

Guidance for Health Professionals writing Medical Evidence Letters for Students' Applications for Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA)

The Disability Service at Lancaster University supports students with disabilities, mental health difficulties and/or medical conditions to apply for the Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA). The student's funding body determines whether an award will be made, and they require medical evidence from a health professional as part of this process. This document outlines what the funding body expects from such a letter.

The person must have a disability as defined by the Equality Act 2010. A person is disabled under the Equality Act 2010 if they have a physical or mental impairment that has a '**substantial**' and '**long-term**' negative effect on their ability to carry out normal daily activities. '**Substantial**' is more than minor or trivial (e.g. it takes much longer than it usually would to complete a daily task). '**Long-term**' means 12 months or more. The long-term substantial adverse effects must be effects on normal day-to-day activities.

Please include the following information in your letter:

- The diagnosis of the disability/mental health condition/medical condition. If the student has more than one disability/condition, please include all information.
- The date of diagnosis. Is the disability / condition long term or likely to be long term? The Equality Act states that a disability must be long term i.e. has lasted, or is likely to last for 12 months or more.
- The impact (or potential impact) of the condition (and where appropriate medication & side effects) on the student's normal daily activities, especially those which may have an impact on studying, e.g. attendance, academic performance motivation, participation etc.
- In your professional opinion does the condition/disability have a substantial effect on the student? The Equality Act states that a 'substantial effect' is one that is more than a minor or trivial effect (e.g. it takes much longer than it usually would to complete a daily task).
- Your details include your name and job description and the name and contact details of the organisation you work for. Where possible please use your agency's stamp or headed paper.
- Any other information that you think might help us assess appropriate support for this student at University.

Completed letters should be given to the student to support their DSA application.