

University Occupational Health and Safety Standard

DISPLAY SCREEN EQUIPMENT

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1. PURPOSE

The University is committed to meeting its legal obligations by ensuring that it has adequate arrangements, facilities and trained staff to reduce the risk of injury or ill health from work activities involving display screen equipment.

This document sets out the minimum requirements to control the risks associated with display screen equipment at the University of Strathclyde, in order to comply with relevant legislative obligations and University requirements.

2. SCOPE

This document applies to all University staff and post graduate research students who will be making use of display screen equipment, or those who have managerial responsibilities for the those making use of display screen equipment.

3. ABBREVIATIONS

DSC	Departmental Safety Coordinator
DSE	Display Screen Equipment
HoD	Head of Departments
MSD	Musculoskeletal Disorder
OHS	Occupational Health and Safety
SHaW	Safety Health and Wellbeing

4. DEFINITIONS

4.1 DSE - any piece of equipment making use of an alphanumeric or graphical display screen, regardless of how the display is generated, and includes display screens, laptops, touch screens and other similar devices.

It does NOT include, vehicle controls or equipment mounted to a vehicle, portable systems not intended for long term use, calculators, registers, any equipment having a small data or measurement display or typewriters.

4.2 DSE User – any full time, part time or temporary/contract University member of staff, or post graduate research student are defined as a DSE user if they:

- Normally use DSE for continuous or near continuous spells of an hour or more at a time (or averaged out to more than 1 hour a day over a week); and
- Use DSE in this way more or less daily; and
- Have to transfer information quickly to or from the DSE; and also
- Need to apply high levels of attention and concentration; or
- Are highly dependent on DSE; or
- Have little choice about using it; or
- Need special training or skills to use the DSE.

The Regulations do not apply to workstations provided to undergraduate students and taught post graduate students. It is nevertheless good practice for student workstations to be ergonomically adjustable such that they can be setup in a way which minimises risks.

4.3 Ergonomics – the science of making work tasks, equipment or the working environment suitable for workers, so that work can be done safely and productively.

4.4 Musculoskeletal Disorder – an injury or disorder relating to the tissues or joints of the body, and in relation to this Standard caused by prolonged usage of an incorrectly or poorly set up workstation.

4.5 Workstation - any assembly comprising DSE, optional accessories for the DSE (telephones, printers, chairs, desks etc) and the immediate environment around the DSE.

5. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The [University OHS Standard for Roles, Responsibilities and Accountabilities](#) document defines the roles, responsibilities and accountabilities necessary to implement the Occupational Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy statement at each level of the organisation.

The roles and responsibilities specifically in relation to the management of DSE are detailed as follows:

5.1 Executive Deans

Responsible for performance monitoring of this Standard within their area of responsibility including the University's significant partnerships, collaborations and wholly owned companies. They must ensure that departments are resourced such that this Standard is fully implemented.

5.2 Heads of Department / Heads of School / Professional Services Directors

Responsible for ensuring compliance with this Standard throughout their area of responsibility by provision of adequate resources and performance monitoring. They will be assisted by the DSC or other nominated person, and any appointed DSE Assessors to carry out delegated tasks as deemed appropriate. They must ensure:

- Appropriate management and administrative arrangements are in place to effectively control risks arising from the use of DSE, and ensure that these arrangements are implemented throughout the department;
- The effective implementation of this Standard, through the provision of sufficient resources to manage and administer the DSE Risk Assessment process and eliminate or reduce identified DSE risks, as required;
- That mechanisms are in place to monitor, audit and review OHS performance in relation to this Standard;
- At least one member of staff is appointed to the role of DSE Assessor and that anyone appointed to this role is:
 - appropriately trained;
 - provided with sufficient time, support and resources to conduct their role.
- All risk assessments are reviewed regularly.

