
Alcohol, Drugs and Substances Misuse

Policy

HR/Occupational Health, Safety and Wellbeing

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Alcohol, Drugs and Substances Misuse Policy

1 Policy Statement

The University of Strathclyde wishes to maintain and support a healthy, safe and efficient working environment and to comply with the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971. The University believes that the development and implementation of a balanced and structured policy will minimise risks to staff health and well-being while providing a supportive and rehabilitative approach towards alcohol, drugs and substance misuse. In this context, all staff have a personal responsibility to be fit for work during working hours and when conducting duties on behalf of the University. In addition, all staff must ensure that the University's reputation is not brought into disrepute.

This policy outlines the University's position on the misuse of alcohol, drugs and substances within the workplace and the approach it will take when misuse affects staff capability, conduct or safety at work. The policy has been developed in accordance with published guidance from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD), the Faculty of Occupational Medicine (FOM), the British Medical Association (BMA) and following consultation with University management and staff representatives.

2 Aims

The policy aims to:

- Confirm the University's position on the misuse of alcohol, drugs and substances to ensure all staff are aware of and understand the rules surrounding this.
- Address the University's legal obligations to ensure the health, safety and welfare of staff, students and others at work through early identification of problems and prompt remedial actions.
- Outline the characteristics that may indicate a potential alcohol, drugs or substance misuse condition and clarify the University's procedure for intervention.
- Clarify the manner in which the University, including identifying the circumstances in which the University in relation to alcohol, drugs or substance misuse will take formal action.
- Provide information on the sources of support that are available to staff with an alcohol, drug or substance misuse condition.
- Clarify the responsibilities of those involved in the implementation of the policy to ensure consistency of approach.
- Support the Public Health and social agenda to reduce the impact of misuse of alcohol, drugs and substances.

3 Definitions and Scope

For the purposes of this policy, the definition of alcohol, drugs and/or substance misuse is any drinking, drug taking or use of substances, either intermittent or continual, which adversely interferes with a person's health, social functioning, work capability or conduct. Drugs and substances are defined as illegal drugs, misuse of prescribed and non-prescribed medication (i.e. over the counter medication), psychoactive substances (i.e. legal highs) and solvents. Substances covered in this document are those that come under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 and the Psychoactive Substances Bill 2016. Appropriate use of prescribed drugs is out with the scope of this policy; however, it is recommended that members of staff should notify their line manager if they are taking prescribed medication that could affect their ability to work safely.

This policy is therefore concerned with the effects of alcohol, drugs and substance misuse in the workplace and applies to all members of staff. Individuals working within, but not employed by the University, e.g. contractors, visitors, tutors, external service providers etc. are also required to adhere to the policy guidelines. Issues arising in relation to contractors should be reported to the Director of Estates Services as soon as reasonably practicable.

Staff who suspect, or know, that they have a problem relating to alcohol, drugs or substance misuse should seek professional help at an early stage to avoid the problem becoming worse. Section 11 of this policy 'Guidance and Other Sources of Support' provides further information. Staff members may also choose to seek assistance from the University's Occupational Health Service (OH) via line management referral. All such requests will be dealt with in strict confidence. Staff will be supported in seeking professional help and a referral for support or attendance for treatment under this policy will not affect job or promotion prospects. Individuals receiving treatment or undergoing counselling will be permitted reasonable time off work to attend appointments.

4 The University's Position on the Misuse of Alcohol, Drugs and Substances in the Workplace

With the exception of work related social events where the availability of alcohol has been sanctioned (see below), the consumption and misuse of alcohol, drugs or substances is not permitted whilst at work. Staff at all times must be free from the effects of drugs, alcohol and substances, as many roles rely on alertness of critical faculties, which if compromised, could adversely affect the health and safety of the person involved or others.

Where a manager suspects that there are grounds for believing that a member of staff is unfit for work due to alcohol, drug or substance misuse guidance should be sought, where practically possible, from Human Resources prior to taking action. In such cases, the member of staff may be asked to leave the premises and may be subsequently suspended from work pending further investigations. Whether a member of staff is fit for work is a matter for the reasonable opinion of management.

5 The University's Position on the Consumption of Alcohol during Work-Related Social Events

Within the range of the University's activities, there are times where alcohol is available at staff and students work-related social events. The University's position is that all work-related social events should be inclusive as possible and care should be taken in planning events to respect the views of anyone who does not drink or does not wish to drink.

