Disabled Students' Allowances

Higher Education Student Finance in England 2012/13 Academic Year

October 2012

Dear Colleague

2012/2013 STUDENT FINANCE IMPLEMENTATION PROJECT: DISABLED STUDENTS' ALLOWANCES (DSAs)

This October version has been updated to include an extra line of guidance at paragraph 188

Attached is revised guidance for the 2012/13 student finance implementation project: '**Disabled Students' Allowances (DSAs)'**. The attached chapter contains guidance on DSA legislation and the administration of DSA applications.

The chapter provides guidance on full-time DSAs (regulation 40 & 41), DSAs for full-time distance learning students (regulation 127), part-time DSAs (regulation 147) and DSAs for postgraduate students (Part 12) as provided in the **Education (Student Support) Regulations 2011.** Guidance on other grants for living and other costs payable under Part 5 of the Regulations is provided separately in the guidance chapters 'Assessing Financial Entitlement' and 'Grants for Dependants and Travel Grants'. Also refer to the LA Portal User Guide for information on processing Non-Loan Products on the single system.

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Introduction

1. The Regulations referred to throughout this chapter, unless otherwise stated, are the Education (Student Support) Regulations 2011. This chapter provides guidance on the Disabled Students' Allowances (DSAs) for full-time students (regulation 40 & 41), full-time distance learning students (regulation 127), part-time students (regulation 147) and postgraduate students (Part 12 of the Regulations).

2. DSAs for full-time students are one of the grants for living and other costs payable under Part 5 of the Regulations. Guidance on the other grants payable under Part 5 can be found in the following guidance chapters:

- 'Assessing Financial Entitlement' (Maintenance Grant, Special Support Grant and Higher Education Grant); and
- 'Grants for Dependants and Travel Grants' (Adult Dependants' Grant, Childcare Grant, Parents' Learning Allowance and Travel Grant).

Policy

Full-time DSAs (regulation 40 & 41)

3. Under regulation 40 & 41 an eligible student qualifies for DSAs to assist with the additional expenditure that the Student Loans Company (SLC) is satisfied the student is obliged to incur to attend a designated course because of a disability. The four elements of DSAs detailed in the above regulations are intended to help disabled students undertake their course on an equal basis to other students. The Regulations do not define disability, but all cases where extra costs are incurred in studying because of a disability (including a long-term health condition, mental health condition or specific learning difficulty such as dyslexia) should be considered.

4. DSAs are not intended to pay for:

- disability related expenditure that the student would incur even if they were not attending a course of higher education;
- costs that any student might have regardless of disability; and
- services which can reasonably be expected to be provided by the student's institution.

Further guidance about the scope of DSAs can be found at paragraph 87.

Eligibility

5. The personal eligibility criteria for receiving full-time student support, including DSAs, are set out in the 'Assessing Eligibility Guidance' chapter.

6. DSAs are not subject to:

- an age limit;
- previous study rules; or

- income assessment.

7. A student can only receive support for a designated course. Where the eligible course does not appear on the HEI database, it will not be possible to fully process the application. Information on what action should be taken in this situation is covered in the 'General Eligibility and Financial Assessment Administration' guidance.

8. Students are potentially eligible for DSAs whilst attending an overseas institution as part of their UK course, whether obligatory or optional.

9. Students who are personally eligible for student support under paragraph 9 of Schedule 1 (i.e. nationals of member states of the European Community) but not under any other paragraph of that Schedule, are not eligible for DSAs.

Prisoners

10. Full-time students who are prisoners and who began designated course before 1st September 2012 are potentially eligible for DSAs but will not generally qualify for other grants for living and other costs under Part 5 of the Regulations (regulation 109(8) & (9)). See 'Grants for Dependants and Travel Grants' guidance chapter. No Disabled Students' Allowances (DSAs) (including DSAs for postgraduate courses) will be available to any prisoner who starts a course on or after 1 September 2012. The responsibility to provide assistance for disabled prisoners will lie with the Prison Service.

Means-tested NHS bursaries

11. Under regulation 38(4)(a), students are not eligible for grants for living and other costs for any academic year during which they are eligible to apply for NHS means-tested bursaries or similar awards bestowed under section 63 of the Health Services and Public Health Act 1968, article 44 of the Health and Personal Social Services (Northern Ireland) Order 1972 or sections 73(f) and 74(1) of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 (if the latter is granted in respect of a course leading to a qualification in a healthcare profession other than as a medical doctor or a dentist). Students who are eligible to apply for an NHS bursary should be directed to the NHS Student Bursaries website at www.nhsstudentgrants.co.uk for information about the financial support available through the NHS Bursary Scheme. Or they can phone the NHS Student Bursaries Helpline on 0845 358 6655.

Students who began an ITT course before 1st September 2010

12. Students who began an ITT course before 1st September 2010 which:

- is at least one academic year in length; and
- involves periods of full-time attendance (including teaching practice) that are in aggregate <u>six weeks or more</u> in the academic year;

are potentially eligible for grants for living and other costs. However, special rules apply to the Maintenance Grant and Special Support Grant (see 'Assessing Financial Entitlement' guidance chapter).

13. Students who began an ITT course before 1st September 2010 which:

- is at least one academic year in length; and;

- involves periods of full-time attendance (including teaching practice) that are in aggregate less than six weeks in the academic year;

are not eligible for grants for living and other costs (regulation 38(4)(b)), with the exception of DSAs (regulation 38(5)). There are separate rates of DSAs for such students (regulation 41(4)) which are set out at paragraph 22. Students who do not qualify for a grant for living and other costs under regulation 38(4)(b) are eligible for a reduced rate maintenance loan which is not subject to income assessment (regulations 80(1)(b) & 80(2)(b)).

Students who begin an ITT course on or after 1st September 2010

14. Where a student begins an ITT course on or after 1st September 2010, the student support package available will depend on whether the course is either full-time or part-time. Designated full-time first degree and postgraduate ITT courses of at least one academic year in length will attract the same support package as full-time non-ITT first degree courses. Designated part-time first degree and postgraduate ITT courses of at least one academic year in length will attract the same part-time package of fee grant, course grant (see 'Grants for Part-time Students' guidance chapter) and DSAs as part-time non-ITT first degree courses.

Sandwich courses

15. Students on part-year paid or unpaid placements where the periods of full-time study in the academic year are 10 weeks or more in aggregate are potentially eligible for DSAs. For example, DSAs could pay for additional disability related travel costs to and from the institution using the general allowance and the additional support required for course work undertaken during the work placement. When a student is going on a work placement as part of their course, the DSA needs assessment should take this into account and, for example, consider the portability of equipment if students need to take it with them on the placement.

16. Under regulation 38(6) students are not eligible for grants for living and other costs, including DSAs, in any academic year of a sandwich course where the periods of full-time study are in aggregate less than 10 weeks (unless the period of work experience is an unpaid placement of a type specified in regulation 38(7)). Students who do not qualify for grants for living and other costs under regulation 38(6) are eligible for a reduced rate maintenance loan which is not subject to income assessment (regulation 80(1)(b) & 80(2)(b)).

17. Under regulation 38(7) students undertaking certain types of unpaid work experience in the public or voluntary sectors are potentially eligible for grants for living and other costs, including DSAs (even where the periods of full-time study in the academic year are less than 10 weeks in aggregate). See 'Grants for Dependants and Travel Grants' guidance chapter.

Students who become eligible during the course

18. Under regulation 38(8) & 38(9), a student **may qualify** for DSAs from and including the academic year during which:

- the student's course becomes designated;

- the student, their spouse, civil partner or their parent is recognised as a refugee or becomes a person with leave to enter or remain (in this context 'spouse' or 'civil partner' does not include a co-habiting partner of the student - also refer to the 'Assessing Eligibility' guidance);
- the state of which the student is a national accedes to the European Community where the student has been ordinarily resident in the United Kingdom and Islands throughout the three-year period immediately preceding the first day of the first academic year of the course;
- the student acquires the right of permanent residence;
- the student becomes the child of a Turkish Worker**;**
- the student becomes a person described in paragraph 6(1)(a) of Schedule 1; or
- the student becomes the child of a Swiss national.

However, such a student is not eligible retrospectively. That is, a student is not eligible for DSAs for academic years of the course falling ***before*** the academic year in which the events listed above occur.

Full-time distance learning courses

19. Where disabled students undertake a full-time course by distance learning because their disability prevents them from attending an institution, they are treated as being in attendance on the course. Such students are potentially eligible for DSAs under regulation 40 & 41. They are also potentially eligible for the other elements of the full-time student support package (except travel grant).

20. Where disabled students undertake a full-time course by distance learning but are not compelled to study in this way because of their disability, they cannot be treated as being in attendance on the course. Such students are potentially eligible for DSAs under regulation 127 which are payable at the same full-time rates as those provided under regulation 41. Where the student commences their full time distance learning course prior to 1st September 2012, they are also potentially eligible for a fee grant and course grant similar to those offered to eligible part-time students. Where the student commences their full time distance learning course on or after 1st September 2012 they will potentially be eligible for a tuition fee loan to cover the tuition fee charged, and no maintenance support. Such students will continue to be potentially eligible for DSAs under regulation 127 which as mentioned above are payable at the same full-time rates as those provided under regulation 41.

21. There is further guidance about full-time distance learning courses in the 'Assessing eligibility guidance 2012/13'.

DSAs for students attending full-time courses or part-time courses of ITT (which began before 1st September 2010)

22. There are four allowances for students attending full-time courses or part-time ITT courses which began before 1st September 2010. The maximum allowances that such students may receive in 2012/13 are given in the table below. Two of the allowances (non-medical helper

allowance and general allowance) are lower for students attending part-time ITT courses which began before 1st September 2010 where the period of full-time attendance, including teaching practice, during the academic year aggregates less than six weeks.

Allowance	Maximum payable	
	Full-time	Part-time ITT course which began before 1st September 2010 (less than 6 weeks attendance)
Specialist equipment allowance (for the duration of the course)	£5,161	£5,161
Non-medical helper allowance (each academic year)	£20,520	£15,390
General allowance (each academic year)	£1,724	£1,293
Travel allowance	Unlimited	Unlimited

23. There is no provision to pay more than the maximum allowances set out in the Regulations. It is not possible, therefore, to use unspent DSAs from a previous academic year or anticipate grant entitlement for a future academic year to pay more than the maximum allowances in the current academic year. Moreover, only the general allowance may be used to supplement expenditure on specialist equipment and non-medical helpers should the student's needs exceed the maximum allowances under the Regulations. The specialist equipment allowance, non-medical helper allowance and the travel allowance should be used for the sole purpose as named and should not be used to supplement other DSAs.

Specialist equipment allowance

24. The specialist equipment allowance (regulation 41(2)(b)) may be used to pay for items of equipment which the student will need, because of a disability, to undertake their course on an equal basis to other students. It may also be reasonable to meet associated insurance, extended warranty, repair and modification costs from the equipment allowance. Where students do not take out insurance and their equipment is stolen, the cost of replacing the stolen equipment will not normally be met from the DSAs. Students should therefore be advised to take out insurance cover for their DSA equipment. The insurance premiums can be paid from the DSA.

25. Students should also be advised to consider receiving some initial training in the use of any equipment to be purchased. Research has shown that many students start their courses without becoming familiar with specialist equipment and can face difficulties that could be avoided. The cost of training in the use of specialist equipment may be set against DSAs, subject to the maxima specified in the Regulations.

26. The specialist equipment allowance is for the duration of the course but, like other grants, has in the past been increased annually (however for the academic years 2010/11, 2011/12 and 2012/13 this element of student finance has been maintained at 2009/10 levels). This means that a student who had received the maximum grant for

specialist equipment (**£5,030**) in 2008/09, could, subject to need, receive a further **£131** for specialist equipment in **2011/12** (**£5,161 - £5,030** (maximum specialist equipment grant in 2008/09) = **£131**).

Course transfers and specialist equipment allowance

27. It should be made clear to students that the specialist equipment allowance covers the whole course duration. If a student transfers their eligibility to another course, any amount awarded for specialist equipment in relation to the first course would still need to be considered as the period of eligibility has not been broken. For example, a student receives £3,000 from the specialist equipment allowance but then transfers their eligibility to another course. Their specialist equipment entitlement for the second course should not exceed **£2,161**, as £3,000 has already been awarded for specialist equipment and given that **£5,161** for 2012/13 is the maximum specialist equipment allowance.

28. All equipment purchased with the help of this allowance is and remains the property of the student. It is open to the student, at the end of their course, to offer the equipment to their institution for the use of other students. Institutions are perfectly free to suggest that students make such gifts.

Non-medical helper allowance

29. The non-medical helper allowance (regulation 41(2)(a)) may be used to pay for helpers such as readers, lip-speakers, note-takers, campus specific mobility trainers, and any non-medical helpers necessary for the student to undertake the course on an equal basis to other students and where the specialist support assessor is satisfied that they are needed because of the student's disability. Where the student has to make regular or frequent payments for a non-medical helper, it may be helpful to arrange for some of their grant payments to be made in corresponding instalments. If grant payments are made in instalments, inform the student, or their institution, how such transactions should be recorded and verified for audit purposes.

