

Policy

Title: ALCOHOL AND SUBSTANCE MISUSE

Ref: HR/RT

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1. Introduction

In the context of this policy Substance Misuse refers to the use of illegal drugs and the deliberate misuse of alcohol, prescribed or over-the-counter drugs and/or substances such as solvents, glues or aerosols which impair the individual, interfere with health, affect job performance and safety at work. The use of the term misuse throughout the policy does not imply that illegal substances have a correct use.

The Misuse of Drugs Act 1991 lists the drugs subject to control and classifies them in three categories according to their relative harm when used or misused. The production, supply and possession of these controlled drugs is unlawful except in certain specified circumstances, for example, when they have been prescribed by a doctor.

- Class A - includes ecstasy, cocaine, heroin, LSD, mescaline, morphine, opium and injectable forms of Class B drugs.
- Class B - includes oral preparations of amphetamines, barbiturates, cannabis, cannabis resin, codeine and methaqualone (Mandrax).
- Class C - includes most benzodiazepines (e.g. Temazepam, Valium) other less harmful drugs of the amphetamine group, and anabolic steroids.

2. Policy

This policy expresses the University's responsibility and commitment to ensuring a healthy and safe environment for work, study and leisure. It is applicable to all employees and students.

The University recognises that staff and students may, for a variety of reasons, suffer stress and/or ill health and from time to time may need personal assistance of some kind. Among these reasons may be problems related to substance misuse which affect work and study. In such circumstances the University will, where appropriate, seek to assist the employee and student concerned to deal with these problems and thereby restore individual well-being and a safe, healthy and congenial working and study situation. This policy will also create an environment in which colleagues will help staff and students with substance misuse problems and these individuals will be encouraged to identify themselves and seek assistance. This policy aims to ensure a safer work and study environment, maintain good order, ensure individuals' well-being and provide an appropriate guide when problems occur.

The misuse of drugs and other potentially harmful substances which may be illegal can cause serious health problems, and can adversely affect safety and performance at work and study. The University will, therefore, take such steps as are deemed necessary to ensure that staff and students do not misuse drugs or other harmful substances on any of the University's campuses, including the premises of the Students' Union, the sports facilities, and any of the University's Halls of Residence. Whilst recognising that it has no control over factors external to the organisation, the University will, in line with the general principles of this policy, seek to prevent the emergence of substance misuse-related problems amongst its employees and students, through education and/or training programmes. Staff and students have a duty to safeguard their own and others' health. It will be an essential part of those programmes to ensure that all staff and students are aware of the possible harmful consequences of substance misuse and excessive drinking.

The University as a community has a contribution to make in helping people overcome substance misuse problems. It can motivate changes through a sympathetic and caring approach. Where such guidance is not

accepted, and the circumstances related to work or study seem likely to persist or recur, the matter may be dealt with under the provisions of the agreed, but quite distinct, disciplinary procedures or the procedures for managing absence due to ill health.

The above measures are designed to prevent substance misuse amongst staff and students. However, instances where staff or students are selling, distributing, possessing or using controlled substances or dangerous drugs on University premises will be regarded as gross misconduct, and will be referred to the relevant disciplinary procedure, the outcome of which may be dismissal or removal from a post or course. According to the facts of the case, the Police should be informed in conjunction with advice from the Chief Security Officer. In the case of such circumstances occurring in Halls of Residence, the Warden, following discussion with the Director of Business Services, will discuss contact with the Police following advice from the Chief Security Officer. In certain circumstances, the use of controlled substances or dangerous drugs in halls of Residence may result in a formal warning being issued to the student or students involved.

If any employee or student knowingly allows unlawful events to take place, they may be committing an offence. Where misuse involves drugs suspected to be in Class A of the Act, the Police will always be notified. Where the misuse is of drugs suspected to be in the lesser categories of Class B or C there will be a discretion as to whether they will be notified depending on the circumstances of the case.

Employees and students may be incapable of attendance for work or study, when required, due to consumption of alcohol or non-prescribed drugs. Failure to observe attendance requirements may lead to appropriate disciplinary action.

