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DISPLAY SCREEN EQUIPMENT (DSE) PROCEDURE

1. Introduction

Under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, there is a requirement to ensure that all workplaces and systems of work are safe and without risks to health. Additionally, the Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992 as amended by the Health & Safety (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2002 place a duty on employers with regard to minimum health and safety requirements for work with display screen equipment.

This document will provide the appropriate guidance in respect of complying with the aforementioned legislation and with Newman University Health & Safety Policy.

2. User Designation

The regulations state that persons who habitually use display screen equipment as a significant part of their normal work need to be defined as "designated users".

Where it is clear that use of DSE is more or less continuous on most days, the individuals concerned should be regarded as users. This will include the majority of those whose job mainly involves, for example, administrator, clerk, data input operator.

Part-time workers should be assessed using the same criteria. For example if an employee works only two days a week but spends most of that time on DSE work, that person should definitely be considered a user

However, in some cases, where use is less continuous and less frequent, other factors connected to the job will need to be assessed. It will generally be appropriate to designate a person as a "user" if most or all of the following criteria apply:

- *Dependency* : how much the individual depends on the display screen equipment to do their work
- *Discretion* : whether the individual has any discretion as to the use or non-use of the display screen equipment
- *Significant Training* : whether the individual requires significant training and/or particular skills in the use of display screen equipment
- *Uninterrupted Use* : whether the individual normally uses display screen equipment for continuous periods in excess of an hour
- *Daily Use* : whether the individual uses display screen equipment as stated above more or less daily
- *Data Transfer Rate* : whether fast transfer of information between the individual and screen is an important requirement of the job
- *Criticality of Errors:* whether the performance requirements of the system demands high levels of concentration by the user, for example, where the consequences of error may be critical.

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It is appreciated that in certain circumstances, that a User Designation form (Appendix 1) will need to be completed in order to assess the individual concerned. Reference should be made to the Guidance on Establishing User Designation (Appendix 2) to undertake this assessment.

3. Work Station Assessment

There is a requirement to carry out an assessment of all work stations used by designated "users" so as to identify any risks present and reduce them to the lowest extent reasonably practicable. For typical applications of display screens in offices, remedial action is often straightforward, for example:

- Postural problems may be overcome by simple adjustments to the work stations such as repositioning equipment or adjusting the chair. Postural problems can also indicate a need to provide reinforced training for the user on correct hand position, posture, how to adjust equipment, etc. In some cases equipment will need to be purchased such as footrests and document holders.

- Visual problems may also be tackled by straightforward means such as repositioning the screen or using blinds to avoid glare, placing the screen at a more comfortable viewing distance from the user, or by ensuring the screen is kept clean. In some cases, new equipment such as window blinds or anti glare screens will need to be purchased.

- Fatigue and stress may be alleviated by correcting obvious defects in the work station as indicated above. In addition, as in other kind of work, good design of the task will be important, wherever possible the task should provide users with a degree of personal control over the pace and nature of their tasks.

Process involved

a) Initial Workstation Checklist

The designated user to complete the DSE Assessment MS Form which will be sent to the Health & Safety Officer who will review the details and decide on whether further assessment is required due to comments noted.

Priority is to be given to assessments being carried out initially on those staff that have been identified as designated users and the workstations of staff that are not identified as being habitual users will be assessed on a rolling programme throughout the campus.

b) Work Station Assessment Report (Appendix 4)

Using the initial checklist as a basis, the Health & Safety Officer or nominated assessor will complete the workstation assessment. The full workstation assessment should be completed in liaison with the user and any risks identified should be noted and the user informed. The form should be completed detailing remedial action required, and a copy sent to the relevant Line Manager.

N.B. - There is a requirement to ensure that all risks identified are remedied as quickly as possible, and costs of such to be borne by the relevant department/school.

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Should the display screen assessment findings indicate that further investigation and/or assessment is required, advice will be sought from the Occupational Health Service and a referral may be required to ensure that the appropriate control measures are implemented and the correct equipment purchased to meet the user's particular needs.

