



**UNIVERSITY POLICY ON
DISPLAY SCREEN EQUIPMENT**

Date: July 2004

Reviewed: October 2006.

Display Screen Equipment and Laptops

1. Introduction

Display Screen Equipment is defined in the Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992 as 'any alphanumeric or graphic display screen, regardless of the display process involved'. This type of equipment is found throughout the University and is most commonly used for word processing.

The aim of this policy is to provide advice to managers, responsible for the use of Display Screen Equipment in their area, with sufficient information to ensure a safe working environment and to comply with the relevant statutory regulations.

2. Legislation

The Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992 are designed to protect the health and safety of people who use display screen equipment (DSE) as a significant part of their normal work. The regulations require employees to carry out an assessment of their workstations and to make sure they comply with the many specific requirements listed. The regulations not only cover the display screens but all associated equipment such as desks, chairs, telephone, printer and software. Lighting and other environmental functions are also covered.

3. Display Screen Equipment User

The DSE Regulations 1992 define a DSE user as an employee who uses the equipment as a significant part of their normal work. The guidance sets out criteria to help the competent person decide whether someone is a user. The employee should be classified as a user if most (or all) of the following criteria apply:

1. DSE is needed to carry out the job effectively
2. The use of DSE is not up to the discretion of the employee.
3. The job specification requires skills or training, for example, a certain typing speed or knowledge of named software
4. The employee uses DSE for at least one hour at a time usually every day
5. The job requires rapid transfer of information between the employee and the screen.
6. The job requires a high level of concentration, such as, where making a mistake would have critical results.

Examples of where employees are likely to be classified as users include word process operators, jobs where there is extensive use of spreadsheets and general administration. If the job only requires limited use of DSE, for example one hour per week, the employee would not be classified as a user. If they are not a user the regulations do not apply to them or their workstations.

4. Role of the Competent Person

The competent person as designated by the Head of Department (usually the departmental health and safety representative) should be capable of carrying out the following functions:

- Carry out or co-ordinate assessments of the workstations of all users within the department
- Identify any workstations that do not comply with the regulations, recommend to the Head of Department equipment to be replaced and lighting to be improved, therefore complying with the DSE Regulations 1992.
- Maintaining a register of workstation assessments within the department and supplying copies of the assessments to the university Health and Safety Advisor.
- Ensuring that DSE users receive appropriate training and information on the safe use of DSE, work related upper limb disorder (WRULD) and their entitlement to free eyesight testing. (see section 5.2 for more details).

5. Workstation Assessment

The competent person (health and safety rep.) must ensure that an assessment of the workstation is carried out for all departmental employees classified as a user, even if they work from home. The main risks this assessment is likely to identify are work related upper limb discomfort, stress and eye strain.

The assessments must be reviewed if there are any changes that will affect the original assessment, for example, new staff, new equipment or relevant results of research on the health effects of DSE.

In many cases the competent person will co-ordinate the risk assessment by giving DSE users a checklist to complete, the competent person can then use the results of these checklists to identify any problems that may require remedial action. The users will require training in assessing their workstations. (Refer to the University Health and Safety Advisor if further advice is required)

The DSE user checklist is given in Appendix 'A', however key issues include the following:

5.1 Work Routine

The Head of Department must ensure that DSE 'Users' work routine is planned in such a way as to give them breaks, preferably short and frequent. These are breaks from the DSE, not necessarily from work. The taking of breaks is more important than their duration. A break of 5 – 10 minutes after about one hour is preferable to a 15 minute break every 2 hours or more.

Staff should be given discretion on when to take breaks and how to carry out tasks so as to allow optimal distribution of effort over the working day.

5.2 The Provision of Eye Tests and Glasses

All DSE users are entitled to an eyesight test paid for by the University. These tests should be repeated at regular intervals after the first test and in between if they are having visual difficulties which may reasonably be considered to be caused by their DSE work.

If the eye test indicates they need glasses/corrective lenses **specifically** for their DSE work, the University will pay for a basic pair of frames and lenses in accordance with the current arrangements established via the Health and Safety Advisor.

From November 2005, the combined eye care/glasses vouchers will be available from the University Health and Safety Advisor, and it will be his responsibility to keep these arrangements for the provision of eye tests and glasses under constant review to ensure the University continues to meet the requirements of the DSE regulations. From November 2005, Specsavers Opticians will provide this service for the University.

5.3 Training and Information

All DSE users will be trained in the safe use of DSE, procedures for reporting problems and the requirement to carry out a self-assessment of their workstations, where appropriate. Departmental health and safety representatives should inform the Staff Development Office of all identified training requirements.

5.4 Records

The workstation assessments must be recorded and maintained within the department. Eyesight test records should be forwarded to the University Health and Safety Advisor.