30. The provision for the non-medical helper allowance does not remove the duty of local social services to provide assistance towards personal care costs that would have been incurred irrespective of a student's attendance on a course. However, in some circumstances a personal carer may also provide course-related help for a student. In such cases it may be appropriate to share the cost of the course-related help provided by the carer with the social services. The non-medical helper allowance should not be used to pay for support that should properly be funded by social services.

31. It is likely that only a relatively small number of disabled students will need the maximum allowance available in any given year. For example, some deaf students whose first language is British Sign Language (rather than Sign Supported English) may incur higher costs because they make greater use of sign language interpreters and note takers.

General allowance

32. The general allowance (regulation 41(2)(d)) may be used both for miscellaneous expenditure not covered by the other allowances and to

supplement the specialist equipment allowance and non-medical helper allowance, if necessary.

Travel allowance

33. The travel allowance (regulation 41(2)(c)) may be used to pay the additional costs of travel to and from the institution which are incurred because of a disability. For example, if a student needs to travel by taxi rather than by public transport because of mobility or visual difficulties, then the DSAs will cover the additional expenditure that represents. In this instance, the amount of travel allowance should be any excess between public transport costs and taxi costs for the journey.

34. Some students may be required as a result of a disability to use their own car to travel to and from the institution. In this instance, the amount of travel allowance should be any excess between public transport costs and the cost of the same journey by car. For the purpose of deciding the cost of the journey by car, it is recommended that the cost of the journey is calculated by using the mid point range of AA motoring costs which includes and element for wear and tear on the car. This is currently (financial year 2011/12) **27p per mile**. Some continuing students using their own car may already be receiving a travel allowance based on a higher mileage rate agreed by SFE. In such cases, the higher rate should continue to be used until the end of the course.

35. The specialist support assessor will need to be satisfied that the travel expenditure arises in each case by reason of a disability to which the student is subject. The travel allowance should not be used to meet non-disability related travel expenditure incurred by a disabled student. For example, it is unlikely that a dyslexic student will incur additional travel expenditure as a result of their specific learning difficulty. A disabled student may still qualify for Travel Grant (regulations 48 - 55) in the same way as any other student (see the 'Grants for Dependants and Travel Grants' guidance chapter 2012/13).

Processing DSAs on the LA Portal

36. Functionality of the Non Loan Products screen on the LA Portal allows a payment limit to be set for each of the DSAs up to the maximum for each allowance, including top ups from the general allowance. Once the payment limits have been set in accordance with the needs assessment recommendations, payments will be made against those limits. Refer to the LA Portal system user guide for further information on processing DSAs on the single system.

Part-time DSAs (regulation 147)

37. Under regulation 147 an eligible part-time student qualifies for DSAs to assist with the additional expenditure that SLC is satisfied the student is obliged to incur to undertake (i.e. to attend or study by distance learning) a designated part-time course because of a disability. DSAs for students undertaking a part-time course with the Open University are administered by the Open University and not by SLC.

38. The part-time DSA scheme closely follows that for full-time students. However there are, necessarily, some differences and these are explained below.

Eligibility

39. Like the full-time DSAs, previous study rules do not apply to part-time DSAs; they are available to eligible part-time students regardless of age and are not income assessed. For details of the personal eligibility criteria for receiving part-time support, including part-time DSAs, please refer to the guidance chapter 'Grants for part-time students'.

40. From AY 2012/13 students who begin part time courses on or after 1st September 2012, must be studying at a minimum intensity of 25% FTE during the academic year to be eligible for PT DSAs. (Regulation 147(4))

Designated part-time courses

41. To be eligible for support, including DSAs, a student must be undertaking a designated part-time course. The criteria for course designation in respect of part-time support, including part-time DSAs, are set out in the 'Grants for part-time students 12/13' guidance chapter.

DSAs for students undertaking part-time courses

42. There are four allowances for students undertaking part-time courses. The maximum allowances that part-time students may receive in 2012/13 are given in the table below. However, it is recommended that the maximum amount of the non-medical helper allowance and general allowance should normally be calculated as a percentage of the full-time rates, according to the intensity of study.

Allowance	Maximum payable	
Specialist equipment allowance (for the duration of the course)	£5,161	
Non-medical helper allowance (each academic year)	£15,390	75% of a FT course = £15,390 60% of a FT course = £12,312 50% of a FT course = £10,260 25% of a FT course = £5,130
General allowance (each academic year)	£1,293	75% of a FT course = £1,293 60% of a FT course = £1,034 50% of a FT course = £862 25% of a FT course = £431
Travel allowance	Unlimited	

43. There are no provisions within the Regulations to pay more than the maximum allowances for the academic year. Please refer to the guidance in respect of full-time DSAs at paragraphs 23 & 25.

Students whose status as an eligible (full-time) student is converted to that of an eligible part-time student (regulation 152(1)-(4))

44. When a student transfers from a full-time to a part-time course, their status must be converted from an eligible full-time student to that of an eligible part-time student. Where a student transfers from a full-time to a part-time course part way through the academic year:

a) no instalment of full-time DSAs is payable after the student became an eligible part-time student;

b) the maximum amounts of part-time DSAs are reduced by one third where the student became an eligible part-time student during the second quarter of the academic year and by two thirds where they became an eligible part-time student in a later quarter of that year; and

c) where full-time DSAs have been paid to the student in a single instalment, the maximum amount of the corresponding part-time DSAs payable to them are reduced by the amount of full-time DSAs already paid (or further reduced if paragraph (b) above applies). If the resulting amount is nil or a negative amount, the part-time DSA is not payable.

Students whose status as an eligible part-time student is converted to that of an eligible (full-time) student (regulation 152(12)-(13))

45. When a student transfers from a part-time to a full-time course, their status must be converted from an eligible part-time student to that of an eligible full-time student. Where a student transfers from a part-time to a full-time course part way through the academic year:

a) no instalment of part-time DSAs is payable after the student became an eligible full-time student;

b) the maximum amounts of any grants for living costs (and loan) for full-time students are reduced by one third where the student became an eligible full-time student during the second quarter of the academic year and by two thirds where they became an eligible full-time student in a later quarter of that year; and

c) where part-time DSAs have been paid to the student in a single instalment, the maximum amount of the corresponding full-time DSAs payable to them are reduced by the amount of part-time DSAs already paid (or further reduced if paragraph (b) above applies). If the resulting amount is nil or a negative amount, the full-time DSA is not payable.

DSAs for postgraduate students

46. Under part 12 of the Regulations an eligible postgraduate student qualifies for DSAs to assist with the additional expenditure that SLC is satisfied the student is obliged to incur to undertake (i.e. to attend or study by distance learning) a designated full- or part-time postgraduate course because of a disability. DSAs for students undertaking a postgraduate course with the Open University are administered by the Open University and not by SLC.

47. The postgraduate DSA scheme closely follows that for undergraduate students. However there are, necessarily, some differences and these are explained below.

48. Regulation 166 provides for a DSA of up to **£10,260** for the academic year **2012/13** to be paid to eligible postgraduate students undertaking designated full- and part-time postgraduate courses. There is no statutory provision to pay a postgraduate student in excess of **£10,260** during academic year 2012/13. There are no specific limits within the maximum **£10,260** on particular items or type of help on which the grant can be spent. The allowance is awarded depending on the recommendations of a needs assessment carried out by an assessment centre or other such body. The cost of the needs assessment can be paid for from the postgraduate DSA, but as with undergraduate DSAs, it cannot be used to pay for establishing a student's disability. The postgraduate DSA may be spent on specialist equipment, non-medical helpers, other general support or additional travel costs, or a combination of the above, up to the maximum amount for the academic year.

Eligibility

49. Like the undergraduate DSAs, previous study rules do not apply to postgraduate DSAs; they are available to eligible postgraduate students regardless of age and are not income assessed. To be eligible for the postgraduate DSA students must meet the personal criteria set out in Schedule 1 of the Regulations and undertake a designated postgraduate course (see paragraph 53).

50. Postgraduate students studying by distance learning are eligible for DSAs, but only if the course is undertaken in the United Kingdom (regulation 159(11)). Students undertaking courses on a distance learning basis are deemed to be studying at their home address. Therefore, to receive DSAs postgraduate distance learners must remain living in the United Kingdom whilst undertaking their course.

51. Under regulation 159(4), a postgraduate student is not eligible for DSAs if they:

a) are eligible to apply for a -

- NHS bursary or award under section 63 of the Health Services and Public Health Act 1968 or article 44 of the Health and Personal Social Services (Northern Ireland) Order 1972;
- allowance under the Nursing and Midwifery Student Allowances (Scotland) Regulations 1992;
- allowance, bursary or award of similar description made by a Research Council (a list of the relevant Research Councils is provided at Annex 1);
- allowance, bursary or award of similar description made by their institution which includes a payment for meeting additional expenditure incurred because of a disability (excluding financial assistance received from their institution's Access to Learning Fund);
- the NHS Business Services Authority (NHSBSA) bursary for students on postgraduate social-work courses which includes a payment for meeting additional expenditure incurred because of a disability;

b) are in breach of an obligation to repay a student loan;

c) have not ratified an agreement for a student loan made with them when they were under the age of 18; or

d) have shown themselves by their conduct to be unfitted to receive support.

52. Under regulation 159(18) an eligible postgraduate student is not eligible for support for more than one designated course at a time.

Designated postgraduate courses for DSAs

53. Regulation 161(1) provides the criteria for course designation in respect of postgraduate DSAs. The requirements are:

- a first degree or higher qualification should be an entry requirement to the course;
- a course duration of at least one academic year;
- where the course commences on or after 1st September 2012, if the course is part-time, it must be of a minimum intensity of 25% FTE during the academic year and ordinarily possible to complete the course in not more than four times the time ordinarily required to complete an equivalent full-time course;
- where the course commences before 1st September 2012, if the course is part-time, it must be ordinarily possible to complete the course in not more than twice the time ordinarily required to complete an equivalent full-time course;
- the course is provided by a UK institution maintained or assisted by public funds;
- the course is not an initial teacher training course or a course taken as part of an employment-based teacher training scheme.

54. Courses need to be provided by publicly funded institutions in order to be automatically designated, although courses at other institutions may be designated on application to the Department. Full and part-time Legal Practice courses and Bar Vocational courses are designated courses under the Regulations as the entry requirement to such courses is a first degree or higher. However, some of these courses are provided by private institutions which have been designated specifically for postgraduate DSAs. A list of postgraduate courses provided by private institutions which have been designated so that students may receive DSA support is provided on SFE practitioners website at http://practitioners.studentfinanceengland.co.uk/pls/portal/docs/PAGE/PPIPG001/PPIPS001/PPIPS036/PPIPS069/1.DOC

55. Students on postgraduate ITT courses are potentially eligible for DSAs under the full-time or part-time scheme. They *are not* therefore eligible for the postgraduate DSA.

56. The Secretary of State may designate courses for the award of postgraduate DSA that are not automatically designated under the Regulations. An institution will be required to apply to the Department in the same way as for undergraduate courses, giving evidence of course aims and validation of the qualification. Designation in the middle of the academic year will allow payment of the DSA to cover the whole academic year in which designation takes place.

Periods of eligibility

57. Regulation 162 provides for DSAs to be paid for the period ordinarily required to complete the course (subject to the course satisfying the requirement of regulation 161). If a student withdraws from the course, abandons or is expelled from the course the period of eligibility is terminated and no further support should be paid.

58. Where the part- time course begins before 1st September 2012 and where a student intends at the outset to complete a part-time postgraduate course in not more than twice the period ordinarily required to complete an equivalent full-time course but subsequently takes longer, the period of eligibility will terminate at the end of the academic year during which it becomes impossible for them to complete the course within the required timeframe. (See examples 1,2 and 3 below). Where the part- time course begins on or after 1st September 2012 and where a student intends at the outset to complete a part-time postgraduate course in not more than four times the period ordinarily required to complete an equivalent full-time course but subsequently takes longer, the period of eligibility will terminate at the end of the academic year during which it becomes impossible for them to complete the course within the required timeframe. (see example 4)

Example 1: Student A studies part-time for a Masters degree (which takes 1 year to complete studying full-time) for two years and then studies part-time for a PhD (which takes three years to complete studying full-time) for a further six years. As the duration of each of the two part-time postgraduate courses does not exceed twice the period normally required to complete its full-time equivalent, student A is eligible to receive support for the whole of that time.

Example 2: Student B undertakes the same two courses. However, while student B studies part-time for the Masters degree for two years, they then study part-time for the PhD for eight years. As the PhD normally takes three years to complete full-time, the duration of the part-time PhD exceeds twice the period normally required to complete its full-time equivalent and is therefore not designated for support. Student B is only eligible for support for the two years of the Masters degree.

