



Manchester
Metropolitan
University

Support at MMU

A Guide for Disabled Students and Students with Dyslexia

Useful contacts

Access Summit

Joint Universities Disability Resource Centre
St Peter's House
Oxford Road
Manchester
M13 9GH

Telephone 0161 275 0990
Email info@access-summit.org.uk
Website www.access-summit.org.uk

SKILL, the National Bureau for Students with Disabilities

Skill is a national charity promoting opportunities for young people and adults with any kind of disability in post-16 education, training and employment across the UK.

Telephone 0800 328 5050
Text 0800 068 2422
Email info@skill.org.uk
Website www.skill.org.uk

Equality and Human Rights Commission

The Equality and Human Rights Commission was established under the Equality Act 2006. It incorporates the remit and work of the former Disability Rights Commission (DRC).

Website www.equalityhumanrights.com

Disabled Student Allowances

England www.direct.gov.uk/studentfinance

Wales www.studentfinancewales.co.uk

Scotland www.student-support-saas.gov.uk

Northern Ireland www.education-support.org.uk/students

NHS Bursaries and Social Work Bursaries
www.nhsstudentgrants.co.uk

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Introduction

Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU) promotes an inclusive learning environment for all students. The Learner Development Service ensures that disabled students and students with specific learning difficulties, such as dyslexia have appropriate study related support. This guide provides information about the different types of support available. It also outlines how you can apply for extra funding which can help to support your learning, if eligible. Some of the support is provided by the University and some has to be obtained via other agencies (for example, your funding body or local Social Services).

Getting information before you apply

A member of staff from Learner Development is often available at MMU Open Days and Visit Days to offer advice on disability related issues. A lot of information is also available on our website. However, you can always phone or email us if you have any specific queries. If you have complex needs, we can advise you about arranging an individual visit.

When you apply

If you decide to apply to MMU you will be given the opportunity to disclose a disability on your UCAS (or other) application form. A copy will be passed to the Learner Development Service who will then send you an information pack. The criteria on which your application will be judged will be exactly the same as for any student who has not disclosed a disability.

Once you have accepted a place

As soon as you have accepted an offer of a place, you should contact the Learner Development Service to discuss your support needs. Any information you disclose to us concerning your disability is treated in strictest confidence and would only be passed on with your written consent.

The Learner Development Service can advise you on the Disabled Students Allowances (DSAs) application process. You will need to provide appropriate medical evidence (see page 12 for further information). Learner Development also require this evidence in order to produce a Personal Learning Plan (PLP) for you.

It will greatly speed up the process of getting support in place for the start of your course if you apply for DSA before coming to university. Application forms are available from around March each year. A DSA application form can be downloaded from the Internet (see page 14 for further information).

Accommodation

If you have particular requirements in relation to residential accommodation, early contact is highly advisable. If you have disclosed a disability, your offer letter will advise you to contact Learner Development and the Accommodation Office, before accepting a place. It can then be identified whether appropriate accommodation is available to suit your needs. You can contact the Accommodation Office direct on 0161 247 2958 (Manchester campuses) or 0161 247 5137 (MMU Cheshire) and discuss your needs with an Accommodation Officer.