5.5 DSE (Screen)

The DSE Regulations require screens/monitors to meet the following criteria:

1. It must be possible to swivel and tilt the screen
2. There must be no glare or reflections which could cause discomfort
3. Characters must be large enough and be adequately spaced
4. Image must be stable and free of flickers
5. The screen must be height adjustable
6. It must be easy to adjust the brightness and contrast to suit the conditions

5.6 DSE (Keyboards)

The DSE Regulations require the keyboards to meet the following criteria:

1. The way in which the keyboard is arranged and key functions must make the keyboard easy to use.
2. The keyboard must be separate from the screen and tiltable, so that it is possible to find a comfortable working position.
3. The symbols on the keyboard should be clear and visible enough to be seen
4. The surface of the keyboard must be matt, so that glare is reduced.
5. There must be at least 50 mm between the edge of the keyboard and the edge of the desk, so that there is sufficient support for the hands and wrists.

5.7 Desk Top

The DSE Regulations require desk tops and other work surfaces to meet the following criteria:

1. There must be enough space to work comfortably
2. The surface must be made of a low reflective material
3. The surface must be large enough to allow all the equipment and other material to be arranged and moved easily to carry out the task comfortably.
4. There must be a document holder, where appropriate, which is sufficiently adjustable and stable

5.8 Seating

The DSE Regulations require seating to meet the following criteria:

1. The seat of the chair must be adjustable in height
2. The back of the chair must be adjustable in height and tilt
3. The chair must be stable
4. The chair must allow a comfortable working position to be achieved and freedom of movement.
5. A footrest will be provided if considered necessary as a result of the DSE assessment.

5.9 Environmental Factors

The DSE Regulations require environmental factors to meet the following criteria:

1. There must be enough light for the task (e.g. 300-500 lux for normal word processing)
2. The equipment and the lighting must be arranged so as to prevent reflection and glare.
3. Glare and reflection onto the screen from windows, light coloured walls, must be avoided.
4. windows must have adjustable blinds
5. The workstation must have enough space for the user to move work around comfortably.
6. The level of humidity must be comfortable
7. The equipment must not emit so much heat that it causes discomfort.
8. The equipment should not cause too much noise, for example, to cause distraction or disturb speech.
9. Radiation (except visible light) must be negligible. The radiation from modern DSE is negligible and it is very unlikely that any action will be needed.

5.10 Information for Staff, Students and Other Users

All DSE users will be provided with information on the following:

1. The issues associated with DSE use
2. How to use the checklist for assessing a workstation
3. The results of the workstation assessment
4. How to lay out their furniture and equipment, and how to adjust it to achieve a comfortable working position.
5. The correct posture for DSE use and its importance in adopting a safe working practice.
6. Who to report problems to, regarding workstations.
7. Incorporating short, frequent breaks into the work routine.
8. Staff entitlement to eyesight tests, where required for DSE use.

Refer to Users Guides for further information on 'Working Safely with Display Screens' or contact the University Health and Safety Advisor

6. Laptop Usage

6.1 Introduction

Since the introduction of the DSE Regulations in 1992, the use of the Laptop computer has become more widespread.

Regulation 1(4) (d) of the DSE Regulations states that portable DSE (e.g. Laptops) is exempt from the regulations *if it is not in prolonged use*. However, portable equipment that is habitually used by a DSE 'User' as a significant part of their work should be regarded as covered by the regulations in the same way as other forms of DSE.

6.2 Laptop Computers

The Laptop computer is not designed for prolonged use because they have smaller keyboards, screens and are often limited by battery life.

In addition, because the equipment is frequently used in constricted or less 'user friendly' environments, e.g. trains and meeting rooms, it is often difficult or impossible for the user to work comfortably at the DSE. Because of the arrangement of the screen and keyboard, laptop users tend to work with the head and shoulders bent forward and to adopt awkward arm, wrist and hand positions.

Laptop users should be aware of the appropriate postures for DSE use. It is important as with other DSE use, that the user varies the working position and takes frequent breaks from the DSE.

6.3 Risk Assessment

Under the DSE Regulations, the University has a duty to assess:

- The whole workstation and work environment of the user
- The work being done
- The particular needs of individual members of staff.

Where there is any risk identified, the University must take action to reduce these risks, so far as is reasonably practicable'. In regards to the requirements for laptop use it will not be realistic to assess all environments in which the equipment will be used. It is important, however, to look at any situation where there is likely to be significant regular use.

6.4 Training

Any training requirements, particularly relating to risk assessment or self assessment should be directed towards the Staff Development Office or the University Health and Safety Advisor

6.5 DSE (Laptops) in Various Environments

6.5.1 Home Workers

Any employee of the University using DSE at home as a significant part of their normal daily routine, is subject to DSE Regulations. As such, an appropriate assessment of the workstation should be carried out. For these employees, laptop equipment is unlikely to be appropriate or justifiable and therefore suitable static workstations should be in place.

