

Display Screen Equipment Code of Practice

November 2017

Reviews and Revisions

Action	Date	Reason	Reviewer
DSE Code of Practice UNN/H&S/CoP/002	10/11/2017	Code of Practice updated	John Hall

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Introduction

It is the responsibility of Northumbria University to provide a safe and healthy working environment and to ensure that users of Display Screen Equipment (DSE) have been properly assessed and the risks to their health and safety controlled in accordance with current Health and Safety legislation, the Display Screen Equipment Regulations 1992 (as amended 2002).

It has long been recognised that incorrectly set up workstations can have a detrimental effect on health. Visual fatigue, shoulder and back pain, carpal tunnel conditions and other types of musculoskeletal problems can result from bad posture, inappropriate seating and long periods working at the keyboard. Stress may result from such factors as unfavourable environmental conditions and task planning.

See Health and Safety Executive guidelines here - [Working with VDU's](#)

The E-learning DSE Training Module

- In order to ensure that such health effects are minimized, **each employee /user shall complete** the **E-learning DSE Training Module (awareness level)** This training informs the user of Work Related Upper Limb Disorders (WRULD's), correct workstation setup and best working practices.
- After this training, users will be able to properly adjust their workstation to suit their own physiology.
- If it is found that elements of the workstation and equipment cannot be adjusted to suit the user, or health or medical conditions require consideration, then the **DSE Self-Assessment Form** should be completed in conjunction with the user's line manager.
- Send the assessment to the Central Health & Safety Team. If required, the University Health and Safety Advisor can assist with the completion of the self-assessment form.

Responsibilities:

Faculty Pro Vice Chancellors and Service Directors

- Ensure all persons in your charge have completed the E-Learning DSE Mandatory Training Module.
- Support the DSE Users/ DSE Assessors in carrying out their duties.
- Implement appropriate recommendations made by the H&S advisor and Occupational Health advisor.
- Ensure furniture and equipment provided for users is of a suitable and sufficient standard.
- Authorise the use of specialist advice/ equipment providers (Posturite).

Users

- Complete the E-learning DSE Training Module which forms part of the mandatory training agreed with HR, and thereafter three yearly as refresher training.

- After this training, users will be able to properly adjust their workstation to suit their own physiology.
- If the workstation cannot be properly adjusted to suit the individual then users must carry out a DSE Self-Assessment in order to properly identify specific issues. The user's supervisor or line manager should be involved in this process.
- E-mail a copy of the self-assessment to the Central Health and Safety Team.
- Repeat self-assessments as required e.g. if there are any significant changes to work equipment or environment, or if advised to do so by the University H&S Advisor.
- Report any health problems which may be related to computer work to their line manager.

University H&S Advisors

- Ensure new starters undergo DSE training as part of their induction process, and keep records to show this has been done.
- Advise existing users to undergo training 3 yearly and carry out a self-assessment as required.
- Assist users in the DSE self-assessment process and the correct set up of their workstation.
- Ensure all users know where to seek help if they have difficulties with an issue which relates to DSE health and safety.
- Follow up self-assessments to resolve any problems identified.
- Carry out face to face assessment where necessary.
- Recommend the use of proprietary items such as footrests, wrist rests, document holders etc.
- Make referrals to Occupational Health (through Human Resources) where appropriate.

Laptop Computers & Portable Devices

- Laptops pose a postural risk to users when used for long periods: (as a rule of thumb - more than 2 hours per day).
- Ideally the keyboard and screen should be separate, with the top third of the screen at eye level, this can be achieved through:
 - Using a docking station (preferred) with screen in an upright position.
 - Using with a separate monitor, keyboard and mouse.
- All laptops and their accessories should be as light as possible. It is recommended that a backpack type carrier be considered if a laptop is to be carried frequently.
- Avoid branded laptop cases for security.

Hot Desking

- Where hot desking takes place, all workstations in that particular area are identically designed so that a single DSE assessment will prove sufficient for all locations (though seating must be correctly adjusted to suit each individual). See hot desking safety advice [here](#).

Occupational Health Referral

- Occupational Health referral may be required for users exhibiting signs and symptoms of work related upper limb disorder. Referrals generally take place after the DSE self- assessment and the "Discomfort questionnaire" have been completed.

- Discussions between the University H&S Advisor and Occupational Health shall decide on the next steps; further assessment / medical treatment /provision of specialist user specific equipment.
- If such equipment is required, the University has engaged the services of Posturite, who will carry out a face to face assessment with the user and recommend the equipment required. Arrangements can then be made for purchase and fitting the equipment.

