

# CHOICES

## TRANSITION INTO HIGHER EDUCATION



**ROADMAP TO HIGHER  
EDUCATION**

**MYTH BUSTING**

**TOP TIPS AND USEFUL  
LINKS**

**INSIDE:**

Autumn 2024

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The OFS Uni Connect Programme – Impartial advice and guidance on college and university.

# INTRODUCTION

## WELCOME TO CHOICES!

This resource has been designed to support learners with additional needs or an EHCP on your journey into Higher Education (HE). We understand that this is a big step, and the transition to Higher Education can be confusing and hard to navigate, so we hope that this transition magazine will help you to easily access information about the timelines, processes and support available to enable you to progress into a destination of your choice.

## WHO IS THE GUIDE FOR?

This guide has been created to support the understanding of the following people:

- Students at secondary school or college who are thinking of, or in the process of applying to university or a Higher Education course
- Students who have been identified as having 'Special Educational Needs' or 'Additional Needs', or who think they may need support at HE for a disability, learning difference, long term medical condition or mental health condition
- Teachers and SENCo/SENDCo staff in schools and colleges
- Parents, carers, guardians, or other supporters of disabled learners

## DISCLAIMER:

The term 'disabled students' is used throughout to describe students with one or more of a wide range of physical, sensory and cognitive impairments in line with the definition of disability under the Equality Act (2010).

# GLOSSARY

There may be terms in this booklet that you are unfamiliar with. Find out what they mean.

Key term	Brief definition
Disabled Students Allowance (DSA)	Support to cover study-related costs you have because of a mental health problem, long term illness or other disability
Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP)	For ages 0-25, outlines special educational, health and care requirements for an individual
Further Education (FE)	Any form of further education at Level 3 - such as T Levels, A Levels, BTECs, Apprenticeships
Higher Education (HE)	Any form of education at Level 4 or above including: Foundation Degrees, Degree Apprenticeships, Higher National Diploma (HNDs), Higher National Certificate (HNCs), BA or BSc Hons courses, Foundation Years
Higher Education Provider (HEP)	Collective term for HE in FE, University and Conservatoire
Mitigating Circumstances	Affects ability to study such as long-term or recurring medical or mental health condition. This may result in additional consideration for deadlines/exam re-sits

# GLOSSARY

Key term	Brief definition
Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND)	<p>Special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) can affect a child or young person's ability to learn. They can affect their:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• behaviour or ability to socialise, for example they struggle to make friends</li> <li>• reading and writing, for example because they have dyslexia</li> <li>• concentration levels, for example because they have ADHD</li> <li>• physical ability</li> <li>• ability to understand things</li> </ul>
Special Educational Needs & Disabilities Co-Ordinator (SENDCo)	A SENDCo is a person in an educational setting who coordinates the provision for children with special educational needs or disabilities in schools
Student Finance England (SFE)	Provide financial support on behalf of the UK Government to students from England entering Higher Education
Universities and College Admissions Service (UCAS)	<p>UK-based organisation - main role is to operate the application process for British universities. Please note entry fees below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Single choice – £22.50</li> <li>• Multiple choices – £27.50</li> </ul>

# MYTH BUSTING

Information about the transition to Higher Education can be confusing and misleading. Find out the truth behind these myths below.

If I state I'm a disabled student on my UCAS application, this will affect the decision made.

Offers are made based on each applicant's ability to meet the entry requirements, their enthusiasm for the subject area, and whether they can succeed on the course they have applied for.



Higher Education is only for people who are academic.

Higher Education is for everyone. Courses can be practical, theory-based and/or creative.



In order to study in Higher Education, you have to live away from home.

You could live in halls of residence, at home, or commute or study online.

Studying at university is the only way to get a degree.

You can study at university, at some colleges and also study for a degree while in a job or apprenticeship.

## TOP TIPS

- Ask questions
- Talk to someone who has already studied in Higher Education
- Do your own research



You can only apply to study in one place.