Example 3: Student C states an intention to study part-time for a PhD for six years. The equivalent full-time PhD would take three years. The student is awarded the DSA in years one to five of the course as the part-time study is at least 50% of a full-time course. However during the fifth year the student's pattern of part-time study changes so that they now require a further three years part-time study to complete the course, making eight years in total. This period exceeds twice the period normally required to complete an equivalent full-time course and so the student cannot receive DSA support for the final three years of the course. Their eligibility will cease at the end of the fifth year.

Example 4: Student D states an intention to study part-time for a PhD for 12 years. The equivalent full-time PhD would take three years. The student is awarded the DSA in years one to eleven of the course as the part-time study is at least 25% of a full-time course. However during the 11th year the student's pattern of part-time study changes and they reduce intensity to below 25%. This will effectively make the period of study exceed four times the period normally required to complete an equivalent full-time course and means the student cannot receive

any further DSA support. Their eligibility will cease from when the intensity drops below 25%.

59. It is for higher education institutions (HEIs) to decide whether a postgraduate course is full-time or part-time and whether a part-time course takes more than twice (where the course begins before 1st September 2012) or where the course takes more than four times the period ordinarily required (where the course begins on or after 1st September 2012) to complete a full-time course leading to the same qualification.

60. The period of eligibility may be terminated where the eligible postgraduate student has shown themselves by their conduct to be unfitted to receive support.

61. SLC may also terminate the period of eligibility or decide that a student no longer qualifies for an amount of grant if a student has failed to comply with a request to provide information or provided information that they know is false. If the provisions in regulation 162(8) are used, support already paid to the student may be treated as an overpayment for recovery under regulation 168.

Transfer of eligibility

62. Regulation 163 provides for eligible postgraduate students to transfer their eligibility to another postgraduate course. A transfer is permitted provided that the period of eligibility for the first course has not expired or been terminated and a request to transfer eligibility is made by the student. It is also a requirement that the exporting institution recommends a transfer in writing and that the importing institution agrees to the transfer. If a student transfers their eligibility to another course, any DSA amount awarded for the first course would need to be considered for the second course as the period of eligibility has not been broken. For example, a student receives support of £3,000 but transfers to another course. For the remainder of the academic year, the student has **£7,260** remaining (**£10,260** maximum grant available less £3,000 already received for the first course). Students transferring courses may continue to receive support without the necessity of a further needs assessment unless their disability has changed in someway or the course is substantially different.

Students moving directly from undergraduate to postgraduate study

63. Where a student has just graduated and is proceeding directly to postgraduate study, the DSA needs assessment that was undertaken in respect of the undergraduate course should be sufficient to identify the student's support needs in respect of the postgraduate course. This means, for example, that the student could continue to receive support from non-medical helpers without the necessity of a new needs assessment. However, if the student wishes to undergo a new needs assessment because their disability has changed in someway or the course is substantially different, this can be paid for from the postgraduate DSA.

64. If the student seeks new equipment, any equipment the student received as an undergraduate should to be taken into account, having regard to how recently the equipment was bought. Requests for any new equipment should be considered very carefully.

65. Students who have not studied recently (those with a break of at least two years since graduating) should be assessed in the same way as undergraduate students are currently. They should provide evidence of disability and then have their course related needs assessed.

Postgraduate students completing dissertations after their course ends

66. A student retains their status as an eligible postgraduate for a period equal to that which is ordinarily required to complete the relevant designated postgraduate course. If the ordinary duration of the course includes a period to complete a dissertation or thesis, the Regulations provide for the student to be eligible to receive a postgraduate DSA for the period spent completing their dissertation or thesis. For example, if a course ordinarily takes two years to complete and the second year of the course is writing up the thesis, the postgraduate student will qualify for support during the writing up period.

67. However, there may be occasions when students request payment of DSAs to continue when they are writing up a dissertation or thesis after the end of the period ordinarily required to complete the designated course. Regulation 162(9) provides discretion to extend or renew a student's eligibility for such further periods as they consider appropriate after the expiry of the period ordinarily required to complete the course. This discretion might be used when a student is writing up a thesis or dissertation after the expiry of the period ordinarily required to complete the course.

68. In the case of part-time designated postgraduate courses which begin before 1st September 2012, if the additional period of writing up a thesis or dissertation would mean that the overall duration of the part-time course will be more than double the time needed to complete a full-time equivalent course, the part-time course would then cease to be designated. Consequently, the student would not qualify for any further DSA support.

69. In the case of part- time postgraduate designated courses regulation 159(9) provides that where the course begins on or after 1st September 2012, and eligible student will not qualify for postgraduate DSAs where the course intensity of study in the academic year for which the support is requested is less than 25%.

The Administration of DSAs

Evidence of a disability

70. For most applicants, there should be little difficulty establishing their eligibility for DSAs. Their disability will have been identified and documented at an earlier stage, in many cases while they were at school. However, it is not essential for an applicant's disability to have been identified at school in order to be eligible for DSAs. Eligibility for DSAs is not dependent on an applicant being registered as disabled. Nor is there any requirement or provision within the Regulations to apply the definition of disability contained in the Equality Act. SLC might find it helpful to know that the categories of disability used on the UCAS application form are:

- specific learning difficulty (e.g. dyslexia);
- blind/partially sighted;

- deaf/has hearing impairment;
- wheelchair user/has mobility difficulties;
- student needs personal care support;
- has mental health difficulties;
- unseen disability i.e. diabetes, epilepsy, asthma;
- a disability, special need or medical condition not listed above.

Care will be needed for applicants whose disabilities have not previously been identified. In such cases, a request should be made for an assessment of the disability by a suitably qualified person or body for the purposes of establishing eligibility for DSAs.

71. The DSAs are not intended to provide assistance to members of the general student population who suffer temporary illness or injury. Assisting such students would properly be the responsibility of HEIs.

72. Students can become eligible for DSAs at any point during their course, not just at the start of their first year. Some students become disabled or have a disability identified after their course has started. Others may decide to disclose their disability only after their course has started. Equipment needs may arise later in the course. Therefore, a policy of only accepting applications for the DSAs at the beginning of a course should not be adopted.

73. Students who are physically disabled, or have a mental-health condition, will need to provide medical evidence of their condition, such as a letter from their doctor or an appropriate specialist. Medical evidence should state the nature of the student's disability and ideally should also briefly explain how the student is affected by the disability. Students with a specific learning difficulty such as dyslexia will need to provide evidence of this in the form of a diagnostic assessment from a psychologist or suitably qualified specialist teacher (see paragraphs 104-111). However, any cost a student incurs obtaining the necessary expert evidence or opinion cannot be met from the DSAs. This is because such costs are not incurred by the student to attend or undertake their course; they are incurred to substantiate their claim for DSAs. However, students might be able to receive assistance with such costs from their institution's Access to Learning Fund.

74. Cases may arise where the evidence that the student has a disability is deemed unsatisfactory. In such cases, the student should be invited to provide further evidence, perhaps in the form of a diagnosis undertaken by a body or another acceptable person. In making such an invitation, it must be made clear to the student that they will normally be liable to meet the cost of providing the necessary evidence. Assistance may be available from their Access to Learning Fund.

75. Once satisfactory medical evidence is received, the student is required to undergo a DSA needs assessment to identify the appropriate course-related support. The cost of the assessment is met from the DSA. Once the initial evidence of a disability has been accepted, in most cases there should be no need for students to provide updated evidence of their disability at a later stage in the course. An exception would be if the student's condition changes or if there is reason to believe that the student's condition may change later in the course. Sometimes an expert may also include recommendations for DSA

support with their medical evidence. Given that the expert is unlikely to be aware of course requirements and technologies, there is still a requirement for the student to receive a separate full assessment of their course needs.

Assessment of course-related needs

76. Once the student's personal and course eligibility has been established and they have provided satisfactory evidence of their disability, they are potentially eligible at that stage for DSAs and should be invited to arrange a needs assessment as soon as possible. The needs assessment will help determine the amount of DSA grant for which the student is eligible. During the DSA needs assessment interview, needs assessors are requested to explain the role of Disability Adviser. Given that the assessment may be carried out some months before the start of the course, some students may subsequently attend a different institution or course. In such cases, a top-up assessment can be carried out once the student has confirmed their place on a course.

77. A DSA needs assessment report will contain information about the student's disability which is classed as sensitive personal data under the Equality Act. This means that the written consent of the student should always be obtained before releasing the DSA needs assessment report or any other disability-related information to a third party. A copy of the needs assessment report should be sent to the Disability Adviser and SLC by the assessment centre once agreed. It would also help assessors if they are provided with a copy of the letter to the student which sets out the agreed DSA support. This is subject to the student giving their consent. This information would make assessors aware of any recommendations which have fallen outside the scope of the Regulations and reduce the likelihood of similar inappropriate recommendations in the future. There are two DSA application forms; both entitled 'Disabled Students' Allowances 2012/13 Application Form'. DSA1F is aimed at students who have not applied for other student support and DSASL is aimed at those students who have already completed an application for student support and therefore do not need to provide some information again. Both forms ask students to give their consent to the release of information about their DSA application to third parties such as disability advisers and DSA assessors (see paragraph 172).

78. The cost of the DSA needs assessment should be met from the non-medical helper allowance. The general allowance may be used to pay the student's travel costs to the needs assessment. Where students do not subsequently start a course, they should not be asked to repay the needs assessment fee. If they reapply for a higher education course the following year, the needs assessment already carried out should be sufficient to process their new DSA application. The Department is prepared to write off the DSA needs assessment costs for those students who do not enter higher education.

79. When advising students that they will need to undergo a DSA needs assessment, ensure that the student understands what is involved and that if they do not attend an assessment they may not receive the additional support they require. SFE are encouraged to use DSA-QAG registered or accredited assessment centres (see paragraph 81). Where students are asked to arrange their own DSA needs assessment, an up-to-date list of assessment centres should be provided to allow students to select their nearest centre. However, if SFE arrange the appointment, students should also be consulted

about the date and time of the appointment to help to reduce the number of missed appointments and increase the availability of appointments

80. Providing that students have granted permission, a copy of the needs assessment and awards letter should be sent to the Disability Adviser at their institution once they have received confirmation of a place. This will help ensure that the support the student requires is put in place.

DSA Quality Assurance Group (DSA-QAG)

81. DSA-QAG is a non-profit making company with charitable status. Its board is made up of representatives from HEIs, DSA needs assessors, DSA equipment suppliers and the NUS, with observers from BIS and the SLC A central administrative unit supports this work. DSA-QAG has responsibility for a quality assurance framework against which levels of service for both DSA assessment centres and equipment suppliers are audited. SFE recommends that needs assessments are undertaken by DSA-QAG registered or accredited assessment centres, and any equipment provided under DSAs is provided by DSA-QAG registered or accredited equipment suppliers. More information on DSA-QAG and a list of registered and accredited assessment centres and suppliers is available at the following website: http://www.dsa-qag.org.uk/.

Needs assessments for students studying in Scotland and Northern Ireland

82. It is expected that the majority of English students who study in Scotland or Northern Ireland will receive a DSA needs assessment in their home area before they start their course. This should be carried out by a DSA-QAG registered or accredited assessment centre.

83. However, there will be some occasions when students who are domiciled in England but study in Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland require a needs assessment during term time. In these circumstances, it would seem sensible to recommend that SFE accept needs assessments carried out by centres used by the Students Awards Agency for Scotland (SAAS) and the Department for Employment and Learning (Northern Ireland).

84. SAAS operate a 'Toolkit of Quality Indicators for Needs Assessments' under which institutions and centres become validated as assessors recognised by SAAS. A list of institutions and centres validated by SAAS to undertake DSA needs assessments can be found on the SAAS website: www.saas.gov.uk (click on 'disabled students', and then 'needs assessment').

Disability Advisers

85. Most higher education institutions have someone responsible for advising on disability matters in support of students. The job title varies (for example, they could be Disability Officers or Disability Co-ordinators as well as Advisers) but they are expected to play an important role in the DSA process. If requested to assist a student with their DSA assessment of needs it is essential that they liaise with SFE before making any arrangements, primarily to ensure the student is an eligible student under the Regulations. Disability Advisers have an understanding of the institutional environment and will have access to

academic teaching staff and to detailed course information. SFE should particularly note that Disability Advisers could provide useful advice when there is uncertainty about recommendations in the assessment of needs report. As well as the job title, the role of Disability Advisers may vary between institutions but the following provides a clearer insight into their roles and their importance to the student in the DSA process. In the main, Disability Advisers may:

- support students with their DSA applications;
- offer disabled students advice on other sources of funding and support that may be available;
- advise or support students to arrange needs assessment appointments;
- ensure that the institutional and non- medical helper support that is recommended in the needs assessment report is in place;
- advise on particular needs that may arise from specific courses;
- arrange diagnostic assessment for students who feel they may have a specific learning difficulty such as dyslexia;
- explain and give advice on diagnostic assessment reports of specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia;
- explain and give advice on DSA needs assessment reports;
- co-ordinate the network of support workers;
- work with Accommodation Services, Social Services, SFE and academic departments;
- make recommendations to central departments in relation to students, for example, extended library loans, networked adaptive software or alternative timetabling arrangements;
- supervise and arrange the recruitment and training of support workers;
- administer the payment of support workers and maintain records of the support provided and payments made;
- research, develop and help implement institutions' policy for exams, physical access and field work; and
- develop and put into practice disability elements of various institutional strategies.