Some University employees are prohibited from consuming alcohol before reporting for, or during periods of, duty if it impairs their performance, by specific management instruction or regulation on health and safety grounds, for example, drivers, gym instructors, security officers and workshop staff, etc.

Although the policy is directed at employees and students, the University has a duty to safeguard all those using its premises.

Any person believed to have an alcohol or drug-related problem should be advised to seek treatment from their GP, Occupational Health Service, the Counselling Service or other such appropriate agency. A student believed to be under the influence of alcohol, drugs or other substances when attending lectures or practical workshops, laboratories, tutorials or clinical sessions should be told to leave the session.

3. Identification and reporting (see above)

Members of staff or students who may be concerned that they have a drinking or substance misuse-related problem are encouraged to seek help and advice either from their own doctors, or, if preferred, from an appropriate member of the University.

Staff may contact their immediate supervisor, Head of Academic Unit, a member of the Occupational Health Service, General Practitioner, University Counselling Service, a University Chaplain, Trade Union Official, the Director of Human Resources or one of his staff.

Students may contact their personal tutor or course supervisor, their GP, University Counselling Service, University Chaplain, Hall Warden or the Student Advice and Information Service.

It can be difficult for one employee or student to report another's suspicious behaviour to his/her Manager/personal tutor or supervisor. Individuals must consider the potential impact on student services, staff relations and health and safety of a drug misuser or alcoholic. Any signs of drug misuse in the University or unexplained disappearance of potentially misuseable substances must be reported without delay to a Manager/personal tutor or supervisor, or to a Personnel Officer, or in the case of students resident in a Hall of Residence to a Warden. Advice from the Chief Security Officer at an early stage may be required by the Manager/personal tutor/supervisor/wardens, or Personnel Officer on the necessity of informing the Police. Not to do so may place others at risk and so breach the duty of care which all share.

Supervisors, Managers or Personal Tutors should be aware of changes in behaviour in their students or staff such as mood swings, signs of confusion and patterns of unexplained lateness or absence which may indicate experimentation or regular misuse. Physical signs such as pallor, tremor, dilated or contracted pupils, sweating, needle marks, sore areas around the mouth or nose etc., may be apparent and should be investigated sensitively and intelligently. The Occupational Health Service and/or the appropriate Personnel Officer (for staff) should be contacted for support and advice at the earliest opportunity.

Any member of staff or student of the University of Southampton who witnesses another member of staff or student consuming what he or she believes to be a controlled or dangerous substance should seek support from the Chief Security Officer, Hall Warden.

Individuals are not obliged to work or study with someone who has consumed alcohol (or drugs) if they consider that by doing so they put themselves or others at risk; anyone in this position should immediately report the matter to a supervisor, warden or senior member of staff.

Individuals considered incapable of performing duties safely and competently due to alleged alcohol (or drug) consumption should immediately be removed from their duties and the course supervisor or Human Resources Department (for staff) consulted.

In cases of overt misconduct or incapability, the normal disciplinary procedures will be instituted. Staff and students will be offered the opportunity to discuss drink-related or substance-misuse incidents and, if appropriate, be referred for treatment and guidance. However, incidences of overt misconduct or incapability are not necessarily related to chronic alcohol misuse or substance misuse nor are they indicative of a dependence on alcohol or other misuseable substances.

4. Staff procedure (see above)

When it becomes evident, in whatever way, that an employee has a drug, alcohol or substance misuse-related problem affecting conduct at work or work performance, that employee will be referred to the Occupational Health Service to seek an assessment of the problem and, if necessary, treatment from, or referral to, an appropriate agency. Most commonly misused substances include barbiturates, amphetamines, tranquillisers, anabolic steroids, all types of nitrates, solvents and alcohol.

Where an employee is recognised as having a substance misuse-related problem, the University will offer assistance, guidance and support to the person concerned on the appropriate remedial action which might be taken. If such guidance is accepted and involves some reasonable loss of time from work, such absences will be regarded in the same way as absence which complies with the sickness provisions of the individual's contract of employment.