You can make between one and five choices for Higher Education courses at the same institution or split between any number of institutions if you are applying through UCAS.

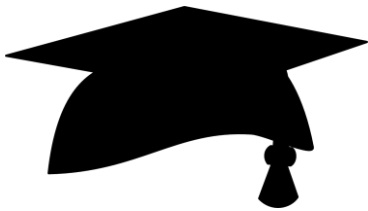
# DEGREE APPRENTICESHIPS

## WHAT ARE DEGREE APPRENTICESHIPS?

A degree apprenticeship gives you the opportunity to gain a paid-for degree while getting industry experience and earning a salary.

Degree apprenticeships take two to six years to complete, depending on the course level.

You'll spend most of your time working and you'll also study part-time at university.



## HOW DO I FIND A DEGREE APPRENTICESHIP?

Search for local degree apprenticeships here:

- [Find an apprenticeship](#)
- [Search apprenticeships - Worcestershire Jobs](#)





# EDUCATION, HEALTH AND CARE PLAN



## WHAT IS AN EHCP?

An Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) is for children and young people that are aged 0 to 25. As the name suggests, an EHCP outlines the special educational, health and/or care requirements for an individual. An EHCP presents information on the extra help and support required for an individual who has barriers to learning.



## WHAT HAPPENS TO YOUR EHCP?

While EHCPs can continue to 25, if a young person goes to university, their EHCP ceases, and support is organised via Disability Student Allowance (DSA).

The relevant and accurate information from your EHCP will feed into DSA, as it supports and outlines the adjustments needed to be put in place by the Higher Education Provider. Please note that an EHCP alone is not enough to immediately grant you DSA, so please provide other evidence alongside the EHCP.

Stating you have a disability will not affect your application to HE as your information is strictly confidential and only shared with the relevant people when needed.

# WHAT IS DSA?

Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA) helps pay the essential extra costs you might have as a direct result of your disability, including a long-term health condition, mental-health condition or specific learning difficulty.

Applications for DSA need to be supported by diagnostic evidence of the student's disability. This evidence needs to be supplied by an appropriately qualified medical professional, who can describe the nature of the person's disability, its impact and the prognosis of disability.

## YOU CAN GET HELP WITH THE COSTS OF:

Specialist  
equipment

British Sign  
Language (BSL)  
interpreter or  
specialist note taker

Travel costs to  
attend your course  
or placement

Disability related  
study support

# APPLYING FOR DSA

When applying for university finance, you will be asked by Student Finance England if you would like to apply for DSA. You will only be able to apply for this once your main application is complete. You will be asked to provide evidence of your disability, which you can submit through your online account.

Your information must be as complete and relevant as possible, otherwise your application could be delayed.

Your assessment is conducted in a **relaxed, informal** and **supportive** environment, and is strictly confidential between you and the Needs Assessor. It can take place over the phone, face-to-face or online, whatever is best for you! This assessment is an opportunity to discuss any challenges or support you need.

After your assessment, your Needs Assessor will send you a draft report, outlining your needs and the recommended support you discussed. Once you are happy with it, they will ask for permission to send a copy to your university's disability services. Giving permission for this is important as it allows the university to make the required adjustments recommended in the DSA.

## IMPORTANT

You can apply for DSA up until 9 months into the academic year. However, to ensure your needs are met, it is encouraged you apply once you confirm your university place.



# DSA TOP TIPS



- ▶ Apply as early as possible.
- ▶ Be honest and give as much information as you can even if you are not sure if it is relevant
- ▶ You are entitled to funding for support of up to £26,948 per year.
- ▶ DSA does not depend on your household income
- ▶ What you can get is unique to your needs
- ▶ You won't pay anything back
- ▶ You can keep any equipment given to you
- ▶ DSA provides a bespoke package of support – with elements provided by the HE provider and/or Student Loans Company
- ▶ If you are not eligible for DSA, then get in contact with your higher education provider's disability support team to see what support they can provide