86. It is the view of the Department that it would not normally be appropriate for a disability adviser to carry out the DSA needs assessment of students for whom they are responsible.

The scope of DSAs

87. SFE must be satisfied that the student is obliged by reason of their disability to incur additional expenditure to be able to attend or undertake their course. SFE must also be satisfied that all such expenditure is reasonably incurred and appropriate to the individual needs of the student. DSAs are <u>not</u> intended to assist with disability-related expenditure that the student would continue to incur if they were not following their course. The local social services department may well continue to provide assistance towards personal care costs that will be incurred irrespective of whether or not the student is attending their course.

88. Higher Education Institutions and those Further Education Colleges which deliver directly funded higher education courses receive a funding allocation from the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) for spending on institutional costs. This allocation includes the mainstream disability allocation which supports institutions in widening access and improving provision for disabled students. Although institutions are accountable for showing that their funds have been spent appropriately, institutions are autonomous in the way they distribute funds internally. Other funding areas also relate to improving provisions for disabled students. It is outside the HEFCE remit to make detailed rules on how the mainstream disability allocation should be used. This is for the institution to decide and the courts would decide on whether an institution should fund a particular area in the event of any legal challenge. Therefore, HEFCE does not produce detailed guidance on how institutions should use their disability-related funding allocation but draws institutions' attention to its guidance on base-level provision and the Equality Act. HEFCE also funds partner organisations to provide support to institutions in meeting the needs of disabled students.

The Equality Act 2010

89. The Equality Act 2010 came into force from 1st October 2010. The Equality Act generally carries forward the protection that the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 provided for disabled people.

90. It is for SFE, higher education institutions and further education colleges to take their own advice on how the Equality Act and related legislation applies to them.

91. The duty requires public authorities (which will include most colleges and universities), when carrying out their functions, to have due regard to the need to:

- promote equality of opportunity between disabled people and other people;
- eliminate discrimination that is unlawful under the Equalities Act 2010;
- eliminate harassment of disabled people that is related to their disabilities;
- promote positive attitudes towards disabled people;
- encourage participation by disabled people in public life; and
- take steps to take account of disabled peoples' disabilities, even where that involves more favourable treatment.

92. These elements are defined as the general duty to promote disability equality. Higher education institutions (HEIs) also have specific duties, which provide a clear framework to meet the general duty. Central to the specific duties is the requirement on HEIs to produce a Disability Equality Scheme. For further information on these duties see the Equality and Human Rights Commission Code of Practice on the Duty to Promote Disability Equality.

93. In addition, it is unlawful under the Equality Act 2010 for educational institutions (including higher education institutions) to discriminate against disabled people. The Act encompasses any services provided

for students - education, training, leisure facilities and accommodation – and also covers admissions, enrolments and exclusions. Part 2 of the Act includes two key requirements on bodies responsible for educational institutions:

i. responsible bodies must not put a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage than a non-disabled person for reasons related to their disability; and

ii. responsible bodies must make 'reasonable adjustments' to ensure that a disabled student is not placed at a 'substantial disadvantage'.

Reasonable adjustments cover everything from admissions procedures, to teaching arrangements, exam procedures or course content. HEIs must anticipate what sort of adjustments may be necessary for disabled students in the future. The anticipatory nature of reasonable adjustments requires education providers to be proactive in finding out about individual disabled students' needs but this does not mean that education providers should wait for a disabled person to approach them before giving consideration to the duty to make reasonable adjustments. The Equality and Human Rights Commission (formerly The Disability Rights Commission) Code of Practice requires consideration and implementation of a range of mechanisms to overcome barriers that are likely to or would obviously disadvantage disabled people

94. The duties in respect of students over 16 years were introduced in three stages: majority of legislation, September 2002; provision of auxiliary aids and services, September 2003; adjustments to physical features of premises, September 2005. This means that providers of goods and services must take reasonable steps to remove or alter a physical feature which makes it difficult for a disabled person to use a service, or provide the service in an alternative way. Funding has been made available to HEIs to enable them to implement the new duties and widen access to premises to bring buildings up to the standards required by the Act. The Equality and Human Rights Commission website (http://www.equalityhumanrights.com) provides a useful source of information about the Equalities Act 2010 including guidance for the post-16 sector (http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/advice-and-guidance/your-rights/disability/disability-in-education/disabled-students-and-learners-in-post-16-education/

The Equality Act 2010 and work placements

95. Work placements are currently included in the Equality Act 2010 which means that college and university staff must take into account a person's disability when arranging work placements and liaise with the work placement providers to implement the support

96. The Equality Act 2010 includes people who are on a work placement as part of a vocational training programme. A vocational training programme is likely to include most students who are undertaking a work placement as an integral part of a further or higher education course. The providers of work placements are now required to ensure that they do not have discriminatory practices and also to make reasonable adjustments for disabled people on a work placement. The length of the work placement may be a factor when determining whether an adjustment is reasonable.

Support appropriate to the DSAs

97. The following headings provide a breakdown of the disability-related support that might be considered appropriate to the DSAs in some circumstances, although it should be noted that the contents are not an exhaustive definition of support appropriate to the DSAs or appropriate in all cases.

Special Equipment

- Computer hardware/laptops
- Disability software
- Computer furniture for student's residence
- Furniture used for study purposes within student residence
- Recording devices
- Access to a fridge for diabetic students in student's residence, requiring the storage of insulin

Non-medical helper allowance

- Training in use of disability software
- Note-takers
- Specialist Support
- Library Support
- Human assistance with carrying course-related materials and mobility around the HEI
- Payments to non-medical helpers comply with statutory employment rights (e.g. tax, holiday pay)
- Assessment of needs fee
- Support for course practical work
- Interpreters to access lectures and other academic areas where learning takes place
- Administration costs incurred in recruiting and organising helpers
- Readers/scribes and proof readers

General Allowances

- Travel costs to/from a needs assessment
- Book Allowances
- Photocopying
- Disability-related travel costs to/from a work placement (if transport costs for non-disabled students are not met by the HEI)
- Internet connection
- HEI Intranet connection
- Consumables (batteries, cartridges, paper)
- Additional costs of en suite university accommodation

98. Given the complexities surrounding disability-related support, it is impossible to provide an exhaustive list of support appropriate to DSAs. In many cases, a separate decision would need to be taken, taking into account circumstances and the purpose of the disability-related support. The following principles could be used to decide if the support is appropriate for DSA funding when it is unclear if the funding should be met from the DSAs or the institution's own funding allocation:

- the support in question is not provided by the institution for all other students; and
- the equipment is provided for use exclusively by the disabled student.

99. The Department recommends:

- DSAs should not be used for charges for support, counselling or tutorial services which the institution makes available to all students;
- DSAs are not intended for the costs of extra academic tuition or support in the main subject area(s) being studied. Institutions should normally meet these costs as part of providing the course;
- Similarly, where an institution makes special adaptations to course handouts or other course equipment for use by a disabled student during the delivery and assessment of the curriculum, it should meet any associated costs as part of providing the course;
- The cost of any special arrangements that institutions may need to make to enable a disabled student to take examinations (e.g. providing physical access to the examination hall or allowing the examinations to be taken and invigilated somewhere else) should not be set against DSAs. Additional costs which the disabled student themselves needs to incur in taking their examinations (for example, a helper or item of specialised equipment) would however fall within the scope of DSAs; and
- DSAs may be used only where a student is obliged by reason of their disability to incur costs in receiving specialised individual support. Some students will require additional support to develop appropriate learning strategies because of their disability, for example dyslexia or a mental health condition. The aim of this support is to maximise their ability and remove the barriers caused by the impairment. The costs of extra tutorial support to improve their study skills (e.g. in essay construction and writing, examination techniques, revision skills) would be appropriate for DSAs. However, SFE should satisfy themselves that the cost is reasonable and appropriate. If such study skills or IT support or IT installation and training are provided through the summer, it would seem reasonable to use DSAs to pay for it. However, any such training undertaken outside term time would not count as attendance on the course and therefore would not trigger Long Courses Loan / extra weeks' Maintenance Loan.

Social Services

100. Social Services may continue to provide assistance towards personal care costs that would be incurred in the UK, regardless of whether or not a student is attending a course. Support needs can be reassessed by Social Services when there is a change in a person's personal circumstances, such as leaving home to attend a course or a change in health. In the event of a student moving away from their home area

to attend a course, funding responsibilities for personal care would continue to rest with the Social Services Department in the student's home area. Social Services receive money from Central Government to fund personal care support for disabled people and are responsible for deciding how their budget allocation is spent (see also paragraph 29).

Dyslexia

What is dyslexia?

101. The Report of the National Working Party on Dyslexia in Higher Education (published in January 1999) identifies the following two forms of dyslexia.

a) Developmental dyslexia – a problem with particular aspects of learning despite adequate intelligence and general learning skills. Developmental dyslexia is the more common form of dyslexia. This type is usually inherited and neurologically based.

b) Acquired dyslexia – is characterised by a loss of literacy skills as a result of a neurological trauma, illness or brain disease.

102. Dyslexia is a variable condition and not all students with dyslexia will display the same difficulties or characteristics. The following characteristics have been noted in connection with dyslexia;

- a marked inefficiency in the working or short-term memory system which may result in problems retaining the meaning of text, disjointed written work and the omission of words and phrases in examinations because students have lost track of what they are trying to express;
- inadequate phonological processing abilities (innate difficulty linking sound and symbol) which affects either the acquisition of phonic skills in reading and spelling so that unfamiliar words are frequently misread which may also affect comprehension or reading and writing fluency;
- difficulties with motor skills or coordination which might affect the ability to listen with understanding while taking notes or to concentrate on both spelling and the content of written work;
- problems with visual processing which can affect handwriting and reading, causing the print to appear distorted or the reader to lose the place excessively (this is termed visual stress or Mears-Irlen Syndrome);
- reading and writing problems which may include slow reading speed, difficulty extracting sense from written material without substantial re-reading, inaccurate reading, omission of words and perceived distortion of text;
- writing problems which may include poor handwriting and slow writing speed, omission of words, spelling problems, difficulties categorising information and sequencing ideas;
- difficulties with numeracy which may take the form of inaccuracy in calculations or failure to grasp mathematical or computational course components;
- lack of structure in oral presentations and word retrieval difficulties;
- short attention spans and a high level of distractibility; and

- poor organisation making time management very difficult.

Dyslexia screening

103. Screening for dyslexia usually precedes a diagnostic assessment and the purpose is to determine whether a full psychological or diagnostic assessment would be warranted. Screening can save the cost of a full diagnostic assessment in cases where the outcome of screening suggests that a full diagnostic assessment would be unwarranted. Quick Scan, Dyslexia Adult Screening Test (DAST, Bangor Dyslexia Test,) and Lucid Adult Dyslexia Screening (LADS) are examples of screening tests, although there are other screening tests. Screening for dyslexia does not constitute a diagnostic assessment of dyslexia and therefore a screening for dyslexia as the sole evidence of dyslexia should not be accepted. There is no requirement for a student to undergo a screening for dyslexia when providing their evidence of dyslexia for HE purposes.

Full diagnostic evidence of dyslexia

104. A Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLDs) Working Group was set up in 2003 to review the arrangements for identifying and assessing SpLDs in higher education students. The Working Group was asked to produce a report recommending a framework to guarantee the quality of assessments which diagnose specific learning difficulties. The Working Group has now finished its work and the final report has been published and is available on the Student Finance England practitioners' website at: http://practitioners.studentfinanceengland.co.uk/portal/page?_pageid=133,4210339&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL#section7.

105. The SpLDs Working Group asked a committee to take a lead in implementing a number of the report's recommendations. This committee is the SpLD Assessment Standards Committee (SASC). A sub-committee of SASC, the SpLD Test Evaluation Committee (STEC), will review periodically the list of suitable tests contained in the SpLDs Working Group report and consider new tests for inclusion. Further information about SASC and STEC is provided at paragraphs 181 - 183.

106. The framework recommended in the report has been adopted by the SFE and was introduced in stages over a three year period. The table below sets out the criteria a diagnostic assessment must meet depending on when it was carried out.

