

## Imperial College Union Policy Display Screen Equipment (DSE) Policy

Audience: All staff  
Owner(s): Leadership Group  
Created Date: December 2020  
Review Date: December 2022

### 1. Policy Statement

Imperial College Union is committed to ensuring the health, safety and welfare of its members, staff, customers, suppliers, visitors and all others who may be affected by its activities.

Imperial College Union recognises that good management of health, safety and welfare is essential to the success of the organisation and is a sign of a well-managed organisation. Imperial College Union is committed to ensuring that procedures are in place to identify hazards, assess risk and set objectives to improve the management of health, safety and welfare.

Imperial College Union acknowledges its duty to ensure that all relevant legislation regarding health, safety and welfare is adhered to and that resources are made available to ensure health, safety and welfare.

Imperial College Union is committed to developing a positive safety culture, based on the involvement of staff and volunteers in health and safety management. Imperial College Union will therefore use consultative forums and mechanisms to involve staff and volunteers in health and safety management and will endeavour to provide relevant training to all staff and students.

Imperial College Union commits to reviewing this policy at least every 2 years, or as and when necessary, with approval for the policy to take place at the Board of Trustees.

### 2. Introduction

All work involving use of computers and other display screen equipment must be organised so as to protect the health of those involved and to ensure that the computer workstations comply with the Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992.

Departments must ensure that their arrangements can achieve the policy objects. Individuals with specific responsibilities under the Policy can delegate those to others, but retain accountability.

### 3. Application

#### Staff

- The policy applies to all staff whose work involves use of a computer. They must be provided with information on safe working with computers. Computer equipment and furniture provided for their use must meet ergonomic standards and be assessed to ascertain this. Any computer equipment supplied for use at home must also meet ergonomic standards.
- Staff classed as computer users are entitled to eyesight tests and, in some instances, to provision of spectacles paid for by the College. The Union is responsible for funding eye tests for individual computer users.

### **Contractor and Agency Staff**

- Computer equipment provided for use by employees of contractors or agencies should meet the same ergonomic standards as for College staff. Their employer is responsible for information, training, and eye tests (if applicable).

## **4. Responsibilities**

### **Board of Trustees**

The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 places a statutory duty on organisations to ensure, so far as reasonably practicable, the safety, health, and welfare of its employees at work and other people who may be affected by their activities, e.g., membership, volunteers, members of the public.

The Board of Trustees, as the governing body of the Union, has overall and final responsibility for Health and Safety matters within the Union, and for ensuring that Health and Safety legislation is complied with.

### **The Managing Director**

The Managing Director has delegated responsibility for the implementation, monitoring, and review of the Health and Safety Policy and associated policies. As required by the 'Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1993', the Managing Director is named as the 'competent person' who will ensure compliance with Health and Safety.

In particular, the MD is responsible for:

- The setting of Health and Safety standards and objectives.
- The allocation of the necessary financial resources.
- Identifying and allocating Health and Safety responsibilities to Senior Managers.

### **Leadership Team Lead**

The Managing Director will delegate to a membership of the leadership team the following responsibility:

- Ensuring all work with computers in all ICU departments are managed to avoid health risks.
- Appointing a competent person to act as Department Computer Health Assessor.
- Ensuring workstations supplied for staff use comply with ergonomic standards and that sufficient resource is allocated to replace damaged or defective chairs and equipment.
- Ensuring appropriate action is taken to resolve health risks identified through workstation assessments.
- Ensuring all staff & students using computers are provided with information, and where required, training on associated health risks & their control.
- Ensuring all staff entitled to Optician's services are informed of their entitlements.
- Ensuring that departmental activities are conducted in accordance with Union policy, legislative, and other formal standards and that those hazards having the potential to cause harm are risk assessed and identified controls are implemented.
- Ensuring that employees receive sufficient information, training and supervision on Health and Safety matters.
- Producing safe systems of work and the means for complying with this Policy and other individual policies and procedures associated with Health and Safety.
- Reviewing the above arrangements at regular intervals, adjusting as necessary.

## **Department Heads and Line Managers**

Department heads and line managers are responsible for:

- Ensuring staff have appropriate computer equipment to undertake the work they are employed to do.
- Ensuring assessments of workstations in their area are carried out when appropriate.
- Ensuring allocated computer tasks are organised to avoid long periods of uninterrupted use.
- Supporting Computer Health Assessors in resolving local problems.

## **Computer Health Assessors**

Computer Health Assessors are responsible for:

Monitoring the conduct and outcome of workstation self-assessments:

- Checking that assessments are carried out when appropriate.
- Maintaining suitable records of workstation assessments.
- Assisting with the assessment of workstations provided for multiple users, e.g., students classrooms, hot desks.
- Assisting with departmental induction training programmes, if required.
- Assisting individuals with workstation assessments.