In all work-related social event contexts, the availability of alcoholic drinks has to be sanctioned by a Head of Department/Director or designated more senior nominee. Verbal or written authorisation should only be given to events held toward the end of the “normal” working day. Members of staff who are required to return to work directly following such events must ensure that they remain free from the effects of drugs, alcohol and substances. Staff should also be aware that consumption of alcohol will not excuse any inappropriate or unprofessional behaviour during such social events and the University, following investigation, in relation to any issues arising, may take that formal action.

6 Characteristics Which May Indicate a Potential Alcohol, Drugs or Substance Misuse Problem

The following characteristics, especially in combinations, may indicate an alcohol, drugs or substance related problem. It should be noted that these symptoms could be caused by other factors such as a medical condition and medical staff should rule these out. In all cases, Occupational Health staff can be contacted for professional advice if alcohol, drugs or substances are suspected to be a factor in relation to the following behaviours:

- Reduced or erratic levels of performance
- Increased sickness absence
- Poor timekeeping
- Changes in behaviour and/or appearance
- Relationships with colleagues
- Higher incidence of accidents

7 Procedures for Intervention and Mechanisms for Support

7.1 Help and Support

Where a member of staff identifies that they may have an alcohol, drug or substance misuse problem, provision is available for confidential referral to an Occupational Health practitioner for advice and support. The member of staff should contact their line manager or HR manager in the first instance.

The University also provides an independent, out-sourced Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) service, PAM Assist, which can be accessed confidentially. The service provides a 24-hour helpline service as well as face to face counselling. The 24 hour helpline is available on 0800 882 4102 and [further information](#) is available via the University’s website.

The member of staff should also consult their own GP.

7.2 Voluntary approach by member of staff who may have an alcohol, drugs or substance misuse problem

When an approach is made by a member of staff to their line manager, the line manager and Human Resources should discuss the matter fully with the member of staff and, with the agreement of the member of staff, Human Resources arrange for a referral to Occupational Health and/or the [Employee Assistance Programme \(EAP\)](#) for advice and support. A date for a review meeting should be arranged at this stage to ensure that ongoing support is provided and progress monitored.

7.3 Colleague/Manager Intervention

It is possible that a member of staff with an alcohol, drugs or substance misuse problem will come to the notice of a department through the observation of colleagues or through inadequate or deteriorating work performance noted by a line manager. It is in the interests of all concerned in this situation that the member of staff is offered help as soon as possible. If an issue appears to be affecting work capability or conduct then a management referral to OH should be requested. This will benefit both the individual and manager in exploring the nature and extent of the problem, and ensure that steps can be taken to effect an improvement. Advice from HR can also be sought. If help is accepted prompt action may assist earlier recovery for the member of staff and reduce any impact on colleagues.

8 Formal Action

This policy is in general, designed to deal in a supportive way with conduct or performance issues where an alcohol, drugs or substance misuse problem is disclosed. Issues that are unrelated to such problems will be dealt with as conduct issues under the relevant Disciplinary Procedure. The nature and appropriateness of disciplinary action will depend on considerations such as the seriousness of the misconduct, and the nature of the work undertaken by the member of staff e.g. whether any other person has been, or could potentially have been, placed at risk by the member of staff's misuse of alcohol, drugs or substances.

It should be noted that misuse of alcohol, drugs or substances, whether resulting from a misuse problem or not, is considered a serious conduct issue and potentially gross misconduct. Refusal to get help or denial of a problem where there are behavioural/performance issues and abuse is strongly suspected, will be treated as a disciplinary/capability issue.

8.1 Alcohol Issues

If a member of staff is at work and is known to be, or strongly suspected of having misused alcohol, where their work capability or conduct is impaired or where there is a safety concern for colleagues or themselves, the line manager should, wherever possible, consult immediately with Human Resources. If appropriate, the staff member will be suspended and arrangements will be made for them to immediately and safely leave the University's premises. Human Resources will notify the relevant trade union of the suspension. An investigation will be initiated at the first appropriate opportunity. If possible two members of staff should be involved in speaking to the member of staff/advising of the suspension from work.