6.5.2 Laptops (Home, Meetings or Hotel)

The Laptop should always be at a comfortable distance away from the user and directly in front of him/her, rather than at an angle.

The furniture, for example the desk, should be at a suitable height, with plenty of unobstructed legroom and a rigid chair should be used. The Laptop should be placed in such a way that glare or reflected light is minimised as far as possible.

6.5.3 Train, Plane, Car, Coach

These are probably some of the most uncomfortable and hazardous environments in which laptops are frequently used. This type of use should be kept to a minimum.

The important points to consider are the adjustments that can be made to put the laptop into a safer and more comfortable position, for example:

- The laptop should always be directly in front of the user, at a suitable height and distance.
- On a train, a table is the ideal surface to position the laptop. However, in the absence of a table, a hard surface can be found using a briefcase or a small suitcase. This will give better stability and will raise the laptop up to a more comfortable height.
- If the user is using a laptop in the car, they should sit in the passenger seat without the constraints of the steering wheel. The seat should be pushed back to give ample room to operate the laptop.
- Glare affecting the screen image can be reduced by using a blind or altering the position of the vehicle.

Review Safety Policy/Code of Practice – November 2006

.....
**Donald Cross - MIOSH, MIIRSM Dated
University Health and Safety Advisor**

Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment)

Workstation Assessment

Name of User

Job Title

Department

Date of Assessment

The assessor should consider **all** of the following questions. The assessor should then use their judgement to assess if the level of risk (the probability of injury occurring) is significant or not, and the remedial action which needs to be taken to reduce those risks.

		Action Recommended	
Does he/she depend on the display screen to the job?	YES/NO		
Does he/she have any discretion as to the use or non-use of the equipment?	YES/NO		
Does he/she need significant training and/or particular skills in the use of the display screen equipment to do the job?	YES/NO		
Does he/she normally use display equipment for continuous spells of an hour or more at a time?	YES/NO		
Does he/she use display screen equipment more or less every working day?	YES/NO		
Is fast transfer of information between user and screen an important requirement of the job?	YES/NO		
Do the performance requirements of the system demand high levels of attention and concentration, for example, where the consequences of error may be critical?	YES/NO		
A person will be classified as a user if the answer to most of all the above questions is YES			
THE DISPLAY SCREEN AND KEYBOARD			
Stability: Is the display screen free from "flicker"?	YES/NO	High/Med/Low	
Clarity: Is the information easy to read?	YES/NO	High/Med/Low	
Can brightness/contrast be adjusted	YES/NO	High/Med/Low	
Glare and Reflection: Is the screen free from glare/reflection?	YES/NO	High/Med/Low	
Adjustability: Can the screen be tilted / swivelled?	YES/NO	High/Med/Low	
Is the keyboard tiltable and separate from the screen?	YES/NO	High/Med/Low	

Is there sufficient space in front of the keyboard to provide support for hands/arms?	YES/NO	High/Med/Low	
Does the keyboard have a matt surface (to eliminate glare)	YES/NO	High/Med/Low	
Are the symbols on the keyboard legible?	YES/NO	High/Med/Low	
Is the mouse used correctly e.g. lightly held/positioned within easy reach?	YES/NO	High/Med/Low	
Is the user aware that an appropriate eye test is available on request?	YES/NO	High/Med/Low	
WORKSTATION DESIGN AND SEATING			
Is the work-station sufficiently large to allow for flexibility of screen/keyboard/documents and other equipment?	YES/NO	High/Med/Low	
Is there adequate space for the user to adopt a comfortable working position and maintain good posture?	YES/NO	High/Med/Low	
Where appropriate, is the document holder stable/adjustable and in a convenient location?	YES/NO	High/Med/Low	
Is the seat stable/comfortable and allow for ease of movement?	YES/NO	High/Med/Low	
Can the seat height be adjusted?	YES/NO	High/Med/Low	
Can the seat back be adjusted in tilt/height?	YES/NO	High/Med/Low	
If, following correct adjustment of the chair , the user cannot place their feet firmly on the floor, are footrests provided?	YES/NO	High/Med/Low	
ENVIRONMENTAL			
Is adequate lighting provided? (e.g. artificial or natural light should illuminate the entire room to an adequate standard)	YES/NO	High/Med/Low	
Are windows fitted with suitable blinds/coverings to reduce glare/ daylight where necessary?	YES/NO	High/Med/Low	
Are workstations free from excessive noise (i.e. is normal conversation difficult)?	YES/NO	High/Med/Low	
Is any dry heat which may be produced from electronic equipment adequately controlled to prevent discomfort/problems of sore eyes?	YES/NO	High/Med/Low	
OVERALL REMARKS/RECOMMENDATIONS			

Signed (Assessor)
Signed (User)
Date: