



Department for Business Innovation & Skills

Higher Education
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Dear Colleague

The Government is determined that anyone with the aspiration and ability can go onto higher education regardless of any disability

It is important that as wide a consensus as possible is built on the role of Disabled Students' Allowances. The Government has been consulting on the draft Disabled Students' Allowances guidance for 2015/16. There are concerns that some institutions are not yet in a position to deliver a fully accessible service to students, and that this may result in a negative impact for some students. In addition, the Government would prefer to move forward in a consensual manner (as far as is reasonably possible) rather than through litigation.

It has now been decided that the proposed changes set out in the draft guidance concerning accommodation, peripherals and consumables - that would have required additional reasonable adjustments from institutions - should be deferred until 2016/17 and that these changes would only be made once continued consultation with the sector and stakeholders has taken place to ensure the changes are introduced effectively.

Although the Government has exceptionally been consulting upon these specific proposals, it remains the case that the Disabled Students' Allowances guidance is a Student Loans Company operational document that is revised on a year to year basis and is not generally subject to consultation before it is amended.

The Government has been in regular contact with stakeholders, including higher education institutions, regarding these measures. Deferring these proposed changes until 2016/17 will help give institutions the time to review the services they offer to disabled students and make appropriate improvements to meet their needs.

The annual guidance for study needs assessors, setting out the approach to managing applications for Disabled Students' Allowances for 2015/16, will be published in due course.

Finally, we appreciate the importance of continued communication. I know that there are many organisations and individuals who are passionate about the interests of disabled students in higher education and we will continue to keep you informed to ensure that everyone is clear about what is happening.

Any comments and enquiries should be sent to our dedicated mailbox at disabledstudentsallowances@bis.gsi.gov.uk or by post to:

BIS enquiries,
1 Victoria Street,
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Yours sincerely,

Ruth Hannant/Polly Payne
Directors of Higher Education