

DRUGS AND ALCOHOL HARM REDUCTION POLICY

1. OVERVIEW AND PURPOSE

- 1.1 The University has a legal duty to provide a safe environment for our whole university community. The health and wellbeing of all students at the University are taken extremely seriously.
- 1.2 This policy sets out the University's approach to reducing the harms that may be associated with the use of drugs and alcohol, while maintaining clear expectations and compliance with UK law.
- 1.3 In line with sector best practice¹, and our commitment to the University Mental Health Charter principles of good practice², the policy aims to: (a) prevent harm through education and early intervention; (b) encourage students to seek help without fear of stigma; (c) take proportionate action where behaviour creates risk to self and others; and (d) address the supplying of illegal substances as a breach of Regulation 2: Student Discipline.

2. SCOPE

- 2.1 This policy applies to all students at the University, including undergraduate, postgraduate taught and research students, and apprentices, and relates to the use of drugs and alcohol.
- 2.2 The policy applies to the use of drugs and alcohol when the use is connected to University activities or premises, or affects the University community, and includes residential accommodation, placements, field trips, events, and online conduct.
- 2.3 For the purpose of this policy, "drugs" includes illegal drugs and prescription drugs, and the following definitions are used in this policy:
 - 2.3.1 "Drugs" means illegal drugs or prescription drugs.
 - 2.3.2 "Harm reduction" means practical steps that reduce risks and negative consequences without condoning or normalising illegal use of drugs.
 - 2.3.3 "Illegal drugs" means "controlled substances", the possession, production, supply, import/export or cultivation of which are unlawful under UK law, including substances controlled by the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 and substances controlled under other applicable legislation; and psychoactive substances regulated under the Psychoactive Substances Act 2016.
 - 2.3.4 "Misuse" includes use that is unlawful, unsafe, or contrary to medical direction.

¹ Universities UK's report [Enabling student health and success - Tackling supply and demand for drugs and improving harm reduction](#)

² Student Minds - [The University Mental Health Charter 'Principles of Good Practice'](#)

2.3.5 “Prescription drugs” means medicine prescribed by a healthcare professional and “Prescription drugs misuse” means use, possession or supply of prescription drugs where the medicine is not prescribed to the person or is used contrary to clinical directions.

2.3.6 “Supplying” includes giving, sharing, selling, distributing, offering, or making drugs available to another person, whether or not for payment or benefit. Supplying includes sharing a personal supply.

3. RESPONSIBILITIES

3.1 All students must comply with the law, University regulations and this policy and should avoid behaviour that puts themselves or others at risk and seek help early.

4. POLICY

Use of drugs and alcohol

4.1 The University does not condone the use of illegal drugs or the misuse of prescription drugs, the use of alcohol by individuals under 18, or the use of drugs or alcohol in a way that negatively impacts on students or the wider University community.

4.2 However, we operate an approach of harm reduction that prioritises the welfare and wellbeing of our community, whilst having due regard to the law. This recognises that some students may choose to use drugs during their time at university – or drink alcohol in a way that negatively impacts on the individual or others - and responds in a way that is relevant, educative, and promotes safety and support.

Harm reduction

4.3 The use of illegal drugs, the misuse of prescription drugs, or the inappropriate / excessive use of alcohol can cause harm to individuals. This can include impacts on health, safety, finances, relationships and education. The focus of a harm reduction approach aims to reduce the risks and negative impacts, whilst promoting education, prevention, and support services, and encouraging students to seek support.

4.4 Information on the effects of drugs and alcohol should be provided to students, including potential impacts on mental and physical health, academic performance and personal safety, along with relevant events and campaigns. Support should be provided to students who may be impacted by drug or alcohol use, including signposting to external support services.

University action

4.5 Where there is the use of drugs or alcohol which may amount to a criminal offence, the matter should be reported to the police, in line with our legal duty. Related criminal offences include the following:

- 4.5.1 Possession of a controlled substance with intent to supply;
- 4.5.2 The supply, or offer to supply, a controlled drug (even if it is given free);
- 4.5.3 The manufacture of controlled substances; and
- 4.5.4 Allowing a home, flat or office to be used by people taking drugs.

- 4.6 Where the use of drugs or alcohol causes risks or adversely affects individuals or the University community, or is in breach of the law, it should be considered under applicable University regulations and procedures, including the Student Discipline procedure and the Suitability to Practice procedure, and may be considered as a breach of our accommodation License rules.

5. LEGISLATION AND GOOD PRACTICE

Legislation

- 5.1 Relevant legislation includes (non-exhaustive): [The Misuse of Drugs Act 1971](#) [The Psychoactive Substances Act 2016](#); and [The Medicines Act 1968](#).

Further information and support

- 5.2 [Drug addiction - getting help](#): NHS guidance
- 5.3 [Drink Aware - Alcohol and the law](#)
- 5.4 [Brighton & Hove drugs & alcohol support](#) – multiple services offering support.

Review / Contacts / References

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Division:	Division for the Student Experience
Policy Owner:	Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Education and Students, Professor Kate O’Riordan
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