Diagnostic assessments carried out before September 2006	• Accept diagnostic assessments carried out by psychologists and suitably qualified specialist teachers. Specialist teachers who assess dyslexia should hold AMBDA (Associate Membership of the British Dyslexia Association) or a qualification from an advanced training course which assesses adults for dyslexia and is recognised by the British Dyslexia Association's Accreditation Board (see the table in Annex 1).
Diagnostic assessments carried out between September 2006 and August 2007	• Accept diagnostic assessments carried out by psychologists and suitably qualified specialist teachers as above. • Diagnostic reports to be in the format

	recommended in the SpLDs Working Group's report. • Diagnostic reports to use tests recommended in the SpLDs Working Group's guidelines or added by the SpLD Test Evaluation Committee (STEC). See paragraph 182.
Diagnostic assessments carried out between September 2007 and August 2008	• Accept diagnostic reports from psychologists and specialist teachers. Specialist teachers must hold a current practising certificate in assessing specific learning difficulties issued by their relevant professional association (for example, the Professional Association of Teachers of Students with Specific Learning Difficulties (PATOSS) or Dyslexia Action). Psychologists must hold a current practising certificate issued by their relevant professional association (for example, the British Psychological Society). • Diagnostic reports to be in the report format recommended in the SpLDs Working Group's guidelines • Diagnostic reports to use tests recommended in the SpLDs Working Group's guidelines or added by the SpLD Test Evaluation Committee (STEC). See paragraph 182.
Diagnostic assessments carried out from September 2008	• Procedures as from September 2007 above plus the following. • All training for assessing specific learning difficulties to incorporate the SpLDs Working Group's guidelines.

107. It is recommended that a full diagnostic assessment of a higher education student for dyslexia should contain the following.

- Evidence of any significant difficulties in reading, writing, spelling and numeracy relevant to the standards in these skills required in higher education.
- Evidence of a significant discrepancy between the abilities in reading, writing, spelling and numeracy and the level of those abilities expected of the student in terms of their general intellectual ability.
- Evidence of cognitive disabilities or neurological anomalies (affecting memory, visual perception, phonological processing, including speed of processing or motor coordination) which are likely to have adverse effects on learning.
- Evidence that the learning difficulties identified are likely to affect learning in higher education.

108. Once the diagnostic report has been accepted there is no requirement for a student to undergo a new diagnosis later in the course. A diagnostic report accepted for a first course should also be acceptable for subsequent courses, including postgraduate courses.

109. If the diagnosis was carried out before the age of 16, the student should normally be asked to undergo an 'Assessment of Performance Attainment' which would provide an update on their current performance in reading, writing and spelling. Intelligence is unlikely to change significantly even if the student was diagnosed as a child and therefore there is no requirement for another assessment of intelligence. However, reading, writing and spelling could change in adulthood. The 'Assessment of Performance Attainment' is a 'top up' diagnosis which provides up to date evidence of the student's current degree of difficulty in reading, writing and spelling. The top up diagnosis is to establish the likely impact of the student's specific learning difficulties on the skills needed for higher education. The top up diagnosis should be based on tests recommended in the Specific Learning Difficulties Working Group's guidelines or added by the SpLD Test Evaluation Committee (STEC). See paragraph 184. The Assessment of Performance Attainment is part of the diagnosis and the cost should be met by the student, although an application may be made to the institution's discretionary Access to Learning Fund to meet the cost. The Assessment of Performance Attainment could be carried out by specialist teachers who hold a current practicing certificate in assessing specific learning difficulties issued by their relevant professional association (for example, the Professional Association of Teachers of Students with Specific Learning Difficulties (PATOSS) or Dyslexia Action), or by psychologists who hold a current practising certificate issued by their relevant professional association (for example, the British Psychological Society).

110. The diagnostic report should state that because the student has dyslexia they should receive extra support to compensate for these difficulties. The diagnostic report will often classify the dyslexia into three bands, severe, moderate and mild. Mild dyslexia does not always mean that the student will encounter mild problems as mild dyslexia can cause severe problems and still need support to compensate. Therefore, the written report of a relevant specialist or expert whose qualifications have been checked should be sufficient to enable the student to proceed to the next stage of the process; the assessment of course related needs. There is no requirement to consider the level or severity of dyslexia. The judgement on eligibility made by a qualified professional should be accepted unless it can be shown that the supporting evidence is inadequate to have reasonably formed a view; for example, the evidence is out of date, irrelevant to the applicant or very cursory. In such circumstances, further information should be sought and the views of institution's Disability Adviser should also be taken into account.

Specialist support for dyslexic students

111. Dyslexic students may be eligible for the following support from the DSAs subject to the nature of their learning difficulties and their needs assessment.

- Specialist Support (1:1 support and Group workshops)
- Individual 1:1 support addresses the effects of language processing (acquiring, retaining and recalling information) in written and spoken language as well as the range of memory, organisational, attention and numeracy difficulties that students with specific learning difficulties (SpLDs) often face when producing academic work in a HE context. These particular difficulties may only become evident when these students

encounter the range and increasing complexity of academic tasks inherent in studying at HE level. Whilst a ceiling has not been set on the number of hours of 1:1 specialist SpLD support that may be provided through the DSAs, this support should, in conjunction with the specialist equipment provided and incorporating IT strategies, aim to develop the students' skills for autonomy in the learning environment. This specialist support should be tailored to the student's individual needs which will require the professionals delivering the support to set out clear goals and timescales for achieving those goals. Some students' may need additional 1:1 specialist SpLD support as their course progresses and recommendations for this should be considered on a case-by-case basis. Whilst this guidance refers to specialist 1:1 support for students with SpLDs, similar 1:1 support may be considered for students with mental health difficulties where recommended in the needs assessment report.

- Group workshops should not be considered as an alternative to specialist 1:1 support, but may be effective for some students to share strategies and develop peer support or for some generic information sessions such as stress relief exercises for exam anxiety or speed reading courses. Whether additional support of this type can be funded from the student's DSAs must be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- A computer with a word processing package, spell-checker, dictionary and/or voice recognition software, text help software and mind-mapping software reduces the need for redrafting. A scanner with Optical Character Recognition (OCR) software linked to text-to-speech software, may also be appropriate where students have particularly poor reading skills.
- Training in the use of disability software.
- Readers to read text to students either in person or on tape.
- Scribes to note down the student's ideas for early drafts.
- Proof readers to correct minor technical errors.
- An allowance for additional textbooks so that the student may use them to implement various reading strategies, such as book-marking and highlighting key words. Extended library loans are useful but inadequate as substitute strategies.
- Photocopying allowances so that students can obtain enlarged copies of text to alleviate visual discomfort. Extended library loans are useful but inadequate as substitute strategies.
- Portable spell-checkers.
- A tape-recorder, mini disk or digital recorder to record lectures or to compose orally before writing onto a computer.

Students diagnosed after the start of their HE course

112. Students who might previously have attained high levels of academic achievement without any additional support may request DSA support after entering higher education. In order to gain entry to higher education, most dyslexic students have developed compensatory strategies. Although these strategies may have been adequate in their previous learning environment, they may be inadequate for coping with the greater demands of higher education. The switch to independent learning and self reliance in the organisation of study can present extreme difficulties. Students with dyslexia typically have greater

problems in adjusting to independent learning because the necessary organisational capacity is weak. The dyslexic student who has used compensatory strategies will usually need to put in more time and effort than other students to complete the same academic work. As they progress through their courses, the quantity and volume of work increases and they can no longer cope without additional support.

The arrangements for engaging non-medical helpers

The employment rights of non-medical helpers including tax and National Insurance Contribution implications

113. If non-medical helpers earn more than the National Insurance lower earnings limit of **£139** (**2011/12 Financial Year**) per week issues arise relating to the employment of the non-medical helper and pay records will need to be submitted to HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC). In the tax year **2011/12** Class 1 national insurance contributions (NIC) are payable by the employer and the employee when the employee earns **£139** per week or more. Employee's national insurance contributions are 12% of weekly earnings between **£139** and **£817**. If non- medical helpers earn more than £817 a week, they will also pay 2 per cent of all your earnings over **£817** Non-medical helpers pay income tax on earnings over and above **£7,457** (**2011/12**) per annum but may have to pay tax on earnings below this level if, for example, they have other employment earnings which combined takes their earnings above the threshold. The employers of non-medical helpers are responsible for calculating the amount of tax and national insurance, deducting it from the employee's wages and making payments to HMRC. Employers may also be required to pay Employer's National Insurance contributions. This will be in addition to the gross pay paid to the non-medical helper and therefore needs to be taken into account when agreeing how much the helper will be paid.

114. Non-medical helpers have certain other employment rights regardless of how much they earn. These rights are:

- itemised pay statements;
- time off for public duties;
- basic maternity leave for women;
- basic paternity leave for men;
- not be discriminated against on grounds of sex, race or disability;
- not to be victimised for trade union membership; and
- paid holiday entitlements.

The Department for Business, Innovation & Skills provides information on the individual rights of employees. This information may be accessed through the website at: http://www.bis.gov.uk/policies/employment-matters/rights

The employer of the non-medical helper

115. It is the engager's **(e.g. the student's or HEI's)** role to decide whether the person they are hiring should be treated as an employee or self-employed. Individuals and their engagers are free to decide the terms and conditions of any engagement but they cannot simply call a contract employment or self-employment unless the facts support that. For the purpose of tax and national insurance contributions (NICs),

where the facts suggest that the contract is one of employment, PAYE income tax and Class 1 NICs should be deducted. In order to make this decision, each case needs to be considered on an individual basis. It is impossible to provide comprehensive guidance on where employer responsibilities lie for every arrangement. The following case studies provide an indication of who would be treated as the employer of the non-medical helpers. They are based on advice received from HMRC technical advisers. Further advice on identifying the employment status of non-medical helpers can be obtained direct from HMRC Enquiry Offices and at: www.hmrc.gov.uk/employment-status.

Case Study 1

The university recruits, organises and trains the non-medical helpers. The university invoices SLC and then pays the non-medical helper.

Assuming there is a contract of service between the HEI and the non-medical helper, regardless of the invoicing arrangements, the HEI, as the employer, is responsible for PAYE/NICs. If under the same arrangements**,** SFE or the student pays the non-medical helper on the HEI's behalf as its agent, this does not affect who is the secondary contributor (the person responsible for paying the secondary contribution which is normally the employer).

Case Study 2

The student recruits, organises and pays the non-medical helper directly.

Assuming there is a contract of service between the student and the non-medical helper, the student is the employer and responsible for PAYE/ NICS.

Case Study 3

The student recruits, and arranges their own non-medical helper. The university draws the DSA monies from the SFE and pays the non-medical helper on the student's behalf.

Assuming there is a contract of service between the student and non-medical helper the student, as the employer, is responsible for PAYE/NICs. The fact that the HEI pays the non-medical helper on the student's behalf as their agent does not affect who is the liable secondary contributor.

116. In all of the three case studies, if the non-medical helper runs their own business: for instance negotiates their fees independently of the HEI and has a number of other clients, it is likely the non-medical helper is self employed and responsible for their own Class 2/Class 4 NICS and tax on their trading income.

117. For assistance in determining the correct employment status of the non-medical helper you can use HMRC's interactive Employment Status Indicator (ESI) tool. The ESI is an online tool which HMRC use to determine a workers employment status. It is free and easy to use and can help you work out whether the non- medical helper is employed or self employed in all but the most complex of cases.

The ESI is available at http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/calcs/esi.htm

Relieving students of employer responsibilities

118. Few students are trained or equipped to act as the employer of a non-medical helper and we also believe that whenever possible disabled students should not be burdened with employer responsibilities if they do not desire this role. As SFE has no role in engaging non-medical helpers and agreeing the terms of engagement, it is unlikely that SFE would be the employer of a non-medical helper. It may help when approving payments for non-medical helper support to request a statement from the helper that they are self employed or a statement from the employer confirming they are acting as the employer of the non-medical helper. Remember that individuals and their engagers are free to decide the terms and conditions of any engagement, but they cannot simply call a contract employment or self-employment unless the facts support that.

119. The following arrangements could be considered to avoid students being the employer of their non-medical helpers.

Using non-medical helpers employed by HEIs

120. Many universities already employ non-medical helpers on behalf of disabled students or administer a register of non-medical helpers who are self employed. This involves advertising, recruiting, training, organising and paying the non-medical helpers. Some universities operate a register of support workers and have formal contracts or agreements with the non-medical helpers. In such arrangements, as well as paying the non-medical helper's wages, the DSA could also pay for the non-medical helpers' tax, national insurance and other employer-related costs.

Using self employed non-medical helpers

121. Non-medical helpers who are self-employed are responsible for their own tax and national insurance and are not covered by the employment legislation set out in the paragraphs above. Therefore, using a self-employed non-medical helper for the particular engagement would mean that students, or any other body, are not the employer of the non-medical helper. For the purpose of tax and NICs it is the engager's responsibility to decide whether someone is an employee or self-employed. HMRC can provide advice. In deciding whether to approve a non-medical helper as self employed, HMRC would look at what the job involves. If a person negotiates their own fees, runs their own business and works for a number of people it is more likely they would be classed as self-employed. If the non-medical helper has regular payments from the student and works under the student's direction this would indicate that they are more likely to be employed.

