Display Screen Equipment (DSE) Policy
(Version 3)
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Introduction

This Policy defines the College's arrangements for the management of Display Screen Equipment. The arrangements are based on the requirements of the Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992 as amended by the Health and Safety (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2002, and associated Guidance on the Regulations. It identifies how the College will identify and manage the risks arising from the use of display screen equipment.

In recognition of these legal obligations and the potential adverse health effects to staff and others from the prolonged use of display screen equipment (hereafter referred to as ‘DSE’), the College will implement appropriate arrangements to ensure that no work activities with DSE are carried out without first considering the risks and necessary precautions, and any other action necessary to comply with the Regulations. This will be achieved by carrying out an assessment of the risks to health and implementing appropriate measures to mitigate such risks, considering all aspect of the use of DSE.

This Policy should not be considered a definitive guide to the management of DSE and the requirements of the Regulations. Where any doubt exists as to the action to be taken, or advice or assistance is required, contact should be made with a staff member in the College Health and Safety Office.

Copies of those documents referred to above and other useful reference material are available from the College Health and Safety Office, and information is available on the Health & Safety Executive website.

Objectives

1. Compliance with the requirements of this Policy will ensure:
   - The College meets its obligations in respect of legislation.
   - The safety and health of staff (and others) whilst working with DSE.
   - Everyone is aware of their roles and responsibilities.
   - That staff and others who work with display screen equipment are appropriately informed, and where necessary trained.

Application

2. The Policy applies to all College staff who use DSE as a significant part of their work based activity. These staff will be defined as ‘users’.

3. In determining who are ‘users’, the department must take account of the frequency and the duration of spells of continuous or near-continuous use. An employee will be classed as a ‘user’ if they:
   - Normally use DSE for continuous or near-continuous spells of an hour or more at a time, and
   - Use DSE in this way on a daily basis.

4. The DSE Regulations do not apply to staff who occasionally work from home, but the College has a duty to ensure that their work area is set up in accordance with good DSE layout and working practices.

5. Undergraduate and post-graduate students who are not employed by the College, will be provided with workstations that meet the minimum requirements of the legislation, and guidance on how to use the equipment safely, but DSE assessments of such workstations will not be carried out. The College has a duty to ensure all workstation equipment is suitable for the task. Furthermore, the College will support those students who have specific needs in relation to the use of DSE through its Student Advisory and Support Service.

6. Post-graduate and undergraduate students employed by the College are covered by this Policy; where defined as a ‘user’, this includes the provision of a DSE Assessment, associated training, offer of an eye examination, and ‘special corrective appliances’ (i.e. glasses of DSE).
**Temporary workers (employed through an Agency)**

7. Many temporary workers supplied by agencies, may use DSE sufficiently to be classified as ‘users’. Where the worker is an employee of the agency or is self-employed, both the agency and the host employer (College) will have duties under the Regulations.

8. If the College is the host employer then the agency worker should be provided with a DSE assessment and any workstation must comply with the Regulations. The employment agency is responsible for the provision of eye tests for the agency worker.

**Temporary workers (employed directly on temporary contracts)**

9. Employees working under a temporary contract of employment may also be considered a ‘user’, and as the host employer, the College has a responsibility to ensure that DSE assessments are conducted for such employees, where identified necessary.

10. Where any doubt exists as to the requirements for temporary workers, advice should be requested from a member of staff in the Health and Safety Office.

**Homeworkers**

11. Employees who choose to work from home, should ensure that their workstation is set up correctly, is safe to use and that the set-up is similar to that in the workplace, following the same principles covered in their DSE Assessment.

12. Further guidance on home working is provided in Appendix 3.

**Portable DSE**

13. This includes equipment such as laptops, notebook computers, tablets, and personal digital assistants.

14. The use of portable equipment is increasing and users should be advised wherever possible to apply similar principles to those in the Policy regarding posture and breaks/changes of activity.

15. Prolonged use of laptops is subject to the same requirements as non-portable DSE equipment, including DSE assessments.

16. Mobile telephones, tablets and personal organisers that are in prolonged use to compose and edit text, or connect to the internet should be operated in accordance with the College’s risk assessment for use of such devices and any guidance provided by the Health and Safety Office.

17. Further guidance on portable equipment is provided in Appendix 2.

**Shared workstations ("Hot – Desking")**

18. In some work areas a workstation may be used by more than one person. Such shared workstations must be considered for each ‘user’ as it is likely that individuals will need to make adjustments to suit their needs.

