

## Scope

1. This standard applies to all workstations used by employees i.e. staff and post-graduate students at UCL. Staff and post-graduate students who are classified as display screen equipment (DSE) users (see definitions) will be required to carry out an online DSE assessment of their own workstation and their use of that workstation; this includes an online tutorial. Any issues that are unresolved after completing the assessment are followed up by trained, competent DSE assessors, supported by UCL Safety Services and/or Occupational Health Services as required. Graduate research students and long-term visitors to UCL are treated as employees for the purposes of this standard.

2. For the purposes of this standard, undergraduate students will be provided with workstations that meet the minimum requirements of the legislation and guidance on how to use the equipment safely, but user assessments of such workstations will not be carried out.

## Legal requirements

3. The Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992 require UCL to:
- Identify workstations and assess risks associated with their use;
  - Ensure that workstations meet minimum legal requirements;
  - Ensure that work is planned to allow for breaks or changes of activity;
  - Provide, if requested or identified in an assessment, an eye and eyesight test; and
  - Provide information and training so that staff can use their workstations safely.

## Definitions

**DSE:** *Any alphanumeric or graphic display screen, regardless of the display process.* A display screen usually forms part of a computer showing text, numbers or graphics. Display screens include cathode-ray, liquid crystal, plasma (flat) and touch-screens. The definition is not limited to office situations but also applies to non-electronic display systems such as microfiche and display screens that are part of laboratory equipment

**User:** *Someone who uses DSE for a significant part of their normal work.* This means individuals who use DSE continuously or near continuously for an hour or more at a time and that they do this on a more or less daily basis. In most areas within UCL, it is recommended that all staff who have access to DSE be classed as users rather than trying to analyse the detail of each job or work activity.

**Upper-Limb Disorder (ULD):** *Conditions which affect the muscles, tendons, ligaments, nerves or soft tissues and joints in the neck, shoulders, arms, wrists, hands or fingers.* ULD is a general term which is used to describe a wide range of disorders that may or may not have an underlying medical pathology. Symptoms may be associated with work e.g. DSE, laboratory or factory work but can also be associated with non-work activities e.g. hobbies or domestic activities and may be exacerbated by work activities.

**DSE tool:** At UCL the method which must be used to co-ordinate departmental DSE assessments is via the RiskNET DSE tool which has the following features:

- User tutorial provides information about DSE risks and instruction on safe working with DSE;
- User checklist provides direct feedback to the Departmental DSE assessor of those Users who may require a further assessment;
- a method of recording recommendations, corrective actions, tracking and assigning

## **Workstation:**



### **Minimum workstation requirements:**

**Chair** must be stable and have sufficient adjustment to ensure the correct posture can be achieved;

**Screen** image must be stable, the characters must be well defined and the brightness and contrast must be adjustable; **Worksurface** must be large enough to ensure all documents and equipment which are in immediate use can be accommodated

**Keyboard** must be separate from the screen and have a tilt mechanism.

**Additional equipment** which may be provided as a result of the risk assessment or because of the nature of the work must be adjustable if appropriate e.g. footrest, wrist rest etc

## **Minimum environmental factors:**

- **Space** must be sufficient for postural changes and to provide freedom of movement while seated and while moving between furniture and equipment.
- **Lighting** levels must be sufficient for all tasks at the workstation e.g. reading or keyboard work. The light source can be natural or artificial or a combination of both. Measures must be taken to avoid reflections and glare.
- **Noise** from equipment should not distract the user thus impairing concentration or preventing normal conversation.
- **Temperature and Humidity** may be affected by the heat emitted by workstation equipment and consideration should be given to this when equipment is purchased.

