

Display screen equipment policy and guidance

1. Scope

This document outlines actions required to comply with the Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992 (as amended 2002). The document provides the University policy which is applicable to all Schools and Services and has detailed guidance in order to manage local arrangements.

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2. Introduction

All employers are under a general duty to assess the risks to the health and safety of their employees and to anyone else who may be affected by their activity, so that appropriate preventative measures can be identified and put in place. As part of this general assessment, work with display screen equipment (DSE) must be assessed against the requirements of the Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992 (amended 2002).

3. Policy

It is the policy of the University of Bristol to fully comply with the Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992 (as amended 2002). This policy applies to all users and their workstations used in the undertaking of University business (see definitions).

3.1 Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the Head of School or Service to ensure:

- There is a management procedure in place which is outlined in the local rules document to assess workstations and reduce risks.

It is the responsibility of line managers to ensure that:

- user workstations are assessed and any associated risks are reduced as far as possible;
- workstations meet specified minimum requirements;
- staff are given adequate information and training with regard to working with DSE including the importance of taking regular breaks;
- eye and eyesight tests are provided to DSE users on request and that there is a procedure to reimburse users for correct appliances (glasses) that are provided where they are required solely for DSE work.

It is the responsibility of the DSE user to:

- report any problems that they may be experiencing while working on DSE to their line manager;
- complete any training provided and follow specific requirements outlined for safe working practices.

3.2 Definitions

3.2.1 Display Screen Equipment (DSE)

DSE is defined as 'any alphanumeric or graphic display screen, regardless of the display process'. A display screen usually forms part of a computer showing text,

graphics or numbers (i.e., desktop, laptop or smartphone). The definition also applies to display systems such as microfiche and CCTV.

3.2.2 User

User means any employee who habitually uses display screen equipment as a significant part of their normal work. The Regulations apply to users whether they are employed to work at their own employer's workstation, a workstation at home or hot-desking. The majority of University employees (including research post graduate students) will be classed as 'users'.

3.2.3 Workstation

A workstation includes:

- the display screen;
- chair, work surface / desk, keyboard or other input device;
- telephone, document holder, printer etc.;
- any optional accessories to the display screen equipment;
- the immediate work environment around the display screen equipment;
- environmental considerations such as space, heat, lighting, noise and humidity.

4. Guidance

4.1 Analysis of workstations to assess and reduce risks

Each school/service should have one or more assessors who are trained in the principles and practices of workstation assessment. The assessor must be familiar with the main requirements of the DSE Regulations and be able to:

- identify hazards (including less obvious ones) and assess risks from the workstation and the kind of DSE work being done;
- draw valid and reliable conclusions from assessments and identify steps to reduce risks;
- make a clear record of the assessment and communicate the findings to those who need to take appropriate action, and to the worker concerned;
- call on further expertise if necessary (assessors may seek advice from Safety and Health Services or recommend referral to the Occupational Health Service).

When identifying DSE assessors, the School Manager or Divisional Head must ensure that the individual has enough time and motivation to carry out the role effectively. Safety and Health Services provides training and information for assessors (see section 4.5 for more details).

Workstation self-assessment must be carried out by all employees who use DSE using the form <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/safety/media/ra/dse-workstation-ra.docx>

The results of the assessment must then be reviewed by the DSE assessor and appropriate action taken to resolve any issues highlighted. Assessments should be repeated or reviewed if there are major changes to the equipment, environment, furniture, tasks or following an employee relocating workstations. Users should be encouraged to report any ill health that may be due to their DSE work to their line manager or School/Service Safety Advisor. Reports of ill health can also indicate that a reassessment of the workstation is required.

The assessment must be repeated on a regular basis (1-3 years, determined locally) to ensure good working practices are maintained. Reassessment should be carried out in the same way as the original assessment.

In some areas a workstation may be shared by more than one employee. Where this occurs an assessment must be undertaken by each user using the workstation.

4.2 Minimum requirements for workstations

Workstations and equipment must comply with the minimum requirements outlined in the DSE regulations. The minimum requirements for workstations apply to all elements of the workstation including furniture, software and environmental factors. Full details of the minimum requirements can be found in appendix 1.

Inspections should be carried out by School Safety Advisors of any university workstations used by students, for example in computer teaching spaces. These workstations should as far as is reasonably practicable meet the minimum ergonomic requirements set out in the Regulations in order to comply with the duty of care that the University owes to its students. Further advice can be obtained from Safety and Health Services.

