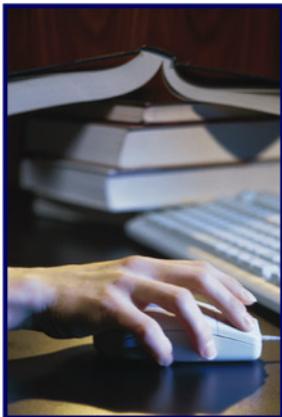


[Too many allowances](#) [1]

Written by [Charlotte Bowyer](#) [2] | Sunday 16 May 2010



As it currently stands, anyone entering full-time higher education can receive financial support from the government in the form of Tuition Fee funding and Maintenance Loans, as well as the option of a means-tested grant. Additionally, if you have any form of disability or learning disorder, you are eligible for Disabled Student's Allowance, which is available regardless of family income, and doesn't have to be paid back.

Being dyslexic, my friend was delighted to discover that he was eligible for up to £5,161 worth of specialist equipment, and so applied for DSA. His experience is a prime example of inefficient and wasteful government.

After a needs assessment in September and the promise of a shiny new laptop, processing the case took over eight months. Nevertheless, the essential technological support eventually arrived- in the form of a MacBook Pro, a printer and voice-recognition software. However, the delivery also included (amongst much more) a scanner, USB hub, a backpack, an ink allowance, and, strangely enough, an AA battery charger. Call me insensitive, but I simply cannot understand the necessity of all these items for a dyslexic university student.

My expressions of disapproval led to accusations of bitterness and jealousy. In fact, I was shocked that such items should be provided by the government, regardless of income- and without even being asking for. The response I received from my friend was, "But I've done nothing wrong- they're free". However, the gadgets weren't free. They had been paid for by other people's money - confiscated through taxation. They were funded with money that would have been put to better use were it allowed to stay in the individuals' pockets, rather than paying for backpacks for dyslexics.

The country is saddled with a huge government deficit, and spending pressures are beginning to emerge: The Russell Group has warned that current higher education funding is [unsustainable](#) [3]. Meanwhile, the Coalition government is keen to make savings through "efficiencies" and will be unwilling to touch frontline services. However, the DSA appears to be something that could be seriously revised, without seriously disadvantaging the disabled in University.

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Links:

[1] <http://www.adamsmith.org/blog/education/too-many-allowances>

[2] <http://www.adamsmith.org/taxonomy/term/5805>

[3] <http://www.guardian.co.uk/education/2010/may/14/students-must-pay-more-russell-group>

[4] http://disqus.com/?ref_noscript

[5] <http://disqus.com>