# Getting the Braille you Need in the Workplace or Education

## The Braillists Foundation

## Access to work

### What is Access to Work

Access To Work is a UK government funded scheme which funds support which is not covered by an employer making reasonable adjustments for a disabled employee. This could include equipment, software, and human support.

### How do I Apply for ATW?

You can apply for ATW online or by phone. If applying online, you'll be asked to fill in a short form where you explain your disability or health condition and how it impacts you in the workplace. You will also be asked to provide a contact at your place of work.

### Do I Need to be in Work?

You need to have either started work, or have a start date, in order to apply.

### Will ATW Provide Braille Equipment

Yes, ATW can provide equipment such as braille displays and embossers, depending on the job you are doing. It isn't so much about the disability as the tasks you are doing. You will need to explain how a braille display or embosser will enable you to do your job, rather than simply stating that you are blind.

### Can I Choose What Equipment I Get?

Yes, there are several ways you can do this. When you've applied for ATW you will be contacted by a member of the team. At this stage you will have the option to go for an assessment to determine what support you might need, or if you know that you only want a specific piece of equipment, you can provide your advisor with three quotes.

### What happens at assessment?

If you go for an assessment you will discuss your job and the tasks you are required to perform. The assessor will then make several recommendations. If you have some idea of what you'll need, it's worth writing this down in advance so that you remember to cover everything at the meeting.

### Who Pays for the Equipment

Access To Work will pay for the support if you've been in work for less than 12 weeks, or haven't yet started. After this time, your employer may be expected to contribute.

## Disabled Students Allowance:

### What is DSA

Disabled Students Allowance (DSA) is a government funded scheme which provides equipment and non-medical support for students in higher education.

### Who can apply for DSA

Anyone who has a specific disability or medical condition that affects their ability to study can apply. You must also be an undergraduate or postgraduate on a course that lasts at least a year.

### How do I apply?

You can apply for DSA as part of your student finance application. Alternatively, if you are not applying for a student loan, you can download the DSA form from the government website and post it to the DSA team.

### What happens at assessment?

After you apply for DSA, you will be asked to complete a needs assessment. This is an opportunity to speak with someone about your specific access needs. Your needs assessor will produce a report, recommending certain support, which is then sent to the Student Loans Company.

Your first assessment can be a daunting process, however it's important to remember that assessors are here to help you. It's also worth noting that they interact with students with a range of disabilities, so they are unlikely to be a blindness expert. Write down a list of all the tasks you might be expected to complete at university, and think about what support you'd need to complete them.

Think about your needs on your worst day, this is especially important if you have a condition that fluctuates. For example, can you carry a heavy piece of equipment to and from campus every day? Are there days when you may need extra lighting in your room in order to read?

Ask yourself if there are any situations in which hard copy braille might be more helpful than electronic braille. Think about handling data, and whether it would be easier transcribed and embossed.

### What support can I ask for?

You can ask for a whole range of support, however, here are some things you might need in respect to braille:

* An electronic braille display.
* Duxbury.
* A braille embosser.
* Transcription hours.
* A Perkins brailler.
* Braille paper.
* Training to use your display or software.

### What happens if I don't get what I need?

If you don't get the support package approved, you can ask your needs assessor to go back to Student Finance and move your case up the chain of command. There is a process that they should be familiar with. Alternatively, you can fill in an official complaint and email it to the Student Loans Company yourself.