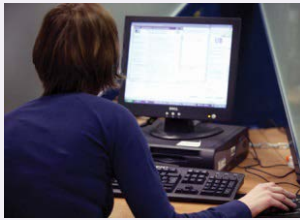


## University Health & Safety Arrangements: Chapter 34



### Display Screen Equipment

Key word(s) : Display Screen Equipment, DSE, DSE assessment, Occupational Health screening for DSE users, visual display unit (VDU)

Target audience : All staff and students using Display Screen Equipment, Heads of Schools, line managers, School Safety Advisors, DSE assessors

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#### Note.

**“Senior Managers”** are responsible for health and safety within their organisational unit, specified areas or as a consequence of their activities, and for any additional activities as agreed and delegated to them (e.g. where they accept responsibility for day-to-day safety arrangements for staff who have other line managers, for reasons of geographical or other convenience). They may be Deans, Heads of School, Directors of Institutes, Directors and Heads of Service in non-academic areas, the University Librarian, the Directors of the Manchester Museum and the Whitworth Art Gallery, and their equivalents.

## Introduction

1. The Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992<sup>1</sup> place a duty on The University of Manchester to analyse workstations, and to assess the health and safety risks to those users. They date from before the use of mobile devices, and relate mainly to a “traditional” workstation at a desk, with screen, keyboard and desktop computer. However, the basic principles and practices laid out in the Regulations are applicable to the use of mobile technology and a wide range of working environments and work patterns. Use of more modern devices and work practices should be included in our risk assessments.
2. A Display Screen Equipment (DSE) user is defined as an employee who “habitually uses display screen equipment as a significant part of his or her normal work”. DSE use has become so commonplace that the presumption should be that an employee is a DSE User unless their work involves very little (less than 1 hour per day) or no use of DSE. This will therefore include large numbers of administrative, academic, technical and support staff.
3. The Regulations cover workstation analysis, requirements for workstations, daily work routine, eye and eyesight, training and provision of information.

## Responsibilities

4. Senior Managers must appoint an appropriate number of Display Screen Assessors (“**DSA’s**”) for their area, and ensure that the appointees undertake appropriate training e.g. STDU, course THS17. Detailed arrangements will vary. Some schools may choose to appoint several assessors; others may wish to appoint someone who has the resources to co-ordinate assessments for the whole school/area. In some cases, the school safety advisor may be able to carry out the role; in others, an administrative officer may be more appropriate. General advice can be obtained from your University Safety Co-ordinator (USC).
5. Senior Managers must also ensure that:
  - each DSE User within their area of responsibility is identified, given information on the health risks associated with such work, and is provided initially with the means of carrying out a self-assessment (i.e signed up for the on-line assessment or issued with a hard copy blank, and given guidance on how to complete it);
  - the self-assessment forms are collated and checked by the line manager with assistance from a competent DSA, and that steps are taken to address any

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/1992/2792/contents/made>

risks found as a result of the assessment; assessment records should be kept with reference to the University's [record retention schedule](#)<sup>2</sup>;

- DSE Users are informed about the arrangements for DSE vision screening eye and eyesight test prior to employment and at regular intervals thereafter, and know what to do if they experience a visual problem
  - where the results of the screening indicate a requirement for a specialist eye examination and/or a requirement for corrective lenses specifically for DSE work, reasonable costs are met towards the costs of an eye examination and/or corrective lenses.
6. The local health & safety committee should receive regular updates about how these responsibilities are being discharged.
7. Where a member of staff raises a matter related to health and safety in the use of DSE, **the line manager** must:
- take all necessary steps to investigate the circumstances and review the assessment;
  - take corrective measures where appropriate; and
  - advise the member of staff of the actions taken to resolve the matter.
8. Where a problem arises in the use of DSE, the **member of staff** must:
- inform their supervisor / line manager; and
  - in the case of an adverse health condition, advise the University of Manchester Occupational Health Service and his or her own general practitioner.

### Workstation analysis

9. With assistance from line managers (and depending on the exact local arrangements), the DSAs should identify groups of DSE Users, and provide each person with guidance and information about setting up their workstations, either with the University's guidance or guidance available from the HSE<sup>3</sup>. Most DSAs will wish to use the University's on-line self-assessment method as the starting point in carrying out the assessments. Paper copies can also be used.
10. On-line self-assessments are set up by Safety Services on instruction from DSAs. Ideally, recruitment to the on-line form should be for a group of staff, although

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<sup>2</sup> See <http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=6514>. For DSE assessments, this is normally until superseded + 5 years.

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg36.pdf>

individuals can be enrolled, for example, when a new member of staff joins a team.

11. The self-assessment procedure is designed to be used without special training, and guidance is provided within the questionnaire.

### **Requirements for workstations**

12. Many of the physical requirements for workstations are covered in the self-assessment questionnaire and relate to issues such as glare, reflections or flicker on the screen, brightness and contrast, space requirements, etc.
13. Managers procuring components of any workstation should always take into account the fundamental requirement to provide equipment that can be adjusted to suit the individual DSE User, rather than making the DSE User adapt uncomfortably to the limits of the equipment. A good example is seating; most office chairs sold now are capable of being adjusted in several ways including seat height, backrest height and tilt.

