



University of Essex

A Display Screen Equipment (DSE) guide to Managing Hybrid Workers

University of Essex

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Hybrid Workers and Smart Working at Essex (SWAE)

This guide has been created for managers and brings together several key topics that managers may encounter when staff members are working in a hybrid way. This guide will help inform you of your health and safety responsibilities and identify risks that staff members can encounter when working remotely.

Roles and responsibilities

The University

The University will maintain the regulatory requirements for Display Screen Equipment, Health and Safety at Work and duty of care for any participant of the SWAE project. The University will have in place the sufficient management and assessment controls required to ensure the safety of staff members.

Head of Department / Section

Heads of Department /Section will ensure health risks from use of DSE are controlled in their Department. Workstations used by staff members will comply with the minimum requirements of the Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations.

This includes checking that:

- Workstations are set up ergonomically in accordance with good practice
- Training has been undertaken
- DSE workstation assessments are carried out and adjustments are made where necessary
- Sufficient DSE Facilitators are appointed to support the DSE assessment process.
- Heads of Department must ensure that the relevant [Departmental Management Statement](#) is updated to include additional details for Hybrid Working.

Managers

All managers and supervisors are to:

- Ensure their staff members complete the online [How We Work at Essex](#) and a [Hybrid Working Self-Assessment](#). A resource has been created on the [Moodle platform](#) to assist all SWAE users with setting up their workstations.

- Periodically check that the relevant Hybrid Working self- assessment is up to date and actions taken.
- Where a DSE adjustment is outside the staff member's control, Managers are to take action to ensure it is addressed, such as requesting support from the departments DSE Facilitator and / or Workplace Health, Safety and Wellbeing.
- Where staff members report health problems associated with the use of DSE, which continue after adjustments has been taken, and / or staff are absent due to DSE related work; refer them to Occupational Health.
- Ensure staff members can plan their work to include regular breaks from DSE work.

Staff member

- Complete the online Induction training [How We Work at Essex](#) and read the [Moodle resource on Hybrid Working](#) if they use SWAE computers as part of their work.
- Complete a [Hybrid Working Self-Assessment](#) form and send it to the relevant line manager.
- If staff members experience aches and pains or visual problems that may be related to using DSE at work, they can make adjustments within their control. This includes following the advice in the online Moodle resource on setting up a workstation for comfort.
- Health problems that may be caused or made worse by using DSE should be reported to the relevant manager or, staff members can seek confidential advice from Occupational Health.

DSE Facilitator

The role of the DSE Facilitator during SWAE migrations is to support the relevant manager in identifying and addressing remedial action. Where further help is needed, seeking the advice of Workplace Health, Safety and Wellbeing or Occupational Health.

Workplace Health, Safety and Wellbeing

The Workplace Health, Safety and Wellbeing (WHSW) team are available to support DSE Facilitators and Managers with complex assessments.

Occupational Health

The Occupational Health Service will support DSE Facilitators and Managers with complex assessments, investigating health issues arising from DSE use and provide arrangements for eye tests and vision screening.

Training and support

All staff members are required to complete the University induction training course [How we Work at Essex](#) or, the [HWWAE Booster courses](#) that are published annually to all staff members.

All staff members within the SWAE project (including Frontrunners and Intern staff members) will have access to the online [Moodle resource 'Hybrid Working'](#). It is recommended that all SWAE participants read the 'Hybrid Working' Moodle resource.

The University maintains a Key Performance Indicator (KPI) target of 95% completion of the 'How We Work At Essex course', participants of the SWAE project will be included within the annual calculation of this KPI.

The Workplace Health, Safety and Wellbeing team are available to provide demonstration sessions regarding how to make adjustments and setup a workstation(s) at home or within a SWAE office area. Staff members can attend these sessions in groups and managers can contact WHSW to arrange demonstrations as required.

Office areas that are part of the SWAE project will have rotating groups of staff members throughout the week therefore, managers may want to consider training more staff members to perform supporting roles of *DSE Facilitators*, *Fire Marshals* and *Fire Aiders*. Training support for these roles is available via Workplace Health, Safety and Wellbeing.

Assessment

A [Hybrid Working self-assessment](#) template is available on the Staff Directory for staff members to download and complete. This form should be completed and sent to the relevant line manager within one month of being issued with SWAE equipment. New or transferring staff members will be required to complete this self-assessment upon starting employment with the department.

The [Hybrid Working Self-assessment](#) will be the only DSE form that SWAE participants will need to complete. The previous self-assessment checklist and home working risk assessment form will not be required if a DSE Hybrid Working Self-assessment has been completed.

