

**DSSG – MAY 2009  
UPDATE ON REVIEW OF DSA**

**Immediate**

<b>ACTION POINTS</b>	<b>LEAD</b>	<b>UPDATE</b>
Retain the status quo, improve IAG and monitor the situation with a view to developing specific guidance on eligibility for DSA for other types of access courses.	SG & SAAS	SAAS are currently developing new guidance.  This new guidance will be available in time for start of 09/10 academic year.
Retain the current eligibility criteria for part-time students. Ensure that the sector is made more aware of the flexibility within the current rules should a part-time student encounter problems completing their course due to their disability.	SG & SAAS	SAAS are currently developing new guidance.  This new guidance will be available in time for start of 09/10 academic year.
Improve the information, advice and guidance which is issued to the sector and used to increase awareness of current eligibility criteria and rules for arrangements in place for exceptional cases.	SG & SAAS	SAAS are currently developing new guidance. This new guidance will be available in time for start of 09/10 academic year.  SG will use DSSG workshops to improve awareness
Extend NMPH provision to voluntary tutorials.	SG & SAAS	SAAS are currently developing new guidance. This new guidance will be available in time for start of 09/10 academic year.
SAAS to produce guidance on the rules governing this matter and devise a form which could be signed by the lecturer to ensure student attendance.	SAAS	SAAS are currently developing new guidance. This new guidance will be available in time for start of 09/10 academic year. The new form will also be developed in time for the start of the academic year.
SAAS to continue to consider individual requests for earlier payments where they receive evidence from the Disability Advisor supporting the request.	SAAS	
SAAS to give further consideration as to whether or not there is a need to produce a standard form to claim for additional support outwith term-time.	SAAS	
The updated guidance should explain the current and any new rules associated with outwith term-time support. This information should also explain why there might be some grey areas/different procedures which might be in place in certain circumstances and these could be highlighted through the use of case studies.	SAAS	SAAS are currently developing new guidance. This new guidance will be available in time for start of 09/10 academic year.

As the upper threshold for the NMPH allowance has now been increased with effect from academic year 2008/09 the Scottish Government does not believe that there is a need to further increase this threshold. However the Scottish Government will continue to up-rate this threshold each year in line with all other forms of student support.	SG	The new thresholds have all been up-rated for the new academic year.
A DSSG sub-group, led by SAAS, has been established to examine issues relating to the roles and responsibilities of NMPH in more detail and will provide advice back to the DSSG over the coming months.	SAAS	This group have met and the papers will be available on the DSSG website.
Scottish Government and SAAS to consider the Review team's recommendation to reduce the mileage rate from 40 pence per mile to 30 pence to bring it more in line with the rest of the UK. As this would apply to all students and not just those claiming DSA, the Scottish Government and SAAS will consider this change for all students in the student support system as part of the consultation on the Loans to Grant scheme.	SG and SAAS	The consultation period has now closed and the SG is considering all the responses.  Consultation responses will be available on 28 <sup>th</sup> may. The final report will be published at the end of September.
SAAS to consider if the new 'STEPS' IT system can improve the on-line application form process for applying for the DSA.	SAAS	
The Scottish Government to invite representatives from NUS Scotland and SKILL Scotland to attend the DSSG workshops in order to discuss possible improvements to communication strategies between students and staff.	SG	At the recent workshops students were invited to attend. Limited response. However examples of good practice will be contained within the guidance.  SG, Skill Scotland and NUS will be meeting soon to discuss on going improvements to communications
Scottish Government to consider the introduction of an IT element within the living cost support for all students in the student support system as part of the consultation on the Loans to Grant scheme.	SG	The consultation period has now closed and the SG is considering all the responses.  Consultation responses will be available on 28 <sup>th</sup> may. The final report will be published at the end of September.
SAAS to consider raising awareness of the forms of evidence that they are willing to accept.	SAAS	SAAS are currently developing new guidance. This new guidance will be available in time for start of 09/10 academic year.

<p>If a student requires evidence of a diagnosis for the purpose of the DSA, or to qualify for particular reasonable adjustments, then the institution should continue to consider the use of their Discretionary Funds, DSP or other institution funds to cover the cost of this diagnosis. Students should not be asked to pay for a diagnosis.</p>	<p>INSTITUTIONS &amp; DSSG</p>	<p>SG and DSSG will continue to monitor the situation.</p>
<p>The Scottish Government and SAAS to clearly articulate the appeals process as part of the proposed revised guidance material.</p>	<p>SAAS &amp; SG</p>	<p>SAAS are currently developing new guidance. This new guidance will be available in time for start of 09/10 academic year.</p>