## SIGNPOSTING

- [Disabled Students' Allowance - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/disabled-students-allowance)
- [Eligibility - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/disabled-students-allowance-eligibility)
- [How to apply - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/disabled-students-allowance-how-to-apply)
- [Further information - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/disabled-students-allowance-further-information)
- [Find a Disabled Students' Allowance assessment provider - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/disabled-students-allowance-assessment-provider)



# ROADMAP TO HIGHER EDUCATION

There are four stages for HE you need to be aware of as a disabled student. These are set out in the roadmap. This provides you with a checklist to help you with the transition to HE. The timings are estimates and may vary between the HE provider, the course and the learner's individual needs.

Four stages of applying to HE study:

-  Decision making
-  Communicating
-  Transition
-  Support



# STAGE 1 - DECISION-MAKING



Timing: Autumn term - the year before you begin HE

Main Task	Checklist	Who can help?
Start looking at different courses and HE providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Attend open days</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Research courses and HE providers</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Complete work experience</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Write a personal statement</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Look at local offers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers</li> <li>• Careers Adviser</li> <li>• Parent/carers</li> <li>• Social Worker</li> <li>• Advisers at Careers Worcs</li> </ul>
Start your UCAS application	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Complete work experience</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Fill out the online application</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Ask for help and support from your school/college</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Write a personal statement</li> </ul>	
Apply to UCAS for their equal consideration deadline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Check the deadline date: <a href="#">Why students should apply by the Equal Consideration Deadline</a></li> </ul>	
Apply for an HE access scheme for the HE Provider (Optional)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> If an access scheme is offered, check you are eligible</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Apply and complete HE access scheme</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Receive an access offer</li> </ul>	

# STAGE 2 - COMMUNICATING



Timing: Spring term - post-application but pre-offer

Main Task	Checklist	Who can help?
Apply for Student Finance England (SFE) <a href="#">SFE - Student Finance England</a>	<input type="checkbox"/> Check requirements e.g. evidence etc <input type="checkbox"/> Gather evidence required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers</li> <li>• Parent/carers</li> <li>• Social Worker</li> <li>• SENDIASS</li> <li>• Department for Work and Pensions</li> <li>• Disability Services Team at HE provider</li> </ul>
Apply for Disabled Students Allowance (DSA) <a href="#">How to apply</a>	<input type="checkbox"/> Check eligibility <input type="checkbox"/> Collate evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Seek guidance	
Communicate with chosen HE Providers	<input type="checkbox"/> Some will offer 1-1 appointments <input type="checkbox"/> Check out Disability Services webpages <input type="checkbox"/> Email staff if you have questions	
Attend an interview (if applicable)	<input type="checkbox"/> Prepare for interview <input type="checkbox"/> Ensure the HE Provider is aware of any specific needs to support your interview <input type="checkbox"/> Ask for reasonable adjustments if needed	

# STAGE 3 - TRANSITION



Timing: Summer term - Post-offer but pre-entry

Main Task	Checklist	Who can help?
If moving for HE, apply for accommodation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Tour of accommodation/ accessible accommodation</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Speak to Disability Services</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Do you need an Occupational Therapy assessment?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers</li> <li>• Parent/ carers</li> <li>• Friends</li> <li>• Social Worker</li> <li>• SENDIASS</li> <li>• Disability Services Team at HE provider</li> </ul>
Pass on your EHCP to your HE Provider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Obtain a copy of your most up to date EHCP</li> </ul>	
Attend an HE transition event, e.g. an Open Day (Dependant on HE provider)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Ask about transition events</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Prepare and ask any questions you might have</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> What do you want to know?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Who do you want to meet?</li> </ul>	
Attend offer day or open days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> If applicable, attend an offer day event at your HE Provider</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Think beforehand of questions to ask staff</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Take your family and friends to visit an open day</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Explore the local area, shops and transport links</li> </ul>	