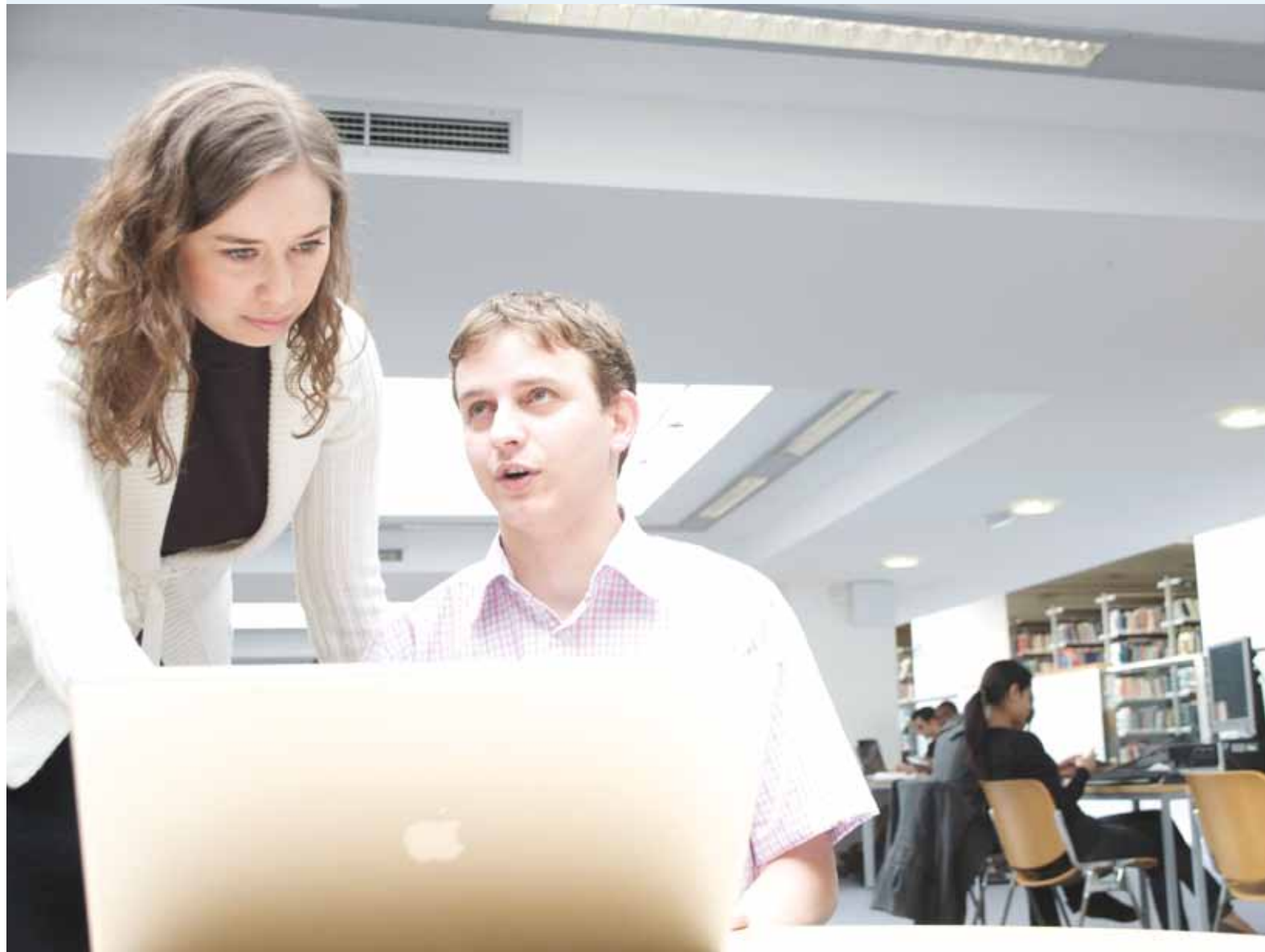
Wheelchair accessible study bedrooms with en-suite facilities are available in halls of residence at several campuses. There are also vibrating or flashing light alert systems in study bedrooms for deaf students.

Personal care support

The University will help with supporting your learning needs. However, if you need assistance with any aspects of personal care such as eating, shopping, cooking, toileting, or doing your laundry, this would normally be provided by your home Social Services. You should contact your Social Services office to discuss your personal care requirements with them directly.








Support at MMU when you commence your studies

Personal Learning Plans

As part of the assessment process, Learner Development will produce a Personal Learning Plan (PLP) outlining your support needs. The PLP is sent to teaching and other relevant staff in your department. It advises them of any reasonable adjustments they may need to make. A PLP might include requests for handouts in large print, transcripts of lecture notes, extended library loans and examination and assessment recommendations. More information about alternative assessment arrangements can be found on MMU's website at www.mmu.ac.uk/academic/grad_regulations.php



If you do not wish, or are not eligible, to apply for DSAs, Learner Development can still draw up a PLP for you if you provide appropriate medical evidence (see page 12 for further information).

Faculty based Student Support Officers

Each faculty has a Student Support Officer (SSO) who provides study skills support for all students within that faculty. They offer both individual and group study skills sessions. Also, they can give advice and guidance on general issues related to study and university life. MMU has a skills online site to help develop your academic skills. Your student support officer will be able to tell you about this resource.

