THE UNIVERSITY OF SHEFFIELD

DISPLAY SCREEN EQUIPMENT POLICY AND PROCEDURES
Statement

This University Policy and associated procedures were approved by the Health and Safety Committee on 12 October 2012 on behalf of the University of Sheffield Council and forms part of the Health and Safety Policy of the University of Sheffield.

The use of this Management Procedure and the incorporation of its requirements into working practices and activities will ensure that the University of Sheffield and its community achieve compliance with its legal duties with regard to health and safety.

The most recent version of the University Policy and Procedures can be found at: -

https://hs.shef.ac.uk/attachments/170?updated=1391525531

Table of significant changes since last review (December 2013):

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1 INTRODUCTION

The Policy is concerned with all aspects of usage, including posture and furniture, visual factors, breaks, environment and training. It is intended to minimise the incidence of work related upper limb disorders (WRULD).

All employers are under a general duty to assess the risks to health and safety or their employees and anyone else who may be affected by their activities. As part of this general assessment, work with display screen equipment must be assessed against the requirements of the Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992 (amended 2002).

The Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 (HASWA) states that employees have a duty to take reasonable care for the health and safety of themselves and therefore as a result the employee should bring to the attention of their line manager any problems that they may be experiencing whilst working with DSE.

2 DEFINITIONS

Display Screen Equipment – Any alphanumeric or graphic display screen this covers cathode ray screens and liquid crystal displays, plasma screens and is inclusive of the use of laptops. As well as computers, it will also include many types of laboratory equipment (e.g. microscopes) that use such displays.

Workstation – Comprises of: -

- 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
- immediate work environment around the display screen equipment

User – Any employee who habitually uses display screen equipment as a significant part of his/her normal work. Someone who uses display screen equipment for an hour or more at a time, on most days would generally be considered as a user.

Assessor – An individual nominated by the Head of Department to carry out duties as outlined in this policy; and who has attended the mandatory DSE Assessor training which is provided by the Health & Safety Department three times per year.
3 DISPLAY SCREEN EQUIPMENT POLICY

It is the policy at the University of Sheffield to provide a safe and healthy working environment for employees, including specific measures to protect their health and safety when working with display screen equipment (DSE).

The University will fulfil the obligations placed upon it by:

- The provision of suitable work equipment
- The provision of information and awareness training for users, primarily through a computer based assessment package
- The assessment of workstations, using a self-assessment approach, supported by a network of trained assessors
- The provision of eyesight testing for users, and the provision of corrective spectacles where these are required solely for DSE work
- Making arrangements for regular breaks for employees working with DSE

4 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

President & Vice Chancellor
The President & Vice-Chancellor is responsible for achieving the objectives of the University's Display Screen Equipment Policy, namely to:

- Ensure that Heads of Departments know and undertake their individual responsibilities regarding DSE work, and that the requirements of the DSE Policy are met.

Faculty Vice-Presidents
Faculty Vice-President have oversight of resources devolved from the President & Vice-Chancellor. As such, they have a duty for not only the application of these resources, but also its safe application. Faculty Vice-Presidents should satisfy themselves that the departments within their area of responsibility have suitable and sufficient arrangements in place to meet all statutory requirements.

Director of Health & Safety
The Director of Health & Safety is responsible for developing the University's procedures and guidance for the control and management of health and safety and reviewing this Policy and Guidance at regular intervals.

Heads of Departments
Each Head of Department will be responsible for ensuring that a DSE assessment is completed for each user. In addition each Head of Department should ensure:-
Managers/ Supervisors are aware of their responsibility in ensuring that DSE assessments are undertaken for all staff in their control

Individual(s) are allocated the role of DSE Assessor and ensure they attend training

That consideration is given to remote sites ensuring a DSE Assessor can provide support.

There is support for DSE assessor(s) in carrying out their duties

Staff have breaks or changes in activity whilst working with DSE

Staff are made aware of the risks associated with DSE, through adequate and suitable health and safety training

Where appropriate that formal management referrals are instigated via the DSE referral form where it has been identified that individuals require specialist support

Appropriate recommendations made by the DSE Assessor and/or Occupational Health specialists are implemented

A list of DSE Assessors is maintained

Effective monitoring of DSE Assessments

**Line Managers of DSE Users**

- Ensure new and existing users access the online DSE awareness training and complete the DSE assessment within one week of becoming a DSE User.

- Provide DSE equipment/reasonable adjustments following recommendations made by the DSE Assessor/Occupational Health.

- Refer DSE Users to Occupational Health

**DSE Assessors as part of their role will:-**

- Ensure new and existing users are made aware of the potential hazards and risks associated with the use of DSE

- Carry out face to face DSE assessments where necessary

- Where necessary, follow up assessments to resolve problems

- Ensure the provision of any equipment recommendations

- If following the workstation assessment issues/problems have been identified, the DSE Assessor will advise the member of staff and their Line Manager on changes and/or adaptions which could be made to the workstation.

- If after these changes and/or adaptions have been made the member of staff is still experiencing issues/problems with their workstation, then the DSE Assessor will discuss any issues with their Line Manager and a referral to the University's appointed Occupational Health Specialist will need to be made – for full procedure guidance, and template referrals please refer to the following webpage

  [https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/hr/wellbeing/workstation-assessment](https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/hr/wellbeing/workstation-assessment)
• Ensure that the assessment shall be repeated or reviewed if major changes are made to equipment or furniture; if workstations are relocated; if the nature of the work changes; if the health of the user changes or if there is any reason to believe the assessment is invalid.

• Consult with the Departmental Safety Officer and send out reminders to all users who have not completed the DSE training.

Staff who are designated as users will:-

• Complete the online DSE awareness training and assessment within one week of becoming a DSE User and work in accordance with agreed procedures and instructions.

• Discuss any untoward outcomes of the assessment with the DSE Assessor.

• Make any changes indicated by the assessment or when recommended by a DSE Assessor.

• Notify the DSE Assessor of any significant changes associated with the DSE.

• Report any health problems related to DSE work to their line manager/supervisor or DSE Assessor.

University Occupational Health Service will where necessary:

Where a management or self-referral has been made to the University Occupational Health Service, they will where necessary:

• Make recommendations for individuals and managers to discuss implementation of reasonable adjustments, including specialist equipment referrals.

• Provide support and advice on ill-health issues related to work with DSE.

5 PROCEDURES AND GUIDANCE

5.1 Workstation Assessment and Self-Assessment

Each department shall have one or more DSE Assessor. In the case of small departments, an Assessor may be shared with another department. The Assessors will be trained in the principles and practices of workstation assessment and problem solving; training courses and regular updates are arranged through Health & Safety.

When choosing Assessors, care should be taken to ensure they have adequate time and motivation to carry out the role effectively. Workstation self-assessment shall be carried out by all employees who use display screen equipment. The results of this assessment will then be reviewed where necessary by the appropriate DSE Assessor who will provide assistance to resolve any outstanding problems.
The assessment shall be repeated/reviewed if major changes are made to equipment or furniture; if workstations are relocated; if the nature of the work changes; or if the health of the user changes. Review of the assessment on a regular basis (e.g. every 1-3 years) may help to remind users of the importance of good practice in DSE work.

A more formal assessment of the workstation may be carried out by the Assessor if required e.g. if the Assessor has specific concerns about the individual or office arrangements.

5.2 Minimum Requirements for Workstations

Workstations and equipment must comply with specific minimum requirements laid down in the DSE Regulations. These include, for example, a chair with seat height adjustment, seat back adjustment and a stable base (usually 5 wheels/castors); a desk which provides ‘adequate space’; a monitor which tilts and swivels and has a clearly readable screen. There are minimum standards which apply to all elements of the workstation, including the keyboard, the mouse, the environment and the software. These are summarised in Appendix A of this Policy.

If items such as a footrest or document holder are provided these should comply with the minimum standard; however, they need only be provided if they are necessary given the nature of the work and/or the individual.

Equipment which does not meet the minimum standard may be provided if it is necessary for health and safety reasons – for example, some users may benefit from using a specialist chair which does not have a seat back.

Laptop computers must comply with the minimum standard if they are in prolonged use (See section 5.6)

5.3 Training and Information for Users

All users should have training on the possible risks of DSE work, how to work safely, how to carry out a self-assessment and on the measures the University has put in place to comply with the regulations. To achieve this, all users are responsible for completing the on-line training programme at: - https://hs.shef.ac.uk/

Reminders to this effect will be issued by departmental DSE Assessors.

5.4 Breaks

Breaking up long spells of DSE work helps to prevent fatigue, eyestrain, upper limb problems and backache. Most employees within the University will have control over their own working arrangements and will be able to organise their work to take this into account.
The best way to break up work is to alternate sedentary work with more active tasks such as filing, photocopying etc. Where this is not possible, more formal breaks may be necessary.

Frequent breaks (e.g. 5 minutes every hour) should be built into the work routine. These can be used for carrying out alternative tasks not involving the use of DSE.

5.5 **Eyesight Testing**

The University will pay for eyesight testing for all employees who are identified as ‘DSE users’. This payment is conditional on testing being carried out at the University’s chosen optician, the user having completed the online DSE training and authorisation being obtained in advance. For authorisation complete this electronic request form [https://gw.eyecareplans.co.uk/Account/Login/theu35019eb414b](https://gw.eyecareplans.co.uk/Account/Login/theu35019eb414b) once completed the request will automatically be sent to the Health & Safety Department where authorisation will be made for the issue of a DSE eye care voucher.

The Display Screen Equipment Regulations make clear that the use of the employer’s prescribed eye test system is completely optional. Where staff choose not to use this system the University will not reimburse eye testing costs for those employees who choose to use an alternative optician.

Eye care vouchers are issued in response to an identified DSE need; the eye care voucher once issued must be used within one month or it will be revoked and subsequently an additional application will have to be made should an eyesight test be required. Retesting will usually be allowed every 2 years, except in exceptional circumstances.

The University will also pay for a pair of basic spectacles (frames and lenses) where these are required *solely and specifically* for DSE use. The University will not pay for glasses which are used for reading or driving as well as DSE work.

5.6 **Laptop Computers**

Laptops must comply with the Regulations where they are in prolonged use (e.g. for periods of an hour or more, and on most days).

As the regulations state that the keyboard and screen must be separate, specific modifications will be required to laptops in prolonged use. There are several options:-

a) Place the laptop on a specially made platform or a pile of books etc, and use a separate keyboard and mouse
b) Use the laptop with a separate monitor
c) Use the laptop with a docking station
d) Connect the laptop to a desktop computer using a KVM (keyboard, video, mouse) switch

All laptop accessories should be as light as possible. It is recommended that a rucksack type carrier is considered if a laptop is frequently carried.

5.7 Additional Monitors/Screens

It is becoming more common place these days for a standard desk top computer to have attached to it a primary and a secondary monitor. If this is the case in your DSE set up then the secondary monitor should be in set in line with the primary one to enable ease of viewing and the same considerations ie re glare and flicker etc applied.

5.8 iPads, Tablet PCs, etc

The use of these types of equipment is becoming increasingly more prevalent within the University. These appliances are designed for work of a short duration and should not be used in preference to a desktop computer set up. Users should be advised wherever possible to apply similar principles to those in the Policy as regards posture and breaks/changes of activity.

Portable equipment used within departments should be considered in the same manner as all other types of DSE. Portable equipment that is used at remote premises though is subject to the requirements of section 5.10 of the Policy.

5.9 Hot Desk Working

If you work at a workstation that is also used by others at different times, it is important to use all the adjustments available to make yourself comfortable. The settings on the chair etc. may be different each time you arrive at the desk, so you should spend some time at the start of your work adjusting the DSE equipment to suit you. If you are classed as a user the online DSE training still applies, but only needs to be completed once, unless you are requested to repeat the training or you personally feel the need to be re-trained, this will provide the necessary skills to assess your workstation.

If the standard equipment provided does not suit you, please talk to your Departmental Display Screen Assessor or Line Manager.

5.10 Remote Working at Premises Controlled by Employees

Certain employees have the discretion to work away from the University, often at home, using DSE equipment. Departments and Schools with employees who work at these remote workstations must ensure the following:
(a) Where any individual has been provided with University equipment, it should comply with the requirements of this Policy and should be maintained in a safe condition. “Safe condition” means that the screen must not flicker and the equipment, including the flexes and plugs, must be physically intact. Electrical equipment must also be PAT tested as per the University’s Electrical Safety Policy.

(b) All individuals who use computing equipment, which may be their own, must arrange their equipment such that risk from trips over cabling or flexes is minimised.

(c) If usage is to the extent that the individuals become “users” for the purpose of their employment in locations away from their normal workstation, they must apply their DSE training and consider the risks of using the equipment and the risk control measures. However, it is not intended that DSE assessors should make visits to remote locations.

(d) Users will be personally responsible for:

   (i) Arranging their equipment and workstations in accordance with the online training and take regular short breaks.

   (ii) Arranging a timely repair if their computer screen flickers or their equipment, including the flexes and plugs, become physically damaged.

   (iii) Reporting, without delay, to their line manager any personal discomfort, e.g. tingling sensations or pains in their hands or forearms or necks, thought to be associated with the use of the workstation.

5.11 Young Workers

It is important to take account of any special risks that arise from the employment of a young person under the age of 18 years. This is primarily to do with their possible lack of knowledge and experience. A DSE Assessment form should be completed as soon as the young person has commenced work. The DSE Assessment must be done under the supervision of the local DSE Assessor on a one-to-one basis.

6 ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

6.1 Postgraduate Students

   See Appendix B.

6.2 Undergraduate Students

   See Appendix B.
APPENDIX A

SUMMARY OF DISPLAY SCREEN EQUIPMENT WORKSTATION
MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS

1. The display screen should have well defined characters of adequate size, stable image, easily adjustable brightness and contrast. The screen should be easily tilting and swivelling with no reflective glare.

2. The keyboard should be adjustable and separate from the screen; sufficient space in front of the keyboard; matt surface; easy to use; adequate and contrasting symbols on keys. The mouse (or other non-keyboard device) should be suitable for the task.

3. The work surface should be sufficiently large and low reflecting, and allow a flexible arrangement of equipment and adequate space.

4. The work chair should be stable allowing the user easy movement and comfortable position. It should have adjustable height (seat); adjustable height and tilt (seat back). Footrests should be available on request.

5. There should be space necessary to allow the operator to change positions.

6. The lighting should be satisfactory with appropriate contrast between screen and background; prevention of glare through positioning of artificial lighting.

7. Positioning must prevent sources of light such as windows from causing distracting reflections on the screen.

8. Noise must not cause distraction of attention or disturbance of speech.

9. Heat must not be excessive such to cause discomfort and an adequate level of humidity should be established and maintained.

10. The software systems must be suitable for the task, easy to use, and adaptable to the level of the user's knowledge. No quantitative or qualitative checking facility may be used without the user's knowledge.
APPENDIX B

POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS

1. Postgraduate students have a particular risk of health problems related to computer use due to the long hours they spend working, the risk of ignoring early symptoms in order to meet deadlines, and the possibility that they will work for long periods on a laptop computer.

2. Postgraduate students who have an employment contract with the University will be covered under this policy in the same way as other employees.

3. Postgraduate students who are not employees are not specifically covered by the Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992 (amended 2002); they are not entitled to free eyesight testing and the University is not obliged to provide training and information.

4. Where the University provides a computer workstation for use by a postgraduate student, there is a duty of care to ensure this is suitable for the task involved.

5. It is good practice to encourage postgraduate students to visit the online training site https://hs.sheffield.ac.uk/ to carry out self-assessment and to seek support from their supervisor, departmental DSE Assessor or IT staff if they feel equipment is sub-standard.

UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

1. The DSE regulations do not require workstation assessments for undergraduate students, however, where the University provides facilities for use by students (e.g. in computer labs, the library etc), these should be of an adequate standard i.e. with suitably adjustable chairs, space to work etc.