Display Screen Equipment (DSE) Policy

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Contents

1. Introduction

This Policy defines London Metropolitan University arrangements to protect staff from the health risks of working with display screen equipment (DSE), such as laptops, tablets and smartphones.
The Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992 (revised 2002) (DSE Regulations) apply to staff who use DSE daily for 1 hour or more.
The regulations do not apply to workers who use DSE infrequently or only use it for a short time.
The policy explains how the University will identify and manage the risks arising from the use of display screen equipment In recognition of the legal obligations and the potential adverse health effects to staff and others from the prolonged use of display screen equipment (hereafter referred to as 'DSE').

Prolonged working with computers can be associated with neck, shoulder, back or arm pain, as well as with fatigue and eye strain.

That does not mean that DSE work is high risk – it is not. However muscular skeletal problems can be avoided if users follow effective practice, set up their workstations properly and take breaks during prolonged use. By just taking a few simple precautions, work with DSE can be more comfortable and productive.

2. Application

Compliance with the requirements of this Policy will ensure:

- The University meets its obligations in respect of the legislation.
- The safety and health of staff (and others) whilst working with DSE.
- Everyone is aware of their roles and responsibilities.
- That staff and others who work with display screen equipment are appropriately informed, and where necessary trained

This Policy applies to all university staff who use DSE as a significant part of their work-based activity. These staff are defined as "users".
The law applies if staff are,
- At a fixed workstation
- Hot desking
- 'Hybrid working' when the employee split their working time between a workplace and working remotely, for example, working from an office and at home.

3. What is a workstation?

A workstation exists wherever there is DSE (including portable DSE) and is defined as the assembly including:

The screen, keyboard, other parts of the computer and its accessories (such as the

mouse, or other input device), the desk, the chair, and immediate work environment.

Minimum Requirements for DSE workstations include:

- **Chair** – must be stable and have sufficient adjustment to ensure the correct posture can be achieved.
    - The seat shall be adjustable in height.
    - The seat back shall be adjustable in both height and tilt.
    - A footrest shall be made available to anyone who requires one.
- **Screen** - image must be stable, the characters must be well defined, and the brightness and contrast must be adjustable. The screen must swivel and tilt easily and suit the needs of the user.**Keyboard** - must be separate from the screen and have a tilt mechanism.
- **Worksurface or Desk** - must be large enough to ensure all documents and equipment which are in immediate use can be accommodated without reaching or stretching. There shall be adequate space for users to find a comfortable position.
- **Working Environment**
    - **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.

Exclusions apply to DSE mainly intended for public operation and portable systems not in prolonged use. However, the general duties on employers and others under the Health and Safety at Work Act and Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations still apply

4. Definitions

4.1 Users

In determining who are 'users', the department must take account of the frequency and the duration of spells of continuous or near-continuous use. An employee will be classed as a 'user' if they:

Normally Use DSE for continuous or near-continuous spells of an hour or more at a time and Use DSE in this way on a daily basis.

The DSE Regulations do not apply to staff who occasionally work from home, but the University has a duty to ensure that their work area is set up in accordance with good DSE layout and working practices see Appendix 1.

Appendix 2 presents a flowchart to identify the workflow associated with DSE assessment and its outcomes.

4.2 Students

The University has a duty of care (not Statutory) to consider the workstations used by students. Those students who have specific needs in relation to the use of DSE will be supported through its Student Advisory and Support Service.

It is not necessary for Schools to assess every individual student but it is recommended that DSE facilities provided for their use (e.g. computer rooms), be provided with suitable equipment (firm steady work surface with sufficient space and a standard DSE chair).

If the contents or nature of postgraduate research would clearly classify them as a DSE user were the student is an employee, the School/Department should apply the same standard of equipment and assessment to that individual as they would do for staff however students do not have the access to training, occupational health or the eye care scheme as staff.

4.3 Temporary workers (employed through an Agency or directly on temporary contracts)

Many temporary workers supplied by agencies or employed directly, may use DSE sufficiently to be classified as "users". Where the worker is an employee of the agency or is self-employed, both the agency and the host employer (University) will have duties under the DSE Regulations.