8.2 Drug and Substance Issues

A member of staff, who misuses drugs or substances will in the absence of strong mitigating circumstances, will be considered to have committed an act of serious misconduct and potentially gross misconduct. This also applies to any member of staff believed to be buying or selling drugs and/or substances, unlawfully possessing drugs and/or substances, who has stolen drugs and/or substances from the University, or who is or has been involved in the attempted illegal manufacture of drugs and/or substances on University premises. The Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 may also apply in these circumstances. Where any of the above activity is known or strongly suspected, the line manager should, wherever possible, consult immediately with Human Resources. If appropriate, the staff member will be suspended and arrangements will be made for them to immediately and safely leave the University's premises. Human Resources will notify the relevant trade union of the suspension. An investigation will be initiated at the first appropriate opportunity. If possible two members of staff should be involved in speaking to the member of staff/advising of the suspension from work. Acts involving illegal activity will be reported to the Police, irrespective of whether the act has taken place during working hours/on University premises.

8.3 Mandatory Referrals to Employee Assistance Programme/Occupational Health Service

In circumstances where an alcohol, drug or substance misuse problem issue is disclosed through an investigation or disciplinary process the member of staff will be referred, on a mandatory basis, to the University's external [Employee Assistance Programme \(EAP\)](#) and/or its internal Occupational Health Service for advice and professional support. In such circumstances, the individual will be made aware that it will be compulsory to attend such an appointment and make satisfactory progress. Where this is the outcome of a disciplinary hearing or a condition of continuing employment with the University, this will be made clear. Where a member of staff, having undergone treatment, does not make satisfactory progress or where further conduct or capability issues arise, the University will consider all the circumstances of the case in determining appropriate further steps.

It should be noted that the existence of an alcohol, drug or substance misuse problem does not preclude the University from instigating disciplinary action or issuing a disciplinary penalty against an individual, including dismissal. However, if an alcohol, drugs or substance misuse problem is identified the member of staff will generally be given an opportunity to undergo appropriate treatment to enable him/her to return to full health and wellbeing and achieve the necessary standards of performance and behaviour at work. This is unless the disciplinary issue is judged so serious as to merit dismissal irrespective of the disclosure of a misuse problem. A member of staff will be entitled to be accompanied by a trade union representative or work colleague at any associated disciplinary procedures.

9 Responsibilities

Wherever possible the University will support staff through periods of alcohol, drugs and/or substance related sickness absence, under the normal sick pay arrangements, with the aim of securing their return to work, and will encourage rehabilitation arrangements, or other resolution as appropriate.

Outlined below are the responsibilities of those involved in this policy.

9.1 Employees have a personal responsibility:

- To read and understand the policy
- In the context of this policy, to be fit for work when conducting duties on behalf of the University.
- Not to misuse alcohol, drugs or other substances to the detriment of their employment.
- Not to bring drugs, alcohol or substances onto University premises or collude in so doing at any time.
- Not to supply illegal substances or collude in so doing, in connection with their employment.
- To seek professional help if they have, or suspect they have, an alcohol, drug or substance misuse problem.
- To undertake and satisfactorily complete any rehabilitation programme recommended by Occupational Health, the [Employee Assistance Programme \(EAP\)](#) or other relevant external person or agency.
- To report to management if they reasonably suspect an individual covered by the scope of this policy is misusing alcohol, drugs or substances in the workplace and by doing so is placing themselves/others at risk. This is clearly of particular importance if the individual is employed in a safety critical role.
- To notify their manager if they are taking any medication (including over the counter drugs) that could affect their work performance or give the impression that they are under the influence of alcohol, drugs or substances. This is particularly important where an individual is engaged in safety critical work and where there may be a need to make reasonable adjustments to work arrangements or put in place other support measures if performance related effects are anticipated. In exceptional cases, for example, where sensitive health issues are involved and staff are uncomfortable about discussing these with their manager, contact can be made with Occupational Health or Human Resources.

- To cooperate in full with any support programmes put in place for them.

9.2 Executive Deans/Directors/Heads of Department:

- Ensure their familiarity with the policy and raise awareness and understanding of it amongst their staff.
- Ensure they implement the policy fairly and consistently.
- Having considered the nature of activities undertaken within their jurisdiction, identify work tasks/locations with high accident risks, define, and implement a 'dry role' policy. A 'dry role' requires the post holder not to drink alcohol during working hours.

9.3 Managers have a responsibility to:

- Ensure compliance with the Policy.
- Communicate which roles have been designated as 'dry roles'.
- Reinforce to members of staff the requirement for appropriate behaviour at University social events.
- Privately discuss with employees, as soon as possible, if a problem with alcohol, drugs or substances is suspected and advise them, if concerns remain, that they will be seeking guidance from Human Resources and Occupational Health as to how to manage their case.
- Support employees who disclose alcohol, drug or substance misuse issues and who are undertaking a programme of treatment, maintaining confidentiality at all times.
- Address suspected problems as and when they may arise, seeking advice as required from Human Resources and Occupational Health.