National Insurance rates

122. For **2011/12**, employees' National Insurance contributions are 12% of weekly earnings between **£139** and **£817** and 2% of weekly earnings above **£817**. The employer's contribution is 13.8% on earnings above **£102** per week with no upper limit. The rate of Class 2 contribution (paid by self employed workers) is **£2.50** per week. Please note that figures for the 2009/10 and 2010/11 tax year figures can be viewed at:

http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/rates/nic.htm

Income tax

123. In **2011/12**, income tax is paid on earnings **£0- £35,000** at 20% and from **£35,001** to **£150,000** at 40%. These figures can be viewed at:

http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/rates/it.htm

Annual leave

124. From 1st October 2007 the Working Time Regulations changed to allow full time workers 4.8 weeks paid annual leave (24 days if working a 5 day week). This figure increased to 5.6 weeks (28 days if working a 5 day week) from 1st April 2009, pro-rata for those working part-time. For example, if a non-medical helper works 5 days per week, annual leave entitlement is 24 days a year from 1st October 2007, increasing to 28 days a year from 1st April 2009. If the non-medical helper works 2 days per week the annual leave entitlement is 8 days per year. See Department for Business, Innovation & Skills (formerly Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform) website: http://www.berr.gov.uk/whatwedo/employment/holidays/index.html.

125. The entitlement begins on the first day of employment. The amount of leave accrues monthly at the rate of one-twelfth of the annual entitlement each month. When the calculation does not result in an exact number of days, the amount of leave is rounded up to the next half day. For example, a worker who works 5 days per week would have accrued 6 days annual leave after 3 months (24 divide by 12 x 3), or 7 days annual leave after 3 months (28 divided by 12 x 3).

Employers' liability (compulsory insurance)

126. The Employer's Liability Act 1969 also requires employers to take out insurance against liability for bodily injury or disease sustained by their employees during the course of employment. This requirement applies when the employer deducts national insurance and income tax and controls where and how the work is carried out. Employer's Liability Insurance is not required if the worker is self employed. More information about employer's liability insurance is available from the Health and Safety Executive.

127. For further guidance and clarification on the above and other employment legislation, advice should be taken from the appropriate sources.

National minimum wage

128. From 1st October 2010 the main (adult) rate is **£6.08** per hour for those aged 21 years and over. The rate of **£4.98** per hour applies to workers aged 18-20 years inclusive. The development rate can also apply to workers aged 22 and above during their first 6 months in a new job with a new employer and who are receiving accredited training.

http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/Employment/Employees/NationalMinimumWage/index.htm

Administration charges for arranging non-medical helpers

<u>Summary</u>

129. A DSA for a full time student is 'a grant to assist with the additional expenditure which the Secretary of State is satisfied that the student is obliged to incur in connection with their attendance on a designated course by reason of a disability to which they are subject' (regulation 40 of the Education (Student Support) Regulations 2011). The allowance is made up of different elements including expenditure on a non-medical helper.

130. DSAs cannot be used as a contribution towards the infrastructure, general administration and pastoral costs of the HEI. DSAs must not be used to cross-subsidise the infrastructure of HEIs' disability services.

131. It is permissible for HEIs to recover administrative costs associated with the provision of non-medical helpers funded through DSAs.

132. Fixed percentages without an evidence base do not provide a sound basis for the calculation of relevant admin charges.

133. The clear and consistent allocation of relevant costs provides the most accurate guide to the true cost of delivering the service.

134. HEIs need to think through their costs properly: It needs to be assured that claims that are over the odds are not endorsed..

Context

135. The Department depends on HEIs to provide a range of well-managed services that respond to the needs of students. In the context of DSAs, many HEIs arrange and administer non-medical helper support; HEIs may incur extra costs in providing this service. Such costs might include recruiting potential non-medical helpers, advertising for helpers, selecting suitable candidates, training unqualified non-medical helpers and maintaining records of their personal and financial details. The Department accepts that it is legitimate for HEIs to add the relevant element of these administration costs into their charges for non-medical helper support. Furthermore the Department accepts that such charges, as an integral part of the provision of non-medical helper support, constitute a cost that a student requiring non-medical helper support is obliged to incur and can therefore be met from the student's DSA.

The DSAs

136. HEI governing bodies are responsible for the proper stewardship and value for money of public funds. The amount they claim for DSA administration needs to be relevant and proportionate, and to have been incurred by the HEI specifically in providing the DSA service.

137. Fixed percentages without an evidence base do not provide a sound basis for the calculation and award of relevant administration costs. Finding the clearly calculated cost of activity is a more transparent and sustainable means of funding than arbitrary fixed percentages.

138. Costs should be based on actual delivery and not assessed delivery. It is reasonable to ask for evidence that the support for which they are invoiced by HEIs or other providers was delivered. (Further guidance on whether charges incurred when a student fails to attend a pre-arranged session with a non-medical helper can be met for the DSAs is provided at paragraphs 142 & 143).

139. Administration charges and associated overheads should be claimed only once: the same activity should not be claimed twice. A reasonable level of actually-incurred marginal costs should be the maximum. HEIs should clearly distinguish the types of services and their costs on the invoices submitted. SFE will need to assure themselves about the amounts claimed by individual providers. They might, for example, ask providers to submit details of how their administrative costs have been calculated with the first claims each year.

140. A fundamental review of costs should be undertaken periodically to ensure that the service continues to provide value for money (for example, that efficiency improvements are effectively managed, to avoid a "last year plus x per cent" approach, and to assess whether the level of resources used to provide the service remain appropriate in the light of changing demand and other factors) and to avoid double-counting.

141. SLC should be satisfied that claims for DSAs are made in accordance with guidance and should challenge costs which do not appear to them to be reasonable.

Cancellation charges when students fail to attend a pre-arranged session with a non-medical helper

142. It is not advised to have a general policy of paying for NMH provision that has been recommended in a DSA needs assessment report and put in place by an HEI or other provider, regardless of whether or not the student takes up that support. There will of course be occasions where a student fails to attend NMH sessions at short notice for reasons such as illness, etc. It is the Department's view that if the student is required in such circumstances to pay a cancellation charge, then the charge could be met from the student's DSAs as part of the expenditure they were obliged to incur to secure NMH support. For example, where the terms of a contract the student has entered into with an HEI or other provider of NMH support stipulate that a charge will be made for missed sessions if less than 24 hours' notice of cancellation is given.

143. However, it would be expected that the number of missed sessions and the reasons for not attending is closely monitored. Where students continually fail to attend NMH sessions without good reason a point must come where SFE can no longer agree to pay for NMH provision that is not being used. Similarly where students give notice part way through the year that they no longer need or want NMH support, SLC should consider not continuing to pay for NMH provision that is not being taken up. It would be considered reasonable to request evidence that any NMH support for which they are invoiced by HEIs or other providers has been delivered.

Payments of DSAs

144. Regulation 108 (full time DSAs), 127 (full-time distance learning DSAs) 147 (part-time DSAs) and 167 (postgraduate DSAs) provide a discretion as to the timing of DSA payments and also whether payments should be paid in instalments. Where high costs in respect of a non-medical personal helper's allowance are incurred, consideration should be given to the practical implications for the student who may have to make frequent payments to support workers. For example, a student who has to pay a helper £60 per week may have difficulty in meeting such costs in advance of receiving their grant

instalment. While we do not recommend the payment of the full allowance available to the student in advance of the services being carried out, internal audit departments could be consulted on whether provisional monthly or termly payments might be paid based on an estimate. SFE would need to be satisfied that the student had attended the sessions for which provisional payments had been made.

Timing of payments for specialist equipment

145. In some cases, it may be necessary or desirable for students to purchase items of special equipment before the start of their courses, so that they may make use of them from the very beginning of their studies. It should not be expected for students to initially make large payments themselves and then claim reimbursement. Once it has been established that the student is eligible for DSAs, it would not be unreasonable to arrange the purchase and supply of equipment shortly before the start of the course once the student's place is unconditional, i.e. after 'A' level results and it is established that the student is eligible for student support. In particular, students with severe disabilities, such as blind students, may need longer time for training in the use of their DSA equipment and software. Needs Assessors and Disability Advisers may recommend that equipment is supplied before the start of the course to allow time for training in the use of the equipment. It is advised to accept such recommendations. It is not expected that payments of DSAs are made well in advance of the start of the course, particularly where the student is still at school. There is no bar under the Regulations to making such payments in advance of the student's actual attendance on their course.

Payments to third parties

146. It is recommended to pay DSAs directly to assessment centres and suppliers of services and equipment after obtaining the student's written consent. We discourage insisting that students purchase recommended DSA equipment using their own monies and then reimburse the student from the DSAs. The Teaching and Higher Education Act 1998 (section 22) and the Student Support Regulations authorise the payment of DSAs directly to students. Therefore, payment directly to a third party would not satisfy the statutory requirements unless the student consents to this arrangement. Consent could be inferred if a student was written to advising that payment would be made directly to a supplier and the student accepted delivery of the equipment. Acceptance of the equipment could be inferred as the student giving their consent. However, from a legal perspective the safest course would be to obtain the student's written consent to making the payments directly to the supplier or assessment centre.

DSA applications received in the final stages of a course

147. Some students may apply for DSA support in the latter stages of the final year of their courses. Many of the students who apply late for DSA support do so because they have been reluctant to disclose their disability and now have concerns about their impending examinations or are struggling with dissertations. If a need for disability-related support is identified in the latter stages of the course, it is important the student receives the appropriate support, even if it is only for a short period until the end of the course.

148. A concern is that students applying late may not receive their DSA support before the end of their courses. It is recommended that students applying near the end of their courses are also referred to their Disability Advisers for further advice. Disability Advisers may be able to arrange human support, such as exam support, study support or revision skills, at short notice. However, the usual DSA needs assessment would be required to identify any assistive technology requirements. Although it is reasonable for special equipment needs to arise at the end of a course, it is advised to treat with caution, applications for the equipment allowance towards the end of a student's course. If suppliers are willing to rent out equipment and if rental is better value for money, consider rental or hired equipment as the Student Support Regulations allow for support to be provided by way of hire or rental as well as through outright purchases. Assessment centres can offer information on equipment suppliers who provide equipment for hire or rental. However, it is important that students receive the necessary support and in the event that it is not possible to rent or hire equipment, purchases of equipment should be made.

Student leaves a course after receiving equipment

149. If a student receives DSA equipment whilst on their course and then abandons the course, there is no provision within the Regulations for recovery of the equipment, regardless of the length of time the student spent on the course. This is because the award was made with statutory authority and the purpose for which the equipment was supplied had already materialised.

Equipment supplied before the student starts the course / delivered after the student has left the course

150. A DSA assessment may be provided before a student has started their course to ensure that any equipment or other support they need can be arranged and delivered for the beginning of term. In some cases it may be appropriate to supply DSA equipment early as well e.g. where training on the equipment is necessary before the student starts their course. However, if the student subsequently does not start the course, this will constitute an overpayment for the purposes of regulation 117 (full-time students), regulation 135 (full-time distance learning students) regulation 156 (part-time students) and regulation 159 (postgraduate students).

151. Similarly, a student may start their course, then abandon it and then receive DSA payments or equipment after they have abandoned the course (possibly because SLC had not been notified that the student had left the course). This will constitute an overpayment for the purposes of regulation 117(7) (full-time students), regulation 135(8) (full-time distance learning students), regulation 156(7) (part-time students) and regulation 168(6) (postgraduate students).

152. SFE will be able to accept the return of the equipment to the supplier, a monetary repayment or a combination of both. For example, where the student has received two items of equipment through the DSA and it is possible to return one item to the supplier and secure a full refund but it is not possible to return the other item, the student should only have to pay for the second item of equipment.

153. It should be clearly explained to students who are supplied with equipment before the start of their course that they may be liable for the cost of the equipment if they do not subsequently begin the course.

VAT and Disabled Students' Allowances

154. Under VAT law, equipment and appliances are VAT zero-rated if:

i. they are designed *solely* for use by a disabled person;

ii. the supply is to a disabled person for their personal or domestic use; and

iii. the equipment is relevant to a person's disability.

155. If the supplier has received advice/confirmation from the 'designer and/or manufacturer' that the goods are *'designed solely for use by a disabled person'* (condition 'i' above) and the supplier is satisfied that conditions ('ii' & 'iii' above) for VAT relief are met, they should not charge VAT on the goods at *the time of supply.* Before zero-rating the goods, a supplier should ask a purchaser to complete an 'eligibility declaration' contained in VAT Notice 701/7/2002 *Reliefs for disabled people*.