NB If the University is the host employer then the agency worker should be provided with a DSE assessment and any workstation must comply with the DSE Regulations. The employment agency is responsible for the provision of eye tests for the agency worker.

4.5 Hybrid workers/Homeworkers

Employees who work from home, should follow the Working with computers and other Display Screen Equipment (DSE). They are required to complete a DSE Self Assessment for their workstation at both their home and in each of their office locations to ensure it is set up correctly, is safe to use following the same principles covered in the DSE Self - Assessment in Appendix 1.

Further guidance on setting up a workstation at home is provided in Appendix 3

4.6 Portable DSE

This includes equipment such as laptops, notebook computers, tablets, and personal digital assistants. The use of portable equipment is increasing, and users should be advised wherever possible by the H&S team to apply similar principles to those in the Policy regarding posture and breaks/changes of activity.

4.7 Shared workstations (Hot-Desking)

In some work areas a workstation may be used by more than one person. Such shared workstations must be considered for each 'user' as it is likely that individuals will need to make adjustments to suit their needs.

If the workstation(s) are the same, are located in the same area, and the equipment provided meets the minimum requirements, then there need be only one DSE Assessment which will cover any workstation in this area.

A separate DSE Assessment should be carried out for workstations in different locations.

Further guidance on 'hot-desking' is provided in Appendix 4

5. Roles and Responsibilities

5.1 Heads of Departments/School and Directors of Professional Service
Line Managers have overall responsibility for implementing the requirements of this Policy, including

- Bringing this Policy to the attention of all their staff, including the measures their Department has put in place to comply with this Policy.
- Identifying those members of their staff who are covered by the requirements of this Policy (i.e. DSE 'users').
- Ensuring that users are provided with information and training on the safe use of DSE.
- **Ensuring that all DSE 'users', within their area of responsibility, complete the self-assessment DSE checklist on commencement of employment (or as soon as reasonably practicable) and a review of this assessment is conducted at least every 2 years.**
- Ensuring there are effective arrangements in place to implement any recommendations arising from the DSE assessment checklist.
- Ensuring that each new user confirmed in post is offered an eyesight test and every 2 years, thereafter.

5.2 Health and Safety Team
The Health and Safety team are responsible for the provision of advice and guidance including

- The application of the requirements of legislation and this Policy.
- Monitoring compliance with the requirements of this Policy through the health and safety audit process.
- Ensuring employees who conduct assessments on behalf of the Department are adequately trained.
- Providing advice on the provision of specialist equipment following referral to Occupational Health Service if required.

5.3 Occupational Health Service
The Occupational Health Service is responsible for

- Following referral, carrying out an occupational health assessment for employees with a health condition associated with the use of DSE or a health condition which could affect an individual's ability to carry out display screen work.
- Making recommendations to staff and their manager based upon the findings of the assessment.

5.4 University employees who are 'users'

University employees defined as 'users' are responsible for

- Working and using DSE in accordance with any information and training provided.
- Informing their line manager of any changes/deficiencies in their workstation set-up or work practices which could give rise to potential harm or injury.
- Taking remedial action, which is within their control to address, including working with the support of their line manager to resolve any issues arising from the DSE Assessment checklist.
- Informing their line manager if they suffer health problems that may be caused or made worse by DSE work.
- Ensuring that if they work from home, that the work area is set up in accordance with good DSE work practices.

5.5 Procurement

Estates are responsible for procuring suitable furniture for DSE users and ensuring that this complies with LMU furniture policy.

ITS is responsible for providing the initial PC set which can include laptop, monitor, keyboard, mouse and a headset. **Schools and Professional Services Directorates**, following the recommendation from the H&S team and agreement from line managers, are responsible for procuring and additional suitable computer equipment such as ergonomic keyboard, screen, ergonomic mouse, etc.

5.6 Estates (Space Planning)
Estates is responsible for ensuring:

- Any changes to the design and layout of the work area and office moves comply with the requirements for DSE use.
- The workstation shall be dimensioned and designed so as to provide sufficient space for the employee to change position and vary movements.