4. Daily Work Routine of Users

Whenever possible, tasks involving work on DSE should be designed to consist of a mix of screen based and non-screen based work to prevent fatigue and to vary visual and mental demands.
Where DSE work involves intensive use of the keyboard, mouse or other input device, any activity that would demand broadly similar use of the arms or hands should be avoided during breaks.

Similarly, if the DSE work is visually demanding, any activities during breaks should be of a different visual nature. Breaks must also allow users to vary their posture.

Where work cannot be organised, for example in jobs requiring only data or text entry or screen monitoring requiring sustained attention and concentration, deliberate breaks must be introduced.

There are no hard and fast rules regarding breaks, but points to consider are:

- Breaks or changes of activity should be included in working time. They should reduce the workload at the screen, ie, should not result in a higher pace or intensity of work on account of their introduction.
- Breaks should be taken when performance and productivity are still at a maximum, before the user starts getting tired. This is better than taking a break to recover from fatigue. Appropriate timing of the break is more important than its length.
- Short, frequent breaks are more satisfactory than occasional, longer breaks: for example a 5-10 minute break after 50-60 minutes continuous screen and/or keyboard work is likely to be better than a 15-20 minute break every 2 hours.
- Wherever practicable, users should be allowed some discretion as to when to take breaks and how they carry out tasks; individual control over the nature and pace of work allows optimal distribution of effort over the working day.
- Changes of activity (time spent doing other tasks not using the DSE) appear from study evidence to be more effective than formal rest breaks in relieving visual fatigue.
- Breaks must also allow users to vary their posture, and if possible they should be taken away from the DSE workstation to allow the user to stand up, move about and/or change posture.

5. Electronic Submission, Marking and Feedback

Newman University has implemented arrangements for electronic submission, marking and feedback.
Staff involved in the process who choose to carry out electronic marking and feedback whilst away from their usual work location using portable DSE equipment, e.g. a laptop, should refer to the guidance available in Appendices 6 and 7.

6. Eyesight Test

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There is no reliable evidence that work with display screen equipment causes any permanent vision defects to eyes or eyesight, but research shows that it may exacerbate pre-existing vision defects. This, combined with poor working conditions, may give some users temporary visual fatigue and/or headaches.

Uncorrected vision defects can make work at display screens more tiring and stressful, therefore correcting defects can improve comfort, job satisfaction and performance.

The regulations state that all users should be provided with an appropriate eye and eyesight test at regular intervals. The test includes an examination of the eye and a test for vision. With regard to work on display screens, the test takes account of the nature of the users' work, for example, time spent in front of screen, size of screen, position of screen, whether above or below eye level, working distance away from screen, etc.

The cost of the eyesight test for a user will be provided by the Human Resources Department (Health and Safety) and in addition should the result of the eyesight test indicate a defect in sight which requires correction when working on display screen equipment, there is a requirement to provide the user with a special corrective appliance.

Special corrective appliances (normally spectacles) will be those appliances prescribed for vision defects at the viewing distance or distances used specifically for the display screen work concerned. In order to effectively implement the requirements of the regulations, Newman University has adopted a formal procedure for the payment of such provisions as eyesight tests, and the provision of corrective appliances. Please refer to the procedure in Appendix 5.

7. User Training

The regulations state that persons designated as display screen equipment users must receive relevant health and safety information & training. In relation to the provision of information, reference needs to be made to the Health & Safety Executive's (HSE) leaflet 'working with Display Screen Equipment' and the training to be provided is aimed at reducing or minimising the risks, such as: upper limb pains and discomfort, eye strain, stress and fatigue.

Aspects which will be covered in the training package for designated users:
- A simple explanation of the causes of risk and how this can cause harm/injury, for example; poor posture leading to upper limb pains and discomfort.
- How possible health risks can be reduced/eliminated, with particular reference to the role of the user.
- The use and arrangement of work station components to facilitate good posture, prevent over reaching and avoid glare and reflections on the screen.
- The need to take advantage of breaks and changes of activity.
- Information on the regulations and how they affect the users, particularly with regard to eyesight tests, breaks away from the screen and the risk assessment exercise and their contribution as users.
- Newman University policies and procedures with regard to the use of display screen equipment and arrangements for reporting symptoms or problems with the work station, etc.