4.3 Daily work routines of users

Whenever possible, jobs using DSE should be designed to consist of a mixture of screen-based and non-screen-based work to prevent fatigue, eyestrain, musculoskeletal conditions such as backache and mental demands. Breaks or changes of activity must be included in working time.

It is advisable to take short, frequent breaks rather than occasional longer breaks: for example a 5-10 minute break after 50-60 minutes continuous screen and/or keyboard use will be more beneficial than a 15-20 minute break every 2 hours. If possible breaks should be taken away from the DSE workstation, to allow the user to stand up, move about and change posture.

Most University employees have control over their own work and will be able to organise their time to ensure that they take sufficient breaks.

4.4 Eyesight tests

4.4.1 Legal requirements and responsibilities

Under The Health and safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992 (as amended 2002), employers must provide display screen equipment (DSE) users with eye and eyesight tests on request, and corrective appliances specifically for use with DSE (e.g. glasses) if needed.

DSE Users are entitled to eye and eyesight tests by a registered practitioner (Optician or Doctor) on the following occasions:

- when they first become a user;
- when requested by the user;
- at regular intervals thereafter on the recommendation of the practitioner (usually every 2 years);
- when the user experiences visual difficulties attributed to display screen use.

DSE users are currently entitled to receive the following financial contributions towards eye tests and corrective appliances:

- up to £25 towards the cost of an eye test;
- up to £35 towards the cost of glasses prescribed solely for DSE use.

Please note that any glasses remain the property of the University. The University will not pay for glasses which are used for other purposes such as reading or driving in addition to display screen equipment work. Therefore, if an ordinary prescription is suitable for DSE work, the University does not have to pay for the glasses. Claims must be supported by receipts.

Each school/section is responsible for:

- managing the procedure for providing eye tests for DSE users;
- providing information to staff on the arrangements for eye testing (for example by providing details in their Local Rules);
- ensuring DSE users are reimbursed for eye sight tests and glasses as appropriate.

4.4.2 Eye testing procedure

The following steps should be taken when a user needs an eye test:

- a) The employee must obtain authorisation prior to attending an eye test and submit it for approval to the nominated person within their school/section using the form available here:
https://www.bristol.ac.uk/safety/uobonly/forms/health/eyetest_form.pdf
- b) Once authorised, the employee should arrange their own appointment with the optician.

- c) Section 2 of the form should be completed by the optician. If the optician determines that glasses are needed specifically for DSE use, they must indicate this on the authorisation form.
- d) The employee should pay for the test and any glasses issued for DSE use.
- e) The relevant person in the school/section (with the authority to approve eye test requests) must check that the optician has completed the relevant section prior to agreeing payment for any glasses issued.
- f) The employee can then claim costs back through the school/section expenses as appropriate (within the limits specified above). Receipts must be provided.
- g) Any costs incurred above the limits specified above for eye tests and glasses must be met by the employee.
- h) The completed authorisation form should be kept by the school/section as evidence that the relevant legislation is being complied with. These records may be checked by Safety and Health Services during audits. Records should be kept for 5 years.

4.5 Provision of training and information

All users must be provided with adequate information and training on the following areas:

- risks from display screen equipment and workstations;
- risk assessment and measures to reduce the risks;
- breaks and activity changes;
- eye and eyesight tests;
- initial training;
- training when the workstation is modified, including situations where the user is hot-desking.

The following training is available:

- DSE e-learning training: provides DSE users with information on how to set their workstation up correctly <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/safety/training/#e-learning>.
- 'Setting up your workstation correctly' Training course run by Safety and Health Services and can be booked through the Staff Development website.
- DSE Assessors course: run by Safety and Health Services and can be booked through the Staff Development website. This course is aimed those with a responsibility for checking DSE assessments.
- Training on touch typing: a good typing technique reduces stress on upper limbs and can help prevent MSDs from developing.
 - <http://www.sense-lang.org/typing>
 - <http://www.typeonline.co.uk/lesson1.html>
- Other training is also available for example tailored training course to suit the needs of a particular school or service

Details of courses can be found in the Staff Development course diary

<http://staffdev.ilt.bris.ac.uk/staffdevelopment/courses/directory/>.

4.6 Prevention of potential health effects

Guidance on minimising the main health risks associated with DSE work (musculoskeletal problems, visual fatigue and mental stress) are covered in in the DSE Assessors Handbook: <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/safety/media/gn/dsehandbook-gn.pdf>. For further information please contact Safety and Health Services.

