



UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM

Health and Safety Policy

Display Screen Equipment Use

UHSP/7/DSE/05

This document sets out in more detail the arrangements for compliance with University Health and Safety Policy at Budget Centre level and it gives guidance on how these requirements may be met. This document forms a part of the University Health and Safety Policy. It has been approved by the Environment, Health and Safety Executive Committee, in consultation with the Joint Safety Advisory Committee, and it will be subject to review.

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Display Screen Equipment Use

UHSP/7/DSE/05

INTRODUCTION

Aims of the policy

This policy is aimed at preventing ill health resulting from the use of Display Screen Equipment (DSE). The possible risk factors associated with DSE use are:

- musculoskeletal problems (affecting neck, back and upper limbs)
- visual fatigue
- stress

Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to:

- All DSE provided by the University for use in administration, teaching and research.
- Anyone employed by the University, whether directly or through an agency, who uses DSE provided by the University (on or off site) as a significant part of their normal work (referred to as users - see guidance).
- DSE used by students

Exceptions to the Policy

- The University is not responsible for eyesight testing or prescription spectacles for students or agency workers.

Compliance with this policy should ensure compliance with relevant statutory requirements, in particular, the Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations.

Definitions of DSE, Workstation and User can be found in the Guidance section.

POLICY

Heads of Budget Centres must make arrangements in areas under their control to ensure:

- That suitable DSE and Workstation are provided.
- DSE users are identified.
- An initial risk assessment is completed of each user's workstation, whether fixed or mobile and wherever the equipment is located.
- All necessary steps are taken to remedy risks found as a result of the assessment.
- Review of a risk assessment where required by change of circumstances.
- Ill health attributed to DSE use is promptly investigated, corrective measures are implemented where appropriate and the individual is referred to the University's Occupational Health Service.
- Appropriate eye sight testing is provided for **employees**, if requested, on commencement of DSE use, subsequently at intervals indicated by the optician, and if an employee is experiencing visual difficulties.
- Provide **employees** with suitable corrective glasses if there is a specific problem with viewing at display screen distance.
- Users are aware of this Policy and are provided with information, instruction and training on DSE use, on potential risks to health and how these may be avoided.

- Users are trained to use the equipment provided for them correctly.
- Supervisors and managers are identified for DSE Assessor training to undertake workstation assessments.

Supervisors must ensure:

- Users' workstations are assessed before commencement of work to ensure workstation is adjusted and set up appropriately.
- Further assessment is arranged if any problems are unresolved.
- Users who require training are identified.
- New users complete online training and ensure appropriate adjustments are made to the workstation on completion of training.
- Users have received sufficient information, instruction and training in DSE use by accessing the training provided.
- Users are not required to engage in intensive periods of on-screen activity without sufficient break.
- Ensure users take sufficient rest breaks.
- Instances of users reporting health problems attributed to DSE use are followed up without delay, in accordance with this Policy.
- Software used is reviewed to ensure that it is suitable for the task and not unnecessarily complicated.

The Health and Safety Unit will:

- Investigate ill health attributed to DSE use.
- Advise on modifications to workstations to accommodate disability, involving outside agencies as necessary.
- After workstation assessments have been completed and remedial action taken, advise on workstation modifications if health problems are not resolved.
- Liaise (with written consent), with the employee's optician in the case of disagreement about the requirements for correction at DSE viewing distance.

Individuals must:

- Ensure that they adjust their DSE equipment/ environment on each occasion, as instructed and in accordance with the risk assessment, in order to reduce risk of health problems.
- Organise their work to include changes in task to provide breaks from DSE use.
- Undertake training provided and complete a checklist of their workstation.
- Notify their supervisor if they are experiencing any health problem which they relate to the use of DSE and, if directed to do so, co-operate in referral to the University's Occupational Health Service.
- Obtain prior approval from their supervisor before arranging an eyesight test.

GUIDANCE

Display Screen Equipment

DSE covered by this policy includes:

- Conventional display screens
- Flat panel screens and touch screens
- Television screens
- Microfiche
- Control panels on machinery

Workstations

A workstation is covered by this policy if DSE, including portable DSE in prolonged use is present.

For the purposes of this policy a work station is understood to be:

- Display screen equipment
- Its peripherals e.g. keyboard, mouse, and other inputting devices
- The chair
- The desk
- The immediate work environment

Identifying users

An individual will be a User if one or more of the following criteria apply:

- The individual depends on the use of DSE as a significant part of their normal work, as alternative means are not readily available for achieving the same results.
- The individual has no discretion as to the use or non-use of DSE.
- The individual uses DSE more or less daily.
- The individual normally uses DSE for a continuous or near continuous period of an hour or more at a time.
- Fast transfer of information between the user and the system is an important part of the job.
- There is a requirement for high levels of attention and concentration.
- The individual needs special training or skills to use DSE.

Workstation assessment

This includes initial assessments to identify the optimal position of additional computer network points and / or electrical sockets when creating additional workstations.

This will also include those of laptop users and home workers using university equipment, multiple user workstations and also workers on other employer's sites.

Further information is available in the University's Health and Safety Guidance *Workstation Design* (GUIDANCE/5/WD/98) (See <http://www.hsu.bham.ac.uk/univ/hsguidance/5wd.pdf>)

Information and training

The person using the equipment should be trained in the health and safety aspects of working with DSE. It should be recognised that standards of keyboard skills and software competence can have an impact on the development of musculoskeletal and other problems. Training should be undertaken on commencement and after return from any absence cause by visual, musculoskeletal or stress related ill health.