## **Risks associated with DSE use:**

- *Upper limb disorders*
- *Back ache*
- *Fatigue and stress*
- *Temporary eyestrain (not damage) and headaches.* Ref: Regulation 5-Work with display screen equipment: Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992

## **Responsibilities**

4. Heads of Department must ensure that there are arrangements in place to identify and control the risks arising from DSE work in their departments and to allocate resources accordingly. The arrangements will include:

- the selection and training of DSE assessors;
  - the provision of resources to ensure that workstations meet the minimum specified requirements;
  - the provision of information about the risks associated with DSE work;
  - ensuring there is a system in place for fault reporting; and
  - ensuring that records are kept.
5. Line managers must ensure that:
- new staff and post graduate students undertake the online training on the safe use of DSE and then carry out the online self-assessment of their workstation as soon as possible after they start work. This can be part of the routine induction of new staff and post graduate students and will form part of the induction record for individuals;
  - the workstations of existing staff have been assessed. If no paper record exists for a member of staff, they should carry out a self assessment online. Where a paper record

- exists i.e. the assessment was carried out under previous arrangements, when a review of the assessment is triggered (see below) this should be carried out using the online tool;
  - recommendations made by the DSE assessor are implemented;
  - if the changes made as a result of the DSE assessment do not resolve pain, discomfort or health issues experienced by the User then the User must be referred to Occupational Health for advice.
  - a review is undertaken when required (see 13).
6. DSE Assessors must:
- attend training – Assessment of Display Screen Equipment Foundation Workshop to gain the knowledge and skills to analyse workstations;
  - co-ordinate a programme of workstation assessments using the RiskNET DSE tool by:
    - identifying the group of users to be assessed by consulting with managers
    - sending a self-assessment to new users or existing users when a review is appropriate;
    - carrying out a DSE assessment if issues are raised in user self-assessments;
    - recording the results and/or recommendations which must be communicated to the manager for implementation;
    - reviewing the assessment when needed (see 13).
7. DSE Users must:
- carry out a DSE self-assessment when requested to do so;
  - follow the advice and guidance provided about workstation layout and correct posture;
  - report health problems or workstation faults to their manager.

## **Assessing the risks**

8. The risks associated with DSE work fall into three main categories:
- Postural problems** may occur because of poorly adjusted equipment, insufficient information and/ training, poor work organisation and/or insufficient changes in activity;
  - Visual problems** may be caused by an incorrectly positioned screen, glare, reflections, poor lighting , poor work organisation and / or insufficient changes in activity or an uncorrected sight problem;
  - Fatigue and stress** may be overcome by dealing with postural and visual problems, suitable task design to incorporate breaks, training to use software correctly.

## **Managing the risks**

9. The measures necessary to control the risks associated with DSE work fall into two main categories.
- Practical controls** include the selection and provision of suitable equipment, software and eyesight tests.
  - Management controls** include the provision of information, training and task design.

### **Equipment selection**

10. 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:

- replacement of obsolete, damaged or broken equipment
- refurbishment of work areas
- new groups joining the Department

### **Work routine of users**

11. Managers must ensure that work is planned to ensure that other tasks prompt periodic breaks from DSE work.

The main purpose of incorporating breaks into the work pattern is to ensure that the user varies their posture and changes visual demands. The frequency and length of breaks will depend on the mix of demands placed on the user by the work at DSE.

For many users changes in activity and short pauses occur naturally but for others who use DSE at a more intense pace breaks may need to be introduced and in a few cases enforced. Ensuring users take a break from the screen can be achieved by the introduction of software which provides screen reminders at suitable intervals.

### **Shared workstations**

12. In some work areas a workstation may be used by more than one person or users may rotate around a group of workstations. If the workstation(s) are located in the same area and the equipment provided meets the basic minimum requirements then the User need only do one assessment. N.B. the chair must have a sufficient range in height adjustment for each user. In addition a short user may need a footrest which may not be necessary for a taller person using the same equipment. If the User uses workstations in different locations then a separate assessment should be carried out for each workstation in each location.

### **Review the risk assessment**

13. The manager is responsible for ensuring a review of the risk assessment is carried out but this duty can be delegated to the DSE assessor. Workstation assessments must be reviewed if:

- major changes are made to the equipment, furniture or environment;
- workstations are relocated;
- the nature of the work changes;
- the user becomes pregnant;
- the user is diagnosed with a permanent or temporary disability. (NB Users can be referred to Occupational Health for advice on workplace adjustments for disability and IT support can be provided by the Digital Accessibility Technologists).

**OR**

- 5 years have elapsed since the last review.

Safety Services Reference(s):

Display Screen Equipment: managing the risks	
ACOP First Published	March 2006
Revised Standard	May 2012
Revised Standard	July 2018