If support is to be given under this Policy, however, it will be necessary for the members of staff to make a formal agreement between themselves and their Manager that they will cooperate with the programme of assistance and receive advice from the Occupational Health Service or their General Practitioner.

Compliance with the programme will be monitored by the Manager and with the employee's consent. Regular reports will be made to the Manager and Human Resources Department by the Occupational Health Service. The Occupational Health Service will support employees and monitor their progress.

The main objective of the University's support for treatment is to ensure the employee's successful return to normal duties to the required standard.

It is recognised that in a few cases members of staff who develop drug, alcohol or substance misuse problems may become unsuited to their particular posts. Consideration will need to be given to the position of such staff and, wherever possible, suitable alternative posts will be sought or incapability on the grounds of ill health investigated.

Where the above guidance is not accepted and the issues related to work performance persist or recur, the matter will be dealt with under the provisions of the disciplinary procedure. For example:

- a. possession of, or dealing in, illegal drugs will be reported to the Police;
- b. if an employee with an identified substance-misuse problem which affects conduct at work or which prevents the achievement of a satisfactory level of work performance refuses the opportunity to receive help;
- c. if an employee discontinues treatment and then reverts to previous levels of misconduct or poor performance;
- d. where an employee accepts the opportunity to receive help but his/her conduct or work performance afterwards reverts to the problem level;
- e. where an employee is charged with misconduct whilst under the influence of misused substances. (If during the investigation it is determined that the employee has a substance-misuse problem, this will then be taken into account when deciding on the appropriate action.)

5. Procedures to be followed in the event of drug misuse by students occurring in Halls of Residence

Students are informed that the misuse of drugs and other potentially harmful substances will not be condoned in University Halls of Residence or when this occurs on any property owned by The University; in private rented accommodation; or during the course of any social, recreational or educational activities that take place outside the University.

(The University, in the context of landlord, is required to comply with the Provisions of the Misuse of Drugs Act, 1971.)

If it becomes evident, in whatever way, that a student in residence has a drug, alcohol or substance misuse related problem, which is likely to be affecting their study, the student will be encouraged to seek advice and assessment from their General Practitioner, or from another appropriate agency. The student will be offered assistance, guidance and support by the Warden, in the event that the student lives in a Hall of Residence, and, if appropriate, their Personal Tutor/Supervisor, on the suitable remedial action which might be taken. The student will be encouraged to follow a programme of assistance and to receive on-going advice from their General Practitioner or other appropriate agency.

6. Students in Halls of Residence

If, in discussion with the appropriate specialist professionals, it is considered appropriate and desirable for the student to remain in residence, this will be subject to the consent and agreement of the Warden of the Hall. Agreement will depend on the particular circumstances of each individual case. It will be important for the Wardens to take account not only of the needs of the student who is seeking a programme of rehabilitation but also the needs of other student residents in the Hall.

7. Students in other University rented accommodation

If, in discussion with the appropriate specialist professionals, it is considered appropriate and desirable for the student to remain in rented accommodation, this will be subject to the consent of the Accommodation Officer. Agreement will depend on the particular circumstances of each individual case. It will be important for the Accommodation Officer to take account not only of the needs of the student who is seeking a programme of rehabilitation but also the needs of other students.

Where guidance and assistance is not accepted by a student and issues related to unacceptable behaviour in Halls of Residence persist or recur the matter will be dealt with:

8. Students in Halls of Residence

Under the provisions of the Halls disciplinary procedures. This may involve the exclusion of the student from Halls of Residence and the reporting of possession of or dealing with illegal drugs to the Police. The Warden, in all such dealings, will keep the Director of Business Services or his nominee, fully informed in such circumstances. The Warden will also act in concert with the Co-ordinator of Student Services in the Academic Registrar's Department.

9. Students in other rented accommodation

By the University's Committee of Discipline. This may involve the suspension or exclusion of the student from the University; and the reporting of the possession of, or trafficking in, illegal drugs to the Police.