

NDMRB-POL-005

Display Screen Equipment - DSE

1.0 Introduction

Display screen equipment (DSE) is a general term given for all types of visual display units (VDU). This includes computer terminals, laptops, microscopes, liquid crystal displays and plasma screens.

The University has a policy identify and assess users of such equipment. Personnel are classified as users if you fall into one or both of the following categories:

1. If the user is using DSE for continuous spells of an hour or more at a time and on a regular daily basis,
2. If the user has to transfer information quickly to and from the DSE and who may have to apply high levels of attention and concentration

2.0 Use of DSE

2.1 Self-Assessment

There is a self-assessment programme available for users of DSE. To use this program, individuals must hold a valid University card and have an active 'Webauth - Single Sign-On account'. The program can be accessed at the following web address:

<https://dse.oucs.ox.ac.uk>

2.2 Physical self-assessment

2.2.1 Getting comfortable

- Adjust your chair and VDU to find the most comfortable position for your work. As a broad guide, your forearms should be approximately horizontal and your eyes the same height as the top of the VDU. Use old catalogues/box files to raise the screen if necessary. The chair should provide support to the small of your back.
- Make sure you are sitting square on to the screen. Do not sit so that your neck or torso is twisted. Do not cross your legs while working.
- Make sure you have enough work space to take whatever documents or other equipment you need.

- Try different arrangements of keyboard, screen, mouse and documents to find the best arrangement for you. A document holder may help you avoid awkward neck and eye movements.
- Arrange your desk and VDU to avoid glare, or bright reflections on the screen. This will be easiest if neither you nor the screen is directly facing windows or bright lights. Adjust curtains or blinds to prevent unwanted light.
- Make sure there is space under your desk to move your legs freely. Move any obstacles such as boxes or equipment.
- Avoid excess pressure from the edge of your seat on the backs of your legs and knees. A footrest may be helpful, particularly for smaller users.

2.2.2 Keying in

- Adjust your keyboard to get a good keying position. A space in front of the keyboard is sometimes helpful for resting the hands and wrists when not keying.
- Try to keep your wrists straight when keying. Keep a soft touch on the keys and don't overstretch your fingers. Good keyboard technique is important.

2.2.3 Using a mouse

Position the mouse within easy reach, so it can be used with the wrist straight. Sit upright and close to the desk, so you don't have to work with your mouse arm stretched. Move the keyboard out of the way if it is not being used.

Support your forearm on the desk, and don't grip the mouse too tightly. Use the mouse mat/wrist rest provided where possible. If you find it uncomfortable turn the mouse mat through 180°.

Rest your fingers lightly on the buttons and do not press them hard.



Make sure the screen surface is clean.

When setting up software, choose options giving text that is large enough to read easily on your screen, when you are sitting in a normal, comfortable working position. Select colours that are easy on the eye (avoid red text on a blue background, or vice-versa).

Individual characters on the screen should be sharply focused and should not flicker or move. If they do, the VDU may need servicing or adjustment.

2.2.5 Posture and breaks

Don't sit in the same position for long periods. Make sure you change your posture as often as practicable. Some movement is desirable, but avoid repeated stretching to reach things you need (if this happens a lot, rearrange your workstation).

Most jobs provide opportunities to take a break from the screen, e.g. to do filing or photocopying. Make use of them. If there are no such natural breaks in your job, your employer should plan for you to have rest breaks. Frequent short breaks are better than fewer long ones.

2.2.6 Possible Health Effects from DSE work

A variety of "work-related upper limb disorders" may be associated with DSE use, although the precise causal pathway is unclear. Some users experience discomfort or aches and pains. If you experience any such discomfort, then this must be brought to the attention of your Group-Leader. A University Approved 'DSE Assessor' must then complete an assessment and where necessary Occupational Health will be contacted for further advice. The DSE Assessors currently within the department are:

- Ling Sung – Buildings Manager
- Andrea Keyte – TDI Laboratory Manager
- Genevieve Moffa - Receptionist

4.0 Eye & Eyesight Tests

Individuals who do meet the definition of **DSE Users** are entitled to an eyesight test and the employer must cover the minimum cost. Individuals requesting such tests should again contact their Group-Leader first and then subsequently the Health & Safety Officer for confirmation of whether they meet this definition. Individuals must then use one of the University approved Opticians which are:

- Batemans Opticians, Cornmarket, Oxford.
- P B Conway, George St, Oxford
- Gardiners, Gardiners, Oxford.
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It is worth noting though, that there are no known adverse effects on the eye or eyesight due to DSE work. However, some users experience temporary visual fatigue leading to eye discomfort and may require advice on reducing this effect. Existing eye conditions are not made worse by DSE work, but it is logical to use the appropriate sight correction for such work, as would be expected with any other job needing visual skills.

5.0 Further information/reading/references

- University Safety Office DSE Policy: <http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/safety/policy-statements/s8-09/>
- Self-Assessment: <https://dse.oucs.ox.ac.uk>
- Health and Safety Executive <http://www.hse.gov.uk/msd/dse/>
- WTCHG Guidance Note: Guidance Note: Use of Display Screen Equipment

6.0 Review

The information in this document will be reviewed and amended if necessary every 3 years by the laboratory manager or alternative relevant personnel.