156. The services of adapting goods that have not been designed solely for use by disabled people, to suit the condition of a disabled person can also be zero-rated. The goods themselves however remain standard-rated and the value of those goods and of the zero-rated services of adaptation can be apportioned when calculating the VAT chargeable.

157. For the purpose of VAT relief, a disabled person is:

- a person with a physical or mental impairment which has a long term and substantial effect on their ability to carry out everyday activities;
- a condition which the medical profession treats as a chronic sickness (for example, diabetes); or
- a person who is terminally ill.

Computer Equipment that may be zero-rated when supplied to a disabled person for personal or domestic use

158. In general, computer equipment is only zero-rated if it is designed solely for use by a disabled person. Examples of equipment which might qualify for zero-rating include special items of furniture, Braille embossing printers and speech synthesisers. A central processor can **by concession** be zero-rated if it has software installed which enables a disabled student to use the computer effectively or to carry out tasks effectively when otherwise they could not do so and is sold as part of a computer system.

159. When a computer system is purchased that contains both elements on which VAT is chargeable as well as zero-rated, the supplier may decide **by concession** to apply a 'composite rate' of VAT to the whole system. Suppliers who decide to apply a composite rate of VAT for computer packages may do so after consulting HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC). Please refer to Section 9 of VAT Notice 701/7/2002 *Reliefs for disabled people*.

160. General purpose goods and services such as standard recording or computer equipment (standard printers, keyboards, VDUs or software) are not eligible for VAT relief even when purchased for, or by a disabled person. There is no provision for VAT relief on taxi fares and VAT will be chargeable in the usual way.

161. Under VAT notice 701/7/2002, the following are listed as services which might be zero-rated to a disabled person: installation of qualifying goods, adaptation of general goods, repair and maintenance of qualifying goods, **some** building alterations, goods supplied in connection with **qualifying** services and letting of goods on hire or lease.

DSA equipment ordered and paid direct by SLC

162. DSA funds belong to the student and items purchased with these funds remain the property of the student. If SFE orders and pays for the equipment on behalf of the student, VAT relief may be available where all the relevant conditions are met. VAT relief, if appropriate, is applied at the time of purchase by the supplier. Where VAT is charged, it cannot be reclaimed from HMRC by SFE or the student.

163. Further advice and help on VAT relief for disabled people can be obtained from VAT Notice 701/7/2002: VAT reliefs for disabled people. A copy of this notice and further advice may be obtained from the HMRC Charities Helpline, that also deals with VAT relief's for disabled people, on 0845 3020203 or by visiting the HMRC website at: http://customs.hmrc.gov.uk/channelsPortalWebApp/channelsPortalWebApp.portal?_nfpb=true&_pageLabel=pageVAT_ShowContent&id=HMCE_CL_000184&propertyType=document.

Information to help with frequently asked questions

Internet connection

164. Internet connection may be necessary for some disabled students. However, it is recommended that access to the Internet should only be considered if it is recommended in the students DSA needs assessment. It is not recommended to approve Internet access on the basis of a request by the institution alone unless it is part of a DSA assessment. When satisfied that the student's need for connection to the Internet arises because of a disability, the recommended view is that support for associated costs (e.g. subscribing to an Internet provider) may be met from the DSA, subject to the limits of the particular allowance.

DSAs and laptop computers

165. Laptop computers may be more expensive to purchase than an equivalent desktop computer. If a desk top computer is sufficient to meet the student's disability-related needs, the use of DSA monies to purchase a laptop computer would not satisfy the Regulations which describe DSAs as grants to assist with the additional expenditure which the Secretary of State (i.e. SFE) is satisfied that the student is obliged to incur. A laptop should not be approved, for example, when a student states that they do not have enough space in their accommodation to house a desk top computer or simply because a laptop computer is more convenient. When it is not appropriate to provide a DSA grant for a laptop computer, it is permissible for a student to use their own money to pay the difference in cost between a

desk top and a lap top computer. If a student decides to purchase a laptop using part DSA monies and their own monies, it should be made clear at the outset that any malfunctioning or incompatibility with other recommendations is the student's responsibility. The laptop should meet the specifications set out in the DSA needs assessment report and have sufficient memory to take account of changing needs during the course.

166. However, there may be occasions when a grant from the DSA is needed to purchase a laptop computer due to a student's disability, for example, a student with a physical disability which requires them to work from a chair rather than at a desk or a student who has regular kidney dialysis and needs a laptop with them. Further examples when a laptop might be considered are when a disabled student studies part of their course abroad or attends residential work placements where they need to use special software to write up notes or submit course work during the placement. This is not an exhaustive list of examples when it may be appropriate for a student to be supported with a laptop. It should always be ensured that the need for a laptop arises because of a disability, if necessary consulting with DSA needs assessors and Disability Advisers. Recommendations should also be made that students take out sufficient insurance to cover possible loss or damage when the laptop is in transit or used outside the home.

Non-recommended suppliers and upgrades

167. There is no statutory requirement that students should purchase the DSA equipment or other support they need from a particular supplier. However, although a student is free to use a different supplier from that recommended in the DSA needs assessment report, they may only use DSA monies to purchase support which has been agreed by SLC. SLC will need to be satisfied that the expenditure is reasonable. Purchases made directly by students should always be supported by receipts which SLC may request under the provisions of Schedule 3 of the Student Support Regulations. If a student wishes to purchase equipment of a higher specification than that recommended, they must use their own monies to meet the extra costs.

Electrically powered wheelchairs and scooters

168. Generally the cost of purchasing wheelchairs and scooters would be incurred regardless of whether the student is attending a course and therefore would not normally be an appropriate charge to the DSA. Individual health authorities have duties to meet the mobility needs of people who are unable or virtually unable to walk. However, some students may have requirements which arise specifically because of the course. For example, attendance on a course may mean that a student has to use hilly terrains which can be avoided in ordinary life. Advice may be requested from the institution's Disability Adviser. A hilly university campus terrain may mean that a manual wheelchair is inadequate or that a student with mobility problems might require human assistance to move around the campus. An electrically powered wheelchair/scooter in such cases would probably be more cost effective over the life of the course. If lectures are held in different parts of the campus which are some distance apart, students may be required to travel quickly in order to reach their next lecture on time. This may not be possible for a student with limited mobility or a manual wheelchair. Therefore, we believe that each request for mobility equipment such as wheelchairs and scooters should be considered

individually in the light of course requirements and the terrain of the university campus.

Using DSAs to support participation in extra curricular activities

169. It has been asked whether the DSAs can be used to fund extra curricular activities and participation in Freshers' week. The Regulations allow for the DSAs to be used for additional expenditure which SLC is satisfied the student is *obliged* to incur in connection with their attendance on (or their undertaking) a designated course. This would not allow the DSAs to be used to support a student when participating in Freshers' week or other extra curricular activities where there is *no link* with the course of study. However, if it could be demonstrated that the extra curricular activity is a course requirement, we can see no statutory bar to paying a DSA to allow the student to participate in that activity. Examples might be a music student participating in a choral society, or a drama student involved in a drama group. It is recommended that the DSAs can be used to provide support for students during induction meetings they might have with their course tutors during Freshers' week (as well as during other parts of their course) as this is course-related.

Reimbursing HEIs for support provided before a DSA assessment was carried out

170. Where a disabled student has a clear need for non-medical helper and/or other support, HEIs will sometimes provide this support whilst the student's DSA application is still being processed and before a DSA needs assessment has been carried out. This might occur when the application for DSAs is made after the course has started and a DSA needs assessment is not immediately available. In the Department's view the HEI can be reimbursed from the student's DSA (where subsequently awarded) if the type of support provided was later recommended in the DSA needs assessment report.

Student fails to pay an assessment centre or supplier

171. Although it is recommended to obtain the consent of the student to make payments direct to suppliers and other service providers, some students have insisted on exercising their rights to receive their DSA monies and make payments direct. In some cases, the DSA assessment has been undertaken but the student has not paid for the assessment. Advice is that this does not constitute an overpayment and that this is a matter between the assessment centre and the student. There are no provisions in the Regulations which would enable, in such circumstances to set the student's debt to the provider against future grants or to make other arrangements for recovery. The same advice would apply if a student failed to pay a supplier for equipment.

Supplier of equipment becomes bankrupt

172. It has also been asked what should be done if DSA monies have been paid to a supplier of specialist equipment (paid either by SFE or the student) and the supplier has gone bankrupt before supplying the equipment. In such circumstances, under insolvency law, the student could become a creditor of the bankrupt's estate and potentially recover the monies subject to prior creditor's claims or receive the equipment already paid for, assuming the supplier still has the equipment. However, if the student is unable to obtain their equipment

or recover their monies, a further grant could be paid subject to the statutory maxima. For example, a full-time student pays £3,000 to an equipment supplier who then goes bankrupt. The student is unable to obtain their equipment or recover their monies. The student still needs the equipment costing £3,000. The student could be awarded the remaining **£2,161** of the equipment allowance and **£1,724** from the general allowance so that they can purchase the equipment from another equipment supplier (this assumes the student used the general allowance or any other monies from the equipment allowance).

The role of disability organisations

173. National disability organisations such as Disability Alliance,, RNIB (Royal National Institute of the Blind) and RNID (Royal National Institute for Deaf People) can often provide valuable specialist support and advice They can help in one or more of the following ways:

- providing information on particular disabilities;
- assessing students' needs;
- helping with the training of Student Support Officers;
- increasing awareness of DSAs in their own constituent groups; and
- providing a network of wider help for SLC.

174. It is important for SFE to establish good working relationships with the national bodies. SFE, which have specialist support assessors with responsibility for DSAs, will find it easier to establish and maintain a good working relationship. Assistance of the type described above from a national body need not replace any local arrangements that SLC may already have but can usefully supplement them.

Disability Alliance

175. Disability Alliance is a national charity which promotes opportunities for disabled people in higher education. The Disability Alliance gives information and advice to disabled students and the people who work with them. Their Information Service team can answer enquiries and supply information booklets on a range of subjects, such as 'Applying to Higher Education: Guidance for Disabled People' and 'Funding Higher Education for disabled students in higher education'. All of the Disability Alliance's information booklets are also available on their website at: www.skill.org.uk. The Disability Alliance's information Service is open Tuesdays 11.30am – 1.30pm and Thursdays 1.30 – 3.30pm. Telephone 0800 328 5050, textphone 0800 068 2422, email skill4disabledstudents@disabilityalliance.org

176. Disability Alliance also promotes opportunities for disabled people through conferences, publications and working with its members to influence policy makers. Their publications provide a range of information and include original research, practical guidelines and compendiums. Key titles relating to higher education are:

- Into Higher Education – a comprehensive guide to higher education for disabled students (produced annually);
- A Guide to the Disability Discrimination Act: for institutions of further and higher education (revised and abridged 2007 – online resource); and

- The Co-ordinator's Handbook (for Disability Advisers).

177. Copies of all Disability Alliance publications and information booklets are available from the online Bookshop at www.disabilityalliance.org/shop.htm or by contacting Disability Alliance on 020 7247 8776, email sales@disabilityalliance.org or writing to Disability Alliance, Universal House, 88-94 Wentworth Street London, E1 7SA. Disability Alliance can give up-to-date information and advice on applications, getting support, grants and benefits; profiles of disabled students; and details of universities and colleges offering higher education courses. They are also able to provide training for Student Support Officers and other LA and SLC staff on the Disability Discrimination Act Part 4 (Post-16 education), the Disability Equality Duty and DSAs.

National Association of Disability Practitioners (NADP)

178. The National Association of Disability Practitioners (NADP) Ltd is the professional organisation for disability and support staff in further and higher education. NADP is for anyone working in the post-16 education sector and involved in the management or delivery of services for students with disabilities. NADP is available to respond to questions SLC have on the role of disability staff and how they support disabled students.

National Association of Disability Practitioners Ltd
Moulton Park Business Centre
Redhouse Road
Moulton Park
Northampton
NN3 6AQ

Tel/Fax: 01604 497933

Email: admin@nadp.org.uk

Website: http://www.nadp-uk.org

The National Network of Assessment Centres (NNAC)

179. The National Network of Assessment Centres (NNAC) comprises of assessment centres that have registered with DSA-QAG. NNAC represents assessment centre managers and all those who work within centres. NNAC itself does not currently deal with complaints about assessment centres, which should be directed to the individual centre concerned. Queries can be addressed to the NNAC Administration Centre, contact details below.

NNAC Administration Centre

Email: admin@nnac.org

Website: http://www.nnac.org

Tel: 01432 376 630

Association of Study Aids and Study Strategies Assessors (ASASA)

180. ASASA is a voluntary organisation of Needs Assessors, Diagnosticians (SpLD), Study Skills Providers and IT Trainers. It is independent of other stakeholders in the sector and its remit is to provide a forum

where issues relating to the DSA needs assessment process can be discussed and considered.

