



GUIDELINES ON SAFETY IN THE USE OF VISUAL SCREEN EQUIPMENT (VISUAL DISPLAY UNITS)

Procedure
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1. **PURPOSE**

To acquaint staff with College policy and our legal obligations relating to the safe use of display screen equipment.

2. **SCOPE**

These guidelines apply mainly to each employee who '*habitually uses display screen equipment as a significant part of his normal work*' (e.g. for more than 1 continuous hour per day, every day) They should be interpreted in a common sense way in the case of occasional and short term users and non-employees.

3. **LEGISLATION**

The principal piece of legislation covering display screen equipment (VDUs) is the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (General Application) Regulations, 1993. This legislation places obligations on an employer in respect of employees referred to above. There are not specific statutory obligations owed to non-employees e.g. student. The standards set for employees may, however, be used in assessing how we are discharging our general Common Law obligations to non-employees.

The aim of the legislation is to reduce the level of risk inherent in display screen work by:-

- Requiring the employer to provide equipment, environment and training to allow employees adopt a correct posture and avoid musculoskeletal disorders such as neck or back pain, upper limb stresses, wrist strains etc.

- Requiring the employer to provide the equipment and environment to limit any effect on their eyes/eyesight and to ensure that any such effect is discovered by appropriate health surveillance and corrective appliances are provided.
- Requiring the employer to provide the equipment, software, environment, training and working arrangements to ensure that the employees mental well being is not affected by display screen work.

4. EMPLOYER OBLIGATIONS

4.1 Ergonomic Assessment

An employer must perform an analysis of the workstation in order to evaluate the safety and health conditions to which they give rise for his employees, particularly as regards possible risks to eyesight, physical problems and problems of mental stress.

This analysis will consider:

- The equipment - Display screen, keyboard, ancillary electronic equipment, work desk, work surface, work chair and other equipment such as footrest and document holder.
- Environment - reflection, glare, light, noise, heat and humidity.
- Software - particularly non-standard or tailored software

Most computer equipment supplied in the last 8/10 years complies with the requirements of the regulations and the analysis tends to focus on how the equipment is positioned and the ancillary equipment. An appropriate adjustable chair is a key element of the workstation and must be provided for employees. Employees must be shown how to adjust the chair to help prevent musculoskeletal problems. Other equipment such as document holders, footrests and window blinds must be provided where the assessment so indicates.

Each Head of Department should nominate someone to carry out these analyses and to maintain the records of such assessments. The College Safety Office provides or arranges training for these Department Display Screen Assessors.

An employer must take appropriate measures to remedy any risks found in the evaluation and inform employees of the results of the evaluation as well as providing training to employees in the use of workstations.

4.2 Work Breaks

An employer must plan the activities of his employees in such a way that daily work on display screen is periodically interrupted by breaks or changes of activity, which reduce workload at the display screen.

It is recommended that at least 5 minutes in every hour be spent away from the screen/keyboard. For most people this is not a problem as activities such as filing, printing, phone work or laboratory work generally provide such changes in activity. Intense periods of work such as data input or payroll runs must be designed to provide specific breaks or changes in activity.

4.3 Eye Tests and Corrective Appliances

Any employee who habitually uses a VDU as a significant part of their normal work (e.g. > 1 continuous hour per day, every day) can arrange to have an eye and eyesight test. Ideally such tests should be undertaken before using a VDU for the first time, at regular intervals thereafter (approximately every 2-3 years) and if an employee experiences visual difficulties which be due to display screen work. The cost for such an examination (up to a maximum of €25.00 less any social welfare entitlements due to you) can be recovered from your Department/ Discipline/Unit, provided you give prior notice to your supervisor.

Where an eye test carried out by the doctor or optometrist reveal that particular lenses are required by an employee **solely for VDU work**, the basic costs of providing glasses or of new lenses where the employee already wears glasses (up to a maximum value of €60.00 less any social welfare entitlement) must be borne by the Department/ Discipline/Unit. Where an employee already wears glasses to correct a visual defect and, routine changes of lens arises, if these glasses are adequate also for VDU work, then the Department is not liable for the cost.

If a person fails to claim their social welfare entitlement the College reserves the right to deduct the equivalent amount from the allowances specified above.

Those not eligible to claim social welfare benefit are eligible by the Department/Discipline/Unit for an allowance of €25.00 towards the cost of an eye test and €60.00 towards the cost of frames/lenses, again if required solely for VDU use.

If the employee suffers from specific health problems such as migraine or epilepsy the Occupational Health Service should be consulted.

How do I go about getting an Eye Test?

1. An Employee can arrange an eye test with their chosen doctor or optometrist.
2. Each Employee should fill in the relevant Eye Test and Lenses Form below. The doctor or optometrist should also fill in the relevant part of this form, while carrying out the eye test.
3. Those Employee's that are eligible for Social Welfare benefit should request the relevant social welfare claim form from the doctor or optometrist carrying out the test. Each employee must claim their social welfare before submitting any claim to their Department.
4. **To claim reimbursement of the cost of your eye test and / or corrective lenses / glasses from your Department, please complete the relevant section of the 'Eye Test and Lenses Form below and submit the original receipt with this completed form to your Head of Discipline/Department/Unit.**

4.4 Radiation

There is substantial evidence that concerns about radiation emissions from VDU's and their possible effects on pregnant women are unfounded. According to the World Health Organisation -

'The levels of ionising and non-ionising electromagnetic radiation which are likely to be generated by VDUs are well below those set out in international recommendations for limiting risk to human health created by such emissions and does not consider

such levels to pose a significant risk to health. No special protective measures are therefore needed to protect the health of people from this radiation.'

5. Further Information

Your Departmental Display Screen Assessor is trained to deal with basic display screen hazards. Further information on the safe use of Display Screen Equipment is available from the College Safety Office on ext. 1914 or on the College Web site at

<http://www.tcd.ie/Buildings/Safety/safe-10.htm>

Trinity College Eye Test and Lenses Reimbursement Form

Name: _____ Staff No: _____

Date of last Eye Test: _____ Current Eye Test: _____

How long have you used a VDU? _____

Make and model of VDU _____

On average, how many hours per day do you use a VDU? _____

For what purpose - please tick:

Data input _____ / Mainly input but reading some output _____

A mixture of inputting and reading output _____

Mainly reading output but some input also _____

Reading output only _____

Mainly text _____ or numbers _____

If a claim is being made for lenses or a test, please complete and sign the section below and ensure that your Optician completes the attached section. **(Please note you must claim any social welfare benefits due to you, prior to submitting a claim to your Department)**

Signed: _____ Cost of eye test € _____

Cost of lenses only € _____ Social welfare reimbursement € _____

Amount Refunded by Department € _____

To claim reimbursement from college please submit original receipt with this completed expenses reclaim form to your Head of Department.

OPTICIAN TO COMPLETE THIS PORTION

Test	Right eye	Left eye
Unaided visual acuity		
Refractive findings	SPH CYL AXIS	SPH CYL AXIS
Amplitude of accommodation (dioptries)	Corrected for near =	Corrected for near =
Muscle bal - distance (6m) (Maddox Rod)	Horizontal Vertical	
Muscle bal - distance (6m) (Maddox Rod)	Horizontal Vertical	
Muscle bal - distance (6m) (Maddox Rod)	Horizontal Vertical	
Near point of convergence PPC		

Spectacles currently used:

Distance _____ Close _____ Work only _____

New spectacles required _____

I confirm that lenses ARE / ARE NOT required solely for VDU use.

Signed: _____ Optician

Optician Stamp: