

Display Screen Equipment (DSE) Policy

CONTENTS

- 1. University Policy**
- 2. Procedures / Guidance**
 - 2.1 Workstation assessment and self assessment
 - 2.2 Minimum requirements for workstations
 - 2.3 Training and information for users
 - 2.4 Breaks
 - 2.5 Eyesight testing
 - 2.6 Laptop Computers
 - 2.7 Responsibilities of Managers/Heads of Department/Heads of Section
 - 2.8 Responsibilities of assessors
 - 2.9 Responsibilities of users
 - 2.10 Responsibilities of Occupational Health Adviser
- 3. Definitions**
- 4. Further Reading**

APPENDICES

- A Schedule of Minimum requirements
- B List of Assessors
- C Post graduate students

1. POLICY

It is the policy of Loughborough University to provide a safe and healthy working environment for employees, including particular measures to protect their health and safety when they are working with **Display Screen Equipment (DSE)**.

The University will fulfil its obligations by

- a) the assessment of workstations, using a self assessment approach, supported by a network of trained **assessors**;
- b) the provision of suitable **work equipment**;
- c) the provision of information and training for **users**, primarily through a computer based package;
- d) the provision of eye and eyesight testing for users, and the provision of spectacles where these are required solely and specifically for DSE work;
- e) making arrangements for regular breaks for employees working with DSE.

The main legislation which is relevant to this subject is the Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992 (amended 2002).

2. PROCEDURES / GUIDANCE

2.1 Workstation assessment and self assessment

Each department shall have one or more assessors. In the case of small departments, an assessor may be shared with another department. These assessors will be trained in the principles and practice of workstation assessment and problem solving; training courses and regular updates are arranged through Staff Development <http://s-d.lboro.ac.uk/default.asp>

When choosing assessors, care should be taken to ensure they have adequate time and motivation. In some departments the IT co-ordinator fulfils the role, this is particularly appropriate, senior clerical or administrative staff may also be suitable.

Workstation self-assessment shall be carried out by all employees who use display screen equipment, using the electronic form which is available through <http://www.openerg.com/dse/mainform.html> 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.

2.2 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/casters); 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 2.6)

2.3 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 www.openenerg.com/dse/index.html . Reminders to this effect will be issued by departmental DSE assessors annually.

The Occupational Health Adviser will carry out face to face training/ briefings on request e.g. for a number of users in a department.

Briefings on DSE use will also be available from time to time via Professional Development.

2.4 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 mini breaks (e.g. 1 minute every 15 – 30 minutes) are preferable to longer breaks every couple of hours. Computer installed software can be useful to remind users to take frequent mini breaks.

2.5 Eyesight testing

The University will pay for eye testing for all employees who are identified as users. This payment is conditional on testing being carried out at the University's chosen optician, and on a voucher for payment being obtained in advance via the Health and Safety department (call extension 2181).

The University will not reimburse eye testing costs for employees who choose to use a different optician.

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.

The University may contribute towards the cost of varifocal lenses where the central part of the lens is specifically calibrated to allow viewing of the computer screen. The cost of the contribution will not exceed the normal cost of a pair of basic frames and lenses.

2.6 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 carried frequently.

* A 'Loughborough University Desk Pack' Comprising of: Toshiba Advanced Port Replicator 3, Toshiba Black USB Keyboard, Toshiba PS2/USB Optical Scroll Mouse and LG L1750H 17" LCD Monitor is available from the official university laptop suppliers, Getech,

2.7 Responsibilities of Managers / Heads of Department (HoD) / Heads of Section (HoS)

- a) Nominate one or more DSE assessors for the department (HoD/HoS only)
- b) Support DSE assessor(s) in carrying out their duties
- c) Ensure furniture and equipment provided is of a suitable and sufficient standard
- d) Implement appropriate recommendations made by DSE assessor and/or Occupational Health Adviser

2.8 Responsibilities of assessors

- a) Ensure new users undergo training and self assessment (using the www.openerg.com website) as part of the induction process, and keep records to demonstrate this has been done
- b) Advise existing users to undergo training and self assessment (using the www.openerg.com website) and send reminders to this effect (a format for such reminders will be supplied by the Occupational Health Adviser on an annual basis)
- c) Ensure all users know where to seek help if they have difficulties with an issue which relates to DSE health and safety
- d) Follow up self assessments to resolve any problems identified
- e) Carry out face to face assessments where necessary
- f) Make referrals to Occupational Health / Health and Safety where appropriate

2.9 Responsibilities of users

- a) Visit www.openerg.com.dse/index.html and view on-line training; this should be done initially and then reviewed from time to time as required.
- b) Carry out self assessment of workstation at <http://www.openerg.com/dse/mainform.html> and make any necessary changes to workstation and work arrangements.
- c) Seek advice from the DSE assessor to resolve any remaining issues arising from workstation assessment, and make any necessary changes recommended by DSE assessor.
- d) Repeat self assessment as required e.g. if there are changes to work equipment or environment; or if advised to do so by assessor

- e) Report any health problems which may be related to computer work to Manager and/or DSE assessor and to Occupational Health or the Health, Safety and Environment Office.

2.10 Responsibilities of Occupational Health Adviser

- a) Maintain list of DSE assessors in conjunction with Health and Safety and Environment Office
- b) Train DSE assessors in conjunction with Staff Development
- c) Circulate a reminder to all DSE assessors annually to encourage DSE users to update training/self assessment
- d) Assist assessors with assessments on request
- e) Carry out assessments for individuals with work related health problems
- f) Make recommendations to individuals and managers following assessments

3. DEFINITIONS

Display Screen Equipment – any alphanumeric or graphic display screen

Workstation – this includes Display screen equipment, any associated accessories including keyboard, mouse, printer, furniture etc and the immediate work environment around the Display screen equipment

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

Assessor – individual nominated by the HoD/HoS to carry out duties as outlined in this policy; and who has attended for training accordingly

4. FURTHER READING

The Law on VDUS – an easy guide
HSG90, HSE books, 2003

Work with Display Screen equipment – Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations. Guidance on regulations L26
HSE books, 2003

Seating at work HSG57
HSE books, 2002

www.openerg.com

This is the University's web site which provides training and self assessment for users. It can also be accessed by a link from the Health and Safety pages

www.abilitynet.org.uk

This is an organisation which specialises in supporting computer users with disabilities or work related ill-health problems. They produce a large number of factsheets on relevant issues, and recommend alternate equipment to solve particular problems.

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 tiltable 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.

LIST OF ASSESSORS

Please see list of assessors at the following link:

<http://www.lboro.ac.uk/admin/hse/departmental-contacts/dse.html>

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 HSE regulations on Display Screen Equipment; 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 training site www.openerg.com ,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.
6. Undergraduate students are not covered under the DSE regulations. However, they should be encouraged to visit www.openerg.com and to carry out self assessment of any workstation which they use on a regular basis.
7. 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.