Website: www.asasa.org.uk
Email: admin@asasa.org.uk

SpLD Assessment Standards Committee (SASC) and the SpLD Test Evaluation Committee (STEC)

181. The SpLD Assessment Standards Committee (SASC) is taking a lead in implementing a number of the recommendations contained in the report of the SpLDs Working Group (see paragraph 100). Membership consists of individuals representing organisations with national roles in promoting standards in SpLD assessment, support and teacher training. SASCs purpose and responsibilities are to:

- implement the recommendations for SpLD assessor training contained in the SpLD Working Group report;
- promote continuing professional development in SpLD assessment;
- oversee and approve processes of awarding SpLD Assessment Practising Certificates;
- maintain list of approved evaluators for Accreditation of Prior Learning and/or Experience (APL/ape) applications;
- provide training for evaluators;
- approve course as meeting standards of SpLD assessor training; and
- draw on expertise across the sector and provide a forum for sharing good practice.

182. A sub-committee of SASC, the SpLD Test Evaluation Committee (STEC), will review periodically the list of suitable tests contained in the SpLDs Working Group report and consider new tests for inclusion. Membership consists of individuals representing organisations with national roles in promoting standards in SpLD assessment and identification.

183. Further information about SASC and/or STEC can be found on the SASC website at www.sasc.org.uk. Enquiries relating to the work of SASC and/or STEC should be directed to –

Lynn Greenwold
Chair, SASC
c/o Patoss
PO Box 10
Evesham, Worcs
WR11 1ZW
E-mail: info@sasc.org.uk

Further guidance

184. It is important that students who may be eligible for DSAs know that they are available. The Department has published a supplement to its 'A Guide to Financial Support for Higher Education Students in

2012/13' booklets which provides information about the DSAs. The booklet 'Bridging the Gap: a guide to the Disabled Students' Allowances (DSAs) in Higher Education. Guide for **2012/13** is available by calling the Department's free publication line on 0800 731 9133. Bridging the Gap can also be downloaded from the website at: www.direct.gov.uk/studentfinance.

The DSA Application Process

Application procedures for students applying for DSAs in respect of full-time courses

185. It is important to identify as early as possible in the application process any applicant who may be disabled. The processes of assessing a disabled applicant's needs for their course, and arranging for those needs to be met, can take time. The aim must be for them to be completed before the start of the course so that the student can embark on it properly equipped.

186. Students are asked on the PN1 and the PR1 if they wish to apply for DSAs. Continuing students applying for the non-income assessed element of the student loan are asked on the PR1a if they wish to apply for DSAs. These questions allow DSA applications to be prioritised. Where a student answers 'yes' to these questions, the SLC user, at data entry is prompted to raise an 'Issue Information Pack' task. This task should then be processed (this may be the responsibility of the same person who completed data entry or another officer).

187. The status of the DSA application will be displayed (i.e. await DSA evidence, insufficient DSA evidence received, verifying application, await study needs assessment, application rejected/cancelled).

188. DSAs are awarded on an annual basis. Students must make a separate application in respect of each academic year that DSA support is required, **unless SLC has determined that this is not necessary e.g. continuing students in receipt of the core support package.**

189. In 2010/11 the declaration form for all student finance applications was amended to allow it to be more "generic" to cover the main student support application and any supplementary products (inc DSA) applied for in 2012/13

Information for students

190. The process of applying for DSAs can be confusing for students as they do not always understand what evidence is required. Therefore, it is important that students are provided with sufficient information on the stages in the DSA process, the DSA support awarded to them, the arrangements for delivering and paying for support, the importance of the DSA assessment and the support available from Disability Advisers at their institutions. Students should also be made aware that they have responsibilities to supply information promptly to minimise the risk of delay in processing their applications and arranging their support.

191. Letters issued to students should include the following.

- Information on the evidence of disability required from students together with a brief outline of the DSA process. This letter should be issued with 'Bridging the Gap' when students enquire about DSAs or have indicated on their application forms that they wish to apply for DSAs (samples available in the DSA letter catalogue). The DSA application form for 2012/13 should also be sent at this stage. (DSA1F for students who have not yet submitted a student support application or DSASL, which can be requested via the correspondence screen in the student's account, for those who have.)
- A brief outline of the DSA assessment process and its importance. This letter would confirm that SLC accepts the evidence of disability provided by the student and clearly sets out the arrangements for obtaining a DSA assessment (see sample 'letter setting out arrangements for obtaining a DSA assessment appointment').
- Full details of the DSA support awarded, delivery arrangements and method of paying for DSA support. This letter would be issued once SLC has agreed the DSA support to be awarded (see sample 'awards letter' in the catalogue)
- A reference to Disability Advisers at HE institutions as a source of further assistance for the student. Whenever possible it would be helpful if SLC included the name and contact details of the Disability Adviser at the student's institution.

192. This text is not prescriptive given that individual circumstances may require different approaches (for example, different arrangements for arranging DSA assessments or obtaining equipment) and that SLC already has its own letters which adequately provide the information contained in the bullet points in the previous paragraph. Due to the varied and complex nature of DSAs it has been decided, for the time being, that it is not appropriate to hold a suite of DSA letters on the single system. Instead SLC should continue to produce locally prepared letters, updating student support system records to show where this has been done.

193. The DSA flag (found on the Eligibility Details screen) is defaulted to 'Undetermined'. Once SLC has determined a student's eligibility to receive DSAs they should set the flag accordingly. DSAs cannot be made against a student's record in any year unless the DSA flag for that year has been set to 'Eligible'.

194. Continuing students who received a DSA earlier in the course are not required to resubmit evidence of their disability. In order to minimise: a) an increased demand on assessment centres for needs assessments over a shorter period of time; and b) delays in general DSA processing, To minimise the risk of delays in the DSA application process the following action should be taken.

- identify students wishing to apply for DSAs by checking the PN1, PR1 or PR1a and the accompanying evidence of a disability (if supplied) immediately on receipt of applications;
- determine eligibility for student support from potential DSA applicants as a priority, if necessary fast tracking such applicants;
- Once established that a student is eligible for support and if the student has provided acceptable evidence of their disability with their application forms, contact the student with a view to arranging

an assessment of course needs (see sample letters in the catalogue);

- If a student has indicated they wish to apply for DSAs on their application form but not included evidence of a disability, establish eligibility for support and then issue a DSA application pack, consisting of the booklet 'Bridging the Gap', 'Application for Disabled Students' Allowances 2012/13' (form DSA1F or DSASL) and a covering letter, requesting the student returns evidence of their disability.

195. The DSA application form for 2012/13 (either DSA1F for students who have not yet submitted a student support application or DSASL for those who have) will ask the student to agree that SLC can:

- release information about their application to the Disability Adviser at their institution and to their DSA needs assessors;
- give their address and phone number to the supplier of any equipment they need so that delivery can be arranged; and
- pay suppliers of equipment and support direct.

196. Where an application for DSAs is rejected or allows only part of the application, it should provide clear reasons to the applicant for its decisions. This rejection should not delay the student's application for other types of student finance provided all the relevant eligibility criteria have been met. In such cases, it would be helpful if SLC at the same time provided the applicant with information on its appeals policies and procedures. Whatever the outcome the Department expects all applications to be dealt with expeditiously. It is recommended that SLC make full use of the notes facility on the student's record on the system to detail information that may assist with enquiries from students.

Application procedures for students applying for DSAs in respect of full-time distance learning courses, part-time courses and postgraduate courses

197. Students wishing to apply for DSAs in respect of a full-time distance learning course or a part-time undergraduate course are requested to complete the DSASL if they have already completed a PTG1. Postgraduate students will be required to complete the DSA1F. Supplies of the DSA1F will be delivered via Prolog. In order to expedite the application process it is recommended to issue a cover letter with the DSA application forms, requesting that students provide evidence of their disability with their completed application form.

198. The DSA application process for students undertaking full-time distance learning, part-time and postgraduate courses involves completion of the DSA1F / DSASL form by the student and endorsement of course details by institutions (DSA1F only). Under the Equality Act 2010, disabled students have the right to confidentiality which means that they are not required to reveal their disability to their institution. We expect that most students will not object to asking their institutions to endorse their application form. However, some disabled students (we expect the number to be minimal) may object to asking their institution to complete the form because this would disclose that they are disabled and deny their rights to confidentiality under the Act.

199. In the event that a disabled student does object to their institution seeing their application form on the grounds that this breaches their right under the Equality Act, we recommend the following action:

- the student completes all parts of the DSA1F application form except Section 5 and returns the form to SLC;
- the student obtains a letter from SLC requesting information from the HEI about their course and the student's study pattern.
- the student passes the letter to the HEI; and
- the information is returned by the HEI to SLC via the student.

Annex 1

LIST OF RESEARCH COUNCILS

Research Councils

The Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) at www.ahrc.ac.uk

Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC) at www.bbsrc.ac.uk

Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) at www.esrc.ac.uk

Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) at www.epsrc.ac.uk

Medical Research Council (MRC) at www.mrc.ac.uk

Natural Environment Research Council (NERC) at www.nerc.ac.uk

Science and Technology Facilities Council (STFC) at www.scitech.ac.uk

COURSES ACCREDITED BY BDA FOR DYSLEXIA ASSESSMENTS CARRIED OUT BY TEACHERS

Courses Leading to SpLD Assessment Practising Certificate-

The following courses will qualify successful candidates to apply for SpLD Assessment Practising Certificate from Patoss or Dyslexia Action.

- All courses leading to AMBDA
- University College London - Certificate in the Diagnostic Assessment & Management of Literacy Difficulties [from 2000 through 2004]
- Evesham & Malvern Hills College Postgraduate Certificate in the Assessment of Specific Learning Difficulties validated by University of Worcester
- London South Bank University LLU+ Postgraduate Diploma in Adult Dyslexia, Diagnosis and Support M Level (7) [from November 2006]
- Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations OCR Level 7 Certificate in Assessing and Teaching Learners with Specific Learning Difficulties (Dyslexia)

Below are tables that give details of the specific institutions and courses that meet the above requirements.

Accredited AMBDA Courses

Institution	Course Title	Level
Bath Spa University	Professional Masters Programme, Module One Identifying and supporting Learners with Specific Learning Difficulties/Dyslexia and Module Two Assessment Methodology for SpLD/Dyslexia	AMBDA
Bangor University of Wales	Advanced Certificate of Further Professional Studies (8 modules)	AMBDA
Birmingham University	B Phil / PG Dip / M Ed in Dyslexia Studies	AMBDA
Durham County Council	PG Cert in Teaching Pupils with SpLD/Dyslexia within the School Context	AMBDA
Dyslexia Action (formerly Dyslexia Institute)	PG Dip in Dyslexia and Literacy	AMBDA & AMBDA FE/HE
East Sussex County Council	Meeting the Needs of Pupils with Dyslexia (SpLD)	AMBDA
Edge Hill College of HE	Postgraduate Certificate in SpLD	AMBDA
University of Gloucestershire	Postgraduate Certificate in SpLD	AMBDA
Leicester University	Postgraduate Certificate in Education Studies	AMBDA
Liverpool John Moores University	PG Cert in SEN (Dyslexia) (with upgrade to AMBDA)	AMBDA
London Metropolitan University	PG Dip: Assessment for Specific Learning Difficulties (Dyslexia)/PG Cert Teaching Adult Dyslexic Learners in Higher Education (PGC: TADHLE)	AMBDA FE/HE & AMBDA
Manchester Metropolitan University	"i) PG Dip/Cert in SpLD ii) PG Cert in SpLD (FE/HE)"	i) AMBDA ii) FE/HE

Institution	Course Title	Level
Newport, University of Wales	MA (SEN), Dip SEN (SpLD)/ CFPS (SpLD) (modules G101444, G101511, G101512 & G105688)	AMBDA
OCR (previously RSA)	SpLD Diploma	AMBDA
Open University	E801: Difficulties with Literacy Development	AMBDA
Oxford Brookes University – Reaccreditation in progress	Working with Children and Young People with Literacy Difficulties: Postgraduate Certificate in Advanced Professional Practice (Level M)	AMBDA
Somerset LEA	PG Dip in Complex Specific Learning Difficulties (Dyslexia)	AMBDA
Southampton University	PCES: Specific Learning Difficulties (Dyslexia): Identification and Assessment	AMBDA
Swansea LEA	Teaching Pupils with SpLD (Dyslexia) (with upgrade to AMBDA)	AMBDA
University of Teesside	University Certificate in Advanced Professional Development Dyslexia in Post Compulsory Education Settings	AMBDA

Courses Leading to SpLD Assessment Practising Certificate

Institution	Course Title	Level
University College London	Certificate in the Diagnostic Assessment & Management of Literacy Difficulties	
Evesham & Malvern Hills College	Postgraduate Certificate in the Assessment of Specific Learning Difficulties	
London South Bank University	LLU+ Postgraduate Diploma in Adult Dyslexia, Diagnosis and Support M Level (7)	
Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations	OCR Level 7 Certificate in Assessing and Teaching Learners with Specific Learning Difficulties (Dyslexia)	