

# A Guide to Help You Prepare for University



Including:

- Points to consider when looking for a university and submitting your application
- Applying for Accommodation
- Student Finance
- Disabled Student Allowance (DSA)
- Applying for Disabled Student Railcard
- Audiological Services

## Before applying for university:

With loads of university and undergraduate courses in the UK, finding your perfect course can be a hassle.

- Establish a clear idea of your interests and career aspirations
- Once you have an idea of the type of course you wish to study – look for universities that offer these courses and require a range of entry – don't underestimate the importance of where you will study – do you wish to study close to home or further afield?
- Check out the university websites for the dates of their open days and go and visit when in Y12
- While visiting don't forget to ask about accommodation and cost of living etc for the area as there can be different levels of cost for different areas of the country.
- See appendix A for questions you may wish to ask on your open day visits

## Applying for University:

If you are at school/college in England and want to study at a UK university, you must apply through UCAS.

But before you apply make sure you:

- have chosen where you want to study, visited the university and are sure the course is the right one for you.
- are aware of deadlines for your university of choice, key dates and the entry requirements for your desired course.
- have registered for an account with UCAS and have drafted your personal statement.

UCAS has a helpful guide on [Applying to University - learn about everything involved \(ucas.com\)](https://ucas.com) including support for what to do after, like student finance and when you'll receive an offer.

- You can usually make a private visit of your chosen university, and it is a good idea to make an appointment to visit the Disabled Student Service/Inclusion Department.



## Sections to consider when filling in the UCAS Form:

- Page 16 - You may wish to consider nominating a parent/carer in this section – this enables them to speak with UCAS and the university about your application.
- Pages 17 & 18 – Disabilities/Special Needs section. You may not consider yourself to have a disability, but the term disability is broad and considers any physical, mental or sensory impairment which has a significant impact on daily life and is long term (lasts more than 12 months). This includes people who:
  - Are D/deaf or hearing impaired (all levels of hearing loss are considered)
  - Are blind or visually impaired
  - Are physically disabled, and/or have mobility difficulties
  - Have a specific learning difficulty (e.g. dyslexia)
  - Have a neurodevelopmental condition (e.g ADHD)
  - Have a neurological condition (e.g. epilepsy, Tourette’s syndrome, stammer)
  - Are autistic
  - Have a mental health condition
  - Have a long-term health condition (e.g. chronic fatigue syndrome, asthma, diabetes, cancer, HIV)
  - Have a combination of these
- Although it may feel difficult or unfamiliar to use the term ‘disability’ or ‘disabled’ for the first time remember disability is about barriers created by society not about your worth, ability or intellect. Identifying as disabled gives you protection under the Equality Act 2010 and enables you to access support and adjustments.

## Student Accommodation:

- Once you have received offers and have decided on your first choice of university you should apply for university accommodation. When you’ve chosen the kind of accommodation you want, it’s usually first-come-first-served, so it’s worth getting your application in as soon as you’re allowed.
- Each university or college will have different deadlines for accommodation applications (this is usually before July). You can usually find this information on their website for university or college halls, or through the accommodation provider website if you decide to choose a private accommodation option.



- If you can't find out when you'll be able to apply, give your chosen unis a call or an email

### How do you apply for student accommodation?

- Applications are typically made online. You usually put down several preferences – your preferred accommodation residence as well as your preferred type of room (standard, ensuite, catered etc).

Accommodation officers will do their best to match you to your preferences, but some residences will be very over-subscribed, so you're not guaranteed to get your first choice.

### How much is the deposit for student accommodation?

- Just like with private accommodation, a deposit is usually required for university halls – which could be anywhere between £150 and £500 depending on the university, and whether the room is catered or not.
- For further advice and information:
- <https://www.ucas.com/money-and-student-life/student-life/accommodation-advice>
- <https://www.theuniguide.co.uk/advice/student-accommodation/applying-for-university-accommodation>

## Student Finance:

The most common way for students to cover university costs is by taking out a student finance loan, which can cover tuition fees and some living costs.

There are two main types of loans that most students can apply for.

You'll need to **apply** for these loans **every year (remember to complete the application form on an annual basis, applications open between February and March for the academic year starting in September)** that you study, and you can use these loans for the duration of your course.

- **Tuition fee loans cover your tuition fees.** These are sent directly to your university to pay for lectures, seminars and equipment. You won't need to deal with tuition fee loans until after you graduate.
- **Maintenance loans will cover some of your living expenses as a student.** The exact amount that you receive will vary depending on your circumstances. Where you're from, how much your parents earn, and where you'll be studying are all considered, so those who need extra help can get it. However, it's rare for



maintenance loans to cover all your expenses, so you'll most likely need a way of making or saving money in addition to the maintenance loan.

- **Who can claim student finance:**

If you're a UK citizen who has been settled in the country for three years before the start of your course, you're eligible for student financial support if you're studying:

- A Bachelor's or undergraduate degree.
- A foundation degree.
- A certificate of higher education, diploma of higher education (DipHE), higher national certificate (HNC), higher national diploma (HND) or an initial teacher training course.
- An integrated Master's degree, or a pre-registration postgraduate healthcare course.
- A level 4 or 5 course with higher technical qualification approval.
- You may still be eligible for financial support if you're studying part-time. However, you will need to be completing around 25% of your course every year to be eligible.
- There are also some course restrictions, so check and see if your course is eligible.
- There's different funding if you're studying to be a doctor, dentist, social worker or if you are a postgraduate student.

- **How to apply: New students who are from or normally live in England:**

Most full-time and part-time students who are from or normally live in England can apply online to Student Finance England - [Apply online for student finance - GOV.UK](#)

1. Set up a student finance online account.
2. Log in and complete the online application.
3. Include your household income if needed (If you're under 25 and financially depend on at least one parent your household income includes: your parents' income, if you live with them or depend on them financially or the combined income of one of your parents and their partner, if you live with them or depend on them financially). Your parent will be asked to confirm these details.
4. Send in proof of identity if needed, e.g. valid passport, birth/adoption certificate.

If you cannot apply online, use the form finder ([Student finance forms - GOV.UK](#)) to get the forms you need. You can call student finance England if you want to apply online, but you cannot use a computer without help. Telephone: 0300 100 0607 [Text relay](#) (if you cannot hear or speak on the phone): 18001 then 0300 100 0607 Monday to Friday, 8am to 8pm

Saturday, 9am to 4pm

Sunday, 9am to 4pm

### **If you're eligible for tuition fee-only funding**

You must apply by post. You can use the form finder ([Student finance forms - GOV.UK](#)) to find and download your form.

You'll get a letter confirming how much you'll get, usually within 6 weeks.

- **When to apply:**

Applications usually open around February or March. To avoid any delays in receiving your funds, it's best to submit your application as early as possible after the opening date.

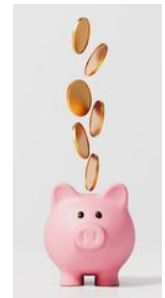
If you do forget to apply you can still apply for funding up to 9 months after the first day of the academic year for your course.

## **Applying Disabled Students Allowance (DSA):**

You can apply for DSA from the March in the year you are due to commence your studies. You do need to wait until you have received your exam results or have accepted a place at university. It is best to apply as early as possible as it can take a few months to process. You can apply at any point during your studies.

You can apply for DSA if you are:

- Eligible for student finance in the UK, and
- Joining a full-time course that lasts as least one year, including a distance learning course, or
- On a part time course that lasts at least one year and does not take twice as long as long to complete as an equivalent full-time course or



You should be able to receive DSA even if you don't get a full student loan or help with fees. The amount you receive depends on your individual needs and is not means tested. To qualify you will need to provide evidence of your hearing loss.

How to Apply:

### **Full-time undergraduate students:**

- If you've already applied for student finance [Sign in to your student finance account](#) to start your DSA application.

- The application for DSA should be on your 'to-do list' if you chose DSA in your application for other support. If it is not, select 'change your circumstances' to apply.
- If you do not have an online account because you applied for student finance by post, fill in a [student finance form](#) (DSA slim form).
- If you have not applied for student finance, you can apply for DSA when you [apply for student finance online](#).
- If you do not need student finance, you can fill in a [student finance form](#) (DSA1 form) to apply just for DSA.
- You cannot apply for student finance online once you've applied for DSA.

### **Part-time and postgraduate students**

- Fill in a [student finance form](#) (DSA1 form) to apply for DSA.
- You will need to obtain proof of your hearing loss from the audiologist. You can also ask for a report from your Teacher of the Deaf entailing the support you currently have and what you need at university.
- You will have a special needs assessment which identifies what extra study-related needs you have due to your hearing loss. This takes roughly 2 hours and is a chance to discuss with the assessor what support you currently have and to hear their suggestions about the support that you could receive at university. It is a good idea to make a list of the support you would like at university and your reasons before going to the assessment. For example:
  - Assistive technology such as a radio aid; if you want a particular model you need to specify this. Please remember to specify the receivers you need. If you want an additional microphone to hand around you would also need to specify this.
  - Note taker support (it may be helpful to specify whether you would like this to be electronic e.g. Dragon Speech software).
  - Access to online information about the course/lecture notes etc (if this is a need you could also ask for a laptop)
  - Speech to print (voice recognition software changes speech to print)
  - Palantypist
  - Lip Speaker
  - Photocopying/printing allowance so documents/parts of books can be available in a hard copy to follow in lectures etc
  - Additional support sessions with a subject specialist
  - Particular software to support learning
- Take a parent/supportive adult with you for the assessment to support you. Be prepared to ask them to explain academic vocabulary you do not understand e.g. tutorial, seminar, fresher
- Check with the disability officer when your support package will start. How/when will you get the equipment requested?