5.3 Line Managers / Principal Investigators / Academic Supervisors

Responsible on a day-to-day basis for ensuring that risks associated with DSE are appropriately managed within their area of responsibility. They must ensure:

- A suitable and sufficient general risk assessment for the work activity is completed;
- Where the use of DSE is identified by the risk assessment, control measures are put in place to reduce the risk from DSE use;
- Any DSE users working within their area of responsibility complete both the DSE Online Awareness training (see Section 6.3) and the DSE Workstation Self-Assessment;
- Where issues are identified during the DSE Workstation Self-Assessment or where issues subsequently arise, liaise with the DSC and DSE Assessor to agree additional risk control measures, and ensure these are implemented and reviewed;
- Where the use of DSE is identified, and working from home is agreed, appropriate arrangements are put in place as identified in this Standard;
- Where equipment is required to ensure the safe use of DSE, that this equipment is provided;
- That all DSE equipment is PAT tested to ensure that it is electrically safe to use;
- Any eye tests that are requested are approved in accordance with this Standard;
- No harm comes to themselves or others as a result of their work, actions or inactions.

5.4 Departmental Safety Coordinators

DSCs are responsible for coordinating safety arrangements within their department of responsibility.

The DSC is responsible for:

- Liaising with the DSE Assessor when issues are identified during the DSE Workstation Self-Assessment;
- Ensuring the communication of the requirements of this Standard within their area of responsibility.

5.5 DSE Assessors

A member / members of staff, appointed by the HoD, to assist with undertaking DSE Workstation Self-Assessments. They must:

- Prior to undertaking the role, successfully complete the DSE Assessor Training;
- Provide advice to DSE users on appropriate changes to a workstation;
- Liaise with the DSC when issues are identified during the DSE Workstation Self-Assessment;
- Escalate issues which cannot be resolved immediately to the DSC and the DSE Users line manager.

5.6 Departmental Safety Committee

The purpose of a Departmental Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee is to assist the HoD in fulfilling their health and safety functions. The Committees duties include reviewing risks and issues in relation to DSE use which have been reported/escalated from staff, students and their representatives.

5.7 DSE Users

All DSE Users must:

- Only use DSE equipment for its intended purpose;
- Complete the DSE Online Awareness training (existing DSE Users should repeat the course as a refresher and repeat the self-assessment at least once every 3 years);
- Comply with the arrangements put in place to prevent or reduce risks from DSE work;
- Report issues in relation to DSE use to their Line Manager, Principle Investigator or Academic Supervisor, as appropriate.

5.8 Safety, Health and Wellbeing

SHaW are responsible for:

- Setting the requirements of this Standard, and ensuring that appropriate training is available to meet the requirements of this Standard;
- The provision of competent advice in relation to DSE use;
- Engaging with an external DSE specialist where necessary.

5.9 Occupational Health and University Physiotherapy Service

The University's Occupational Health Service:

- Assist managers and Human Resources to identify appropriate adjustments and rehabilitation programmes to support staff who are suffering from ill health or returning to work following a period of absence;
- Through self-referral offer advice to staff to ensure they access the support they require to manage any health issues;
- Provide an Early Access Physiotherapy Clinic which is aimed at staff who are on sick leave and/or suffering from MSDs at work.

6. MANAGING RISKS FROM DISPLAY SCREEN EQUIPMENT

The improper and/or intensive use of DSE is known to be associated with a range of health issues, such as back pain, eye strain and headaches. Ensuring that DSE is used appropriately can help prevent the on-set of these issues.

6.1 General Risk Assessment of the Work Activity

A general risk assessment must be undertaken for all work activities, including those that involve the use of DSE before the work activity commences. General risk assessments should be completed using the [eRISK](#) system. Health and Safety issues associated with the use of DSE are described in Section 6.6.

Where the general risk assessment identifies the need to make use of DSE, then:

- The DSE User must complete the DSE Online Awareness training. This must be repeated at least every 3 years (see Section 6.3 for further information).

- The DSE user must complete the DSE Workstation Self-Assessment, which forms part of the DSE Online Awareness training. This must be reviewed when repeating the DSE Online Awareness training, or whenever issues are identified, or significant changes are made (see Section 6.3 for further information).