6. Possible effects on health

The principal risks associated with DSE include:

- Musculoskeletal problems, visual fatigue, and mental stress.

- Ill health can result from incorrect posture, poor work organisation, and inadequate workplace and job design.
- Such conditions can, therefore, be prevented by applying good ergonomic principles to the design, selection and set-up of DSE, the design of the work environment, and the organisation of work tasks.

7. DSE Assessments

New employees, defined as a 'user', must assess their workstation for the purpose of establishing any risks from the use of such equipment, and identifying and taking appropriate remedial action.

- The assessment will be conducted at departmental level using the University DSE Assessment Checklist located on the Health & Safety web pages
- **This assessment should be completed, as far as is reasonably practicable, during the 'users' first week of employment**
- This standardised assessment checklist has been developed to promote consistency across the University
- The assessment checklist is intended to identify any aspects of work equipment, workstation layout, work environment, job design and individual factors, which have the potential to lead to ill health.
- It is also designed to provide the 'user' with instruction and training in the safe use of DSE, which is an important part of the assessment process.
- Where the DSE assessment establishes the requirement for improvements/remedial action, which cannot be completed at the time of the assessment, the user should follow-up with the line manager to ensure that any additional issues are resolved.
- The above requirements also apply to existing and staff transferring to another Department.
- If a new employee is employed to work at an existing workstation, a DSE assessment must be carried out. The assessment is relevant to each user, not the workstation.

7.1 Review of DSE assessments

a) DSE assessments must be reviewed every 2 years.
b) DSE assessments must also be reviewed following a significant change or when a 'user' experiences discomfort.

Examples of a significant change include:

- Relocation of the workstation
- A change in the workstation layout or design
- The introduction of new equipment
- A change in the nature of the work, such as a substantial increase in the amount of time spent using DSE or substantial change in other task requirements (i.e.) increase in speed or accuracy required to complete a task)
- A change in environmental conditions (i.e. lighting, temperature, etc.)
- The 'user' is pregnant

7.2 Recording of DSE assessments (including reviews)

- DSE Assessments should be recorded using one of the University standardised assessment checklist.

Electronic (scanned) copies of all DSE assessments (including reviews) must be stored securely on a departmental shared drive, which is accessible to the departmental manager and members of the Health & Safety team

7.3 Managing the risks

Managers have overall responsibility for implementing the requirements of this Policy. Managers should establish effective arrangements to implement the findings of DSE Assessments (including DSE reviews).
The measures necessary to control the risks associated with DSE work fall into two main categories.

i.   Practical controls, including the selection and provision of suitable equipment, software, and eye and eyesight testing.

ii. Management controls, including the provision of information, training, and good task design.

Equipment selection

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, including:

- Replacement of damaged or broken equipment.
- Refurbishment of work areas.
- New staff joining the Department.
- Daily Work Routine of Users.

Managers must ensure that:

- Work is planned so that other tasks prompt periodic short breaks from DSE work, or for a change of task to be scheduled into work routines.
- Breaks should be short and frequent. (i.e.) 5- 10 minutes break after 50 – 60 minutes of continuous screen/keyboard work is considered more effective in reducing risk than 15-20 minutes after 2 hours of activity.
- The main purpose of incorporating breaks into the work pattern is to ensure that the 'user' varies their posture and changes visual demands.
- Such breaks should, therefore, be organised to permit 'users' to vary their posture, get up from the workstation, and undertake tasks for which there is not a need to view the screen or to operate a keyboard.

In certain circumstances, it may be necessary to refer staff to the Universities Occupational Health Service. This should be arranged through Human Resources

and after a consultation with the Health and Safety Team.

Training and information for DSE users

Managers must bring this Policy to the attention of all their staff, including the measures their Department has put in place to comply with the Policy. For new staff this will be achieved through departmental health and safety induction.
All "users" should receive information and training on the potential risks of DSE work and the measures necessary to mitigate such risks. This information and training will form part of the DSE assessment checklist and cover the following key areas:

1. The health risks associated with DSE work
2. Measures to eliminate or reduce risk
3. Good workstation layout to facilitate good posture and avoid glare and reflections
4. The importance of good posture, postural change and adjusting the workstation
5. The need to take regular breaks and incorporate changes in activity
6. Recognising visual and postural fatigue, and how to respond
7. Procedure to follow in the event of any discomfort or ill health arising from DSE work.

