Student Development and Well-being



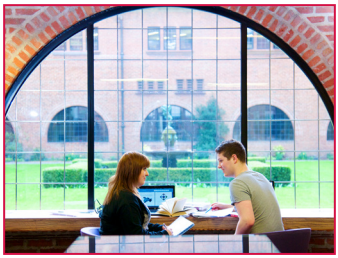
STUDENTS AND SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFITS

Disabled Students/Disability Benefits

April 2016 - March 2017

Liverpool Hope University
Student Support
& Well-being

Liverpool Hope University


1. Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)

Employment and Support Allowance is a benefit for people who are too ill to work full-time and for disabled people. There is an income based and contribution based ESA and you may receive one or both of these benefits. Contribution based ESA is only paid for up to 12 months unless you are a claimant placed in the support group. Assessment for the benefit is based on limited capability for work according to a work capability assessment conducted by a healthcare professional.

Student Entitlement

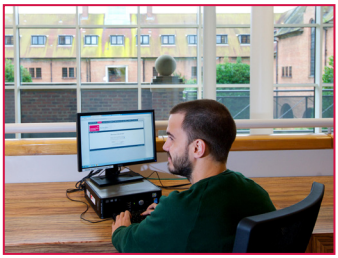
Part-time students who have limited capability for work and full-time students in receipt of Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payments can claim income based ESA. Both part and full-time students qualify for contribution based ESA if they have paid enough National Insurance contributions. Seek advice if you think you may be entitled. (Also see part 4 of this leaflet).

If you are claiming income based ESA you can claim help with mortgage interest payments on the first £200,000 of your mortgage after a waiting period of 39 weeks.

Claiming ESA

To make a claim you need to call the local Contact Centre between 8am-6pm on 0800 055 6688 or using a text phone on 0800 023 4888. Once a telephone interview has been conducted and a claim form completed, you then enter a 13 week assessment phase for benefit where you are paid a basic allowance of ESA. You will then undergo a work capability assessment to determine whether you are eligible for benefit and either the support component or the work-related activity component top-up.

Most claimants will be eligible for the latter and will be required to undertake work-related activities including attending six work-focused interviews. In most cases you will attend an initial ‘work-focused interview’ after the 8th week of your claim. At this interview a Personal Adviser will talk to you about your work prospects, the steps you are able to take to find work and the support that is available to you. If you are placed in the Work-related Activity Group you will be required to attend a further five work-focused interviews at monthly intervals.





Work-focused interviews are mandatory and if you fail to attend or participate in them your ESA can be sanctioned, although sanctions can only be applied after the 13 week assessment phase is complete. If you fail the work capability assessment, you can ask for a mandatory reconsideration of the decision and you will be paid the basic rate of ESA until this is processed. Once you have the decision, if it is still unfavourable, you are entitled to appeal. **N.B.** It is intended that most ESA claimants will be transferred onto Universal Credit by Spring 2021.

Reviews When Starting a Full-time Course

Sometimes the DWP review your disability benefit entitlement when you become a full-time student and may treat you as capable of full-time work. This is because you are attending a full-time course and they use this factor to stop paying you ESA. If your medical condition remains the same, regardless of the fact that you are a student or you are trying to do the course for therapeutic reasons, it is advisable to challenge the decision by asking for a mandatory revision and then lodging an appeal.

A full-time course doesn't necessarily have the workload or responsibilities of a full-time job. If your benefit stops whilst you are studying a full-time course but your medical condition has not changed and you do not feel capable of full-time work, you should seek advice about appealing. It would help if your Doctor is able to confirm that your illness has not changed and/or that you are taking up the course for therapeutic reasons.

Employment and Support Allowance is an important benefit as it can provide a passport to entitlement to Housing Benefit. However, as it is a means-tested benefit the amount you receive depends on the total income and circumstances of you and your family.

Student Funding

Receipt of Employment and Support Allowance does not affect the amount of student finance you are entitled to and can in some circumstances (subject to means test) be paid in addition to any student funding you can get. It can also help you qualify for the Special Support Grant and/or a higher rate of maintenance loan from Student Finance England. For more details call Student Funds on 0151 291 3435 or email studentfunds@hope.ac.uk





2. Disability Living Allowance

This is a benefit intended to help severely disabled children who have care needs in connection with bodily functions such as eating, drinking, taking medication, mobility; for those who require regular supervision due to mental illness such as panic attacks, drop attacks, fits, epilepsy etc.; or those with mobility needs because they need help with getting around due to their disability.