### **Daily work routine**

14. Long spells of working in one position carrying out the same type of activity can lead to fatigue, eye strain, upper limb strains and aches. As a rule of thumb, DSE Users should plan their work to avoid working for more than about an hour without taking a break from DSE use. Taking short, frequent breaks is more beneficial than working for longer periods without a break and then taking a longer break.

### **Eyes and eyesight**

15. The Regulations include the requirement for the employer to provide:
  - appropriate eye and eyesight tests to DSE Users on request; and
  - special corrective appliances where the test(s) indicate they are necessary.
16. At present, DSE users are encouraged to attend the [University Occupational Health Service](#) for a visual screening test in the following circumstances<sup>4</sup>:
  - when first using a DSE on a regular basis;

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<sup>4</sup> This arrangement is due to change from Aug 2015, when Occupational Health move into the Directorate for the Student Experience. For off-campus workers, DSE users are referred to local opticians.

- if the DSA recommends they do so, following analysis of the self-assessment questionnaire;
- if they begin to experience discomfort or other visual problems when using DSE; and
- at further intervals if advised appropriate to do so.

17. The Occupational Health Nurse will first undertake a visual screening which includes a sight test appropriate for DSE use only. If the screening indicates that the employee may have a problem at a distance relevant to DSE use (55cm to 65cm) the DSE User will be referred to an Optometrist for a further assessment, and, if required, for the provision of special spectacles specifically for DSE use.

18. The Occupational Health Service will issue the DSE User with a letter for the Optometrist stating that a professional eye test is required and that the University will be responsible for the cost of any spectacles, if required specifically for DSE use<sup>5</sup>. The DSE User's manager will be informed of this referral by the Occupational Health Service. The employee may attend an Optometrist of their choice.

19. DSE Users should be aware that the cost contribution is intended to cover the sight correction required for DSE use (only). It does not cover the cost of other sight corrections. The cost for the provision of spectacles specifically for DSE distance appears to vary significantly between Optometrists. Bifocal and varifocal spectacles are not normally recommended for DSE work.

### **Musculoskeletal disorders**

20. Where a member of staff raises a matter related to health and safety in the use of DSE, either via the on-line assessment or at any other time, their line manager should:

- investigate the circumstances and review the assessment, involving the DSA as appropriate;
- take corrective measures including referral to Occupational Health or, in possession of supporting medical evidence, the University's Disability Support Office (DSO); and
- advise the member of staff of the actions taken to resolve the matter.

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<sup>5</sup> Nov 2014 – this contribution was up to £85

## Provision of information to DSE users

21. Managers of new DSE Users and those setting up new workstations or equipment should ensure that they provide information and instruction on how to set up workstations in a manner that will not adversely affect their health.
22. Further guidance is contained in the Safety Services [DSE toolkit](#) and [Occupational Health webpages](#).
23. Information leaflets are also available as free downloads from [the HSE's webpages](#),

## Training

24. DSAs must attend the DSAs course at the University's Staff Training and Development Unit, STDU course THS17.
25. The requirement for DSA refresher training should be decided on a case by case basis; the decision may be informed by factors such as the DSA's experience and case load profile (numbers, frequency, and complexity), the extent/pace of change in current thinking and best practice with DSE assessment issues.
26. Approaches to refresher training should be individually tailored and may take the form of: competency discussions at P&DR or with Safety Services personnel; repeat attending [THS17](#); revising the THS17 Course Materials; reviewing current guidance in the Safety Services [DSE toolkit](#); reflecting on personal practice or attending problem solving workshops, or any combination of these approaches

## Monitoring and review

27. DSE assessments should be reviewed if significant changes occur, if the DSE User reports any adverse symptoms or if the original assessment is no longer valid. Significant changes could include:
  - a new piece of furniture (desk, table);
  - an office rearrangement or relocation;
  - provision of a new or replacement computer or new software;
  - a change in lighting;
  - an injury or condition experienced by the DSE User; and/or
  - a change in work pattern leading to more intense and prolonged DSE use.

28. It is also good practice to review the assessments periodically (e.g every two years) to pick up less significant or unreported changes.

### Assessment of mobile devices, work patterns and environments

29. Although the current Regulations cover mobile and touch screen devices used away from formal workstations, it can be hard to “analyse the workstation” which might be on a train, in a lecture theatre, at home, at a “hot-desk” or other workplace of choice. At EU level, there have been moves to consolidate this specific legislation into a more general set of regulations dealing with musculoskeletal disorders, from DSE use, from manual handling and other repetitive activities. See <http://www.hse.gov.uk/msd/index.htm> for updates about such developments.

30. By applying the basic DSE assessment principles, raising awareness, influencing behaviours and making dynamic assessments, and referring to other specific Safety Services guidance (eg [Homeworking](#), [Generic and Dynamic Risk Assessments](#),) the risks involved should be addressed.

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