Advising on the resolution of problems identified through workstation assessments:

- Some users may require assistance or instruction to undertake a workstation assessment.
- Assessors should be the first source of advice on how to resolve ergonomic problems identified in workstation assessments.
- Assessors may be delegated responsibility for authorising referrals for optician's eye examination.

Promoting good practice amongst users:

- Assessors can deliver user training locally.

Reporting significant problems to Line Managers:

- The Line Manager should be informed of problems in achieving compliance with the Policy and of unresolved resource issues.
- Cases of possible health problems relating to computer use should be reported to the Department Safety Officer.

## **Users**

Users are responsible for:

Checking and adjusting their workstation to fit their needs:

- Assessments should be carried out at the first use of the computer. The assessment checklist on the Occupational Health web pages should be used to guide the user through an assessment.

Organising their work to avoid overuse problems:

- The guidance notes for computer use produced by the College OH service describe best practice

Seeking assistance to resolve problems where necessary:

- The Departmental Computer Health Assessor can help on problems with set-up and adjustment to workstations. Users should inform their manager of unresolved workstation problems, or if the user develops musculoskeletal problems.

Computer users with possible work-related upper limb pain (RSI WRULD) or other computer related problems should consult with one of the Colleges OH Advisers:

- Seek prior approval from their Line Manager or Computer Health Assessor to arrange an eye test via the Eye-care Portal on the College's Occupational Health Web Pages

### **Individual Members of Staff, Volunteers, Students and Visitors**

Individual members of staff, students and visitors have a legal duty to co-operate and comply at all times with the Health and Safety information, instruction and training provided. They must bring to the attention of their line manager or duty manager, without delay, any hazards identified, or improvements identified as necessary. If a hazard is seen, it should be removed or dealt with as soon as possible if it is safe to do so. It should also be reported using the Unions incident reporting system as a matter of priority.

Individual members of staff and students have a duty to take reasonable care for the Health and Safety of themselves and for other persons whom their actions or omissions may affect. Specifically, no person shall intentionally or recklessly interfere with or misuse anything provided in the interests of health, safety or welfare. Serious breaches of the Health and Safety Policy (e.g., misusing equipment, deliberately putting someone else's safety in danger) will be dealt with through the Union's Disciplinary Procedure.

Health and Safety matters may also be raised by any employee at 1-2-1 meetings, team meetings and at Town Hall meetings, which occur regularly.

Individual Users are responsible for:

- Assisting with assessment of workstations supplied for their use
- Reporting problems identified through the workstation assessments
- Following College guidance on safe practice in use of computers
- Reporting health problems possibly induced through computer work

## **5. Definitions**

### **Display screen equipment**

All computers or other equipment utilising alpha-numeric or graphical display screens, including microfiche readers and similar equipment. Television equipment is included if its main function is display of alpha-numeric data.

Calculators, typewriters and cash registers with small 'fixed window'-type display are not classed as display screen equipment for the purposes of College Policy.

### **A computer workstation**

The computer equipment, including display screen, keyboard, pointing devices and other peripherals (printers, scanners etc) plus the desk and chair provided for use and the immediate environment around the desk.

Associated equipment such as document holders or footrests, if provided, are also included.

### **A User**

Any member of staff who usually works for 1 or more hour per day is a User.

## **6. Arrangements**

### **Workstation Equipment**

#### **Work Surface**

**The work desk or work-surface must have:**

- Adequate space available for the user to arrange the screen, keyboard and related equipment so as to achieve a comfortable working position.
- A non-gloss finish to prevent distracting reflections.
- Adequate space for the use and storage of related equipment & materials e.g. telephones, printers & other peripherals, work documents.
- Adequate leg space underneath the work-surface.
- The size required will depend on type and amount of the equipment in use and, in particular, the size and type of screen provided. As a guide the desk should ideally be deep enough for the screen to be placed 60cm from the front edge of the desk. The minimum acceptable depth should allow space to rest hands in front of the keyboard. The available width should be at least twice the width of the keyboard. Table height should be between 66 cm and 73 cm (fixed height optimum 72 cm). Shelving should be located so as not to interfere with positioning of the computer screen. Where desk space or overhang is limited, flat screens and/or floor mounted computer cases may be necessary.
- Height adjustable desks (standing desks) can be an effective solution for those who experience lower back pain aggravated by extended periods of sitting.

#### **Seating**

The work chair provided must allow the user to achieve a comfortable working position. For most users to achieve this and in all circumstances where the chair is to be used more than one person this will require that the chair provided must:

- Allow the seat height to be adjusted.
- Allow the height and angle of the seat back to be adjusted.
- Have a stable five-footed base to achieve stability and a swivel seat for user comfort.
- A footrest is required if a user is unable to adjust the work surface height and/or chair height to allow their feet to rest flat on the floor while working.

