

Policy Guidance – Q&A

Title: No Smoking Policy (HR/ER, dated 18/6/14)

From: HR/ER

Date: 18/6/14

The University operates an organisation-wide policy on smoking that was agreed and introduced in July 2014. This policy guidance is intended to provide additional information to explain the rationale behind and application of the policy in practice.

Q: Does the University have designated areas for smoking?

A: The nature of the University premises, particularly at the Highfield campus, means that it is not suited to having designated areas for smoking or specific smoking shelters. We ask that smokers behave responsibly towards their colleagues, visitors and the general public who may be on our premises and refrain from smoking in building entrances or close to windows which may cause a nuisance to others. Moving 5m or more from buildings is recommended, where possible.

Q: Why does the University not have smoking shelters?

A: The University wishes to promote a non-smoking environment for our staff, students and visitors. Further, having smoking shelters would raise a number of concerns, such as accessibility, maintenance costs and site cleanliness which makes this an impractical solution.

Q: Are the areas by the smoking bins designated smoking areas?

A: No. Smoking bins are provided so that people can stub out cigarettes before entering buildings only. They are intended to ensure that our premises are kept clean and tidy, giving a good impression to staff, students and visitors. It is not appropriate for staff or students to smoke near to the entrances to buildings, close to windows or by external air vents, as this may cause a nuisance to others.

Q: Why does this policy apply to e-cigarettes?

A: The University recognises that smokers and those that use e-cigarettes are different, and that staff and students may have a different attitude towards e-cigarettes as they have little or no smell and do not produce smoke. However, in support of our policy of a “smoke free” campus as far as possible, believe it is appropriate to extend the policy to apply to e-cigarettes.

The University acknowledges that some staff may wish to make use of electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes) in the workplace, particularly as an aid to giving up smoking. E-cigarettes are battery powered products that release a visible vapour that contains liquid nicotine that is inhaled by the user. Our rationale for including e-cigarettes in this policy is that:

- Although they do not produce smoke, e-cigarettes produce a vapour that could provide an annoyance or health risk to other employees
- Some e-cigarette models can, from a distance, look like real cigarettes, making a smoking ban difficult to police, and creating an impression for others that it is acceptable to smoke.

Further, there have been several reported incidents where unattended chargers for e-cigarettes have malfunctioned leading to a potentially serious risk of fire.

Q: Does the University have plans to develop this policy further?

A: The University is currently considering the feasibility of introducing completely “smoke free” areas at some sites. This is only possible where the campus is private and access to the site and its premises is limited to University staff, students, visitors and contractors, and would not be considered at the sites with open public access, such as Highfield Campus.

It has been proposed that a pilot scheme takes place at Avenue Campus initially to inform this potential area to develop the policy moving forward. The pilot scheme may be introduced following consultation with staff, Trade Union Health & Safety Representatives and local residents, after which it will be reviewed by the Faculty of Humanities Executive Group and the Consultative Committee for Safety and Occupational Health to determine whether or not the arrangements are implemented on a longer term basis.