Eye Examination and Testing

- The University will provide the means for all employees who are identified as “users”, to have an eye examination and test when requested. Re-testing is usually every two years, exceptions would be on the optician’s advice.
- The University will only have to pay for spectacles if the test shows you need special corrective lenses that are prescribed for the distance the screen is viewed at. If an ordinary prescription is suitable for your DSE work, then the University /employer does not have to pay for your spectacles. Contact HR or your safety advisors for further information.

Rest Breaks

- Breaking up long spells of DSE work helps to prevent fatigue, eyestrain, upper limb disorders and backache. Most employees within the University will have some 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 work with more active tasks, such as filing, photocopying etc. Where this is not possible, more formal breaks may be necessary.
- Frequent mini breaks every 15-30 minutes are preferable to longer breaks, taken every couple of hours.

Home working

- Where University employees are contracted to work from home, the full requirements of the DSE Regulations in terms of provision of equipment and suitable set up must be implemented.
- In these cases, although not coming under the DSE Regulations, the employee should ensure that their work area is set up in accordance with good DSE working practices.

Specialist Consideration:

Pregnant Workers

- Although scientific studies have not discovered any link amongst new and expectant mothers and DSE use, the layout and working arrangements should be routinely discussed with their supervisor or line manager over this period.
- This can be carried out at the same time as the University Pregnancy Risk Assessment Process. Special consideration should be given to achieving a comfortable seating position and an increase in the frequency and duration of rest breaks.

Post Graduate Students

- Post graduate students who have an employment contract with the University will be covered by this policy, in the same way as other members of staff. They will be expected to complete the mandatory training and DSE self-assessment process.
- Post graduate students who are not employed by the University, are not covered by this policy, and the University are not obliged to provide them with free eyesight testing, glasses and training. However, the University does recognise it has a duty of care to them and every effort will be made to provide those students having difficulties with timely advice and information.
- Where the University provides a computer or workstation for a post graduate student, whether employed by the University or not, there is a duty of care to ensure this is suitable for the task .

Undergraduate Students

- Undergraduate students are not covered by the DSE Regulations and therefore not covered by this policy, however although it is less likely that an undergraduate student would be required to make sufficient concentrated use of DSE to be classed as a "user", should a student report difficulties, every effort should be made to advise that student as necessary.

Appendix 1

DSE Portable Guidance (Tablets, iPads and Smartphones etc.)

Used correctly, smart phones, tablets and notepad devices should not pose any risks to health. The key to preventing hand, neck and eyestrain is to limit the use and duration.

The keypads are not designed for long periods of use or for work requiring information input, a correctly set up workstation or laptop is always the best option.

These smart devices are intended for occasional use as a notepad, as an aide-memoire or to record against a checklist or pro-forma. Suitable arrangements and facilities must therefore be available for downloading and uploading information to a standard workstation where it can be manipulated and used without risk.

Users tend to angle their head down or raise their arms. Holding either posture for any extended period of time runs the risk of developing neck and upper limb conditions.

Some basic advice:

- When interacting with the screen have the tablet flat or only slightly angled to ensure that your wrists are not in an awkward position.
- Use a light touch when interacting with the screen.
- Avoid glare on the screen.
- Keep the screen clean so that you can see the display.
- If you find yourself leaning forward to view the screen or to enlarge the image or text, try to place the tablet on a surface rather than holding it.
- If you need to use the keypad for prolonged periods consider using a blue-tooth external keyboard.
- When reading from (as opposed to interacting with) the equipment use a stand or tilt the tablet so that the need to bend your head forward is minimised.
- Remember that movement is important. If you find yourself using the device for more than 10-20 minutes take a short break to stretch your hands, shoulders and neck. Relax your eyes by looking into the distance.

Remember – Never use your portable device when walking – many slips, trips and falls have resulted from this.

The University Health and Safety Team can be contacted for further information and advice on 0191 2274100.

Display screen Equipment (DSE) Self-assessment

To be completed by the individual and signed by the line manager

Name		Faculty/Service/Room		Date:	
Job Title		Line Manager name:			
Working Hours		How long have you been in this role?		Assessor Name	
Ref	Seating & Posture	Y / N	Comments / Actions		Action Completed
1	Forearms approximately horizontal - adjust seat height to achieve this				
2	Shoulders relaxed and not hunched over, head upright				
3	Wrists and forearms are level				
4	Hips, knees, ankles at 90 degrees when seated				
5	Feet flat on the floor or on footrest				
6	Work chair fully adjustable /seat at correct height				
7	Eyes level with the top third of the screen				
8	Seat at correct height and supporting thighs				
9	Good back (lumbar) support				
10	Keyboard - adjustable detachable, legible				
11	Standalone laptop or I-Pad / tablet or				
11	Laptop with stand, external keyboard & mouse				
12	Screen: stable image - adjustable to suit user				

