

Disability support in higher education

Colleges and universities are continually making themselves more accessible to students with disabilities as a matter of good practice and as a requirement of the law. This is to ensure that every student has an equal opportunity to acquire knowledge, skills and demonstrate their ability.

Support is available in the following areas:

- specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia
- mobility difficulties
- hearing impairments
- visual impairments
- mental health difficulties
- other disabilities and long-term medical conditions

Finding out what's available

Look on the website of the college or university you're interested in to find out more about the facilities and support available. Once you've identified a course you'd like to do, contact the Disability Adviser or Student Support Services at your chosen college or university. If possible, meet up to discuss your requirements. Ask about the study support services including, for example, course materials offered in alternative formats.

Funding Support

Funding for equipment, specialist support, travel and some specific expenses is available through the Disabled Student Allowance (DSA). This is arranged through your Local Education Authority (LEA). Contact them early on in the application process to determine if you are eligible to receive it.

Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA)

This is a grant to help meet the extra costs of studying that a student faces as a direct result of a disability or specific learning difficulty. It is designed to help disabled students study on an equal basis with other students. The allowance provides help for full-time, part-time and postgraduate students.

There's no age limit for eligibility and it is not means tested so the amount awarded doesn't depend on household income. Students don't have to repay this help. Disabled Students' Allowances are paid on top of the standard student finance package. You are strongly advised to apply for a DSA several months before starting your studies, as it can take some time to set up. A DSA can be claimed if you are working and studying.

Applying for DSAs

If you want to study with the Open University ask at the OU's DSA Office at Walton Hall:

DSA Office
The Open University
Walton Hall
Milton Keynes
MK7 6ZN

Voice telephone:

- 01908 654136 (General enquiries)
- 01908 858938 (General enquiries)
- 01908 655548 (Awards Officer)
- 01908 858939 (Awards Officer)
- 01908 652237 (Awards Officer)

Textphone: 01908 659955

Fax: 01908 659956

E-mail: DSA-Queries@open.ac.uk

If you want to study with any other college or university in Sussex, contact the Students Support Offices in Brighton & Hove City Council, East or West Sussex. The contact details are:

Brighton & Hove

Student Support
CYPT
Brighton & Hove City Council
PO Box 2503
Kings House
Grand Avenue
Hove
BN3 2SU
Tel: 01273 293603
Fax: 01273 293549
Email: student.support@brighton-hove.gov.uk

East Sussex

Student Support Office
East Sussex County Council
County Hall
St Anne's Crescent
LEWES
BN7 1SF
Tel: 01273 481000
Fax: 01273 481539
Email : student.support@eastsussexcc.gov.uk
Website: www.eastsussex.gov.uk

West Sussex

Student Support Office
West Sussex County Council
County Hall
West Street
CHICHESTER
PO19 1RF
Tel: 01243 642141
Fax: 01243 752170
Email: student.support@westsussex.gov.uk

Access to Work

Practical issues at work may be stopping you from making the most of your opportunities. Access to Work is government funding designed to help you and your employer find solutions. Talk to your employer about the nature of your disability and how it affects your work.

If you're in employment and then start a foundation degree, the course may be recognised as part of your professional development in work. In this case, the Access to Work scheme could fund solutions to disability related problems and could be extended to cover support for your studies. You should contact an Access to Work Adviser to discuss your individual circumstances.

If you enrol on a foundation degree which includes work placements, then the Disabled Student Allowance scheme could fund solutions to disability related issues.

Contacting Access to Work Advisers

Access to Work Advisers are based at:
Norfolk House
High Street
Shoreham by Sea
West Sussex
BN43 5EN
Tel: 01273 364750
Textphone: 01273 364782

Useful links

UK government website - follow the links for disabled people.
www.direct.gov.uk

Jobcentre Plus (part of the Department for Work and Pensions) – follow the link for customers and then select 'help for disabled people'.
www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk

The Sussex Learning Network

To help you make a decision about where and what to study, the Sussex Learning Network's website provides information, advice and guidance on work-related and work-based learning at higher education level.

<http://www.sussexlearningnetwork.org.uk/learning>.

The Sussex Learning Network works with employers, colleges, universities, training providers and guidance agencies across Sussex. The website brings together links to educational institutions in Sussex and a range of helpful organisations and agencies. It shows how you can progress from one course to another or from one institution to another, and has details of special arrangements and agreements for Sussex students.

Alternative formats of our leaflets are available on request.