6.2 Information, Instruction and Training

All DSE Users and appointed DSE Assessors must be provided with sufficient information, instruction and training to ensure that they are aware of the risks associated with DSE use.

6.2.1 DSE Users

DSE Online Awareness training is mandatory for all DSE users. The course is bookable through the [DAT system](#) and must be undertaken every 3 years.

This course covers the following:

- What a DSE workstation is;
- Ergonomics in relation to a DSE workstation;
- The potential health effects from poorly setup workstations;
- How to correctly setup a DSE workstation;
- DSE issues specifically related to laptop or mobile device use.

6.2.2 DSE Assessors

All DSE Assessors must successfully complete the DSE Assessor's training course which is bookable through the [DAT system](#). This course provides participants with an understanding of the

- DSE regulations,
- The assessment process,
- MSDs associated with DSE,
- Common workstation issues and
- An insight into possible solutions.

Refresher training for DSE Assessors must be undertaken every 3 years.

6.3 Minimising the Risk from DSE

6.3.1 Assessing the Risk from Display Screen Equipment Use

All work involving DSE must be subject to a specific DSE Workstation Self-Assessment (mandatory for permanent homeworking and/or on campus DSE arrangements, see Section 6.4 for requirements for Homeworking and Agile Working). The assessment must be carried out by everyone whose work involves DSE as part of their work activity where they will be using the equipment continuously for more than an hour each day (see Section 4.2 DSE User definition). The assessment is self-assessed and is included at the end of the DSE Online Awareness training.

This assessment covers the following topics:

- Appropriate control measures and adjustments that can be made to the user's workstation;
- The user's workstation (including their chair, desk and all DSE equipment);
- The user's working environment (including light, glare and temperature);
- The work that the user is carrying out; and
- Any special requirements that each user may have (i.e. disabilities).

The DSE Workstation Self-Assessment may also need to be completed where a significant change is introduced such as:

- New equipment (such as PC, monitor, peripherals etc) being installed;
- New workstation furniture;
- Relocation of an existing workstation;
- A modification to environmental conditions;
- A major change to software being used.

Once the self-assessment is completed, and where an issue has been identified, the DSC (or other nominated person within the department) is automatically provided with details of the assessment via the electronic system. The DSC must then review the assessment and discuss any issues with a DSE Assessor. The DSE Assessor will discuss, with the DSE User, reasonable changes that can be made to the workstation and/or work activity to resolve these issues. These changes must be included in the completed general risk assessment.

Where the DSE Assessor is unable to resolve all the issues, then the person managing the work or the DSC must contact SHaW for further advice.

If a DSE user makes a report of a persisting MSD issue following the completion of their DSE Workstation Self-Assessment and adjustments to their DSE set up, they can be referred by their manager to Occupational Health for advice.

See Information Sheet '[DSE Assessment and Review Flowchart](#)' for further information on the DSE workstation assessment process for both permanent and temporary workplaces.

6.3.2 Provision of Suitable Equipment

To reduce the likelihood of DSE users from experiencing adverse health effects that can be caused by DSE use, suitable equipment for the work activity must be provided.

It should be noted that as the University campus remains a work base for the agile worker and a desk and equipment is provided on campus, the University will not normally provide the agile worker with additional IT equipment, phone, broadband connection or furniture to work from home unless there is a contractual agreement for homeworking (see Section 6.4 Homeworking and Agile Working).

The type of equipment required will depend on the task being done, and the requirements of any risk control measures identified in the general risk assessment and the workstation self-assessment. The outcome of the general risk assessment will detail what risk control measures are necessary. Portable equipment should be considered where possible to allow flexibility in its use (i.e. a laptop with a docking station).

Equipment for the use of DSE must be provided following consultation with the user as to their specific requirements, and must be able to be set up in an ergonomic manner to reduce the risk of DSE related MSDs.

Information on the requirements for suitable equipment can be found in the [information sheet – Minimum Workstation and Equipment Requirements](#).

6.3.3 Suitable Workstation Setup

Even where the correct equipment has been provided, the potential for DSE related safety issues can be reduced further by ensuring that the workstation itself is setup in an ergonomic manner for the person utilising the equipment, and that it is fit for the tasks that it is being used.

Ensuring that the workstation has sufficient space and lighting, and noise is minimised will also help to reduce the potential for DSE related health effects, whilst also helping to reduce work related stress.

Where a workstation is shared between multiple persons (e.g. hot desking), then consideration must be given to the provision of equipment that can be configured to fit any person who may require to use the workstation.

The DSE Online Awareness course covers the principles of ergonomic workstation setup.

Further information can be found in the [Information Sheet – Minimum Workstation and Equipment Requirements](#).

Further information on ergonomic workstation setup can be found [here](#).

6.3.4 Work Routine and Breaks

DSE related health issues can be prevented by incorporating regular breaks into the DSE work activity.

DSE Users should take more regular, shorter breaks, rather than taking a single long break. For example, 5 to 10 minutes every hour would be preferable to taking 20-minute breaks every 2 hours. Taking a break from activities involving DSE can also include stopping to make phone calls or other such tasks.

There is no evidence that DSE use will cause permanent damage to eyesight, but it can cause fatigue, blurred vision or headaches. To minimise the potential of this, users are encouraged to glance away from screens at regular periods for a few seconds to allow their eyes to recover.

Where there are no natural chances to take a break, departments must ensure that suitable breaks are planned in to allow staff to take time away from their workstation.

Further information on work breaks can be found [here](#).

6.3.5 Use of Portable DSE Equipment

Portable DSE includes any items that can be operated away from a main power supply, and includes items such as laptops, tablets or other mobile devices.

The incorrect use of mobile DSE can lead to an increased likelihood of the onset of MSDs compared to the use of separate DSE equipment, such as monitors or peripherals.

When users are working remotely / agilely they may be required to make use of portable DSE. When DSE users are in their workplace the use of portable DSE equipment should be discouraged, as the potential for DSE related health effects are increased when using these items.

Portable DSE equipment such as laptops can however provide flexibility for agile working. Where portable DSE is to be used in the workplace and where it can facilitate agile working, then the use of docking stations and external monitors and peripherals must be considered and included in the DSE risk assessment.

Issues associated with the use of portable DSE include:

- Smaller screens;
- Smaller keyboards;
- Weight;
- Less room for adjustment of the display.

To minimise the potential impact of these factors, users must take steps to protect themselves. Information on controls to reduce the impact the use of portable DSE can be found in [Information Sheet – Minimum Workstation and Equipment Requirements](#).

6.4 Homeworking and Agile Working

A general risk assessment must be undertaken for all DSE related activities whilst homeworking and agile working. This risk assessment must be reviewed at appropriate intervals, where there is any change to the work being done, or at least annually. DSE requirements for homeworking and agile working to minimise the risk are outlined in the following sections. Note that a template general risk assessment for homeworking can be found by searching the eRisk system (Ref No. 3778).

The [University's Homeworking Policy](#) provides the wider guidelines for homeworking.

6.4.1 Temporary homeworking

Where a member of the University is working from home on a temporary basis (for example as part of an [Agile Working](#) agreement), a DSE Workstation Self-Assessment is not required. DSE Users must however ensure that their working area is set up appropriately, following the same principles and guidelines for their workstation on campus.

Temporary homeworkers must also complete the [Homeworking Checklist](#), which must be reviewed at least annually or whenever the homeworking environment or work activity is

significantly changed. The Homeworking Checklist facilitates the risk assessment process and aims to help establish good practice to minimise the risk of MSDs and risks arising from other safety issues whilst working from home. Additional guidance and information on DSE setup and agile working is also provided in the Homeworking Checklist. Any issues identified on the checklist must be discussed with the line manager.

As far as possible, if required, Information Services will supply you with equipment which is portable and can be used in more than one location e.g. laptops and docking stations rather than desktop devices. The University will not normally provide additional IT equipment to specifically facilitate temporary homeworking, however departments may provide equipment in line with local Faculty or Departmental guidance, within reasonable limits, and where agreed in advance.