7.4 Workplace Inclusion
The Equality Act 2010 requires employers to remove obstacles faced by those with disabilities.
Employers must make reasonable adjustments to make sure workers with disabilities, or physical or mental health conditions, aren't substantially disadvantaged when doing their jobs.
If you have a disability which makes using standard display screen equipment difficult these adjustments could include:

- Getting new or adapting existing equipment, e.g. chairs, desks, computers (including alternative keyboard/mouse or adjusting the settings)
- Providing software that can aid access
- Using keyboard shortcuts or hot keys
- Adjustments to the workplace to improve access or layout
- Giving or arranging for, additional training
- Providing alternative work or ways of working in discussion with your employer

8. Eye examination and testing

During departmental health and safety induction all new staff, where defined as a 'user' will be advised of their entitlement to an eye and eyesight test.

- You can request an eye care voucher every two years or earlier if you experience visual difficulties when working on display screen equipment.
- You are advised to request an eye care voucher **before** making an

appointment for an eye test as costs cannot be reimbursed afterwards.

- The eye care voucher will cover the cost of a full eye test including digital retinal photography at partner practices across the UK.
- If the optician recommends prescription glasses to correct vision defects, the voucher will entitle you to a discount of £49 off a complete pair of prescription glasses or a pair of single vision glasses from their £49 complete glasses range free of charge towards either VDU glasses or glasses for general purposes.
- If you wish to upgrade your frames to more expensive ones, you can pay the difference between the amount covered by the eye care voucher and the cost of the spectacles.
- For further information, please go to the [Eyecare Voucher Scheme website](#)

9. Appendix 1 - DSE Self-Assessment Form

See our DSE Self-Assessment Form, which can also be found under the 'DSE Policy and checklist' accordion within our Policy Guidance page

Appendix 2 - DSE Assessment workflow


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┌──────────────────────────┐
│  Do you work on a computer│   ──NO──▶  ┌───────────────────┐
│  regularly for 1h and more?│           │  Not a DSE user   │
└──────────────────────────┘            └───────────────────┘
              │ Yes
              ▼
┌──────────────────────────┐
│  Do you do this DSE work  │   ──Yes──▶  ┌───────────────────┐
│  on site (in an office, at │            │ Complete DSE check│
│  a desk or workstation)?  │            │       list        │
└──────────────────────────┘            └───────────────────┘
              │ NO
              ▼
┌──────────────────────────┐
│  Do you do this DSE work  │   ──Yes──▶  ┌───────────────────┐
│  at home or other space   │            │ Complete Home     │
│  outside of the University │            │ working assessment│
│  premises?                │            └───────────────────┘
└──────────────────────────┘
              │ NO
              ▼
        ◇ Any issues identified? ◇
       /Yes                      \ NO
      ▼                           ▼
┌──────────────────────┐   ┌──────────────────────────────────┐
│ Contact Health and   │   │ Add a reminder to your calendar   │
│ Safety team          │   │ to repeat the assessment in 2     │
│ hands@londonmet.ac.uk│   │ years. Repeat the assessment      │
└──────────────────────┘   │ following a significant change or │
                           │ if you start to experience        │
                           │ disconfort.                        │
                           └──────────────────────────────────┘
              │                            ▲
              ▼                            │ Yes
        ◇ Has the issue been resolved? ◇──┘
              │ NO
              ▼
   ┌─────────────┬──────────────────┬──────────────────┐
   ▼             ▼                  ▼
┌────────────┐ ┌──────────────────┐ ┌──────────────────┐
│ Is the     │ │ Is new IT        │ │ Is non-IT        │
│ issue      │ │ equipment        │ │ equipment        │
│ health     │ │ recommended?     │ │ recommended?     │
│ related?   │ │ e.g. ergonomic   │ │ e.g. desk,       │
│            │ │ mouse or keyboard,│ │ chair, foot rest?│
│            │ │ or software?     │ │                  │
└────────────┘ └──────────────────┘ └──────────────────┘
   ▼             ▼                    ▼
┌────────────┐ ┌──────────────────┐ ┌──────────────────┐
│ Health and │ │ To be purchased  │ │ Contact Estates  │
│ Safety team│ │ from the School/ │ │ Services         │
│ will advise│ │ Department budget│ │ Coordinator      │
│ you to     │ │ on approval from │ │ m.spicer@london  │
│ refer to   │ │ the line manager.│ │ met.ac.uk        │
│ Occupational│ └──────────────────┘ └──────────────────┘
│ Health     │
└────────────┘
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Appendix 3 - Further Guidance on Hybrid Working