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This Display Screen Equipment Procedure supersedes all previous Display Screen Equipment Procedures and shall be reviewed at no less than 3 yearly intervals

Authorised By:	Signature:	Issue Date:
Chair of Health & Safety Committee		**July 2021**
Review Date: **July 2024**		

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**Display Screen Equipment Arrangements
User Designation Form**

Name: _____

Department/School: _____

Location: _____

Factor	Circle as appropriate			
	Level	Points	Weighting	Score
1. Dependency	L M H	3 6 9	0.1	
2. Discretion	L M H	3 6 9	0.2	
3. Significant Training	L M H	3 6 9	0.05	
4. Uninterrupted Use	L M H	3 6 9	0.4	
5. Daily Use	L M H	3 6 9	0.1	
6. Data Transfer Rate	L M H	3 6 9	0.1	
7. Criticality of Errors	L M H	3 6 9	0.05	
Total User Score				

User Threshold = 4.7

Designated User   Yes   /   No   (Delete as appropriate)

Refer to Guidance on Establishing User Designation (Appendix 2)

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Display Screen Equipment Arrangements
Guidance and Suggested Questions on Establishing User Designation

When more than one software package is used, the resultant level should reflect both the degree to which the factor applies and the comparative usage of each program.

1. Dependency

To what extent do you depend on your computer system to carry out your work?
Are there any alternative means of achieving the same results?
If alternative means exist, are they readily available?

LOW - the individual can readily carry out the task using other means, eg, typewriter
MEDIUM - other means are available, time or presentation preclude their use
HIGH - the work has been designed to make use of the equipment. Other means are not available and/or practical

2. Discretion

Can result from the freedom to select the method of work or the seniority to delegate the DSE work to others

What discretion do you have as to the use or non-use of the display screen equipment?
Can you choose what method you use to carry out your work?
Can you plan your own work routine, ie, one long session or several shorter ones, am/pm?

LOW - the individual is given no choice regarding work methods
MEDIUM - there are some options regarding equipment use; screen equipment use can be deferred to another time
HIGH - the individual has complete freedom as to use or non-use of equipment

3. Significant Training

The deciding factor should be the recommended training for the system in use, not the actual amount received as this will vary between departments

What training did you have to carry out your work using your computer system?
How long did it take for you to become accustomed to the software package you are using?
Do you feel that there are any particular skills required to carry out your job using display screen equipment?

LOW - word processor, database, spreadsheet 3-5 day courses word processor or computer training as part of a vocational course
MEDIUM - specialised package training, either in-house or residential courses; duration or 5 days or more
HIGH - full/part time training or education courses where different packages are used and compared to carry out the same or similar functions courses involving the use of high or low level computer languages in order to design or amend a software package.

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4. Uninterrupted Use

For continuous spells:
How long do you use the display screen equipment at any one time?
Would you describe this use as "continuous" or are there interruptions?
What causes these interruptions: telephones, writing notes, pause for thought, calculations, enquiries from colleagues or the public, other?

LOW - uninterrupted use up to one hour
MEDIUM - uninterrupted use of over one hour but less than three hours
HIGH - uninterrupted use of three hours or more

5. Daily Use

Use as above for x no of days per week. Workers whose VDU use is subject to monthly/ seasonal variations should refer to times of intensive use

How often would you use the display screen equipment in this way?
Are there any monthly or seasonal variations in your use of display screen equipment?

LOW - on occasions
MEDIUM - two or three times per week
HIGH - four or five times per week

6. Data Transfer Rate/ Speed

How would you describe your speed at inputting data?
Do you touch-type?
What is your current typing speed (estimate)?

LOW - speed not essential, obtaining data/results is the object of the exercise, eg, Spreadsheets, obtaining data from complicated databases
MEDIUM - touch typing, inputting data from hard copies or audio tape
HIGH - inputting large quantities of data where fast transfer of information is required

7. Criticality of Errors

How quickly will any error that you may make be discovered?
What would be the consequences of any error you may make?
What level of concentration, while using the display screen equipment, does the job require?
Do you have to pay close attention to what is being displayed on the screen?