6.4.2 Agile Working

Agile working is a means of giving members of staff the ability to choose when, where and how they work, within guidelines set as part of a discussion with their HoD, giving both the worker and department a greater degree of flexibility in how their work is completed.

Agile working is intended to encourage managers and staff to consider if their work can be achieved in a flexible manner (note that agile working is not the same as flexible working), giving staff the scope to work at times and in locations that are preferable to them, providing a better work life balance. This may include working at home (e.g. in their own office or kitchen) or working in a library or other location. The varied places that agile working can be done means that the equipment being used must be suitable for the task being done.

As the employer, the University is required to ensure the health and safety of its employees wherever they are conducting work on behalf of the University, either on or off campus. A general risk assessment must be completed where work is being done agilely.

There is no need for a DSE Workstation Self-Assessment to be undertaken when working on an agile basis. However, DSE Users who are working agilely must ensure that they use the principles discussed in the DSE Online Awareness training to ensure their workstation is set up appropriately. Please note, that if agile working is undertaken at home, then the DSE Homeworking Checklist must be completed (see Section 6.4.1)

For more information on Agile Working, please see the [Strathclyde Agile Working Toolkit](#).

6.4.3 Permanent homeworking

Where there is a permanent contractual arrangement to allow working from home, e.g. full-time working at home agreement, or as agreed through a [Flexible Working](#) agreement, the work area in the user's home must be fully self-assessed in line with the requirements of a workstation on campus, and the user must complete a full DSE Workstation Self-Assessment.

The need for any follow up arrangements to address issues identified by the DSE User will depend on the user and the necessary corrections / changes, and will need to be discussed by the person responsible for managing the work or the DSC, DSE Assessor and the user.

Where a contractual change has been made that includes homeworking, then additional equipment that is required to ensure that a person's workstation at home is suitable (e.g. monitors or chairs) should be provided by the department, or a reasonable contribution towards any costs incurred should be provided, where the purchase has been agreed.

6.5 Procurement of DSE Equipment

The University has framework agreements in place for the purchase of most IT-related items and consumables. Further information on available frameworks can be found [here](#).

Where equipment is purchased for use at home, and this purchase has been agreed in advance, then this is to be submitted as an expense on FMS, following normal University and Departmental requirements for expenses claims. The equipment would remain the property of the University and would be subject to inclusion in an asset register.

There are a large number of manufacturers and suppliers providing a wide range of DSE related equipment. It is advisable to seek guidance on the suitability of new equipment for the purpose it is intended for from the manufacturers before purchase.

Consideration should be given to the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations (PUWER) 1998 and specific regard given to suitability, maintenance and inspection regimes.

6.6 Safety Issues Associated with DSE

6.6.1 Electrical Safety

All electrical equipment must be set up appropriately and be in a suitable condition before being used. It should be in good working order, free from physical signs of defect or damage, and cables must be intact, with no fraying or splitting. Plugs must be free from damage, and in good condition, with no signs of burns or other damage.

Electrical equipment must be plugged into a wall socket directly. Where this is not possible, then only strip adaptors must be used. Cube type socket adaptors must not be used. No more than 13 amps total of electrical equipment must be connected to a single wall socket. This is to prevent over draw of current, potentially creating the risk of fire within the socket.

Additionally, all DSE equipment used on University premises, whether supplied by the University or brought on by University staff, and all equipment provided by the University for use at home must be PAT tested.

Where any electrical equipment shows signs of physical or heat damage, or where equipment fails PAT testing, then this equipment must be taken out of use and not used again until it has been inspected and repaired by a competent person.

Further information on electrical safety relating to DSE can be found in the [Homeworking Checklist](#).

6.6.2 Electromagnetic Fields

All DSE equipment will generate a very small electromagnetic field (EMF) whilst it is in operation. This is part of the normal operation of any piece of electrical equipment.

