

What learning support can you get at ALRA?

There's no reason why having dyslexia should hold you back from achieving at ALRA or indeed when you graduate and enter the business.

Here's the lowdown on what kind of support is available and how you can get it.

Dyslexia is a recognised disability under the Equality Act 2010, so ALRA offers appropriate support for students according to need. The level of support available can vary, but generally speaking if you're a dyslexic student, you may be entitled to:

- Extra time for completion of assignments
- A learning support tutor or study skills sessions
- Physical materials such as coloured paper, rulers and reading aids

If you already have dyslexia you can apply for [Disabled Students' Allowances \(DSA\)](#) through your student finance funding body (for instance, Student Finance England or the Student Awards Agency for Scotland).

What the DSA covers

The allowance provides you with specialist equipment and support worth up to £5,212 for the whole of your course. Support comes in the form of IT equipment, assistive software (and associated training), aids such as a digital recorder; and other types of help like study skills support from a specialist dyslexia tutor and allowances for books and photocopying.

Get an assessment report

As part of the application you'll need to provide a diagnostic assessment report from either an educational psychologist with a HPC (Health Professional Council Practising Certificate) which costs in excess of £400, or a specialist dyslexia teacher with an Assessment Practising Certificate (this will be less costly). The NHS and (most) schools and colleges won't fund an assessment.

There could be a need to receive some support via Skype, therefore YOU MUST GET THIS ACKNOWLEDGED IN THE RECOMMENDATION SECTION, IN YOUR ASSESSMENT REPORT.

What you need

When your application has been accepted by Student Finance, you will then need to arrange a 'needs assessment' with an [Access Centre](#) where a disability specialist will look at what support and accommodations will best suit your needs. Once their recommendations have been approved by Student Finance, you will be able to organise equipment and appropriate help.

Apply early

Be warned – since the process of applying for the DSA is lengthy (it can take up to four months), it's a good idea to get your application in and approved ahead of you starting at alra. You can apply as early as the January of the year you hope to start your degree, on the basis of a provisional offer of a place on a course.

So to recap: Things you should do or check before arriving at ALRA:

- DSA assessment: Do you have a current (2 years old maximum) DSA assessment? If you don't we recommend you arrive with a current assessment to speed up the process of arranging your support. This can be done through your current educational institution or by arranging a DSA assessment privately.
- ALRA will not finance DSA assessments unless there are exceptional grounds. Where a student has never previously been assessed in education ALRA may contribute 50%. Students facing hardship may be supported further subject to satisfactory evidence being submitted.
- ALRA may accept a DSA assessment older than 2 years but this will be at the discretion of the Learning Support and Tutorial team.

Throughout the year there are timetabled 'Study Skills' sessions which will provide support across significant areas of the timetable. These can be taken instead of or in addition to any Learning Support you may be entitled to.