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How to design ICT suites and workstations

If a school has decided that dedicated ICT suites are required it is important that the room chosen be well-designed and matched to its purpose to ensure best educational value for money.

Evidence shows that pupils who rate a physical environment as good are more likely to be positive about aspects of teaching and learning within that environment.

One reason for this is that effective design can stimulate children's creativity. A good environment will provide comfort, security, visibility, personal space and interest.

To create a positive learning environment for a school's ICT suite the following design factors should be considered:

- layout
- furniture and chairs
- lighting
- flooring
- ventilation and noise absorption
- electrical installations and health and safety
- security
- access to peripherals such as printers and scanners
- installation and location of presentation/display equipment (projectors and interactive whiteboards)
- storage
- colour schemes
- use and access to display items.

Pupils generally need time away from the computer screen to reflect on and evaluate their work and to have discussions with others. This should be factored into the layout of the room.

The space between workstations should be considered in addition to the height and depth of the work surfaces.

Movement of pupils and teachers around the classroom, and teachers' 'sight line checking' need also to be considered in any design.

For example, when equipment is arranged on outer walls pupils have their backs to teachers. In this situation a teacher must give clear instructions to ensure that pupils turn to pay attention during exposition and discussion sessions.

Shape and space are important – long, thin rooms are generally more difficult to teach in. Typical classrooms are between 50 and 75 square metres; there will thus be a maximum number of desktop computers that can be comfortably and safely installed.

Further information

Becta's [Designing ICT suites and workstations advice document](#) is a comprehensive source of information covering many key issues. It outlines nine possible models of ICT suite design, listing the possible advantages and disadvantages of each to support schools with their decision making.

[How to plan safe installation of ICT information sheet](#)

[How to ensure safe use of ICT information sheet](#)

Links:

Designing ICT suites and workstations advice document

[\[http://buildingthegrid.becta.org.uk/docs/ict_design.pdf\]](http://buildingthegrid.becta.org.uk/docs/ict_design.pdf)

How to plan safe installation of ICT information sheet

[\[http://www.becta.org.uk/technology/infosheets/html/safeinstall.html\]](http://www.becta.org.uk/technology/infosheets/html/safeinstall.html)

How to ensure safe use of ICT information sheet

[\[http://www.becta.org.uk/technology/infosheets/html/safeuse.html\]](http://www.becta.org.uk/technology/infosheets/html/safeuse.html)
