

# Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA)



DSA

A quick, student-friendly guide to the process – UK Higher Education  
DSA is extra support for students with a disability, mental health condition, or learning difference. It's not a loan – you don't pay it back. Use it for specialist equipment, software, support workers, travel, and other study-related costs.

## The DSA Process in 5 Easy Steps

- ▶ Check you're eligible: If your condition affects study and meets the Equality Act definition of disability, you can apply. Check eligibility
- ▶ Apply online or by form: Use your Student Finance account or a DSA1 form. Applying early helps your support arrive on time. Apply for DSA
- ▶ Send your evidence: Provide a diagnostic report or medical letter confirming your condition.
- ▶ Have a needs assessment: A friendly conversation (not a test) about the study support that will help you most.
- ▶ Get your support: You'll receive an entitlement letter. Approved equipment and training are arranged and supplied for you.

## What can DSA pay for?

- ▶ Specialist equipment (e.g., computer if needed), assistive software
- ▶ Non-medical help (study skills support, mentoring, BSL interpreter)
- ▶ Extra disability-related travel to campus or placements
- ▶ Other approved study-related disability costs

## Quick tips!

- ▶ Apply early – setup can take a few weeks.
- ▶ Keep copies of evidence and letters.
- ▶ Wait for approval before buying equipment.

## Official links

ENGLAND  
[GOV.UK DSA Guide](#)

ENGLAND  
[DSA Forms & Notes](#)

WALES  
[Disabled Students' Grants](#)

SCOTLAND  
[SAAS: How to Apply for DSA](#)

NORTHERN IRELAND  
[Apply for DSA](#)



## What is MindView Assistive Technology (AT)?

MindView AT is an assistive mind mapping and planning suite built for neurodiverse learners and fully accessible for disabled users. It is accredited to WCAG 2.2 and is AA certified compliant for users with disabilities by the Digital Accessibility Centre.

MindView AT includes Text to Speech and Speech to Text, high contrast modes, keyboard only navigation, and compatibility with other popular AT programs such as Dragon Professional (with native voice commands), Talk-Type, JAWS, SuperNova, and ZoomText

MindView removes “blank page” pressure. Students capture ideas visually, switch to different views to check sequence, then Export into MS Office with hierarchical headings and a table of contents, so drafting starts with structure, not from scratch.

### Why Mind Mapping as a Strategy for learners with disabilities?

Mind mapping helps students externalise ideas, see relationships between concepts, and organise information visually. For learners with dyslexia, ADHD, autism, or executive function challenges, this reduces working memory load and makes complex tasks manageable.

### Key benefits

- ▶ Reduces cognitive load through visual externalisation.
- ▶ Improves organisation and sequencing for essays and projects.
- ▶ Supports memory and recall for revision and comprehension.
- ▶ Boosts confidence and momentum by removing blank page anxiety.
- ▶ Enables flexible thinking; add, move, and restructure ideas quickly.
- ▶ Fits academic workflows when paired with MindView (Outline, Word/PPT export, research support and citations).



## Why MindView?

MindView makes mind mapping even more effective. Students switch easily between map and outline, export their work to Word with clear headings, and add citations. This approach bridges the gap between planning and creating polished academic assignments.

MindView directly reduces cognitive load for DSA students during writing and reviewing. It transforms ideas into clear visual structures and allows instant export to MS Office formats. With MindView, students go from planning in a mind map to drafts with a structured document that includes a formatted academic style, a table of contents, and in-line citations and bibliographies, totally eliminating blank page anxiety.

Academic features like the MindView Research Assistant and Citation Tool guide students from planning and outlining assignments to producing assessment-ready documents in a seamless workflow.

MindView comes as a desktop app for Microsoft Windows and Mac OS, and a web app that works with all browsers. Each version mirrors its native platform, so students master MindView quickly and use it confidently across a wide range of academic tasks.



MindView - Accredited Assistive  
Technology Mind Mapping Software

# Disability Impacts, Strategies & MindView Recommendations

Section B-2 of a DSA Needs Report is titled “**Impacts of Disability and Recommended Strategies**” In this section, the assessor links specific challenges faced by the student to the recommended strategies, ensuring these strategies address the student’s underlying disability-related needs.

**Assessors typically select only one category for each software recommendation.**

## **B-2-1 Research and reading**

Frames reading-comprehension and research-workflow barriers. MindView is rarely placed here (text-to-speech/summarising tools are usually more suitable), though you may reference it if a student benefits from visually structuring literature themes.

## **B-2-2 Writing and reviewing academic work**

This is the primary location for MindView because students need support to plan, sequence and structure essays. MindView enables visual planning, Outline view and export to Word with headings to overcome “blank-page” starts and coherence issues.

## **B-2-3 Note-taking in lectures and seminars**

Captures barriers to listening-while-writing; MindView is not usually justified here; use dedicated capture tools instead.

## **B-2-4 Managing time and organising work**

Use when task breakdown and deadline management are key. MindView’s task data and Timeline/Gantt views provide visual scaffolding.

## **B-2-5 Access to and use of technology**

Use to pair MindView with Assistive Technology training so the student can implement planning features effectively.

## **B-2-6 Practical sessions, placements, field trips and additional course activities**

Rarely used for MindView unless you explicitly link practical activities to planning/report-writing outputs.

## **B-2-7 Examinations and timed assessments**

Not a typical MindView location, unless pre-exam planning or structured revision maps feed into permitted materials or post-exam assignments.

## **B-2-8 Social interaction and communication**

Generally not used for MindView.

## **B-2-9 Travel and access to the higher-education environment**

Not applicable to MindView.

## **B-2-10 Additional information**

Catch-all for context; seldom needed for MindView unless summarising its role in the wider support mix.