you require personal support because of a disability please contact your local social services department as soon as possible to arrange this. Disabled Students' Allowances cannot be used to pay for this support

Remember that if you have someone who helps you at home at the moment you may require support when you come to university.

Personal support may include:

- Shopping, cleaning, laundry, ironing, cooking and preparing meals
- Orientation - finding your way around
- Help with personal care - such as washing, feeding and personal hygiene

Please contact us as soon as possible if you would like advice, and to ensure we are aware of any support you may need.



Funding for disabled International / EU students

Disabled International students and students from the EU who are only eligible for support with fees are not eligible for DSAs. To check eligibility contact your funding body.

A lot of support available at Birmingham City University involves no extra cost; however some types of support will require funding (such as equipment, note takers, sign language interpreters). The University will make every effort to help you find funding for these types of support.

Talk to us about your requirements as soon as possible.

Studying for a second degree?

If you are studying for an equivalent or lower qualification (ELQ) to the qualification you already have, you will need to show the letter from your funding body confirming the support which will be paid for by your DSAs in order to avoid paying the higher fees which may apply to you. Your letter from your funding body confirming your DSAs should be sufficient. If in doubt, contact the Disability Support Team.

Accommodation at Birmingham City University

www.bcu.ac.uk/accommodation

If you have specific accommodation requirements due to a disability or medical condition please contact Accommodation Services at Birmingham City University to advise them of this as early as possible.

You may require a room that is easily accessible or can be adapted. Accommodation Services will ask you to provide supporting evidence about your disability. Please do this at the time of application to enable them to allocate appropriately.



Accessibility

If accessibility is a priority to you because of a disability we recommend that you visit the University to have a tour of the campus. Please contact us to discuss this further.

Check List

Have you:	✓
Told us how your disability affects you so that we can help make sure support is in place for you?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Applied for Disabled Students' Allowances, enclosing your medical evidence?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Booked your DSAs Assessment of Need with a local assessment centre? Do this when your funding body writes to you, after you have completed your DSAs application form.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Informed Accommodation Services if you have specific requirements due to your disability or medical condition?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Talked to your local social services department about any personal support requirements you have?	<input type="checkbox"/>



Useful links

- www.bdadyslexia.org.uk - information about Dyslexia
- www.rnib.org.uk - supporting blind and partially sighted people
- www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk - supporting people who are deaf and have hearing loss
- www.mind.org.uk - information and advice, and campaigning to promote and protect good mental health for everyone
- www.studentdepression.org - information and online support for students affected by depression
- www.disabilityrightsuk.org/how-we-can-help - information for disabled students, including guidance on benefits and finance
- www.autismwestmidlands.org.uk - aiming to improve the quality of life for people with autistic spectrum disorders and their families
- www.gov.uk/disabled-students-allowances-dsas - find an assessment centre near you
- www.equalityhumanrights.com - advice on all equality legislation, including disability
- www.bcsu.com - Birmingham City University Students Union
- <https://icity.bcu.ac.uk/celt/centre-for-academic-success> - Centre for Academic Success – for additional support with your studies
- www.gov.uk/disabled-students-allowances-dsas – for information on Disabled Students' Allowance
- www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/Students - information for NHS funded students

Here's how to ask for further information...

In person

See our website for exact days and times.

City North Campus - 1st Floor, Baker Building

City South Campus - 2nd Floor, Seacole Building

City Centre Campus - 1st Floor, Curzon Building

Contact us

You can get in touch with us by:

Phone: 0121 331 7777

iCity: <https://icity.bcu.ac.uk/ask>

If you require this information in an alternative format,
please contact the Ask Student Enquiry Service.
We welcome your feedback on Birmingham City University and its services.



Ask

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<https://icity.bcu.ac.uk/ask>