- After the assessment meeting a report will be sent for your approval. If you agree with the support, it will be sent to the Student Finance England funding body for DSA support. Another document will then be sent to you and your chosen university about how much funding you will get.
- Once you have received your entitlement letter, contact the suppliers of any recommended equipment or support – if you are not sure which suppliers to contact the disability services at your chosen university for advice.
- It is always a good idea to give permission to the Student Finance for parents/carers to be able to speak to them on your behalf.

### NHS Students:

If you are applying for a course which is eligible for NHS funding e.g. medicine or dentistry, you need to apply for DSA through your bursary online support system (BOSS) account. If you do not already have an account, you must open one before you can apply for DSA to prove your eligibility for NHS funding. For further information please visit: [Student Services | NHSBSA](#)

## Accessing Support in University:



At university you will need to have evidence of a diagnosed disability to access support or adjustments e.g. an audiological report. You will need to register with Disability Services and provide them with a copy of your diagnostic report, or a letter from a medical professional.

Once you have registered with them, Disability Services will meet with you to discuss the support and adjustments you need during your time at university. Some of the adjustments may be like those you had at school (e.g. exam access arrangements), but some will be different. There are generally two categories of support and adjustments which can be implemented, as follows:

**1. Reasonable Adjustments:** all universities are required to make reasonable adjustments and provide basic inclusive support. This may include exam access arrangements and accessible resources. The cost of these adjustments will be met by the university.

**2. Funded Support:** Some elements of support require funding. These include additional equipment, British Sign Language (BSL) interpretation, note taker, additional study support, specialist software and training. Most disabled students are eligible for funding to cover the costs of this support. This funding is called 'Disabled Students' Allowances' (DSA) and it is available from Student Finance England.

## Audiology:



From the age of 16 your audiological department may start discussing with you about transitioning across to adult services. Once under adult services you will be given a battery book, which you take with you to obtain new batteries for your hearing aid(s). You will also need to pay a fee for any replacement aid(s) if lost or broken. If it stops working as result of a fault with the aid, you will not be charged.

If you attend a university in England, then you can remain at your current audiology department under the adult team.

If you attend a university in Scotland or Wales and register with a GP there, you will also need to register with an audiology department in that area – this can be done via the GP.

## Implant Team:



The implant team will have transitioned you across to adult services before you start university. Therefore, you are responsible for contacting them if you require replacement equipment.

**NB:** remember to give them your university accommodation address, otherwise the equipment will be sent to your home address.

## Railcards:



Disabled Persons Railcard	Students Railcard
1/3 off adult rail travel for you and a companion (when travelling together)	1/3 off adult rail travel for you
£20 a year £54 for 3 years	£35 a year £80 for 3 years
Eligible if you have a hearing and/or vision impairment, epilepsy or in receipt of a disability related benefit (no age limit)	Eligible if you are aged 16-25 or a mature student in full time study

All railcards can be purchased online: <https://www.railcard.co.uk/about-railcards/> You will need to provide proof of your disability if applying for a disabled persons railcard e.g. scanning a copy of your audiology report/DLA letter. Or you can download the application form, complete it and send via post.

## Passenger assist:

### What is Passenger Assist?

Passenger Assist allows you to request assistance booking in advance. Any [train company](#) can organise assistance for your entire journey, even if you are travelling on multiple services.

Passenger Assist includes:

- offering a helping hand to navigate the station
- help getting on or off the train
- meeting you from your train and taking you to your next train or the exit
- arranging a ramp on or off your train
- assistance relating to a non-visible impairment
- carrying your bag(s) – up to 3 items of luggage as per the [National Rail Conditions of Travel \(PDF, 1.1MB\)](#)
- getting an [Assistance Dog Under Seat card](#)

### How to use Passenger Assist

There are many ways to request assistance.

- By using **Passenger Assistance by Transreport**: an app and website that lets you make an assistance request. You receive a confirmation email once your request has been checked and confirmed. You can find out more about the app on our [Passenger Assistance by Transreport page](#)
- Via the [Passenger Assistance website\(external link, opens in a new tab\)](#)
- Call: **0800 022 3720**. **Select option 1** and simply let us know the journey you plan to take, and we will connect you to the right train company to place your booking request
- Text: **60083 (Monday to Friday, 09:00 to 17:00)** with your Passenger Assist enquiry
- Textphone/minicom: **0345 60 50 600**

Once we receive your text or textphone request, we will send you a message with the number you need to contact.

# Appendix A

<b>Questions to consider asking when visiting universities</b>	
Ask about the balance of lectures, practicals, seminars etc – what are the likely challenges for following group sessions / lectures?	
How deaf aware is the university – have they had any other deaf students?	
Accommodation – how this is arranged for pupils with disabilities?	
Have they any contacts for note takers/communication support workers?	
Is there a provision for deaf awareness training for lecturers before you start?	
How will you, the student, be able to liaise with specific tutors?	
Will any special arrangements be made, e.g. seating?	
Is additional support available to reinforce lectures and explain assignments?	
How do examinations cater for the students with a disability?  Is there extra time available?	

Is there any social support?	
Would there be any further financial support available other than DSA?	