19. If the workstation(s) are the same, are located in the same area, and the equipment provided meets the minimum requirements, then the DSE Assessor need only undertake one assessment.

20. The chair must have a sufficient height adjustment for each user, and a footrest may be required for certain individuals.

21. A separate DSE Assessment should be carried out for workstations in different locations.

22. Further guidance on ‘hot-desking’ is provided in Appendix 3.
Roles and Responsibilities

23. In meeting its statutory obligations, the College has instituted the following organisational arrangements:

24. Heads of Departments/School and Directors of Professional Service (hereafter referred to as ‘managers’) have overall responsibility for implementing the requirements of this Policy, including:
   - Bringing this Policy to the attention of all their staff, including the measures their Department has put in place to comply with this Policy.
   - Identifying which member(s) of their staff require to be trained to undertake DSE assessments, and ensuring this training takes place. This training is provided by staff members in the College Health and Safety Office.
   - Maintaining an adequate number of assessors to meet the assessment needs of new, transferred and existing staff.
   - Identifying those members of their staff who are covered by the requirements of this Policy (i.e. DSE ‘users’).
   - Ensuring that all DSE ‘users’, within their area of responsibility, are provided with a DSE assessment on commencement of employment (or as soon as reasonably practicable) and a review of this assessment is conducted at least every 2 years.
   - Ensuring there are effective arrangements in place to implement any recommendations arising from the DSE assessment.
   - Ensuring that each new user is offered an eye and eyesight test on commencement of employment and every 2 years, thereafter.
   - Ensuring that users are provided with information and training on the safe use of DSE.
   - Ensuring that recommendations made by the DSE Assessor and/or Occupational Health Advisor, in respect of the health and safety of DSE users are acted on.

25. DSE Assessors (acting on behalf of their Manager) are responsible for:
   - Conducting DSE assessments, including associated training.
   - Undertaking DSE assessment reviews.
   - Following up on issues identified during the DSE Assessment process and working with the line manager and the ‘user’ to resolve any issues identified.
   - Making the line manager aware of any DSE related occupational health issues and recommending referral to Occupational Health (through Human Resources) for staff experiencing DSE-related occupational health issues.
   - Referring any ‘users’ requiring further specialist advice to a member of staff in the Health and Safety Office, including following a request for the provision of specialist equipment.

26. The College Occupational Health Service is responsible for:
   - Following referral, carrying out an occupational health assessment for employees with a health condition associated with the use of DSE or a health condition which could affect an individual’s ability to carry out display screen work.
   - Making recommendations to staff and their manager based upon the findings of the above assessment.

27. The Director of Health and Safety (and other members of the Health and Safety Office) is responsible for:
   - The provision of advice and guidance on the application of the requirements of legislation and this Policy.
   - Monitoring compliance with the requirements of this Policy through the health and safety audit process.
   - Providing DSE Assessor training to College employees who conduct assessments on behalf of their Department.
   - Providing advice on the provision of specialist equipment following referral to either the Health and Safety Office or Occupational Health Service.

28. College employees who are ‘users’ are responsible for:
   - Working and using DSE in accordance with any information and training provided.
- Informing their line manager or DSE Assessor of any changes/deficiencies in their workstation set-up or work practices which could give rise to potential harm or injury.
- Taking remedial action which is within their control to address, including working with the support of their line manager and DSE Assessor to resolve any issues arising from the DSE Assessment.
- Informing their line manager or DSE Assessor if they suffer health problems that may be caused or made worse by DSE work.
- Ensuring that if they occasionally work from home, that the work area is set up in accordance with good DSE work practices.

29. Premises Manager (Estates) is responsible for:
   - Procuring suitable furniture for DSE users and ensuring that this complies with current standards; this includes, for example, dimensions standards for desks suitable for office use, and adjustable chairs.

30. Strategic Space Manager (Estates) is responsible for:
   - Ensuring any changes to the design and layout of the work area and office moves comply with the requirements for DSE use; the workstation shall be dimensioned and designed so as to provide sufficient space for the employee to change position and vary movements.

31. The Director of Human Resources is responsible for:
   - Implementing and maintaining the provision of an Occupational Health Service to advise the College on work-related health problems arising from display screen work.
   - Ensuring that records are maintained of DSE Assessments (including DSE assessment reviews) for all College ‘users’ (i.e. on the personnel file of that member of staff).

What is a workstation?

32. A workstation exists where ever there is DSE (including portable DSE) and is defined as the assembly including the screen, keyboard, other parts of the computer and its accessories (such as the mouse, or other input device), the desk, the chair, and immediate work environment.

33. Exclusions apply to DSE mainly intended for public operation and portable systems not in prolonged use. However, the general duties on employers and others under the Health and Safety at Work Act and Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations still apply.

34. Further information on the minimum requirements for DSE are outlined in Appendix 4.

Possible effects on health

35. The principal risks associated with DSE include musculoskeletal problems, visual fatigue and mental stress.

36. Ill health can result from incorrect posture, poor work organisation, and inadequate workplace and job design.

37. Such conditions can, therefore, be prevented by applying good ergonomic principles to the design, selection and set-up of DSE, the design of the work environment, and the organisation of work tasks.

38. Further information on these principal risks can be found in Appendix 5.

DSE Assessments

39. New employees, defined as a ‘user’, must have a DSE Assessment conducted for the purpose of establishing any risks from the use of such equipment, and identifying and taking appropriate remedial action. This assessment will be conducted, as far as is reasonably practicable, during the ‘users’ first week of employment.

40. The assessment will be conducted at departmental level by a trained member of staff using the College’s DSE Assessment Checklists.
41. This standardised assessment checklists have been developed to promote consistency across the College. The assessment is intended to identify any aspects of work equipment, workstation layout, work environment, job design and individual factors, which have the potential to lead to ill health. It is also designed to provide the ‘user’ with instruction and training in the safe use of DSE, which is an important part of the assessment process.

42. Where the DSE assessment establishes the requirement for improvements/remedial action, which cannot be completed at the time of the assessment, the DSE Assessor should follow-up with the line manager and the ‘user’ to ensure that any additional issues are resolved.

43. The above requirements also apply to existing and staff transferring to another Department.

44. If a new employee is employed to work at an existing workstation, a DSE assessment must be carried out. The assessment is relevant to each user, not the workstation.

Review of DSE assessments

45. DSE assessments must be reviewed every 2 years.

46. DSE assessments must also be reviewed following a significant change or when a ‘user’ experiences discomfort. In the case of the latter, a member of staff in the Health and Safety Office should be informed.

47. Examples of a significant change include:
   - Relocation of the workstation
   - A change in the workstation layout or design
   - The introduction of new equipment
   - A change in the nature of the work, such as a substantial increase in the amount of time spent using DSE or substantial change in other task requirements (e.g. increase in speed or accuracy required to complete a task)
   - A change in environmental conditions (i.e. lighting, temperature, etc.)
   - The ‘user’ is pregnant.

Recording of DSE assessments (including reviews)

48. DSE Assessments should be recorded using one of the College’s standardised assessment checklist, either the DSE Assessment Form or DSE Assessment Form – Portable Computers (Laptops).

49. Department’s should maintain a register of all ‘users’. The register should be stored electronically with all departmental DSE assessments. A sample template for this register is provided in Appendix 6.

50. Electronic (scanned) copies of all DSE assessments (including reviews) must be stored securely on a departmental shared drive, which is accessible to the Departmental DSE Assessors.

51. Electronic (scanned) copies of DSE assessments (including reviews) should also be sent to the Department of Human Resources for retention on the individual’s personnel file.

Managing the risks

52. Managers have overall responsibility for implementing the requirements of this Policy.

53. Managers should establish effective arrangements to implement the findings of DSE Assessments (including DSE reviews). For example, the DSE Assessor could be responsible for monitoring the completion of any required actions, working with the line manager and ‘user’ to resolve any issues identified. Any such
arrangements must ensure that action is taken as soon as is reasonably practicable and to prevent further risk of harm or ill health. Day-to-day responsibility for ensuring action is taken rests with the line manager.

54. The measures necessary to control the risks associated with DSE work fall into two main categories.
   - Practical controls, including the selection and provision of suitable equipment, software, and eye and eyesight testing.
   - Management controls, including the provision of information, training and good task design.

**Equipment selection**
55. When selecting equipment, consideration should be given to features which will provide greater adjustability. The need to provide new equipment may arise for a variety of reasons, including:
   - Replacement of damaged or broken equipment
   - Refurbishment of work areas
   - New staff joining the Department.

**Daily Work Routine of Users**
56. Managers must ensure that work is planned so that other tasks prompt periodic short breaks from DSE work, or for a change of task to be scheduled into work routines. Breaks should short and frequent. For example, 5-10 minutes break after 50 – 60 minutes of continuous screen/keyboard work is considered more effective in reducing risk than 15-20 minutes after 2 hours of activity.

57. The main purpose of incorporating breaks into the work pattern is to ensure that the ‘user’ varies their posture and changes visual demands. Such breaks should, therefore, be organised to permit ‘users’ to vary their posture, get up from the workstation, and undertake tasks for which there is not a need to view the screen or to operate a keyboard (or similar tasks).

**Postural Problems**
58. These may be overcome by adjustments to the workstation (e.g. repositioning equipment or adjusting the chair). Postural problems can indicate a need to provide training of the ‘user’ (e.g. correct hand and arm positioning, how to adjust equipment, etc.).

**Visual Problems**
59. These may be prevented by, for example, repositioning the screen, using blinds to reduce glare, or by ensuring the display screen is clean. Appropriate lighting is also important.

60. If visual difficulties persist after implementing adjustments, it may be necessary for the user to have an eye and eyesight test.

**Fatigue and Stress**
61. This may be alleviated by considering the issues described above. Wherever possible, job design should provide ‘users’ with a degree of control over the pace and nature of their tasks.

**Management of ill health conditions**
62. Staff who experience aches/pains or any other discomfort thought to be associated with the use of DSE, must report this immediately to their line manager or a member of staff in the Health and Safety Office.

63. In certain circumstances, it may be necessary to refer staff to the College’s Occupational Health Service. This should be arranged through Human Resources.

64. The Health and Safety Office should be contacted for advice where, following referral, Occupational Health have recommended providing the staff member with specialist equipment.
65. Where a staff member requests specialist equipment, the Health and Safety Office can provide both advice on the need for such equipment and, where necessary, loan it to the individual on a trial basis, thus confirming its use will have the desired preventative or remedial effect.

66. The cost of all specialist equipment shall be met from the affected staff member’s department, including any permanently retained trial equipment loaned to the Department.

**Training and information for DSE users**

67. Managers must bring this Policy to the attention of all their staff, including the measures their Department has put in place to comply with the Policy. For new staff this will be achieved through departmental health and safety induction.

68. All ‘users’ should receive information and training on the potential risks of DSE work and the measures necessary to mitigate such risks. This information and training will form part of the DSE assessment and cover the following key areas:

- The health risks associated with DSE work
- Measures to eliminate or reduce risk
- Good workstation layout to facilitate good posture and avoid glare and reflections
- The importance of good posture, postural change and adjusting the workstation
- The need to take regular breaks and incorporate changes in activity
- Recognising visual and postural fatigue, and how to respond
- Procedure to follow in the event of any discomfort or ill health arising from DSE work.

69. Further information on the safe use of DSE can be found on the Health and Safety Office website.

**Eye examination and testing**

70. During departmental health and safety induction all new staff, where defined as a ‘user’ will be advised of their entitlement to an eye and eyesight test.

71. This test will be conducted by a competent person (i.e. a registered ophthalmic optician or a registered medical practitioner with suitable qualifications) and employees are entitled to see an ophthalmic practitioner of their choosing for these tests.

72. The costs of eye and eyesight testing and, where applicable, those for the provision of ‘special corrective appliances’ (basic appliances only, any additional costs being met by the employee) shall be met from the departmental budget to the total sum established by the College, from time to time.

73. Further information on eye and eyesight testing, can be found on the Health and Safety Office website.

**Frequency of eyesight tests**

74. Repeat tests should be offered to ‘users’ every 2 years, unless otherwise recommended by the Optometrist or Medical Practitioner who carried out the previous test.

75. Outside the above normal cycle of eye tests, where users experience visual difficulties that may reasonably be considered to be related to DSE work, these should, in the first instance, be referred to a staff member in the Health and Safety Office.

**Departmental compliance with this College Policy**

76. In addition to ongoing monitoring at individual department level, compliance with the requirements of this Policy will be reviewed by members of the College Health and Safety Office during the health and safety audit process.
77. This Policy forms part of the College Health and Safety Policy.

Elaine Cassidy
Health and Safety Officer (Auditor)
Version 3

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