# STAGE 4 – SUPPORT



Timing: Summer term - Post-offer to HE

Main Task	Checklist	Who can help?
Obtain information on the mitigating circumstances process at your HE Provider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Obtain information on mitigating circumstances</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Apply for mitigating circumstances</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers</li> <li>• Parent/ carers</li> <li>• Social Worker</li> </ul>
Apply for exam adjustments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Application for any exam adjustments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disability Services Team at HE provider</li> <li>• HE provider IT and library staff</li> </ul>
Access IT and library support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Speak to library and/or IT team</li> </ul>	
Disclosing your disability if not already done	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Speak to Disability Services team</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Access support from Disability Services team</li> </ul>	

# QUESTIONS TO ASK

There are many things you need to think about when applying to Higher Education. You might already have lots of questions you would like to ask but here are a few suggestions of other questions.

- Is there a map available of the building?
- Do they have cafes, shops and vending machines?
- Where are the quiet spaces?
- Are there good public transport links?
- Is the building accessible?
- Are there any outdoor/green areas nearby?
- Are there any support groups I can join?
- Who can I speak to if I need help?
- Is there a dark place I can use?
- Is there an area for my assistance dog?



# LIVING AT UNIVERSITY

When choosing your accommodation, there are many things you will need to consider. If you need care support outside of your studies, it would be a great idea to talk to your university and the local council to see what support can be put in place. You want to make sure this is all in place before you arrive. Adult social care can provide direct payments from the council to support you with any care needs.



## THINGS TO CONSIDER...

- ▶ If you have a social worker, tell them where you have been accepted and they can support you with accommodation and any additional support needed.
- ▶ If you have overnight needs that require a carer, a second room will be required. This can be funded via the Housing Benefit claim within the local authority in which the university is situated.
- ▶ Will the second bedroom be next door? How will care be accessed overnight?
- ▶ Do you have equipment needs? Do you need an OT assessment prior to the move?
- ▶ Do carers need to be sourced prior to the move or will existing care move with you?
- ▶ Do you require any assistive technology?

# HENRY'S STORY

## **Tell us a bit more about yourself and your journey through education**

"I was diagnosed with Friedreich's Ataxia when I was 11 and just starting secondary school, I found adjusting to my newly diagnosed disability and navigating through high school challenging. For my A Levels I considered moving to another school, however, I decided to stay at my school and studied hard. I always knew I wanted to go to university to explore independent living."



## **What course are you studying at university?**

"I started a degree in Psychology, however, did not enjoy it as much as I thought I would. I failed my second year and decided to change my course to Business with Psychology. I am interested in the business side more and after re-sitting my second year I am just about to go into my final year."

## **What do you enjoy most about university life?**

"Independence. I enjoy living on my own and cooking for myself. I have got involved with the social side and going to clubs in Worcester, however, do not really enjoy that part of uni life. I have worked at the uni throughout last summer term in Student Services and really enjoyed that experience."

**What support do you receive?**

"I started uni with no care, however, due to the nature of my progressive condition, I now have live-in care. This is great and has helped with getting ready for lectures and traveling into Worcester. I have powered wheels on my chair and that is a great help with getting around campus."

**Do you like living in halls? What is your accommodation like?**

"My accommodation is amazing; it is fully accessible and modern, and my carer has a flat on the same corridor. I have been in the same flat for 3 years and it is my home away from home."

**What would you say to someone else considering going to university?**

"Choose a degree in a subject that interests you and do not let any disability hold you back. The University of Worcester has a great support network."

**What are your plans for the future?**

"I am hoping to travel once I graduate and continue independent living."

**Any comments from parent/carers?**

"I am very proud of H; in the face of adversity, he has continued to push for an independent life."



# TOP TIPS FOR APPLYING TO HE

Applying for Higher Education is big milestone. You will have many questions and things you need to consider.

Here are a few top tips for different stages of this journey.