5. Useful Links

- DSE assessors handbook: <http://www.bris.ac.uk/safety/media/gn/dsehandbook-gn.pdf>
- Health and Safety Executive guidance on the health effects of DSE work: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg36.pdf>
- Workstation self-assessment checklist: <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/safety/media/ra/dse-workstation-ra.docx>
- Eye Test Authorisation Form: <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/safety/media/fo/eyetest-form-fo.pdf>
- Occupational Health Service workstation referral process: <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/safety/health/staff/workstation-assessment.html>
- Finance Services information on eye tests: <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/finance/regs/regsindex/annexd/annexd2-15.html>

Appendix 1: Minimum requirements for workstations

The minimum requirements for workstations are contained in the Schedule to the DSE Regulations and set out the standards workstations must meet to help ensure the health, safety and welfare of employees. For information, this has been reproduced as follows;

Equipment

- The use as such of the equipment must not be a source of risk for operators or users.

Display screen

- The characters on the screen shall be well-defined and clearly formed, of adequate size and with adequate spacing between the characters and lines.
- The image on the screen should be stable, with no flickering or other forms of instability.
- The brightness and contrast between the characters and the background shall be easily adjustable by the operator or user, and also be easily adjustable to ambient conditions.
- The screen must swivel and tilt easily and freely to suit the needs of the operator or user.
- It shall be possible to use a separate base for the screen or an adjustable table.
- The screen shall be free of reflective glare and reflections liable to cause discomfort to the operator or user.

Keyboard

- The keyboard shall be tiltable and separate from the screen so as to allow the operator or user to find a comfortable working position avoiding fatigue in the arms or hands.
- The space in front of the keyboard shall be sufficient to provide support for the hands and arms of the operator or user.
- The keyboard shall have a matt surface to avoid reflective glare.
- The arrangement of the keyboard and the characteristics of the keys shall be such as to facilitate the use of the keyboard.
- The symbols on the keys shall be adequately contrasted and legible from the design working position.

Work desk or work surface

- The work desk or work surface shall have a sufficiently large, low-reflective surface and allow a flexible arrangement of the screen, keyboard, documents and related equipment.

- The document holder shall be stable and adjustable and shall be positioned so as to minimize the need for uncomfortable head and eye movements.
- There shall be adequate space for operators or users to find a comfortable position.

Work chair

- The work chair shall be stable and allow the operator or user easy freedom of movement and a comfortable position:
 - The seat shall be adjustable in height;
 - The seat back shall be adjustable in both height and tilt;
 - A footrest shall be made available to any operator or user who wishes one.

Environment

Space requirements

- The workstation shall be dimensioned and designed so as to provide sufficient space for the operator or user to change position and vary movements.

Lighting

- Any room lighting or task lighting provided shall ensure satisfactory lighting conditions and an appropriate contrast between the screen and the background environment, taking into account the type of work and the vision requirements of the operator or user.
- Possible disturbing glare and reflections on the screen or other equipment shall be prevented by co-ordinating workplace and workstation layout with the positioning and technical characteristics of the artificial light sources.

Reflections and glare

- Workstations shall be so designed that sources of light, such as windows and other openings, transparent or translucent walls, and brightly coloured fixtures or walls cause no direct glare and no distracting reflections on the screen.
- Windows shall be fitted with a suitable system of adjustable covering to attenuate the daylight that falls on the workstation.

Noise

- Noise emitted by equipment belonging to any workstation shall be taken into account when a workstation is being equipped, with a view in particular to ensuring that attention is not distracted and speech is not disturbed.

Heat

- Equipment belonging to any workstation shall not produce excess heat which could cause discomfort to operators or users.

Radiation

- All radiation with the exception of the visible part of the electromagnetic spectrum shall be reduced to negligible levels from the point of view of the protection of operators or users health and safety.

Humidity

- An adequate level of humidity shall be established and maintained.

Interface between computer and operator/user

In designing, selecting, commissioning and modifying software, and in designing tasks using display screen equipment, the employer shall take into account the following principles:

- software must be suitable for the task;
- software must be easy to use and, where appropriate, adaptable to the level of knowledge or experience of the operator or user; no quantitative or qualitative checking facility may be used without the knowledge of the operators or users;
- systems must provide feedback to operators or users on the performance of those systems;
- systems must display information in a format and at a pace which are adapted to operators or users;
- the principles of software ergonomics must be applied, in particular to human data processing.