

Harmonised approach to Disabled Students Allowance - Research Councils

Dear Colleagues,

I advised most of you back in August 2011 that the Research Councils were looking at the approach to DSA with a view to harmonising our processes and ensuring that the students do not have to wait for any decision from the RCs before they can access funding to cover DSA. I am pleased to say that we have now reached the stage where we can let you know what the new process is to be.

The decision on whether a student is eligible for DSA is now devolved to the DO at the host institution. The appropriate RC should be contacted if there is any doubt about whether the type of grant on which the student is supported is eligible for DSA.

1. The DO will be responsible for the decision on the requirement for an Assessment of Needs without having to get the agreement of the appropriate RC. The RCs will meet the costs of such assessments.
2. The DO will be able to determine the level of DSA to be provided to any student within the guidelines provided by the RCs but please note that the RCs will not normally provide for book allowances, photocopying allowances, consumables or internet charges through DSA. Nor will we meet the costs of colorimetry testing or for the provision of tinted spectacles or lenses.
3. Once the DO has determined the level of DSA required by each student they should be able to access immediately the funding provided by the RC to the host organisation for training grants so there should be no delay in providing the support required to the student.
4. The DO will need to submit a single claim to the Shared Services Centre to cover all DSA claims for each RC. This can be in the format of a single PDF with separate pages or files for each individual student. Only the claim form or PDF will be required to be submitted – there is no need to submit the current application form or a copy of the Assessment of Needs.
5. The claim will have to be submitted towards the end of each academic year, in the period July-September, and should detail actual expenditure incurred in the academic year. It is expected that the RO will be able to make the claim through the JES system.
6. The RCs reserve the right to ask for supporting documentation for each annual claim but the RO will be required to provide copies of invoices/claims etc with the final expenditure statement at the end of each training grant for DSA attached to that grant.
7. The RCs will reimburse the costs claimed for DSA as a single payment in the next available pay run.
8. Claims that are already in the system will be processed in the current way but no new claims will now be accepted by the RCs until the July-September 2012 window.

I would be grateful if you could disseminate this email as widely as you see fit, including group web pages or notice boards.

The web pages of the RCUK and the Research Councils will be amended shortly to reflect these changes

regards

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