## OPEN DAYS

- ▶ Plan your day to make the most out of your visit
- ▶ Attend any talks or lectures
- ▶ Tour the campus, accommodation, student union, café, shops and library
- ▶ Give yourself time to explore the local area
- ▶ Visit the disability services team
- ▶ Don't leave it to your parent/carers to ask the questions - you'll be the one living and studying there





## APPLYING

- Use an up-to-date email address so you don't miss any updates or offers
- Each university you apply to will all receive the same personal statement, so avoid naming specific universities or courses
- Remember to save your UCAS application regularly
- You can give parent/carers nominated access to your application so they can help you with the process



## ACCOMMODATION

- Find out who to speak to about accommodation
- Make sure the accommodation is accessible for you
- Ask for a tour of the accommodation beforehand
- Every provider's accessible accommodation will be different
- Look at the location, is it near the campus? Near a bus route? Is there extra room for equipment or staff?
- Consider the different options for accommodation - is it catered or self-catered?
- Consider accommodation for each year of your course as this may change

# PARENTS AND CARERS

As a parent or carer of someone going into Higher Education (HE), you are likely to be offering support, guidance and encouragement to the young person or people in your care. This may be an exciting time, and it can also feel like a big step as you may be concerned about a range of issues such as the young person's workload, accommodation, finances or career prospects. This is especially true for parents and carers of disabled students as you may want to feel assured that the appropriate support is in place.

## WILL I BE UPDATED WITH THEIR PROGRESS?

When people enter into HE, the data protection guidelines mean that HE providers cannot pass on information about a student to their family. Therefore, parents or carers do not receive regular updates on the student's progress, the nature of their disability support or their wellbeing.

## WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP?

- Listen to your young person's thoughts and ideas
- Have open conversations
- Do your own research
- Read through the UCAS guide
- Support with applications





# TOP TIPS



- ▶ Try to find out as much as possible about the application process for HE.
- ▶ Find out about the DSA process and encourage the young person to consider this and apply as early as possible.
- ▶ Find out information about the provider that the young person is interested in. Have a look on their websites for information about disability and support services.
- ▶ Take up opportunities to visit HE providers on open days or course information events as there are often staff present who can discuss how support is put in place for disabled students.
- ▶ Contact the Disability Support Service to see if you and the young person can have an appointment with an adviser in advance of the student starting their studies.



## SIGNPOSTING

- [Advice for parents, guardians and carers](#)
- [Parent, guardian and carer guide 2025](#)
- [Tips For Supporting Your Child When They Go To Uni](#)
- [How can I support my child at university?](#)



# USEFUL LINKS

To support learners within Worcestershire, we have gathered local links and websites that might be useful in your transition into Higher Education.

- [Skills 4 Worcestershire](#)
- [Your Future Opportunities](#)
- [Career guidance for those with SEND, SEMH, and EHCP](#)
- [SENDIASS Herefordshire and Worcestershire](#)
- [SEND Local Offer](#)
- [EHCP – Education, Health and Care plans](#)
- [Careers Worcestershire](#)
- [University of Worcester - The Disability and Dyslexia Service](#)
- [Families in Partnership](#)
- [Virtual Family Hub](#)



# USEFUL LINKS

Here are a suggestion of additional links and websites that will be helpful.

- [Access to Work](#)
- [PIP handbook](#)
- [Help if you're a student with a learning difficulty, health problem or disability: Disabled Students' Allowance](#)
- [Financial help if you're disabled](#)
- [Disabled Students Advice And Financial Support - UCAS](#)
- [Careers education, information, advice and guidance \(CEIAG\) - Mencap](#)
- [EmployAbility](#)
- [Funding for disabled students - Scope](#)
- [Looking for work if you're disabled](#)
- [Mental Capacity Act](#)
- [Equality Act 2010](#)
- [My Plus Students' Club](#)
- [UCAS Careers Quiz](#)
- [National Careers Service - Skills Assessment](#)
- [What is a university?](#)

**THANK YOU  
FOR READING**

**CHOICES**

**BROUGHT TO YOU BY INSPIRING  
WORCESTERSHIRE CAREERS HUB AND  
WORCESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**



**worcestershire**  
county council