DLA is no longer available for fresh claims for working age adults (aged 16-64) as it was replaced by Personal Independence Payments in June 2013 and existing claimants are currently being transferred to the new benefit. DLA is paid in two parts, a mobility component and a care component. These components are broken down into rates - the care component has a lower, middle and higher rate and the mobility component has a lower and higher rate.

Students sometimes experience problems when they start university and the benefit authorities assume that the medical condition has improved as a result. However, if you have a long term medical problem that is not likely to improve, your Disability Living Allowance can be paid indefinitely.

N.B. If you are aged between 16 and 64 and are currently receiving DLA it is intended that you will be reassessed for PIP between now and September 2017.

3. Personal Independence Payments (PIP)

Personal Independence Payments replaced DLA for adults aged 16-64 from June 2013. Existing claimants of DLA will be invited to claim PIP between now and September 2017.

PIP has two components, daily living and mobility which will be paid at two rates, standard and enhanced. Claimants will be assessed according to whether they have limited or severely limited ability to undertake a range of activities. Initial claims (PIP 1) are made by telephone and a questionnaire (PIP 2) will then be sent out asking for details of the claimant's medical condition and how it affects them.

The questionnaire will then be passed to a healthcare professional who will decide whether to contact the claimant's GP or consultant and whether a face-to-face medical assessment is required (most claimants will have to attend a medical). Any award of PIP made will be backdated to the date of claim.





Awards of PIP will usually be made for a fixed period, although the regulations do allow for indefinite awards. Claimants will be expected to demonstrate that they have had the condition for 3 months and are likely to have it for a further 9 months.

Student Funding

Disability Living Allowance and Personal Independence Payments do not affect entitlement to student funding and helps students qualify for the Special Support Grant and/or the higher rate of maintenance loan from Student Finance England. For further details contact Student Funds on 0151 291 3435 or email studentfunds@hope.ac.uk.

4. Carers Allowance

Carers Allowance is paid to carers of disabled people receiving Attendance Allowance or Disability Living Allowance care component at the middle or highest rate, or both rates of the daily living component of Personal Independence Payment and who are caring for a disabled person for at least 35 hours per week.

Carers Allowance is not payable to full-time students who are required to study for 21 or more hours per week, which applies to the majority of full-time students. This includes study undertaken on and off campus but excludes meal breaks. Part-time students are eligible to receive Carers Allowance.

If students are studying less than 21 hours per week they may be able to dispute this rule if they can get a letter from their Head of Department stating that the course requirement is less than 21 hours, although this is unlikely.

Some full-time students may be treated as studying less than 21 hours per week where they are not required to take up all the full-time course modules. Examples may include attending part-time on a full-time course or when repeating part of a year. Students also may be able to claim for the summer period when there is no attendance.

Alternatively, if the Carers Allowance is stopped upon starting your course it may be possible for the extra money to be claimed by the disabled person being cared for in the form of the Severe Disability Premium as part of income-related Employment and Support Allowance or Income Support payments, providing that





the disabled person lives alone. (There are currently no plans to replicate the Disability/Severe Disability premiums when Universal Credit is fully introduced).

Student Funding

Carers Allowance does not affect entitlement to student funding.

5. Universal credit

Universal Credit is a new benefit which was introduced in ten pilot areas from October 2013 for single job-seekers without dependants. There are plans to transfer new claims for JSA, ESA, Tax Credits and Housing Benefit over the next few years. It will eventually replace Housing Benefit, Tax Credits, Income Support, Income Related Employment and Support Allowance and Job Seekers Allowance. There will be significant roll out in the next few years with national expansion completion intended by Spring 2021. Existing claimants receiving these benefits will be transferred over the next few years.

6. Disabled Students Allowance (DSA)

Disabled Students Allowance is not a Social Security benefit but a grant intended to assist disabled students with the extra costs of their studies. It is claimed on a DSA 1 Form and is available from Student Finance England on their website at www.gov.uk/studentfinance.

DSA has three parts; Specialist Equipment Allowance, Non-medical Helpers Allowance and a General Disabled Students Allowance. It can be claimed by both full and part-time undergraduate and postgraduate students. It is disregarded from means-tested benefits and does not affect your entitlement to other Social Security benefits. For further information, see www.thestudentroom.co.uk/studentfinance and www.sfengland.slc.co.uk/quickstartguides





You are advised to seek advice from the University's Learning Support Team when making a DSA application. The team are based in Student Development and Well-being in the Gateway Building (1st floor). The team can assist you with making your application and putting your study needs and support into place.

Further help

You are advised to seek advice from the University's Learning Support Team when making a DSA application. The team can answer any questions you may have and will be happy to assist you with the application process.

The Learning Support Team are located in the Gateway Building (1st Floor) at the Hope Park Campus.

T: 0151 291 3427
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