Ref	Environmental Factors	Y / N	Comments / Actions	Y / N
a	Adequate lighting			
b	Adequate contrast, no glare or reflections			
c	Distracting noise minimised			
d	Leg room & clearances sufficient			
e	Window blinds adequate			
f	Software/programs appropriate to task			
g	Work surface spacious - no glare			



Line Manager	Signed	Date
For completion by H&S Team only		
Outstanding actions agreed with Occupational Health nurse and Safety Team		Y/N
Referral to Posturite:	Date:	

Discomfort Questionnaire - Optional

BODY PART	Severity 1-4 indicate left or right L R	Frequency A, B, C	Comments
Hands/ Wrists/ Fingers			
Elbows			
Shoulders			
Neck			
Back (upper/Lower)			
Legs/ Thighs /Calves			
Headache/ Eyestrain			
Other:			
Severity: 1 = mild, 2 = moderate, 3 = severe, 4 = unbearable		Frequency: A = seldom, B = Often, C = Always	
Have you talked to your GP			
What is the hardest part of your job?			
Any other comments			
Referral to Occupational Health	Date:	Referral to POSTURITE	Date: Signed:

Appendix 3



Hot Desking Safely

When using a hot desk, you are not expected to complete a full DSE assessment every time, but you do need to take the time to adjust your workstation to suit you, this will help in reducing any ergonomic risks to you and aid in your comfort. Wipes are provided to keep the keyboard, mouse and screen clean.

Watch your back

- Sit properly; use the seat functions to adjust height and to give the lower back support. Sit well back in the seat and try to keep a straight upright back posture.
- Keep upper arms in line with the upper body and lower arms horizontal to the floor when resting hands on the keyboard.
- Your screen height is very important, and laptops are not best designed for good posture as there is a tendency to be looking down at the screen. Use docking stations wherever possible so you can have your screen height correct for you. The top of the viewing screen should be approximately at your eye level when you are sitting correctly.
- Keep the underside of the desk clear so you can position legs and feet comfortably.
- Do not sit for long periods, stand up and walk around every 25-30 minutes or so.



Watch your neck & shoulders

- Try to keep head movement to a minimum, so position your screen so that you do not need to continually move your head to view it.
- Relax shoulders, do not hunch or lean forward.



Watch your eyes

- Avoid glare from windows and lights reflecting onto your screen by tilting the screen, or positioning it at right angles to natural light if possible. Window blinds should also be used when necessary.
- Look away from the screen occasionally, focus on objects at differing distances within the room for a few seconds on each and blink often!
- Take an eye test.

Watch your arms

- Do not stretch to reach keyboards, again laptops can be restrictive and so separate keyboards should be used if possible.
- Keep the keyboard in front and positioned such that there is room to rest wrists in front when not keying.
- Watch your hands, wrists and fingers.
- Position mouse close to you and in front so wrists are straight.
- Break up intensive and continuous keying or mousing tasks with short frequent breaks, a minute or so in every 10 is advisable and use this time to stretch fingers and then relax hands.

Remember these key points:

1 Elbows Above the desk, at 90-110 degrees	7 Eyes Looking at the top third of the screen. Consider the use of a laptop raiser with your laptop
2 Shoulders Relaxed as opposed to hunched	8 Seat length Should be long enough to provide support beneath thighs
3 Wrists In line with forearms	9 Backrest Angled at 90-110 degrees with adequate lumbar support in line with lower back
4 Hips, Knees, Ankles At 90 degrees whilst seated	10 Keyboard and Mouse G and H of keyboard aligned with your nose. Mouse gripped loosely
5 Feet Flat on the ground or footrest For prolonged standing, consider a mat	11 Laptop Used with a riser, external keyboard and external mouse
6 Head Upright with ears aligned with shoulders	



This poster is for guidance purposes only and does not replace the training provided in the Guidance for the Safe Use of Display Screens provided. If you have any problems with the hot desk or adjusting it, please talk to your line manager.

Appendix 4



Assessment Referral	
<p>Individual to be assessed</p> <p>Name:</p> <p>Email:</p> <p>Telephone Number:</p> <p>Address (where assessment is to take place) :</p>	<p>Requestor / Contact / Report Return</p> <p>Name:</p> <p>Email:</p> <p>Telephone Number:</p>
<p>Working hours of user:</p>	
<p>Reason for request:</p>	
<p>On completing this form, please send direct to our Sales Support Team: appointments@posturite.co.uk</p> <p>Telephone: 0345 345 0010</p>	