Hybrid (or smarter) working refers to a way of working that is **not** at a single workstation or on a single site.

The university has six core guidelines for onsite hybris working.

- Remember to book a desk
- Keep noise and distraction to a minimum
- Be tidy
- Be COVID-safe
- Be considerate
- Show Understanding

Further information is available on the staff zone by clicking the following link
https://staff.londonmet.ac.uk/employment-support/hybrid-working/hybrid-working-etiquette/
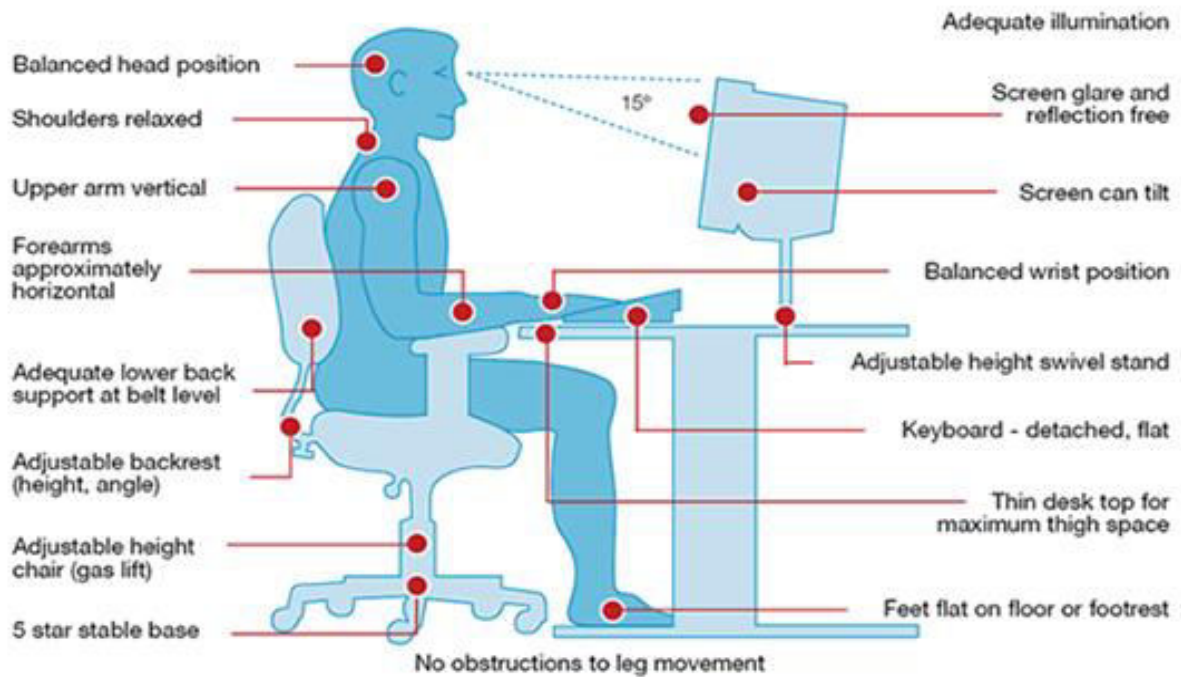
Employees using their own equipment to work from home have a responsibility to:

- Set up their working environment to consider good ergonomic practices, completing a working from home self assessment.
- To adopt a suitably good ergonomic working posture.
- Arrange their equipment in such a way as to reduce the risk from trips over cabling or flexes.
- Equipment is maintained correctly, and reasonable steps are taken to maintain equipment used for work purposes.