TextHELP and Inspiration software

Some assistive technology software has been installed as standard on the MMU student network so that all students may benefit from using it. 'Inspiration' is a mind-mapping programme which is useful for students with Dyslexia or other conditions which affect the ability to organise ideas. 'TextHELP' is a programme which will read text on the screen. It can be used for proofreading as well as listening to other text, such as information on websites.

Laptop loans

The Learner Development Service has a small number of laptops that can be loaned out to disabled students on a short term basis. This would usually be to cover periods before a full assessment for Disabled Students Allowances has been carried out, or for when a student has technical problems with their own computer. However, a loan cannot always be guaranteed, especially at busy periods of the academic year.

Library information

The Library offers a range of support to disabled students; you can speak to a member of library staff to discuss your library and information requirements. A list of contacts can be found on the Library's website at www.library.mmu.ac.uk/help/userguides/disabled.php

Some of the services available to you include an increase in the number of loans. You will be able to borrow 12 items and one week loans may be issued for two weeks if they are not reserved. Staff are happy to retrieve material from the shelves for you and they will provide help with photocopying should you require it. Photocopies can also be posted out to you. Increasingly, the Library provides access to material in electronic format. This is more convenient as it can usually be accessed from any site, or even from home provided you have your network ID and password. The library can provide copies of any of their help sheets on different coloured paper, or in large print.

Career and Employability Support for Disabled Students

If you are a disabled student you may have extra considerations when planning your career. There will be many different and personal ways of handling these issues and the Careers and Employability Service is here to help. The commitment to equality of opportunities for all students underpins the provision of high-quality support to disabled students looking for work and volunteering opportunities.

- Workshops run each term on the topic of disclosing a disability to potential employers www.mmu.ac.uk/careers/events
- There is a range of information on the disability pages of the Careers and Employability website www.mmu.ac.uk/careers/students-and-graduates/students-with-disabilities.php
- For the most up to minute information the career news - disability section should be looked at regularly www.mmu.ac.uk/careers/news

If you need more specialist help contact the Employability and Careers Service to make an individual appointment on 0161 247 3483. D/deaf students can book their appointment by text on 07717 361215.

Counselling Service

The Counselling Service offers you the chance to talk to a professionally trained counsellor in a confidential setting about any personal problems you may have. Students are offered time and space to work through personal issues to gain fresh perspectives. Any problem can be brought however insignificant or overwhelming. Eating disorders, self-harm, panic attacks, depression, bereavement, low self-esteem and sexuality are some of the issues they work with.

Both individual and group counselling are available, free to all students registered with the University. The Counselling Service also runs workshops and courses on issues such as relaxation, stress management and confidence building. Students can be seen briefly between 1 and 2pm most days, without an appointment. All the Counsellors work to the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy Ethical Framework for Good Practice in Counselling and Psychotherapy.

The service operates throughout the week at the All Saints Campus and at certain times on other campuses term time only. You can contact us by telephone 0161 247 3493 or email counselling@mmu.ac.uk (we do not enter into correspondence but we will telephone you back. Please leave your name and telephone number when you email). Counsellors are also available at MMU Cheshire.

Access Summit Disability Resource Centre

Access Summit collaborates with MMU in assessing the needs of disabled students. Also, the majority of non-medical helpers working with MMU students, such as Study Skills Tutors, are provided by Access Summit. They also provide some technical support for equipment supplied via DSAs. You can contact Access Summit on 0161 275 0990, or email info@access-summit.org.uk.

Student experiences of studying at MMU



“Before I came to university I disclosed my hearing impairment on the UCAS form; I am deaf in my left ear. I received forms about applying for support, but decided not to because I did not think that I would get any. I realised I should apply for support when I received a hearing aid for my hearing ear.

The process was really easy and straightforward, I received more support than I thought I would get, including a computer, printer with ink, paper and printing allowance, note taker (if I wanted one), internet connection costs, extra time in exams, plus much more.

“University has been a fantastic experience for me, I feel I have become a much more confident person.”