#### **Computer Monitor**

The computer monitor must:

- Display characters as clear and stable images of adequate size for legibility.
- Allow adjustment of the brightness and contrast of the screen by the user.
- Allow easy adjustment of the tilt and swivel of the screen by the user.
- Be free of distracting reflection from its surface.
- Monitors should be height adjustable or be positioned on a stand to allow for optimum comfort.
- Problems with reflections off the screen can usually be solved by adjusting the position of the screen in relation to light sources or by altering lighting conditions. Only in

exceptional circumstances where this cannot be achieved will an 'add-on' anti-glare screen be necessary.

### **Keyboard**

The keyboard must:

- Be tiltable and separate from the screen base (except for portable computers).
- Have legible symbols.
- Have a matt finish.
- There must be sufficient space, in front to allow the specified user to rest/support their hands.

### **Pointing devices (mice, trackballs, etc.)**

Pointing devices must:

- Have sufficient space to allow unimpeded use.

Individuals who have experienced symptoms of discomfort may benefit from an alternative pointing device.

### **Document Holders**

Document holders are not an absolute requirement but should be provided when working from copy is a significant aspect of the person's computer work.

Where one is provided it must be: -

- Stable and adjustable
- Hold the document at a similar height, viewing distance and angle to that of the display screen.
- Not interfere with the readability of the document.

Please note: These standards apply to desktop computers. Recommendations for laptops are available on the OH web pages.

### **Software**

Any software provided should be suitable for the task for which it is used.

When selecting or modifying software, ease of use as well as the abilities of the intended users and training needs should be taken into account. The College's Staff Learning and Development Centre offers training for a number of software packages.

### **Environmental Standards.**

Space:

- Prolonged sitting in a static position can be harmful. There should be sufficient space for the user to sit down and get up without difficulty and allow for changes in posture whilst working.

Lighting:

- The general lighting around a computer workstation should be suitable for the range of work activities carried out there. Equipment should be positioned to prevent

distracting glare or reflections from the screen or other equipment. In general, screens should be positioned side-on to windows or the light source causing the reflection.

Heat:

- Users should be provided with a comfortable thermal environment. Care should be taken to minimise draughts which may contribute to poor posture.

### **Information**

All users must be provided with information regarding computer health and safety.

New staff will be sent an e-mail from the College OH Service when they first log on to the College IT Network directing them to the guidance available on the OH Services web pages.

In addition to the information provided via the OH Service's e-mail, staff will need to be given information on specific local arrangements e.g. how to contact their Departmental Computer Health Assessor; arrangements for obtaining authorisation for an Opticians eye test (staff Users only).

Users not connected to the College IT network will need to be provided with full information at induction.

Managers should check that staff have received information and encourage them encourage new staff to read and follow the guidance provided.

Information on other computer ergonomic topics (e.g. use of laptops, pointing devices, etc.) is available on the OH services web pages.

Information provided to all users should include:

- Information on symptoms of health problems associated with computer work
- How to set up and adjust the equipment provided
- How and when to carry out a risk assessment
- How to resolve any problems identified through an assessment.
- Guidance on how to organise computer work
- Departmental arrangements for the reporting of problems
- Information on training offered and how to access this training.

Significant users should be provided with information on:

- Eligibility for eyesight testing
- How to arrange for an eyesight test
- How to obtain authorisation for an optician's eyesight test
- Items covered in the OH Service's guidance

## **7. Review**

The Policy Owner is responsible for conducting a comprehensive review of their policies at a minimum of every 3 years or as required to stay current with applicable laws and/or Imperial College Policies.

The purpose of the review is to determine:

- if the policy is still necessary and accurate;
- if the policy should be combined with another policy or if it should be rescinded;
- if the policy is up to date with current laws and regulations and Imperial College policies;
- if changes are required to improve the effectiveness or clarity of the policy.

## **8. Training**

- The training needs of all staff using computers should be assessed during induction or when new equipment or software is introduced.
- For most users, provision of the OH Service's guidance on safe use of computers and on how to carry out a workstation assessment will be sufficient.
- User training: The computer user training sessions provided by the OH service give detailed training in the safe use of computers and the role of users in the prevention of health problems.
- Assessor training: The Computer Health Assessors Course covers the ergonomic assessment and set up of a computer workstation, how to resolve problems identified during an assessment, plus good practice in computer work. Assessors can also deliver User training in their local area. Assessors should also attend the annual assessors update meetings run by the college OHS.
- Information on Computer Health and Safety training is listed in the Safety section of the Learning & Development Centre's web pages
- Additional departmental training sessions for users can be arranged exceptionally with the Occupational Health Service.
- Software training needs should be assessed, and appropriate training provided. The staff development unit offers training for standard software used in College.