



## **DISPLAY SCREEN EQUIPMENT (DSE) POLICY**

### **Introduction**

LSHTM recognises its responsibilities towards users of display screen equipment under the Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulation 1992 (as amended 2002) and aims to fulfil these obligations by application of this policy.

The Health and Safety Executive states that there is no scientific evidence that use of a computer, or other Display Screen Equipment (DSE / Visual Display Unit [VDU]), if used sensibly, will be injurious to health. Nor is there any evidence that computing equipment emits harmful radiation.

The use of DSE may, however, exacerbate any pre-existing medical conditions and can lead to muscular and other physical problems. Some employees may experience fatigue, eye strain, upper limb problems and back ache from over use or improper use of DSE. These problems can also be experienced from poorly designed workstations or work environments. These causes may not always be obvious and can be due to a combination of factors.

LSHTM provides eye sight tests to those staff members who habitually use DSE as part of their work and also some assistance towards the cost of any corrective glasses required specifically for DSE use.

By following the guidance in this document problems may be eliminated or reduced resulting in a better working environment for all staff working with display screen equipment.

### **Application**

This policy applies to all LSHTM employees classified as a display screen equipment user, including those based at home and at another employer's workstation, and all temporary workers.

### **Responsibilities**

The Deans of Faculty and Heads of Professional Support Services are responsible for:

- The implementation of this procedure within their area of responsibility
- Ensuring that there are arrangements in place to provide appropriate information to members of staff, students, visitors etc.
- Ensuring that suitable and sufficient DSE workstation assessments are carried out for all staff that use DSE. Such assessments should be reviewed regularly or upon a change in DSE workstation set-up
- Where a DSE workstation assessment highlights the requirement for further control measures (e.g. footrests, task lamps etc.), an appropriate time-scale for their implementation should be decided and all items identified followed up and closed out

- Ensuring that users are competent and confident in the tasks to be carried out and that minimum standards of required supervision are identified within Faculty or Support Services procedures
- Ensuring that all users are aware of how to obtain an eye-test
- Maintaining the DSE workstation assessments, together with any accompanying documentation, for audit and review purposes, for a minimum of three years

**Note:** The Deans of Faculty/Heads of Professional Services may delegate the above tasks to specific Managers, within their area of authority, as appropriate.

Responsibility for health and safety forms part of managerial responsibility, through the management chain, even if not formally specified in the job description. The supervision of health and safety can be delegated, but the responsibility cannot.

## **Definitions**

### **Display Screen Equipment**

DSE are devices or equivalent or equipment that have an alphanumeric or graphic display screen and includes display screens, laptops, touch screens and other similar devices.

### **DSE User**

An employee who habitually uses display screen equipment as a significant part of their normal work. In general, a person should be classified as a user if all or most of the following criteria apply:

- The work often requires the continuous use of DSE for periods over one hour.
- The display screen is in use, more or less, daily as a significant part of normal work.
- The worker has no discretion as to the use or non-use of the DSE
- High levels of attention/concentration are required.
- The worker is highly dependent on DSE to carry out their role.

### **Workstation**

This includes the DSE and any optional accessories to the DSE plus items such as; telephone, desk, chair, work surface, document holder. It includes the immediate work environment around the DSE.

## **Guidance for the Use of Display Screen Equipment (DSE)**

### **DSE Workstation Assessments:**

All staff can request a workstation assessment at any time by completing a Display Screen Equipment (DSE) [self-assessment form](#) and emailing it their Faculty Safety Supervisor who will be able to help identify any hazards in relation to:

- Poor working posture
- Ease/ability to read the screen
- Organisation of the workstation
- The working conditions
- Any other health concerns

Where applicable, funding will generally be from Faculty/Departmental or research project accounts. There is no central safety budget for such equipment.

Where the disability provisions of the Equality Act (2010) apply, staff may be entitled to funding through Access to Work (please contact Human Resources for further details).

The DSE Workstation Assessment should take into account, and be based upon, the following guidelines:

#### **Good Posture**

- Adjust the chair height so that the upper arms are relaxed and the forearms are approximately horizontal.
- Adjust the height and angle of the chair back rest to give lower back support.
- Keep shoulders and arms relaxed and close to the body.
- When typing, the wrists should be straight (not resting on the desk) and the fingers relaxed.
- Adjust the height and angle of the screen such that neck movement is reduced when looking from screen to keyboard. As a rough rule of thumb if you cannot type without looking at the keyboard, or are wearing bi- or vari-focals the screen needs to lower.
- Feet should be flat on the floor or on a foot rest.
- Use the whole arm to move the mouse, not just the wrist/hand.
- Use the whole seat; do not perch on the edge.

#### **Working Environment**

- Room lighting should:
  - provide a contrast between the screen and the background, which makes it comfortable to read.
  - not cause any reflection or glare.
  - not create any shadows or concealed corners.
  - be adjustable in the area around the workstation.
  - where practicable, be controllable by the User.
- Ventilation should be provided to prevent uncomfortable temperatures.
- Noise should be controlled to a comfortable level.

#### **Workstation Organisation**

- Align the keyboard and monitor to minimise twisting of the neck and torso.
- Place all work materials used regularly within easy reach to avoid twisting of the neck and torso.
- Use a document holder or place material between the keyboard and the screen NOT in front of the keyboard.

- Position the telephone so that it is within easy reach and do not cradle the handset between the ear and shoulder.

### **Work Routine of Users**

Daily work on DSE must be planned so that it is periodically interrupted by breaks or changes of activity through a mixture of screen based and non-screen based activities. Natural breaks such as answering the telephone or picking things up from the printer are sufficient to minimise the above health effects.

Research has shown that short, frequent breaks are more beneficial than one long break, e.g., a 5 to 10 minute break after 50 to 60 minutes of continuous DSE use is likely to be more beneficial than a 15 to 20 minute break after 2 hours of use.

RSIGuard can help you to manage your computer use by giving you rest break reminders to give you time to regain awareness of our posture and work patterns. RSIGuard is available under Utilities in your Novel Application window.

Where the intensity of the DSE work does not allow natural breaks line managers should design the task with their staff to allow a 10 minute break at least once every hour which involves a non-DSE work-based activity.

### **Laptops**

Laptop computers are subject to the DSE Regulations if their use is for prolonged periods of time. Laptops by their design are not very ergonomic, making it difficult to achieve a comfortable working position.

Align the laptop centrally with your body; don't twist round to use it.

Any laptop being used for a significant amount of time at work should be set up with the screen raised and a separate keyboard and mouse.

Where it is not possible to do this due to location, longer and more frequent breaks or changes of activity are necessary to compensate for the poor working environments.

The use of laptops involves a risk from manual handling. This risk can be reduced by:

- Not carrying unnecessary papers and equipment
- Using a lightweight backpack or a wheeled bag to carry the laptop
- Selecting a laptop with as low weight as possible (3kg or less) and keeping accessories few and lightweight.

Selection of a carrying case that does not have a computer manufacturer's branding on it can help to reduce the likelihood of theft.

### **Eye tests**

#### **STAFF**

All staff who use a computer for a significant part of their work are entitled to an appropriate eye and eye sight test paid for by LSHTM. Where a test indicates that corrective glasses are required specifically for working with DSE, LSHTM contributes a £40 payment towards the cost of these glasses.

Please send a completed Eye Test request form to the Safety Office, the form can be found [here](#).

The Safety Office will send the staff member a voucher that **MUST** be taken to University Vision at the time of the appointment. If the voucher is not taken the staff member will be required to pay for the eye test (University Vision will reimburse once the voucher has been produced). If the member of staff fails to attend the appointment, the staff member's department will be recharged the cost of the appointment without further notification.

If staff prefer to use their own opticians then LSHTM will reimburse up to £18 towards to the cost of the eye test. The original receipt must be provided and a petty cash form completed and taken to the Safety Office for approval.

### **STAFF BASED OVERSEAS**

Procedure is as above. Staff are encouraged to use University Vision while visiting London.

### **PhD STUDENTS**

All PhD students registered at LSHTM are entitled to eye tests as above.

### **MSc STUDENTS / DISTANCE LEARNING STUDENTS**

LSHTM does not contribute towards the costs of eye tests for taught cause or distance learning students.

### **Training and Information**

<https://awaken.am.lshtm.ac.uk>

### **Further Information**

Is available on the intranet under 'working safety with computers'

Health and Safety Executive's web site ([www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk)) in the free leaflets section:

- Working with display screen equipment (DSE) –INDG36 (rev4)
- Managing upper limb disorders in the workplace – INDG171 (rev2)
- Ergonomic and human factors at work – INDG90
- Seating at work – HSG 57
- Light at work – HSG38