LOW - copy typing, memoranda, letters, reports, errors usually found before work issues
MEDIUM - inputting figures and codes, audio typing; writing reports; using databases and spreadsheets; extracting information from specialised packages; errors result in annoyance and some disruption, usually discovered within three months
HIGH - writing programs/ fault-finding programs; using packages to design a system/structure; errors having critical consequences, identified after three months (approx), eg, Bridge Engineer.

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Appendix 4 - DISPLAY SCREEN EQUIPMENT (DSE) WORKSTATION ASSESSMENT Report

The following recommendations are designed to comply with the assessment requirements of individual Display Screen Equipment (DSE) workstations in accordance with the Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992, as amended by the Health & Safety (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2002 and associated guidance.

Name of DSE user: **Role:** **Department:**	**Workstation location:**
Name of Manger:	**Name of Assessor:**
Date of assessment:	**Date of Report:** **Review:**

Background: **Medical conditions/ issues:** **Additional reports:**	

Any further action needed? **Please specify action(s) required.**	**Follow up action(s):**
Seating	
Office/ Environment issues	
Screen	
PC accessories:	None
Other Comments/ Advice: DSE online training invite DSE/ eye sight policy eye-test provision advised	
If there are any other outstanding issues/needs relating to workstation or office environment, let manager know in the first instance.	

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CC report:

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Appendix 5

DSE Arrangements – Eye Test Procedure

Introduction

The regulations state that designated users should be provided with an appropriate eye and eyesight test at regular intervals. The test includes an examination of the eye and a test for vision. It takes into account the work undertaken on the display screen; time spent in front of the screen, size of screen, position of screen, working position away from the screen etc.

Payment

The Regulations require that an employer must provide corrective appliances for a designated user if they require a different prescription or type of lens for DSE work than for their normal everyday spectacles.

The cost of the eyesight test for the user is to be borne by Health & Safety and in addition should the result indicate a defect in sight which requires correction when working specifically on display screen equipment, there is a requirement to provide the user with a basic corrective appliance.

Procedure

1. An employee who is designated as a 'user' requests an eyesight test via the Health & Safety Administrator.
2. The employee will be issued with a Specsavers VDU Eyecare Voucher (via email) which entitles the employee to a full eye examination at any Specsavers optician in the UK up to the value of £25.00.
3. The employee is required to book an appointment with Specsavers in advance and the voucher must be presented to prior to the examination.
4. As a result of the examination, if it is identified that the employee is required to wear glasses solely and specifically for VDU use as defined in the Health and Safety (DSE) Regulations, the employee will be able to select a pair of glasses from the £45.00 range at Specsavers.
5. The employee can request more costly appliances; however Newman University is only obliged to pay a contribution equal to the cost of a basic appliance. *(Currently £45.00)*
6. All eye test results will be recorded by the Health and Safety Administrator.
7. Should the employee require a re-test before the recommended date due to visual discomfort, the procedure as above will apply.
8. Should the user be experiencing visual discomfort a review of the workstation assessment will be required.

Note: All Specsavers VDU Eyecare Vouchers are non-refundable and must be redeemed prior to the expiry date.

This procedure will be subject to periodic auditing to ensure the adherence to the policy is maintained.

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Appendix 6

**Working with Portable Display Screen Equipment (DSE)
Health & Safety Guidance for Users**

Introduction

An increasing number of people now have access to what is known as portable DSE, which includes devices such as laptops and notebook computers. Whilst the chances of significant injury at work when using this type of equipment is small, there are some important issues that need to be understood before use is made of the equipment.

This guidance has been produced to provide users of portable DSE with information on the main hazards and what control measures can be implemented to reduce the risk of injury. Additional information on portable DSE use is available from the H&S Officer.

Scope

Specific regulations exist for work with display screen equipment, and in the cases of portable DSE where there is prolonged use then these regulations apply.

The Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992 as amended by the Health & Safety (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2002 provide information on the risks involved when using DSE and details precautions that should be followed before its use. This includes specific requirements for those designated as "Users" and provides minimum requirements for workstations.

The regulations state that portable DSE is subject to the DSE Regulations only when it is in "prolonged use". In practical terms this means that:

a) If you use portable DSE instead of standard desktop DSE for prolonged periods then account must be taken of the minimum workstation requirements listed in the Regulations. If portable DSE is only used for short periods mainly as a supplement to main desktop DSE then the minimum requirements will not apply to the portable DSE (NB – it is worth remembering that although these specific regulations may not apply, general health and safety legislation does, and it is advisable that the standards below are adhered to where possible).

b) If you use portable DSE for prolonged periods then you are likely to be designated as a "User". If you have already been designated as a "User" because of your work with desktop DSE, then switching to portable DSE (either fully or partially), particularly if you continue to use desktop DSE, is unlikely to affect your "User" status.

Possible Hazards

Using a portable DSE may cause problems if not set up appropriately.

You could suffer from:
•   Neck or eye problems because of the angle of the screen
•   Hand or wrist problems due to angle of the keyboard and overuse of the pointing device
•   Shoulder or back problems due to using it in an inappropriate position.

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Reporting health problems

Any health problems associated with the use of portable DSE should be reported immediately. In the first instance you should speak to your line manager and also contact the H&S Officer who will carry out a further assessment of the workstation and working arrangements.

Eyes and eyesight

If you are a designated "User" then you are entitled to eye and eyesight tests. It is worth remembering that viewing distances could be shorter than those for standard desktop DSE.

Breaks from DSE Work

Portable DSE should not be used for extended periods without adequate breaks. Portable DSE users normally require a greater number of breaks away from their equipment to compensate for poorer working environments.

Breaking up long periods of DSE work helps to prevent fatigue and upper limb problems. Frequent short breaks are better than long infrequent ones.

Portable DSE (Laptop)

Equipment selection

- Look for a low weight portable DSE (e.g. 3 kg or less.) Keep accessories as few and as light as possible.

- Choose as large and clear a screen as possible that can be used comfortably for the task to be undertaken

- Where available, opt for a detachable or height adjustable screen.

- Ensure the screen is free from flicker and that the brightness and contrast controls are easy to use.

- Use lightweight cases to carry equipment – avoid cases that have manufacturer brands on the outside.

- Choose portable DSE that that has a facility for attaching a docking station and pointing devices.

- Look for tilt adjustable keyboards on laptops.

- Ensure the equipment has friction pads on its underside to reduce sliding.

- To cut working time and stress, ensure the portable DSE has sufficient memory and speed for the applications to be used.

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Use of Equipment – Checklist

Where possible, try to adhere to the general guidance for fixed DSE equipment, and additionally:

a)   Wherever possible, use laptops or other portable DSE only when away from your main area of work.

b)   Choose a suitable flat surface to work on, try to work on surfaces similar in height to normal office workstations.

c)   Adopt a good posture – wrists should be in a neutral position, back should be supported by chair.

d)   Avoid using equipment in locations which leads to poor posture, e.g. on knees, in cars, on low level tables.

e)   Align the keyboard with your body, try to avoid twisting or leaning over the laptop.

f)   Where possible choose chairs that provide sufficient support to the back and encourage good general posture.

g)   Ensure there is adequate lighting for the task . Where possible, minimise glare by careful positioning.

h)   Make sure the screen is angled correctly to avoid glare and so that you do not have to stretch your neck to see it properly.

i)   Position your screen about an arm's length from you with the top of the screen level with your eyes.

j)   Take short, frequent breaks away from the screen.

k)   Make sure there is enough space around you for your documents

l)   Make sure there is enough space underneath your working area to move your legs freely.

Other points to consider:

•   If you use your laptop connected to the mains, make sure:
    Cables are not trailing
    Plugs/leads are in good condition
    Plug sockets are not overloaded

•   Consider a suitable backpack to reduce strain on arms and distribute loads evenly across the body (or wheeled luggage may be worth considering.)

•   Do not carry equipment or papers unless they are really likely to be needed

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- Do not leave equipment on view in vehicles.

- Ensure that handheld computers for prolonged use are carefully selected for ergonomic features which match the requirements of the tasks undertaken. For example, equipment for use outdoors should be adequately waterproof, legible in bright sunlight, and keyboards and screens should be large enough to be used comfortably.