**Medium Term**

<b>ACTION POINTS</b>	<b>LEAD</b>	<b>UPDATE</b>
<p>SAAS to clarify guidance for exceptional cases whereby a student's condition becomes so severe that they might not be able to complete the course within the agreed timeframe.</p>	<p>SAAS &amp; SG</p>	<p>SAAS are currently developing new guidance. This new guidance will be available in time for start of 09/10 academic year.</p>
<p>Once the DSSG has approved the recommendations from this subgroup the Scottish Government will arrange for the 'Employing Support Workers' booklet to be updated to provide more accurate and useful information.</p>	<p>DSSG &amp; SG</p>	
<p>The institution and the student should come to an agreement, as part of the DSA needs assessment, about the specific training requirements for the student. Thus allowing both the institution and the student the flexibility to take this forward in a manner which suits both parties. There would also be a record of the agreement which would help with any possible disagreements.</p>	<p>INSTITUTIONS, DSSG &amp; SG</p>	<p>This was discussed at the DSSG workshops last year and a number of institutions have included this information in their toolkit application. The new guidance on the toolkit application will contain guidance on this matter.</p>
<p>Cases of good practice to form part of proposed guidance to the sector.</p>	<p>SG</p>	<p>This was discussed at the DSSG workshops last year and a number of institutions have included this information in their toolkit application. The new guidance on the toolkit application will contain guidance on this matter.</p>
<p>Clarification will be sought as part of the annual revalidation which all institutions must submit, on the</p>	<p>INSTITUTIONS, DSSG &amp; SG</p>	<p>A number of institutions have included this information in their toolkit application. The new</p>

issue of training i.e. the percentage of students that have undertaken training and possibly student feedback on the training.		guidance on the toolkit application will contain guidance on this matter.
Questions about provision and effectiveness of training form part of SAAS's DSA student survey which is distributed to a selection of students each year	SAAS	SAAS are currently preparing their new questionnaire.
SAAS to give further thought to the other options identified in the travel theme paper, as these will impact upon non-disabled students too.	SAAS	
The Scottish Government and SAAS will continue to work together with stakeholders to produce up to date comprehensive guidance on the governing the DSA and consider how best this can be promoted to the relevant parties.	SAAS & SG	
Once the pilot of Toolkit of Quality Indicators for the Assessment of Additional Needs has been evaluated, SAAS and the Scottish Government officials will consider the issues raised by the DSSG and its subgroup when considering the long term future of the Toolkit.	SAAS, SG & DSSG.	The toolkit has now formally been evaluated and the SG would recommend to the DSSG that the toolkit is now rolled out.  The SG and SAAS will a number of institutions will prepare guidance on the toolkit application – envisage this to be available early in the new year.
The Scottish Government and SAAS to instigate a formal process for DSA exceptional cases with clear guidance and procedures, including establishing an experts group.	SG & SAAS	
The Scottish Government and SAAS to review information and guidance issued to all validated institutions, organisations and individuals to ensure exceptional cases procedures are clearly articulated.	SG & SAAS	
Scottish Government to provide guidance on roles and responsibilities of other agencies that provide medical support and social care to higher education students.	SG	Partnership Matters has been updated and extended to the university sector.
Scottish Government should extend the guidance in Partnership Matters to higher education students and	SG	Partnership Matters has been updated and extended to the university sector.

publish an updated version of Partnership Matters in time for the next academic year.		
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### Long Term

<b>ACTION POINTS</b>	<b>LEAD</b>	<b>UPDATE</b>
SAAS to consider, as part of the introduction of the new 'STEPS' IT system, methods for remedying the difficulties that the current payment system can have for the payment of multiple NMPHs.	SAAS	
The Scottish Government will continue to monitor the issue of interpreters for deaf students with the aid of stakeholders such as the Deaf Students Working Group, the Scottish Sensory Centre and the Equalities Unit within the Scottish Government.	SG	
SAAS to continue to discuss with the DSSG and students about how the application forms and guidance can be improved upon	SAAS	
Once the pilot of the Toolkit of Quality Indicators for the Assessment of Additional Needs has been evaluated consideration should be given to the validation process for institutions and its quality assurance procedures to ensure that institutions have procedures in place for effective communication with students and are complying with them.	DSSG, SG & SAAS	
Scottish Government to ensure that the Student Communication Strategy reflects the needs of disabled students and of potential students.	SG	
The Scottish Government and SAAS to continue to work with SDS, NUS Scotland and SKILL Scotland on matters relating to information and guidance for disabled students.		
The Scottish Government and SAAS to consider to what extent SAAS DSA appeals and exceptional cases processes are relevant for other SAAS student support application processes– e.g. students who claim to be estranged from parents, not in receipt of	SAAS	

support from parents and want to be considered as an independent student with regard to living cost support.		
SFC to consider the action points from the review relating to training for staff.	SFC	
SFC should consider ensuring that institutions are supporting the inclusiveness agenda, particularly for disabled students, through monitoring of support for disabled students and promoting best practice. It should also consider whether this should be part of its outcome agreements with institutions.	SFC	