The image below is a reminder of what a suitable ergonomic working posture and environment might look like.

# Workstation adjustment and efficient working posture

Slouching, leaning and bending in a chair can lead to discomfort and long term pain.
Use this quick setup sheet to aid a comfortable environment.

Balanced head position

Shoulders relaxed

Upper arm vertical

Forearms approximately horizontal

Adequate lower back support at belt level

Adjustable backrest (height, angle)

Adjustable height chair (gas lift)

5 star stable base

15°

Adequate illumination

Screen glare and reflection free

Screen can tilt

Balanced wrist position

Adjustable height swivel stand

Keyboard - detached, flat

Thin desk top for maximum thigh space

Feet flat on floor or footrest

No obstructions to leg movement

Appendix 4 - Guidance for User's on the Use of a "Hot Desk"

If you are someone who works at a "hot desk", before commencing work ask yourself the following questions?
- Has your DSE risk assessment been completed? See your line manager if in any doubt.
- Have you received training/advice in DSE use and the hazards involved with working with DSE equipment?
- Have you adjusted your workstation to achieve a good posture? Remember the workstation set-up needs of the previous user may be different to your needs, consequently adjustment of the workstation will be necessary (see diagram below).
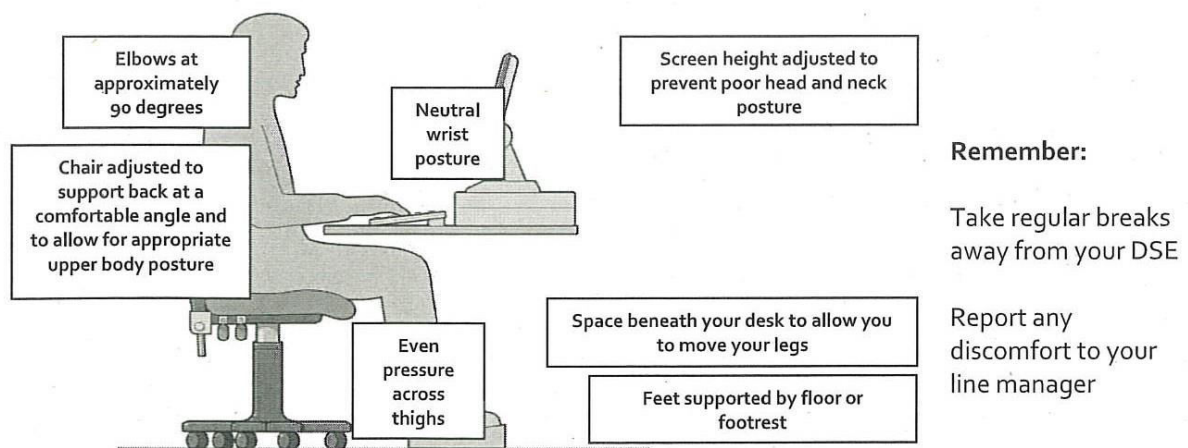
- Do you appreciate the importance of keeping a clear desk for DSE use?
- Are there any environmental factors effecting your ability to work? i.e. glare, temperature, humidity, or noise?
- Can you adjust your workstation to mitigate or reduce any adverse environmental factors?
- Have you visually checked the equipment provided to ensure it is safe to use? (i.e.) PAT tested, free from visual defects and faults.
- Are you aware of the emergency procedures for your workplace?
- If you have answered yes to all the above questions you can utilise the hot desk and log on using the equipment provided at the desk or to you personally.

On Leaving Desk:
- Log out. Do not leave the hot desk equipment logged in to your personal settings
- When leaving your desk, power down. Switch off all equipment at your workstation at the end of your working session.
- Tidy up. Take with you any personal electronic equipment or files at the end of your working session.
- Ensure the desk is left clean and tidy for the next user.