

**STUDENT SUPPORT INFORMATION NOTE
(SSIN)**

Arrangements for students funded under the
Education (Student Support) Regulations

DISABLED STUDENTS' ALLOWANCE (DSA)

To: Student Finance administrators and practitioners in higher education providers;
DSA assessors, assessment centres and suppliers;
Student Finance advisors, and
The Student Loans Company

**SSIN 05/21
August 2021**

Dear Colleagues,

Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA) – guidance on overseas placements

This SSIN provides detailed guidance on DSA support for DSA-eligible students who are undertaking study or work placements overseas as part of their courses.

DSA needs assessments

1. If a student applies for DSA and is found eligible while on an overseas placement, they will be invited to attend a needs assessment as usual. This can take place remotely if required while the student is overseas.

DSA equipment

2. We would expect a student who is going on an overseas placement to take any DSA-funded computer equipment that they have already been awarded with them for use if needed. Students should confirm before they go that any insurance policy they hold for the DSA-funded equipment is valid if the equipment is taken overseas.
3. If a student has any issues with their DSA-funded computer equipment while they are overseas (e.g. equipment breakdown, theft, etc.), they should contact their equipment supplier in the usual way.
4. Where students have been awarded DSA-funded equipment that cannot reasonably be transported overseas by the student (e.g. specialist chairs), and that the student will need in order to access their overseas placement, the student should first determine whether this can be provided by the overseas institution or employer. Where this is not possible, the student should engage with their needs assessor to determine the most cost-effective method of obtaining this equipment in the overseas location (for example, transporting the equipment each way through a courier service or

purchasing it locally). The needs assessor can then make a recommendation to SLC in the usual way, providing a quote for the recommended method and setting out why it is the most cost-effective approach. Students should note that SLC are unable to make payments to non-UK bank details and so if SLC approve a recommendation for equipment to be purchased locally the student or higher education provider will need to purchase this and claim back the cost from SLC by providing the receipt.

5. If the student needs a piece of equipment on their overseas placement which would have been provided as a reasonable adjustment by the student's HEP in the UK, this will not fall within the scope of DSA. The student should speak to their HEP and their overseas institution or employer to agree an arrangement.

DSA assistive software

6. If the student thinks they may need additional assistive software due to the nature of their study or work placement overseas (e.g. a foreign language add-on), they should speak to their needs assessor. The needs assessor can then make a recommendation to SLC in the usual way.

DSA non-medical help (NMH)

7. If the student is receiving DSA-funded NMH in the UK, and this NMH support can continue to be provided remotely while they are overseas (e.g. mentoring or study skills support), DSA will continue to fund this while the student is overseas. No additional approvals are required (unless the student requires a change of supplier, e.g. due to time differences, for which the usual process will apply). Invoices should be submitted by the NMH supplier to SLC in the usual way.
8. If the student is receiving in-person DSA-funded NMH support that cannot be provided overseas (e.g. BSL interpreting), the student should first contact their overseas institution or employer to determine what equivalent support can be provided during their placement and (where necessary) identify a suitable supplier. The student should then engage with their needs assessor, who can make a recommendation to SLC with a quote for the work. We would expect the quote not to exceed the maximum payable under the NMH price band system; where this is not possible then DfE will consider if an exception can be made. While we do not necessarily expect overseas support workers to be able to comply exactly with our NMH qualification requirements¹, given that these are UK-focused, the needs assessor should seek to recommend support workers with broadly equivalent qualifications

¹ [nmh_mandatory_qualifications_and_professional_body_memberships_requirements.pdf](https://www.slsc.co.uk/nmh-mandatory-qualifications-and-professional-body-membership-requirements.pdf)
([slc.co.uk](https://www.slsc.co.uk))

where possible. The needs assessor should include details of the support worker's qualifications in the recommendation to SLC.

9. If the student needs a type of support on their overseas placement which would have been provided as a reasonable adjustment by the student's HEP in the UK, this will not fall within the scope of DSA. The student should speak to their HEP and their overseas institution or employer to agree an arrangement.
10. It remains the case that DSA can only fund support that is needed for a student to access their course as a result of their disability. If a student needs additional support with day-to-day living while living overseas, this falls outside the scope of DSA.

DSA travel

11. If the student is eligible for additional disability-related travel costs to and from their institution to be met through DSA, the student should speak to their needs assessor so that a recommendation can be made to SLC for equivalent overseas costs to be funded through DSA if necessary. Students should note that as SLC are unable to make payments to non-UK bank details, any approved overseas travel will need to be paid for by the student or higher education provider and reimbursement requested from SLC through the usual process of providing receipts.
12. Where a student needs to incur additional disability-related costs in travelling from the UK to the placement country, and these have not been met through other funding (e.g. Turing Scheme grants), they should ask their needs assessor to make a recommendation to SLC for these costs to be paid through DSA. This should be done before the student undertakes the travel. Students are advised not to commit to any expenditure before a recommendation has been approved.

DSA accommodation

13. Where a student needs to incur additional accommodation costs while on an overseas placement which are due solely to their disability, these may be funded through DSA. Students should ask their needs assessor to make a recommendation to SLC.

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