

Assistive Technologies: Engagement and Independence

1. Background:

DMU-CAN was established in 2015 and assesses 600+ students a year for Disabled Students Allowances (DSAs). DSAs can fund a wide variety of personal and technological support that is individualised to the student.

Disabled students who receive DSAs are half as likely to discontinue and slightly more likely to achieve a good honours degree.

DMU has an equivalent number of disabled students (~1300 per year) as the universities of Nottingham and Birmingham; despite being around 60% of their overall size. ⁽¹⁾ More students could benefit both from diagnosis, and ensuring funded support is applied for and utilized.

All students	DMU	Sector ⁽²⁾
Declare a disability	17%	13%
Receive DSAs	11%	7%



All students	Discontinuation ⁽³⁾	Good honours ⁽⁴⁾
Disabled with DSAs	7%	74%
Disabled, no DSAs	13%	72%
No known disability	6%	75%

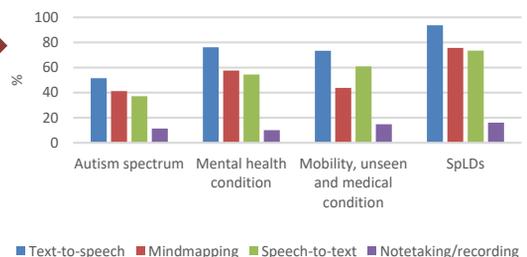


2. "Average" recommendations made at DMU-CAN:

- 30-35 hours of One to One support
 - Study skills and/or Mentoring
- £950 of Specialist equipment
 - inc. 3-4 software packages
- 6-8 hours of "AT" training to learn the new software
- £100-200 General allowance (mostly printing costs)

Total average value per student was £3500 ^(2017/18)

3. What range of software can be recommended?



The assessment process helps students navigate the wide range of options available and how this can address their **specific, individual disability-related study needs.**

Over 100 different software packages have been previously approved for funding. There are 30 that we regularly recommend and many more for specific needs, including hardware and ergonomic devices. There are many suppliers, developers, new products launching and updates to continuously evaluate.



4. Closing the gap

- We estimate 44% of disabled students at DMU receive DSAs, therefore as many as **800 per year may not be receiving the full support available to them.**
- Among students who received DSAs, **37% felt they would not have been able to complete their course, without DSAs.** DSAs were also more important for certain 'widening participation' groups (mature, BAME, parents had not attended HE, 2 or more disabilities). ⁽⁵⁾
- Since the introduction of the £200 student contribution towards equipment (for SFE students), **there has been a 30% decrease in equipment uptake.** ⁽⁶⁾
- DMU students may apply to the DMU Support Fund in relation to this £200, though many are unaware of this and it is another step in a lengthy process.

1. Disclose or Diagnose...

2. Get DSAs and USE them!

References: 1: HESA Table 30, 2: HESA tables T3 & T7, 3: "Staying the course: Retention of students in higher education", National Audit Office (2007), 4: "Equality and HE, Students stats report", AdvanceHE (2018), 5: Evaluation of DSA research report DFE/IFF (2019), 6: "The impact on disabled students of the introduction of a £200 levy on DSA", BATA (2018)