

FAMILY, PARTNERS AND LIFE ADMIN · 10.8

University With ADHD or Autism: DSA, Reasonable Adjustments and Survival

University is the first system most neurodivergent young adults go through without a parent doing the executive function lift for them. The support exists; the gap is usually knowing it exists and applying in time.

FOR

Prospective and current university students

AUDIENCE AGE

18+

REVIEWED

18 May 2026

PART OF

The NeuroFX resource library

IN SUMMARY

University With ADHD or Autism: DSA, Reasonable Adjustments and Survival

What support is on offer

- **Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA).** A non-means-tested grant from Student Finance that funds disability-related study support. Covers undergraduate and most postgraduate, full or part-time. Not a loan; not repaid.
- **Reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act 2010.** Universities have a positive, anticipatory duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled students, including ADHD and autism where impact is substantial and long-term.
- **The disability service writes the plan.** Once you disclose to your university's disability service, they write a Learning Support Plan that academic departments are required to honour.

What helps in the first term

- **Disclose to the disability service before term starts.** Contacting them in July or August is the single most useful action. Disclosure is voluntary, but only those who know can help you when something goes wrong.
- **Apply for DSA early.** The process takes weeks. Equipment may not arrive before week one. Start in summer, not October.
- **Register with a campus GP straight away.** ADHD medication continuity, mental health support and contraception all run through this. Do it in week one.
- **Take the specialist mentoring seriously where DSA funds it.** A weekly meeting with someone who understands the wiring is often the difference between adrift and just-about-coping.
- **Smaller social commitments first.** Society memberships, regular small groups, course friendships. Most lasting university friendships come from a society or course, not Freshers' week.

How we can help

- **GP and university wellbeing first.** For ADHD medication continuity, ask your home GP for a transfer arrangement before you move. For mental health crisis during term, the university's wellbeing service and the local crisis team are the routes.
- **Use legitimate stepping-back tools.** Interruption of studies, dropping a year, switching to part-time are tools the system provides because they work. Speaking to the disability service before deciding is more useful than after.
- **Clinical letters where useful.** NeuroFX can issue clinical letters for patients we have assessed where a university or DSA assessor needs diagnostic confirmation.

WHEN TO SPEAK TO A PROFESSIONAL

Register with a GP near your campus before term starts. For mental health crisis support during term, your university's wellbeing service and the local crisis team are the right routes; out of hours, 111, 999 or A&E. The Samaritans are on 116 123. For ADHD medication continuity, ask your home GP for a transfer arrangement before you move; for autism diagnostic confirmation requests from the university, NeuroFX can issue clinical letters for patients we have assessed.

SOURCES

gov.uk DSA; Equality Act 2010; EHRC HE guidance; OfS; UCAS; NUS; NICE NG87

NEXT STEPS**Speak to NeuroFX**

Private ADHD and autism assessment for adults and children aged 6 and upwards.
CQC-registered. Bedford Consulting Rooms, 4 Goldington Road, Bedford MK40 3NF.

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