University has been a fantastic experience for me, I feel I have become a much more confident person, as I have had to confront my disability. Before coming to university I didn't like telling people about my impairment, now I don't mind as I realise it's a part of me that makes me who I am. I don't let it hinder me and thanks to the support I received I have been able to work to the best of my ability. Without this I feel I wouldn't have done as well. So, if you are in doubt as to whether or not you are entitled to help, book yourself an appointment.”

Jess Bahn

BA(Hons) Early Childhood Studies



“I had a lot of support at MMU, from lecturers and support staff. I have Glaucoma and Horners Syndrome which affects my vision. Learning Support were fantastic and I feel I would not have managed without them, they gave me so much advice.”

Jeannette Vincente

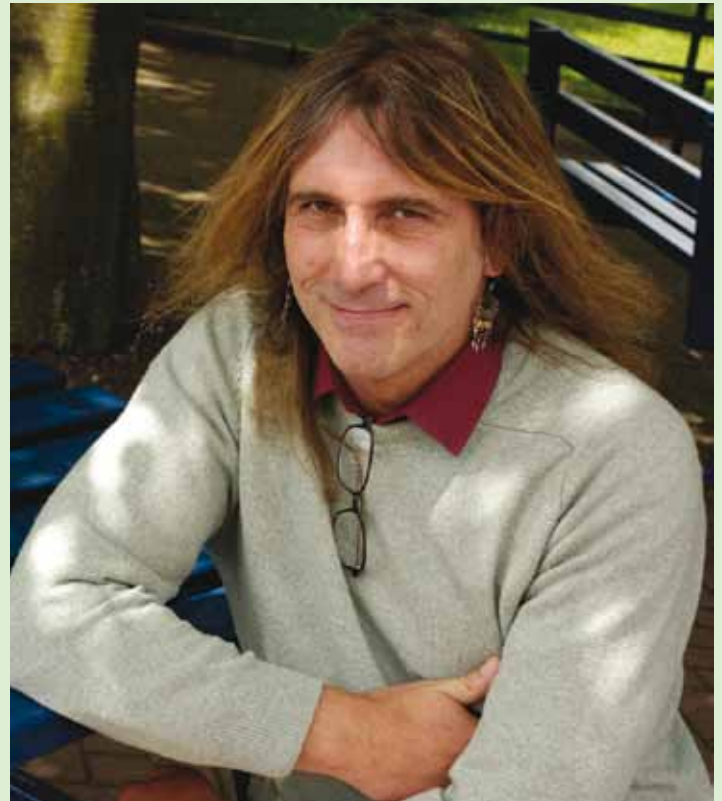
Dental Technology

“Half way through my first year as an undergraduate, studying for a Joint Hons degree in drama and creative writing, a lecturer suggested I might be dyslexic! I made an appointment with Learning Support and to cut a long story short, I was diagnosed with dyslexia. At last I could say that I wasn't ‘thick’ I just had a problem reading and comprehending text.

I started seeing a dyslexia tutor who helped me to dispel some of the myths that surround learning disabilities, and also to help me to equip myself with some learning strategies which have been invaluable. These included reading skills, accessing web pages, research and writing skills. With my new found confidence, I jumped into student life feet first and began to thoroughly enjoy my life on campus.

I founded a student magazine, three years on, the magazine is going strong and I am still the editor. Also, I got involved with the Students Union, organised several fund raising events, and even picked up the courage to read some of my work at a performance poetry evening held at the Alsager Arts Centre.

In 2006 I won the HEFCE national student volunteer of the year award, I was awarded a gold honours certificate by Communi and had the honour of receiving the full colours award from the students union.



All this from a guy who three and a half years ago was too frightened to walk into a library! None of these things would have been possible without the help of Student Services who gave me so much help and support. I know now that being dyslexic isn't a curse, but a blessing, like everything it can be turned into a positive.”

Jim Burns BA

Joint (Hons)

“I started seeing a dyslexia tutor who helped me to dispel some of the myths that surround learning disabilities.”

Disability and your rights

Under the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA 1995), a person is considered to be disabled if they have a *'physical or mental impairment which has a substantial, adverse and long term (i.e. lasting, or expected to last, for 12 months or more) effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities'*. In the context of higher education this definition includes a person with dyslexia or other specific learning difficulties.

