

# **GUIDELINES TO THE SELECTION AND PURCHASE OF WORKSTATION FURNITURE AND EQUIPMENT**

## **Purpose**

A safe and healthy working environment depends on many factors. One of the more important factors in the University is the selection of correct office furniture and equipment. A well-designed workstation can maximise efficiency, safety and health. People responsible for selecting and purchasing such items should systematically evaluate chairs, workstation desks and visual display units (VDUs).

## **Commitment Statement:**

The University is committed to selecting and purchasing workstation furniture and equipment that meet the minimum standard outlined in the OSH "*Approved Code of Practice for the use of Visual Display Units in the Place of Work.*" Computer monitors, keyboards and pointing devices will also meet current accepted international standards.

## **Responsibilities**

- Deans, Directors, the Librarian and all other staff responsible for selecting or purchasing computer workstation furniture and equipment should check that such equipment meets the minimum standard below.
- The Health and Safety Co-ordinator will provide information about appropriate suppliers and resources to those responsible for the purchase of workstation furniture.
- In the case of computer equipment such as monitors, keyboards and pointing devices, Information and Technology Services (through Campus Computers) are responsible for providing equipment that meets current international health and safety standards.

In order to ensure minimum standards are met the following guidelines are provided. Where there is any doubt, reference should be made to the "*Approved Code of Practice for the Use of Visual Display Units in the Place of Work.*"

## **Standard Issue Furniture and Equipment**

**Chair:** Office chairs should have:

- an adjustable backrest, (height and angle);
- cloth covered seat and back;
- curved front edge;
- adjustable height, (preferably a gas operated lift mechanism) ranging from 370-520mm
- five star base for stability, and swivel through 360 degrees
- seat depth 360-480mm
- seat pan width at least 450mm

## **Workstation:**

- Ideally a computer workstation height should be adjustable, (from 580-730mm). A workstation that provides adjustment for the monitor, the keyboard and the work surface provides for optimal comfort where several people use the same desk.
- If the height of the desk is fixed, a height of between 670 and 710mm from the floor to the top surface of the desk is recommended. A chair that rises high enough for a comfortable posture and a footrest should be provided for use at a fixed height desk.
- L shaped desks with a drop down keyboard section provide for flexibility of use. A minimum width of 760mm is required for the rise and fall section to provide room for the keyboard and the mouse.
- The desktop should be thin, (26-30mm). It should be at least 800-900mm deep from front to rear, and a minimum of 1200mm wide where VDU work only is carried out, and 1500mm wide for written work.

## **Footrest**

- large enough to provide variation in foot position
- sloped with a high friction surface to prevent feet slipping
- adjustable height (50-185mm)
- lightweight yet stable

**VDU Hardware:** This should comply with the standard ISO 9241 or similar.

**Monitor**

- adjustable brightness and contrast of the display
- sharp and clear screen images, and easily legible characters displayed
- no perceptible flicker, swim or jitter on the display
- implosion protection on the monitor
- adjustable height, eye-screen distance, tilt and swivel

**Keyboard**

- separate from the monitor
- thin, (30mm or less at the asdf row)
- adjustable slope (within 0-15 degrees)
- neutral colour and low reflectivity keys
- feedback click to indicate successful keystroke

**Mouse**

- size, design and button position to allow for a comfortable relaxed hand position (not cramped)
- placed at same level as the keyboard
- adjustable control/response ratio of mouse movement to screen cursor
- similar principles for a trackball, puck or other input devices.

**Laptops**

- should not be chosen for continuous work because the small keyboard can cramp the hands and it is difficult to get comfortable eye-screen and hand-keyboard relationships simultaneously. In some cases it is possible to attach a large screen and full size keyboard to the laptop as a solution to this problem.