

**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 needs assessors; Student Finance advisors, and The Student Loans Company

**SSIN 05/24
November 2024**

Dear Colleagues,

This is a notification that the Department has updated its guidance on the circumstances in which DSA may be available to fund additional disability-related accommodation costs.

The revised guidance can be found in Section 6.2 of the DSA Guidance Chapter at [dsa-guidance-2425-v10.pdf \(slc.co.uk\)](https://www.slco.co.uk/dsa-guidance-2425-v10.pdf).

The previous guidance had been in place for some years and does not now adequately cover the increased range of recommendations that the Student Loans Company (SLC) has been receiving for additional accommodation costs potentially fundable under DSA. The accommodation guidance has therefore been updated to provide additional detail and example recommendations to help SLC officers and needs assessors determine where additional accommodation costs are eligible to be met by DSA and where they are not, and to ensure that decisions are consistent and in line with DSA policy.

The updated guidance includes the following changes:

- We have clarified that students will qualify for DSA funding for additional accommodation costs only where the recommendation is supported by specific medical evidence demonstrating a clear link between the student's disability and the accommodation requirement.
- We have provided some illustrative examples to help clarify what types of recommendations would be in line with our policy intent and what types of recommendations would not.
- We have included some advice that any recommendation for accommodation should take into account the best interests of the

student and be in line with any medical advice or treatment received or being received by the student.

- We have confirmed that unless in exceptional circumstances DSA will not generally fund excessively expensive accommodation, accommodation that is excessively far away from the student's HEP, or more expensive accommodation solely on the basis that there was no cheaper accommodation available in the student's preferred location.
- We have provided more detailed guidance on how to select comparators for the purpose of calculating the student's additional disability-related accommodation costs and have confirmed that we will use the average cost of the comparators for this calculation.

Students whose eligibility for additional accommodation costs funded by DSA has already been agreed by SLC will not be re-assessed under the updated guidance. Where SLC receives a new recommendation for accommodation from a student in this position, for example because the student is moving accommodation, SLC will not re-assess the student's eligibility for additional accommodation costs to be funded by DSA but will apply the rest of the updated guidance when considering the recommendation (for example, around the provision of comparators).

If you have any queries, please contact the Disabled Students' Allowance Team at: Disabled.STUDENTALLOWANCES@education.gov.uk

Regards,

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