Staff members taking part in the SWAE project will also need to complete or review a SWAE Hybrid Worker self-assessment if:

- they have not reviewed their self-assessment within the past 12 months
- they have not completed a DSE self-assessment before and are a SWAE participant
- they are experiencing aches and pains that may be related to DSE work
- they would like one to one DSE training

Additional assessments may be required in specific circumstances, such as:

- Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP)

- Manual handling risk assessment
- Stress resilience assessment

Adjustments

New SWAE equipment may be different to previous IT equipment used by staff members in the office or at home. If adjustment to workstation(s) is required, Managers can help to make minor adjustments with the assistance of the departmental DSE Facilitator(s).

Consider that a small stock of DSE peripherals may be required in the shared office areas, items such as footrests and wrist rests may be required by staff members and should be available when required. This will need to be funded from your departments budget.

Should initial interventions and adjustments fail to resolve reported issues Workplace Health, Safety and Wellbeing can be contacted for advice and support.

Pregnancy

Line managers must complete a [Pregnancy Risk Assessment](#) (PRA) for staff members where applicable, further [guidance and details regarding Pregnancy Risk Assessment](#) can be found on the Staff Directory. Managers can also make use of the PRA guide that is available on the Staff Directory and request support from People and Culture when completing a PRA.

For Hybrid Working, staff will be required to complete the Hybrid Working Self-assessment form in addition to completing a PRA with their line manager. Managers will need to consider working arrangements that involve lone working, summoning emergency aid and carrying IT equipment between home and place of work (Manual Handling).

If managers or staff members have concerns over working arrangements in relation to their pregnancy alternative seating can be provided and where necessary referral to Occupational Health Service can be made.

Manager Referral

A Manager or Head of Department with concerns about a member of staff may wish to consult Occupational Health (OH) and/or their link People and Culture Officer for advice prior to making a formal referral. The reasons for the referral should be fully discussed with the individual concerned before a referral is sent to OH and a copy sent to People and Culture.

All members of staff can make direct contact with OH regarding any health concern or sickness absence. However, appointments will only be made upon receipt of a referral. Further details on the [Manager Referral process](#) is available on the Staff Directory.

Record keeping

Once complete, managers should retain a copy of the self-assessment form for 5 years plus the current Academic Year. Further details on the [Health and Safety Retention Schedule](#) is available for reference.

Working from home

Many staff members will have worked from home at some point during the Covid-19 global pandemic. There is already some familiarity with working from home however, as a permanent arrangement, Hybrid Working presents risks that need to be addressed and managed as part of day-to-day business. The [Hybrid Working Self-assessment](#) is used to obtain information about a staff members computer workstation and IT equipment, this self-assessment must be completed by any staff members working from home.

Software

New SWAE equipment will be provided with the essential software programs to continue day to day tasks however, Managers may need to assist staff members with obtaining, installing or transferring assistive software such as speech recognition programs or software to assist with dyslexia or reading text on monitor screens. If adjusting monitor screens or installing software does not resolve visual disturbances staff members can obtain a free eye test using the university [self-service voucher scheme](#).

Manual Handling

Participants in the SWAE project will be given laptop cases or rucksacks to hold the IT equipment when travelling between locations. Staff members that are unable to use cases or rucksacks (due to illness or injury) should notify managers so that alternative handling arrangements or storage space can be made available.

The University does have an [Lifting and Carrying information leaflet](#) available that can be provided to staff members to refer to.

Should assistance with Manual Handling arrangements be required Managers can contact the Workplace Health, Safety and Wellbeing team.

Portable Appliance Testing (PAT)

A list of SWAE equipment is available from the SWAE project team (DITS) and should be held alongside your departments existing electrical inventory. Your departmental electrical inventory will need revision following the uptake of SWAE equipment as many old PC's and monitor screens listed on

your inventory will no longer be part of the office setup. PAT for non-SWAE items will still be required and should be undertaken when due.

Additional considerations

Some staff members may have home working arrangements that require additional assessment and support. Workplace Health, Safety and Wellbeing can assist Managers to put into place arrangements for lone working, emergency arrangements and job tasks. Workplace Health, Safety and Wellbeing can be contacted on safety@essex.ac.uk for support.

Shared office spaces

For areas designated SWAE offices; departments will need to update their [Departmental Management Statement](#) (H&S) to include arrangements for Hybrid Working.

Room layout, storage and access

The University Space Planning team have calculated suitable working space for SWAE areas using the appropriate regulations and guidelines for office areas. If Managers would like to alter the layout of a SWAE office space it is advisable to contact the Space Planning team to ensure proposed changes to layout are viable.