Information to be provided	University employees	Those employed by others and Agency workers	Self-employed persons
Risks from DSE and workstation	Yes	Yes	Yes
Risk assessment and measures to reduce risk	Yes	Yes	Yes
Breaks and activity changes	Yes	Yes	No
Eye and eyesight tests	Yes	No	No
Initial training	Yes	No	No
Training when workstation is modified	Yes	Yes	No

Individuals will undertake training and complete a checklist with regards to their own workstation. This will be shared with their manager or supervisor who is responsible for taking the appropriate action.

Supervisors and managers who are responsible for performing workstation assessments should have appropriate training.

The DSE workstation checklist is available on the University's Health and Safety web pages (see <http://www.hsu.bham.ac.uk/univ/pdfs/dsechk1.pdf>)

Action identified by the assessment

If remedial action is required, this should be carried out as soon as reasonably practicable. Most remedial action involves the reorganisation of space or equipment, when organising office furniture or equipment longer cables to the electrical supply, computer network point or between computer hardware may be required to enable the optimum arrangement, the provision of footrests and chair which are adjustable in seat height, back height and back angle. It is often the case that adequate chairs have been provided, but the user has not been shown how to adjust them correctly.

Review of Assessments

Review of assessments is required if any of these changes has occurred:

- Alterations to the workstation
- Change in equipment
- Major change in software
- Substantial changes in task requirements
- When it is relocated
- If there are changes in the environment such as lighting

Special Assessments

Home Workers

If the employee is employed to work at home or at any location away from their main base the DSE regulations apply, whether or not the workstation is provided in part or on whole by the employer. Employees should be trained to undertake their own risk assessments, using an ergonomic checklist.

Further information is available in the University's Health and Safety Guidance *Homeworking* (Guidance/21/HW/03) (See <http://www.hsu.bham.ac.uk/univ/hsguidance/uhsq21.htm>)

Laptops

Portable DSE equipment in prolonged use should be treated in the same way as fixed DSE. However, consideration must also be given to the weight of the equipment and how it is to be transported. Laptops in general have poor ergonomics during use, the screen being too low leading to hunched

postures, and poor mouse facilities leading to upper arm/hand wrist problems. It will normally be beneficial to provide a separate keyboard and mouse. Placing the laptop on a riser to raise the screen will reduce neck and shoulder problems. Specific additional equipment is available that is light and easy transported. Advice and details of suppliers can be obtained from Occupational Health.

Shared or multi-user workstations

When workstations are shared by known individuals, such as in a job share, they should be assessed in relation to all users and operators. In other circumstances, such as equipment in training centres, variability must be built into the workstation to accommodate all likely users. The use of equipment such as variable height monitor risers and the suitability of the chair may need to be checked for both the tall and short user, with the provision of the footrest as necessary. Inputting devices may need to be suitable for both right and left dominant workers, with instruction given as how to configure the mouse for left and right hand use.

Eyesight tests and corrective spectacles

- Employees should be offered an eyesight test upon taking up a new post or if they become a habitual user of DSE in their current post. This is regardless of whether or not they have been a DSE user in any previous post either within University or with another employer.
- If visual problems such as eye strain, headaches and dry eyes are identified a workstation assessment should be performed and remedial action taken.
- Employees are entitled to an eyesight test if they request it even if they currently wear corrective glasses.
- The employee should measure the distance between the eyes and the screen and give this information to the optician performing the eyesight test.
- The cost of test and spectacles will be borne by the Budget Centre but only if requested in advance. Should an employee arrange a test independently even if it is specifically related to DSE use, they will be responsible for the cost of the test.
- The University will pay for a standard frame and lens when it is identified that prescription glasses are required for intermediate distance. The Budget Centre will contribute a maximum of £50 towards more expensive frames or lenses (bifocal/varifocals). This figure will be reviewed annually by the EHSEC. Payment will normally be in arrears.
- The eyesight test should be performed within 4 weeks of any request.
- The employee is responsible for the safe keeping of any glasses provided. It is an offence to interfere with or misuse glasses which are provided in the interest of health and safety. Anyone failing to observe this requirement may be subject to disciplinary action.
- In this respect the University is not responsible for agency workers; it is the Agency that supplies them who is responsible for an eyesight test and the provision of spectacles.

Breaks from DSE use

Short, frequent breaks or changes in activity, posture and visual demand should be taken by DSE users before fatigue sets in. When new posts are developed or jobs re-designed the inclusion of different activities, which will provide natural breaks from DSE use, should be developed where possible.

Purchase of Software, DSE and Office Furniture

In order to prevent avoidable problems related to the ergonomics of equipment, the equipment purchases should normally conform to:

- BS EN ISO 9241(DSE)
- BS3044 (Office Furniture)
- BS EN 527 (Worktables and desks)
- BS En 1335 part 1 (chairs)

Inputting Devices

Many problems arise because insufficient consideration has been given to the appropriate inputting device (mouse, trackball or other pointing device). The basic mouse supplied with a computer system may need to be replaced to facilitate software use e.g. scroll wheel for word and excel documents. The software settings of the pointing device may need adjusting for individual users and the organisation of DSE work should be arranged to provide breaks from using the pointing device. It is important that mouse ball and roller are kept clean, and individuals will need to be shown how to do this. Further advice and information are available from Occupational Health.

FURTHER SOURCES OF INFORMATION

HSE, *The law on VDUs: An easy guide: Making sure your office complies with the Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992 (as amended in 2002)* HSG90, HSE books, 2003

HSE, *Work with display screen equipment. Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992 as amended by the Health and Safety (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2002. Guidance on Regulations L26, (Second edition)* HSE Books, 2003

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