

The aim of this document is to direct you towards training information on safe use of display screen equipment and to enable you to carry out a self-assessment of your workstation.

Display Screen Equipment (DSE) is basically the computer equipment on your desk, i.e. the screen, process unit, mouse, printer and other associated equipment. The information below relates to carrying out DSE work in any type of work environment, not just offices. However, it does depend on the nature of use as will be explained in the supplementary information.

Over the last two or three decades, it has become clear that there can be adverse health effects associated with prolonged use of DSE and UK workplaces have been subject to The Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations since 1992. These regulations seek to direct employers in minimising the ill-health effects to their employees who use DSE on a regular basis as part of their job.

### Key legal requirement

If you are a 'user' (see below for definition) of Display Screen Equipment, an assessment of your workstation is required. This is to comply with the above regulations but, more importantly, it is to ensure that your workstation is set up as ergonomically correct as possible so as to minimise the likelihood of any ill effects (see below for a summary of these).

### Who is a user?

*The Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations state that a user is an EMPLOYEE who HABITUALLY uses display screen equipment as a SIGNIFICANT part of their normal work.*

The guidelines which the University works to are as follows:

If you spend more than 10 hours per week using the computer then you definitely ARE a user.

If you spend less than 5 hours per week using the computer then you are NOT a user.

Any amount of time in between would depend on circumstances, for example whether that time involved long sessions of 90+ minutes or the work was very intensive. Further advice on applying these guidelines may be sought from the Safety Office. In reality, the vast majority of University staff who have computer equipment will be users.

### Adverse Health Effects associated with prolonged computer work

The key health effects are:

- Upper limb pains and discomfort
- Back ache
- Eye and eyesight effects (not permanent effects)
- Fatigue and stress

These are linked to poor posture at the workstation and/or doing prolonged sessions of DSE work.

## Training Information

So that you have a better awareness of the issues relating to safe use of display screen equipment, please take a look at the the following web site:

[Learning Link](#)

Choose the first option: Health and Safety for Display Screen Users. (30 minute training package)

It is recommended that you look at this **before** doing the self-assessment checklist as it will give you a better understanding of the safety issues associated with DSE work and should make the assessment more meaningful.

## University Training courses

In addition to the above, the University offers training in Safe Use of DSE and also for those wishing to become a DSE assessor. Please see our [training web page](#) for further information.

## Carrying out an assessment of your workstation

Once you have looked at the Learning Link presentation, please complete a [self-assessment workstation checklist](#) (web form). (For a PDF version, please [contact the Safety Office](#)) The form is designed to enable you to take action on many of the issues and will advise you when it is necessary to consult your local DSE assessor. If you are not sure who your local DSE assessor is, please contact your [School/Departmental Safety Officer](#). If you still have problems, contact the Safety Office on ext. 13401.

Once you have completed the checklist, please forward it to your School DSE assessor or your School Safety Officer, keeping a record for yourself.

## In the event you identify a problem related to your DSE work

### Actions for User:

Complete a new [self-assessment workstation checklist](#), particularly if it is some time since you last completed one. If this identifies specific problems or deficiencies with your workstation, or you are unsure, forward the assessment to your local DSE assessor/co-ordinator (or [School/Dept Safety Officer](#)), keeping a copy for yourself.

In addition, for health-related issues, seek advice from Occupational Health (ext. 14329). You may self-refer yourself to Occupational Health or you may be referred by your Manager, DSE Assessor or [School/Dept Safety Officer](#).

### Actions for DSE Assessor/Co-ordinator or School Safety Officer:

If problems identified by the User are attributed to the design of the workstation or equipment, these should be rectified. If you require additional guidance, [contact the Safety Office](#). Problems related to work routine should be discussed with the User's line manager. Problems identified by the User related to an existing medical condition should be referred to Occupational Health, ext. 14329.

Other University information on Display Screen Equipment:

- [Display Screen Equipment Regulations](#) - University Policy on their implementation
- [Display Screen Equipment Regulations – Eye Tests](#)