

Alcohol Consumption and Substance Misuse Policy

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1. Policy

- 1.1 The University is committed to providing a safe and positive working environment and to promoting the health, safety and wellbeing of employees. This can be put at risk by employees who misuse alcohol and substances to the extent where it affects their health, work performance, behaviour or relationships at work.
- 1.2 This policy aims to ensure that employees are aware of the consequences of alcohol and substance misuse in the workplace and that an employee's use of alcohol and/or substances does not affect the safe and efficient running of the university, or result in risks to the health and safety of themselves, other employees, students and the general public.

2. Scope of the Policy

- 2.1 This policy applies to all staff, including agency, casual and contract staff employed by the university.
- 2.2 This policy relates to employees during hours undertaking work on behalf of the university, including attending university related social events and driving university vehicles whilst on call.
- 2.3 This policy covers the use and misuse of intoxicating substances, which include alcohol, legal and illegal drugs, solvents, prescription and over the counter medications and other substances that could adversely affect work performance and/or health and safety at work.

3. Confidentiality

- 3.1 Strict confidentiality will be maintained when dealing with individuals under this policy, within the limits of what is practical and within the law.

4. Expectations of Employees

- 4.1 Employees have a responsibility to ensure they are fit for work and must not report, or endeavour to report for work having consumed alcohol, illegal drugs or prescribed medication likely to render them unfit and/or unsafe for work.
- 4.2 The misuse of alcohol, drugs or substances by employees in the course of their duties is prohibited.
- 4.3 The possession, use or dealing in illegal drugs by employees on university premises is prohibited and may lead to criminal prosecution.
- 4.4 The possession and consumption of alcohol on university premises is prohibited, other than at approved university social functions with the prior agreement of the line manager and Security where appropriate. In such circumstances the person responsible for the function, must ensure that the provision of alcohol is moderate and non-alcoholic alternatives are available.
- 4.5 Following risk assessment, some employees undertaking certain activities will not be permitted to drink at university social functions. These activities will include:
 - Working with hazardous chemicals
 - Working with children
 - Operating machinery
 - Driving vehicles
 - Working at heights or in confined spaces

4.6 Individuals taking prescribed medication, which could have an adverse effect on the safe performance of their duties, should inform their line manager. A risk assessment should be carried out and appropriate measures put in place.

5. Supporting Employees

5.1 The university will adopt a supportive and constructive approach when dealing with employees who may be experiencing alcohol and/or substance dependency issues.

5.2 The line manager should discuss with the employee as soon as possible, if their behaviour, performance or absence may indicate a possible problem with alcohol and/or substance misuse.

5.3 A referral to Occupational Health may be considered for a health assessment and advice on workplace support that may be offered to the employee to assist in rehabilitation and aid recovery. Occupational Health may seek advice from the employee's GP or counsellor if appropriate and with the explicit consent of the employee.

5.4 If an employee declares that they have an alcohol or substance dependency issue, the line manager should encourage them to see their GP and may also arrange a referral to Occupational Health, as outlined in 5.3.

5.5 Where an employee is concerned that a colleague may have an alcohol or substance misuse problem, they could try to encourage them to seek help. Should the employee not feel comfortable addressing the matter with their colleague, or where the individual refuses to accept there is an issue, the employee may wish to share their concerns confidentially with their line manager or a member of the HR team.

5.6 Reasonable periods of absence for advice and treatment for dependence on alcohol and/or substances will be treated as normal sickness absence. The Sickness Absence Policy will apply.

5.7 Sources of support for employees experiencing alcohol and/or substance dependency issues will be clearly signposted through relevant internal communication channels, and the Employee Assistance Programme (Validium).

6. Formal Procedures

6.1 The university will support employees who declare an alcohol or substance dependency. However, if such problems are not resolved and performance, attendance or behaviour continues to be unacceptable due to the effects of alcohol or substances, despite any support or assistance that has been offered, the Disciplinary Policy, Sickness Absence Policy or Capability Policy and Procedure may be applied.

6.2 Each case will be dealt with on its own merits and it is the intention of this policy, that by identifying and dealing with problems at an early stage that formal action can be avoided.

6.3 Any breach of this policy or the disciplinary rules as they relate to conduct affected by the use of alcohol and/or substances may be considered under the university Disciplinary Policy and could result in dismissal.

Relevant Policy Headings

Disciplinary Policy

Sickness Absence Policy

Capability Policy and Procedure

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