Storage lockers have been installed in SWAE areas so that staff members can store personal items and IT equipment when not in use.

Some staff members may use specialist ergonomic equipment such as height adjustable desks and ergonomic chairs. This ergonomic furniture must remain available for those staff members along with specific workstations that have the necessary features to support adjustments.

Access to SWAE office areas must be maintained at all times to facilitate evacuation in the event of an emergency. The [University Evacuation Policy](#) remains valid in SWAE areas.

Housekeeping and hygiene

At the end of each day staff members in SWAE areas should clean and clear the desk they have been using. Cleaning materials will be made available so that staff members can dispose of any rubbish accumulated on or around the desk. Cleaning materials should be arranged by the appropriate Manager or Supervisor in each SWAE area. General office cleaning, such as vacuuming and dusting, will be undertaken by Estates and Campus Services (Soft FM) on a rotational basis throughout each term.

Headsets and telephone handsets can accumulate bacteria from regular use, SWAE participants have been issued with individual headsets to prevent spread of bacteria and viruses. Headsets may require

replacement parts, such as microphone and ear covers, should they become damaged or lost. If this should happen the staff members should contact the [IT Helpdesk](#).

Ventilation of office areas has been a key control measure during the Covid-19 pandemic, these measures may apply for SWAE office areas depending on the level of protection set by the University. Managers can contact the [Estates Management Helpdesk](#) to confirm what ventilation arrangements are required for specific SWAE areas.

Trailing electrical cables and personal items are amongst the most common causes of falls within office areas. All staff members must remain aware of potential trip hazards. Corridors within offices must remain hazard free, any item blocking access or egress from workstations or doorways must be relocated to an appropriate area.

Electrical Safety

In addition to Portable Appliance Testing (PAT) arrangements the electrical safety of SWAE areas must be overseen and administered by Managers and Supervisors. Particular hazards such as 'daisy chaining'¹ of electrical extension leads can cause electrical components to overheat or overload resulting in power outages and damage to electrical equipment.

SWAE staff will need to plug portable devices into SWAE workstations and it is advisable to keep easy access to electrical sockets to prevent staff members having to reach or climb over or under workstations to access power outlets.

Full details on [electrical safety](#) can be viewed on the Staff Directory.

Workplace Annual Health and Safety Inspection

The SWAE office areas are considered the responsibility of the department/section that occupies the workspace, a department(s) in these areas will undertake a health and safety workplace inspection on an annual basis. This is inline with all other University areas.

Replacing or returning SWAE equipment

Staff members ending their employment at the University or transferring to a non-SWAE role must return the SWAE equipment that has been provided to them, including all cables, attachments and carry cases. Please contact the [IT Helpdesk](#) for all return equipment queries. Consideration should be made to Manual Handling ability of staff members returning SWAE equipment.

¹ 'Daisy-chaining' occurs when too many high current appliances are plugged into an extension or by plugging one extension lead into another, causing

Furniture provided to staff members that work from home should be returned to either Central Stores or the Postroom (Colchester Campus). Staff members that are unable to return furniture items should inform their line manager, who can in turn contact Workplace Health, Safety and Wellbeing to arrange collection using a university vehicle or external courier company.

Procurement

The procurement and replacement of SWAE equipment during the project is chiefly administered by the SWAE project team (within DITS) with the exception of the following:

Replacement or repair of office furniture used at home (only) is administered by the Workplace Health, Safety and Wellbeing team. For individual staff member cases that meet the criteria for Reasonable Adjustment funding (as part of Occupational Health Manager Referral cases); contact should be made directly to the Occupational Health Service.

Key contacts

SWAE Subject If you have a query regarding:	Contact
SWAE IT equipment and services You can use this email address for SWAE IT equipment queries.	IT HELPDESK – SWAE it.helpdesk@essex.ac.uk
The SWAE project (You can also use this address to post feedback and recommendations regarding the SWAE project).	Smart Working at Essex Project Team (DITS) swae@essex.ac.uk
Any Display Screen Equipment (DSE) related health concern or would like assistance with your workstation.	Workplace Health, Safety and Wellbeing safety@essex.ac.uk
Occupational Health Managers Referral or Reasonable Adjustments.	Occupational Health Service ohquery@essex.ac.uk
Training or demonstration on the setup and use of computer workstations. Training in Manual Handling Risk Assessment or Manual Handling.	Workplace Health, Safety and Wellbeing safety@essex.ac.uk
General Office Cleaning.	Estates and Campus Services (Soft FM) softfm@essex.ac.uk
Annual Workplace Health and Safety Inspections.	Workplace Health, Safety and Wellbeing safety@essex.ac.uk