Going to University and Getting Help

Your guide to getting support at University (Higher education).

Thinking about university?

If you have a learning need, a disability, emotional/mental health condition, or long-term health condition, there is help available at university. **This information guide has been put together to explain:**

- What support is available
- How to ask for it (self-advocacy)
- Where to go for advice

First, it would be good to go through some important information:

What is higher education?

Higher education is when you study at a level beyond school or college. This includes:

- A **Degree** at university, or,
- A **Level 4 course or higher,** at college, or
- A **Level 4 apprenticeship**

How can I apply for university?

You apply for University via the UCAS website.

You can find more information about UCAS and application deadlines here: **www.ucas.com/applying/applying-to-university/dates-and-deadlines-for-uni-applications#_026-entry-application-deadlines**

Do I need to tell the university if I have a learning need, a disability, emotional/mental health condition, or long-term health condition?

YES, **if you want support!** Your school or college won't do it for you. Sharing your needs helps universities put support in place. **If you don't tell them, they won't know to help you.**

> " You can choose how much detail to share. Being open means you can get the help you're entitled to. "

Will my Education, Health Care (EHC) plan continue at university (if you had one at school or college)?

NO.
Your EHC Plan ends when you move to higher education. But don't worry - other support is available

What support can I get at university?

Support at university may come directly from the university or be funded by the Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA). **This guide will explain later what DSA is!**

The type of support you receive depends on your university and your assessed needs. Support can include a mix of the following:

Here are some of the main ways:

Inclusive practice (Reasonable adjustments), usually available at most universities

- Sharing lecture slides before class.
- Taking breaks during lectures or seminars or an extension to coursework deadlines.
- Timetabling classes on the ground floor or with level access.
- Recording of sessions.
- Extra time and/or rest breaks in exams.
- Access to assistive technology available on university computers (e.g. text readers, speech to text, mind mapping software).

Equipment and practical support – usually funded by DSA

- A laptop with specialist assistive technology
- Access to Apps such as Brain in Hand

Human support (Not for medical support) - usually funded by DSA or university

- Counselling & Mental Health Advisers.
- Peer Support Schemes (e.g., buddy systems or student mentors).
- Wellbeing Workshops (e.g., sessions on stress management, mindfulness, resilience).
- Specialist Mentor (Mental Health or Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC).
- Note Taker.
- Specialist Study Skills Tutor (Speech Specific Learning Differences and

- Language or ASC) or Study Assistant.
- Mobility Support Assistant.
- BSL Interpreter.
- Assistive Technology Trainer.

Top tips for Self-Advocacy

(Being able to talk to others about your needs, challenges, and what helps you!)

- **Know your needs:** Think about what has helped you at school or college, and consider what might help you at university.
- **Share and ask early:** Don't wait until you're struggling.
- **Be clear:** Explain exactly what will help you learn best.
- **Get and keep copies:** Save all emails, letters, and assessment reports that you, your parents/carers have from your school/college, (for example your EHC plan, SEN Support plan/IEP, or diagnostic reports).

Who can support me at university?

Universities have different teams to help students who need extra support

These include:

- **Disability Support Teams:** Help with things like mobility, learning needs, or health conditions; reasonable adjustments and help with applying for DSA.
- **Mental Health & Wellbeing Advisors:** Support with stress, anxiety, or emotional health.
- **Student Support Services:** General help with life at university.

At university, these teams are your go-to!

They can help with:

- Learning and studying
- Money and financial aid
- Emotional/mental health and feeling well
- Getting the right support for disabilities

> At school you had a SENCo. At College, a Learning Support team.

> You don't have to manage everything alone - these teams are there to help you succeed and feel supported at university.

How do I let the university know of my needs?

The best time to share information about your needs is during your UCAS application.

Learn more about filling in your UCAS application here: **www.ucas.com/applying/applying-to-university/filling-in-your-ucas-application**

How to do it

1. Go to the **'More about you'** section of your UCAS application.
2. Select your **needs and/or disability** from the drop-down list.
3. (Optional) Use the free text box to explain anything you would like universities to know — such as how your needs affect your learning or daily life.

> " You can keep if brief - this just gives universities a heads-up to contact you about support options. "

Do I need a medical diagnosis?

- **NO,** a formal diagnosis isn't required to share your needs through UCAS.
- However, if you apply for Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA), you will need supporting evidence (e.g. medical letter, assessment report).

Why does it matter?

Sharing this information helps:

- Get reasonable adjustments in place early (e.g. extra time in exams, note-taking support, accessible accommodation).
- Connect you with disability support services.
- Make your transition to university smoother.

What happens next?

Once your application is received, universities may:

- Contact you to discuss your needs in more detail.
- Ask for further information or evidence.
- Guide you through applying for DSA or other support.

Tip: If you are unsure what to share, speak to your:

- Family
- School
- College
- Careers adviser

> " Sharing your needs won't affect your chances of getting a place. Only the staff who organise support will see this information. "

Or contact the university's disability support team directly.

> " If you didn't mention it on your UCAS application, do not worry. You can contact the university directly and ask to be put in touch with the Disability Support Team or the appropriate support service. "

More Information about Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA)

What is Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA)?

If you have a disability, mental health condition, specific learning difference (like dyslexia), or long-term health condition, you may be able to get DSA

Disabled Students' Allowance is money to cover extra study-related costs that you need for your disability or condition.

Good News! You do not have to pay it back.

It could cover things like:

- Specialist equipment (e.g. laptop with assistive technology).
- Human support (e.g., BSL interpreter, note-taker).
- Specialist mentoring or study skills tuition.
- Travel and printing costs.

How to apply for DSA:

- You don't need to wait for a university offer - **you can apply as soon as you apply through UCAS.**
- Apply through **Student Finance: www.gov.uk/browse/education/student-finance**
- You'll need some evidence (e.g., a doctor's letter or assessment report). Ask your parent/carer, school/college for copies.
- If you're not applying for Student Finance, you can still apply for **DSA** here: **www.gov.uk/disabled-students-allowance-dsa/how-to-claim**

What happens after I have applied for DSA?

1 **Send evidence** of your disability, health condition, or learning difference.

2 Wait for your **DSA1 letter** (confirms you are eligible)

3 Go to a **Study Needs Assessment**

4 Get your **Needs Assessment Report**

5 Receive your **DSA2 letter** (final funding approval)

6 Your support is set up!

What next?

Once you get offers (or choose your firm choice), get in touch with the university's Disability or Student Support Service.

They can:

- Set up a **support plan** with you
- Help with **accommodation needs** if you are planning to live on campus
- Give advice about **exam arrangements,** extra time, etc.

> " Again, you can also choose who your information is shared with – your privacy is respected. "

What if I did not apply for DSA or it has not been approved by the time I start university?

Ask your university what **temporary reasonable adjustments** they can make for you in the interim, so your education is as accessible as possible.

Remember, self-advocacy is key!

What do I do if I need support with my personal care?

Support for personal care, night-time care, or support with independent living cannot be funded or provided by the university, or through Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA).

You will need to ask for a care needs assessment. It is important this is planned for in advance, to allow time for the assessment to take place and any adaptations made to your accommodation, if needed.

Support for personal care:

- You will need to ask Wandsworth council for an **Adult Care Needs Assessment** well before you move to university here: **www.wandsworth.gov.uk/health-and-social-care/adult-social-care**

Helpful Links:

- UCAS – You can access more information about support including Podcasts and applying to university here: **www.ucas.com/applying/applying-to-university/students-with-individual-needs/disabled-students**

- Disabled Students' Allowance: **www.gov.uk/disabled-students-allowance-dsa**

- Support for Care Leavers Education: **www.support-for-care-leavers.education.gov.uk/en/home**

This information guide has been put together using information provided by Roehampton University, Gov.uk and UCAS websites.

Supported by

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The local SENDIASS working in partnership with Children and Young People (aged 0-25) with SEND and their parents