Provided that DSE equipment is being operated within the scope of the manufacturer's instructions and recommendations, there is no potential for harm to be caused by EMFs from any consumer DSE equipment.

6.6.3 Health Effects Associated with DSE Use

It is well established that health problems may arise from intensive and/or improper use of DSE.

1) Eyes and Eyesight

Extended use of DSE can lead to eye related issues, such as:

- Tiredness;
- Discomfort;
- Temporary short-sightedness;
- Headaches.

DSE users must ensure that they undergo an eyesight and eye examination before first commencing DSE work, and at suitable intervals thereafter. In Scotland eyesight tests which are carried out by an Ophthalmic Optician, or a registered Medical Practitioner with suitable qualifications, are free of charge, however, there may be a charge for completing a DSE specific eye exam. This charge would be refunded. If the eye test is carried out in another country, then the University would reimburse the charge for the full eye test.

Where glasses with corrective lenses, necessary for DSE work, are required, the University, via the claimant's department, will cover the cost of a basic pair of glasses up to £54 in value.

When making a claim for glasses, a copy of the prescription must be provided which clearly states that corrective lenses are necessary for DSE work. A copy of the receipt must be included in the expenses request.

The University is only required to contribute towards the cost of glasses where the eye test shows the user needs glasses for the specific ocular distance for DSE work. Glasses that are prescribed for non DSE work on an ordinary prescription, such as for distance, driving or reading, will not be reimbursed by the University.

2) Musculoskeletal Disorders

The prolonged use of DSE, even when set up correctly, can lead to muscle strain and fatigue, as well as pain in joints in the arms, back, neck and shoulders.

To ensure that the potential for MSDs are minimised, all DSE Users must ensure that their workstation is appropriately setup and is comfortable for them to carry out their work.

If a DSE User makes a report of a persisting MSD issue following completion of their DSE Workstation Self-Assessment and adjustments to their DSE set up, they can be referred by their manager to Occupational Health for advice.

The University Physiotherapy Service is also available for DSE Users with a persisting MSD and can be accessed via the Occupational Health Service. The physiotherapist is also a trained DSE Assessor who is able to provide DSE workstation advice. Staff are required to submit a self-referral form which is available from occupationalhealth@strath.ac.uk.

Further advice on staying active whilst seated at a workstation which may help to prevent MSDs can be found [here](#).

Further information on the Early Access Physiotherapy Clinic can be found [here](#).

7. DOCUMENTATION AND RECORDS

7.1 The requirements to meet the Standard for DSE are described in this document. Some aspects are covered in more detail in other documents which are referenced throughout.

7.2 Written records must be maintained to comply with this standard.

8. COMMUNICATION AND REPORTING

8.1 A copy of the latest Standard will be available on the SHaW website.

8.2 Departments are expected to report on compliance with this Standard as part of regular OHS performance monitoring, further information can be obtained from SHaW.

8.3 With regard to this Standard, departments must report incidents associated with DSE to the DSC without delay. If appropriate, an S1 Form must be completed, signed by the DSC of the department in which the accident took place, and submitted to SHaW. If more than one person is involved in an incident, then a separate S1 Form should be completed for each individual involved.

8.4 Some incidents may be reportable under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR). These regulations require that certain work-related injuries, cases of ill health and dangerous occurrences are reported to the HSE. SHaW manage the reporting of incidents under RIDDOR.

9. TOOLS

9.1 Information sheets

- Information Sheet – Minimum Workstation and Equipment Requirements
- Information Sheet – DSE Assessment and Review Flowchart

9.2 Forms

- Form – Homeworking Checklist
- Form – Template General Risk Assessment for Homeworking

10. COMPLIANCE

This Standard aims to meet the requirements of:

- Health and Safety at Work Act (1974)
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (1999)

- Managing for Health and Safety HSG65 (2013)
- Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations (PUWER) 1998
- The Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992
- Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) 2013
- Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992
- Working with Display Screen Equipment (DSE) INDG 36

11. DOCUMENT HISTORY

Recorded changes to this document are maintained in the SHaW Document Control Register.