DSE GUIDANCE

DISPLAY SCREEN EQUIPMENT REGULATIONS
The official Health & Safety Executive Guidance and interpretation "Display Screen Equipment: Guidance on Regulations" is available on the Technical Index system (available for University Staff and students only) or from HMSO outlets.

The purpose of this Document is:
- To summarise the guidance and interpretation.
- To advise Schools of the action they are to take.
- To provide basic information for staff.

GUIDANCE AND INTERPRETATION
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APPLICATION
The Regulations apply to "users" of "display screen equipment". These terms mean:

Display Screen Equipment
This is the legally used term for visual display equipment such as word processors, personal computers, etc.

The Regulations do not apply to DSE intended mainly for public operation; window typewriters; calculators, cash registers or similar. Computer terminals provided in libraries for occasional catalogue reference by readers are not covered by the Regulations.

Users
For University purposes a ‘user’ can be regarded as a member of staff who is required to operate Display Screen Equipment as part of their work. Although this definition excludes
students, where workstations are heavily used by students the University wishes the workstation to meet the same standards.

REQUIREMENTS

Work Routine
The requirement is to arrange the work so that periods of activity on the DSE are interrupted by periods doing some other task. The purpose is to prevent the onset of fatigue not for recuperation, and the change period is not required to be a rest break.

The Regulation does not specify what these periods should be, but it is recommended by the Universities Safety Association that no single session of DSE should exceed about 90 minutes without a change of activity for some 15 minutes. Shorter sessions are preferable, such as 30 minutes followed by 5 minutes of change, or 60 minute sessions followed by 10 minutes of change.

For some users the DSE session is frequently interrupted for brief periods by callers, the telephone, etc. These will help relieve fatigue, and may be sufficient.

Eyes and Eyesight Tests
Users may request eye or eyesight tests. These can be undertaken by many high street opticians or by arrangement via the University Occupational Health practice. Where glasses etc. are required specifically for Display Screen use then the University will pay for them, but only for the basic version. If the glasses etc. are needed to correct for general vision defects then the individual is responsible for the cost. For further information on University payment for spectacles see the Expenses Manual.

Information and Training
Users should be provided with this guidance, the HSE leaflets "Working with VDU's" and "Officewise" (Both available via the Safety Office website) and access to the Training / Self Assessment package for Workstations. Full training for School DSE Assessors is also available from the USO (see the website training pages). Further information is also available from the Safety Office.

Information on eye and eyesight tests should also be provided to Users.

Workstations
These should meet the standards in the Schedule. The details of this are addressed in the next section.

ACTION BY SCHOOLS

Assessments of Workstations
The Regulations require that assessments are carried out. Heads of School should nominate one or more persons to be DSE assessors for that School. Assessors will initiate action if problems with workstations are revealed.
A checklist is a suitable way of assessment since it promotes consistency. After completion examined and retained by the School in order to meet the requirement to record assessments. Where staff are required (as against elect) to work at home, they should be asked to carry out the assessment using the same checklist.

In the case of workstations heavily used by students (see introduction to "user" section above) the checklist should be completed by the assessor. For sets of identical workstations, one checklist may be used for the set.

The School Assessor may identify problems that they feel are beyond their competency to deal with. In this case they can refer to the USO for assistance with theses problem cases. If the USO identify health issues they will in turn refer the case on to the University Occupational Health Service.

The USO, Occupational Health and the Procurement Office have collaborated to provide a range of low cost chairs (and are working on other equipment) that are suitable for most users. In the case of a user with special needs please refer the case to the USO for assessment.

If there are significant numbers of workstations that require costly improvements (most changes are near or at no cost) then the School may need to develop a plan for the phased implementation of large scale change over a few years. In these cases it is important that the priority is given to people with known health problems then the people who have the highest usage. Second hand equipment and low cost desk raisers are adequate in many cases and will massively reduce the costs of workstation upgrades.