If you are unsure about whether or not you would be considered disabled, an adviser in the Learner Development Service will be able to advise you, in confidence. If you would prefer to discuss this with someone outside the University, you can contact the Equality and Human Rights Commission (see useful contacts at the front of this guide).

Disclosure

Some students, or prospective students are reluctant to disclose a disability because, for example, they fear that it might prejudice their application or result in them being treated differently by university staff. This is particularly the case for students with mental health difficulties and those with sensitive personal care issues.

However, under part IV of the Disability Discrimination Act, it is illegal for a university to discriminate against a student or prospective student for a reason associated with a disability. If you want to discuss the implications of disclosing a disability before making a decision about whether to formally disclose, you can arrange to see a Learner Development Adviser who will be able to advise you in complete confidence to help you make your decision.

The key reason for you to disclose early is so that you don't miss out on any adjustments which may make your studies more accessible.

There are many benefits to disclosure, but if you decide that you would prefer not to formally disclose and request that the information concerning your disability remains confidential, it would not be passed on to other staff in the University. However, you should be aware that if you do this it may restrict or adversely affect the level of support the University or placement provider can offer.








What is medical evidence?

Before the Learner Development Service can put support in place, we need to receive some medical evidence from you. Sometimes funding bodies can refuse to accept a student's medical evidence if it does not contain sufficient information. For this reason we have outlined what is likely to be required.

If you are a disabled student or have a health condition we will need a letter from a qualified medical professional (GP, consultant or specialist nurse) which gives:

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- 1 The name of your disability or health condition, when it was diagnosed/identified and how long it is likely to last;
 - 2 The main difficulties that you experience i.e. mobility impairment or concentration difficulties;
 - 3 Any side-effects of medication that you are taking;
 - 4 How your study may be affected.

If you are a d/Deaf or hard of hearing student, we need an audiology report or a doctor's letter confirming your hearing loss.

Dyslexia and other specific learning difficulties

Dyslexia, dyspraxia, dyscalculia, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), and other Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLDs) are all considered to be disabilities in the context of Higher Education, and students with any of these difficulties are eligible to apply for Disabled Students' Allowances (DSA).

If you are a student with dyslexia we will need an Educational Psychologist's report carried out after the age of 16. If you only have a report carried out before you were 16, or if you have never had a formal assessment, please contact the Learner Development Service for advice.

If you already have a full diagnostic report carried out by an Educational Psychologist when you were over the age of 16 you can use this as medical evidence when you apply for Disabled Students Allowances.

Disabled Students' Allowances

Disabled Students' Allowances (DSAs) are funds that can be used to pay for any additional study related support that you may need as a consequence of your disability. DSAs cannot be used to pay for personal care support or to ease financial hardship for disabled students. However, you may be entitled to additional financial support through the University's Access to Learning Fund. DSAs are non-means tested, so if you receive support from DSAs it will not affect any other benefits you may receive.

DSA funds may be available to cover the following costs:

- 1 Non-medical helper support - for example, study support tutors, BSL interpreters, note takers, lip speakers;
- 2 Equipment and IT support - for example computers with relevant specialist software, voice recorder, spellcheckers;
- 3 Consumables, including printer paper and ink cartridges, internet connection costs, photocopying costs;
- 4 Funding towards transport costs for students whose disability prevents them using public transport.