9.4 Occupational Health has a responsibility to:

- Provide support to individuals referred under this policy
- Provide advice and guidance to managers and Human Resources as to how best to support individuals.
- Maintain confidentiality and privacy in relation to employee referrals.
- Provide advice and training to managers on early detection of alcohol, drugs or substance misuse and guidance about work related issues arising from this.
- Provide advice and guidance to employees and generally raise awareness across the University about the harmful effects associated with alcohol, drugs or substance misuse.
- Provide updates on management referrals and progress status.
- Maintain appropriate knowledge of alcohol, drug and substance misuse, keeping abreast of new developments.

9.5 Human Resources has a responsibility to:

- Provide consistent advice and guidance to managers and employees on the understanding and application of this policy.
- Ensure appropriate training is put in place to support managers.
- Where appropriate make referral arrangements for employees to Occupational Health/ the [Employee Assistance Programme \(EAP\)](#).

10 Guidance on 'Dry Roles'

Alcohol, and substances even in small amounts insufficient to cause obvious intoxication, can impair physical co-ordination and reflexes. It can also adversely affect concentration and alertness. A staff member under the influence of alcohol or a substance is at greater risk of an accident, risking harm to themselves and others.

Directors/ Heads of Department should identify jobs or tasks where there is potential for serious injury or significant damage to property or equipment in the event of an accident and designate these as 'dry roles'. Jobs that require sustained vigilance or careful attention and where inattention could result in significant loss or harm to others should also be

considered for designation. No staff member should consume alcohol on days when they are expected to have direct contact with students.

Staff in dry roles should be instructed that they must not drink alcohol when at work, including during lunch-breaks or to report for work when they suspect they may have a blood alcohol level exceeding the Scottish limit for safe driving outlined below.*

Line Managers may need to advise staff in designated dry roles that heavy drinking after work may mean they could be unfit for work on the following day.

Alcohol should not be served at University work-related social events held during the working day for staff in dry roles or organised in such a way that staff in dry roles are unable to return to normal duties after the event.

Examples of jobs, which should be considered for designation as a dry role, include those involving:

- Work in a laboratory where hazardous materials including chemicals, radioactive isotopes or biological agents are handled.
- Operating dangerous machinery, e.g. workshop machinery, food processing equipment, hand tools, cutting equipment, lasers, and cutting-presses.
- Jobs involving work at height, or where an unimpaired sense of balance is essential e.g. working on roof, scaffold or ladders.
- Working in confined spaces.
- Electrical maintenance.
- Driving vehicles of any description.
- Security work.
- Working with animals.
- Working with children, young people or those with additional needs.

This is not an exclusive list. As a general rule, jobs with responsibilities that involve use of, or exposure to, hazards sufficient to require a documented risk assessment should be considered for designation, at least for that aspect of the role.

*The alcohol limit for drivers in Scotland is different from for the rest of the UK. In December 2014, the limit was reduced to 50 milligrams of alcohol in every 100 millilitres of blood. The breath alcohol equivalent reduced to 22 micrograms of alcohol per 100 millilitres of breath.

11 Other Sources of Support and Guidance

The University is committed to providing training and advice to support the management of alcohol, drugs and substance misuse problems. Advice is available through Human Resources and Occupational Health who can provide both general guidance as well as advice on specific circumstances.

The following bodies can also be contacted for advice:

Alcohol Related Issues

University of Strathclyde

Alcohol Focus Scotland, www.alcohol-focus-scotland.org.uk
(0141) 572 6700

Alcoholics Anonymous, National Helpline, www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk
0800 9177 650 (National Helpline)
0141 226 2214 (Mon – Fri 9am to 5pm Glasgow)

Substance Misuse Issues

Know the Score, www.knowthescore.info
0800 587 5879

UK National Drugs Helpline, www.urban75.com/Drugs/helpline.html
0800 77 66 00

SDF Scottish Drugs Forum, www.sdf.org.uk
0141 221 1175

Turning Point Scotland, www.turningpointscotland.com
0800 652 3757 (Mon – Fri 9am to 5pm)

12 Review

The University is committed to regular monitoring and review of this policy, in conjunction with the campus trade unions, to assess ongoing effectiveness.