

PC SCREEN LOCKS

1. Background

- 1.1 The University is a knowledge organisation: information lies at the heart of its business and activities and forms an important part of the University's assets. Access to much of that information is through electronic systems and services, normally accessed through desktop PCs.
- 1.2 As the threat landscape evolves, the University is working to ensure that it has the appropriate cyber security measures in place to protect its assets.
- 1.3 IT Services, while following best practice wherever possible, will always take into account the need to balance security against usability and convenience for its customers.
- 1.4 Use of the screen lock facility is good practice in line with the University's Information Security Policy and Acceptable Use of IT Policy. All staff should lock the PC they are using if they leave it unattended for any period of time. The screen lock prevents unauthorised access to systems, information and data.
- 1.5 In order to support good practice IT Services have centrally set screen lock rules so that any PC that is not used (no keyboard or mouse activity) for 10 minutes will automatically lock. In addition, the PC screen will move into sleep mode two minutes after being locked. This is to support the green impact programme being led by the Estate Management Section.

2. Scope

- 2.1 The screen lock rule applies to all staff PCs purchased and supported by IT Services. It does not apply to Apple Mac computers, laptops or other mobile devices, or to PCs in teaching spaces or PC labs.
- 2.2 The rule does not apply to those areas where PCs are locally managed and maintained and where the prevailing screen lock policy is the same as, or less than, the 10 minutes of the main policy. This covers locally managed PCs in the following areas:
 - a) UKDA;
 - b) ISER;
 - c) Biological Sciences;
 - d) Psychology;
 - e) CSEE.

3. Exceptions

- 3.1 Exceptions may additionally be made in the following circumstances.
- 3.2 The PC is in an area that has restricted access. Physical barriers such as customer service desks will prevent casual access to the PC. There may be other physical restrictions such as a requirement for an access control card or knowledge of a keypad number. The risk of unauthorised access is therefore low. PCs in such situations may be granted a longer timeout period or have the timeout removed.
- 3.3 The PCs are in regular use for a limited purpose or set of purposes, are publically accessible, but also very visible, and are used by a number of different people. PCs in these situations may be treated the same as lab PCs, with an automatic log-out applied instead of the automatic screen lock.

4. Requests for exemptions

- 4.1 Requests for exemptions should be made to Systems Group Queries sgq@essex.ac.uk. Requests should include the PC's location, a brief description of any physical barriers and limitations to access, and a brief description of the main uses of the PC, including the individuals or groups who use it.
- 4.2 Requests should come from the person who has management responsibility for the area or team that owns the PC.
- 4.3 Requests will be considered and granted, where appropriate, by IT Services management.
- 4.4 Requests to apply exemptions to standard PCs allocated to individual staff members for their own work will not be considered.

5. Audit trails

- 5.1 A log will be kept of those PCs to which exceptions have been applied, and a note made of the reasons for the exemption.
- 5.2 If a PC is moved or its use changes then the application of the exemption will be reviewed and may be removed.

6. Review

- 6.1 PC screen locks, their scope, and the scope of exemptions, will be reviewed and updated as required.

Policy information

Title	PC Screen Locks
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Owner	Assistant Director of IT Services (Infrastructure)
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Relevant policies and guidelines	Visit our website at www.essex.ac.uk/it/about/policies-and-guidelines
Comments	