

17. DISPLAY SCREEN EQUIPMENT

17.1.1 Contents:

Aim	17.2.1
Introduction	17.3.1
Policy	17.4.1
Safe display screen equipment operations	17.5.1
Training	17.6.1
Further information	17.7.1

17.2.1 Aim: To minimise the risk of harm that may be caused through incorrect use of display screen equipment operations.

17.3.1 Introduction: Display screen equipment (DSE) and visual display units (VDUs) are a commonplace feature of both office and laboratory environments. Work with display screen equipment is not generally considered to be a high-risk activity, but it can lead to muscular problems, eye fatigue and/or stress if used incorrectly, especially over extended periods of time. Problems of this kind can be alleviated by good design of workstations, including computer equipment and office furniture, and effective control of the work environment and the pattern of work.

17.4.1 Policy: The Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992 (as amended), and associated guidance, apply to display screens where there is a user who is habitually using the equipment as a significant component of work.

17.5.1 Safe Display Screen Equipment Operations: An assessment should be made of risk associated with display screen equipment operations. A form and supporting notes may be downloaded from:

<https://www.ed.ac.uk/health-safety/online-resources/risk-assessments>

though attention is drawn also to the on-line training and risk assessment package referred to in Paragraph 17.6.1

17.5.2 In order to avoid discomfort from prolonged use of DSE equipment, users should:

- Assess their own workstation;
- Raise any problems with their line manager in order that these may be resolved;
- Make any necessary adjustments to their workstation; and
- Adopt good working practices.

17.5.3 Before beginning to work at a workstation, you should receive adequate instruction and training in the use of your own particular workstation equipment, with particular emphasis placed on the health and safety aspects associated with its use.

Further information on this aspect is available in the form of a downloadable leaflet from the University's Occupational Health Service:

http://www.docs.csg.ed.ac.uk/Safety/health/keying_comfortably_exercises.pdf

17.5.4 Display Screen Equipment Safety Advisers are available within the campus to help with the inspection workstations to assess any risk to the health and safety of users (enquiries related to this may be directed to the Health & Safety Manager for University buildings on the Edinburgh bioQuarter campus by emailing lgm@staffmail.ed.ac.uk). Risks must be reduced as far as is reasonably practicable. All workstations must comply with the current regulations.

17.5.5 Designated users may be entitled to an eye and eyesight test (although currently, these are freely available in Scotland anyway). Further information on this aspect is available at:

http://www.docs.csg.ed.ac.uk/Safety/general/DSE_eye_tests.pdf

17.5.6 Keyboard shortcuts can, to some extent, reduce the need to use a computer mouse and may help reduce the effects or likelihood of work-related discomfort. Details of some common keyboard shortcuts for *Windows* programmes are available at:

http://www.docs.csg.ed.ac.uk/Safety/health/keyboard_shortcuts.pdf

Some specific additional shortcuts are also available from the Help menu within *Microsoft Access*.

17.6.1 Training: On-line training related to display screen equipment safety is available from the University. Specifically, *Cardinus* training packages are available through the University's Health and Safety Department; there are web-based e-learning packages covering the use of display screen equipment, manual handling, home working, and laboratory ergonomics, and all are available at:

<https://health-safety.ed.ac.uk/training/accessing-training/cardinus>

These consist of a variety of training, quiz and risk assessment modules which take users through the fundamental safety aspects of these subjects. Training related specifically to display screen equipment safety consists of five areas of training plus a ten-question test; this then leads onto a sixteen section conditional risk assessment, with further guidance on remedial actions if required. There is also a set of exercises available online. The training takes approximately 30-40 minutes to complete

17.6.3 It is recommended that new workers address themselves to the *Cardinus* on-line training and risk assessment package as quickly as possible after taking up post, in order that they may make prompt and suitable adjustments to their workstation before becoming too busy to pay full attention to that important matter. The risk assessment element should be repeated every time the worker changes workstation locations, or is provided with new equipment, and in any event every few years to take account of possible changes in the person's physical condition.

17.6.4 Face-to-face training courses are also available on the Edinburgh bioQuarter campus, upon request, for those who may be involved at a practical level in display screen operations (contact Lindsay.Murray@ed.ac.uk). Aspects of DSE safety are also mentioned during mandatory three yearly H&S refresher/continuation training.

17.7.1 Further information: Detailed information on health and safety aspects of display screen equipment operations appears on the University's Health and Safety web site (and should be consulted):

http://www.docs.csg.ed.ac.uk/Safety/Policy/Section_3_DSE.pdf

and

<https://www.ed.ac.uk/health-safety/guidance/workplaces-general/personal-computing>

Last reviewed/updated: 21st July, 2025