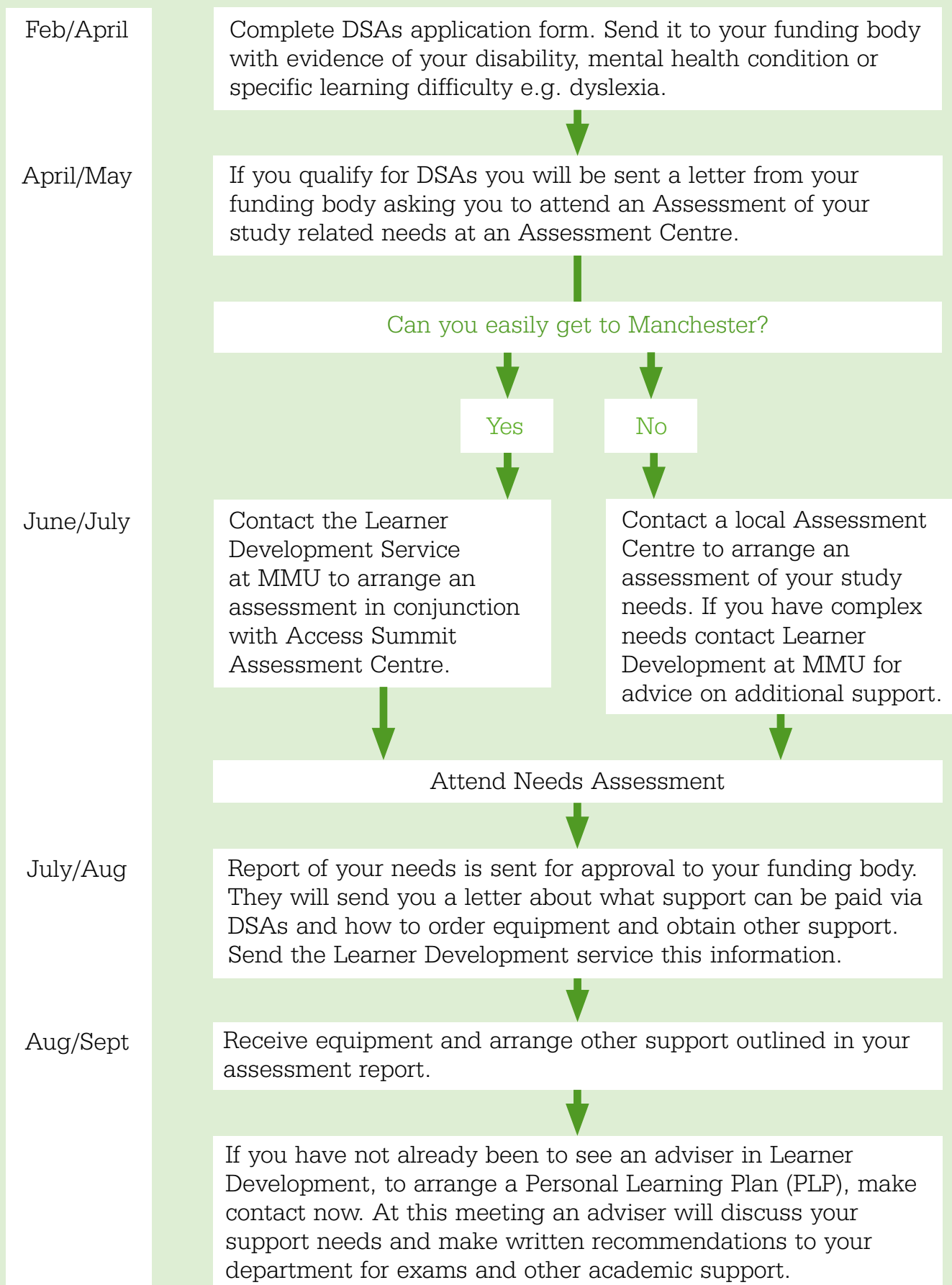
For further information go to www.direct.gov.uk/en/DisabledPeople/EducationAndTraining/HigherEducation/DG_10034900

The relevant web addresses for students from Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and those applying for NHS or Social Work Bursaries are given at the front of this guide.

If you are a student from another European Union country or an international student, you will not normally be entitled to DSAs, so please contact the relevant government department within your own country to discuss possible support, you should still contact the Learner Development Service to discuss your support needs.

Disabled Students' Allowances: DSAs application process

Approx time line



The Learner Development Service

Manchester Campuses

First floor
All Saints Building
All Saints
Manchester
M15 6BH

Telephone 0161 247 3491
Email learner.development@mmu.ac.uk
Website www.mmu.ac.uk/learnerdevelopment

MMU Cheshire Campuses

Student Services

Crewe Campus
Crewe Green Road
Crewe
CW1 5DU

Telephone 0161 247 5725
Email stsrvccheshire@mmu.ac.uk

The information in this booklet is accurate at the time of printing. Manchester Metropolitan University and the Learner Development Service will make every reasonable effort to provide the services set out in this booklet and to help you to make the best use of them, although it cannot guarantee to do so at all times.

The University holds personal data on all applicants and enrolled students. All such data is kept in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

This publication is available in alternative formats, telephone +44 (0)161 247 3491.