

DRUGS AND ALCOHOL POLICY (Staff)

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1.** The University wishes to promote the health and well-being of all its members of staff. It recognises that the abuse of alcohol and prescribed drugs and the use of illegal drugs may result in serious health problems and jeopardise the health and safety of others. The University treats dependency as an illness and offers a supportive approach in the first instance.
- 1.2.** The University recognises that drug and alcohol abuse contribute to absenteeism and poor performance and adversely affects working relationships. The University is also aware that it may be held responsible in law for illegal drug possession or trafficking carried out on its premises and for staff who are required to drive as part of their work duties.

1.3. Purpose

- 1.3.1.** This policy sets out how the University expects to minimise the effects of drug and alcohol abuse on its services by:
- a)** Assisting managers, colleagues and individuals in the recognition of an individual with drink or drug related problems so that assistance may be offered
 - b)** Supporting individuals who seek rehabilitation
 - c)** Clearly stating the rules governing the use of alcohol and drugs within the working environment.
- 1.3.2.** This policy has been written in line with current legislative guidance:
- a)** Health & Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
 - b)** Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999
 - c)** Misuse of Drugs Act 1971
 - d)** Psychoactive Substances Act 2016

1.4. Scope

- 1.4.1.** The following policy applies to all members of staff of the University, regardless of grade or position.

2. POLICY

2.1. Rules governing alcohol and drug use at work

- 2.1.1.** Because alcohol can impair judgement, it can affect conduct and performance. All staff are expected to perform at a suitable level and to act reasonably. If, as a result of excessive and/or inappropriate alcohol consumption, they cannot discharge their responsibilities then the relevant HR policy will be applied.

2.1.2. There are a number of areas within the University where being under the influence of alcohol or drugs may constitute a serious hazard or may be in itself illegal, for example while driving a vehicle. In such instances being under the influence of alcohol or drugs is unacceptable and disciplinary action will be pursued.

2.1.3. Departments have a duty to assess and control work related risks. As part of this process, restrictions may be placed on alcohol consumption before or during certain activities on a departmental basis. These restrictions must be brought to the attention of all concerned. Such activities may include:

- a) driving vehicles
- b) using potentially dangerous substances or machinery
- c) working in confined spaces or at heights
- d) working with live electrical equipment
- e) hot work (welding etc.)

Please note that this is not an exhaustive list and additional positions may be identified subject to risk assessment.

2.1.4. If an individual behaves or carries out duties in such a way as to endanger or potentially endanger themselves or others, prompt action must be taken to prevent it. This may include a change of working location, a prohibition on the use of certain machinery or hazardous substances or suspension from duty. Managers should contact the Health and Safety Department for further advice.

2.1.5. Individuals taking prescribed medication, which has, or could have a significant adverse effect on the safe performance of their duties, should inform their Head of Department/Line Manager. A risk assessment should be undertaken, and appropriate measures put in place. Where the employee or the Head of Department/Line Manager are not sure as to the possible impact on safe working, the Health and Safety Department should be consulted.

2.2. Disciplinary actions

2.2.1. The University will, where appropriate to do so, adopt a constructive and supportive approach when dealing with employees who may be experiencing drug or alcohol dependency/addiction.

2.2.2. Keele University disciplinary policy and procedures state that incapacity or unacceptable behaviour due to alcohol or the misuse of drugs may constitute misconduct; and that serious or repeated cases of incapacity due to the influence of alcohol or drugs could amount to gross misconduct. While the University views alcohol and drug problems as primarily health issues it may still take disciplinary action where appropriate and in accordance with the Disciplinary and Appeals Procedure (Staff) or Discipline and Appeals Procedure of Academic Staff.

2.2.3. The University will take into account the acceptance of a referral for diagnosis and the continuation of treatment when considering disciplinary action. Refusal to accept help does not in itself lead to disciplinary action.

2.2.4. However, if performance, attendance or behaviour continues to be unacceptable due to the effects of drugs or alcohol, despite any support and assistance that can be offered, the disciplinary procedure may be implemented ultimately dismissal may be unavoidable.

2.2.5. Possession, production, or use of an illegal drug on University premises and supplying, attempting to supply or offering to supply illegal drugs to others are contraventions under the Misuse of Drugs Act and will be reported forthwith to Campus Security or the Police.

3. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

3.1. Recognising individuals with alcohol or drug related problems

3.1.1. Signs of alcohol or drug misuse may include high levels of absenteeism, particularly on Mondays and Fridays; poor work performance; personality change such as irritability, depression and anxiety; impaired or abnormal fluctuations in concentration and memory; slurred speech; deterioration of personal hygiene.

3.1.2. Problems may also come to light as a result of HR related procedures including performance capability, disciplinary and absence procedure or accidents at work.

3.2. Supporting individuals who seek rehabilitation

3.2.1. Where an employee is giving cause for concern, their Line Manager should arrange to meet with them. It is appropriate for a Line Manager to explain their concerns and offer the employee further support. The main aim of this meeting should be raise concerns, to support the individual, to encourage them to seek assistance where appropriate, and to achieve a successful work performance.

3.2.2. Initially the employee may be advised to contact:

- a)** the University Occupational Health service
- b)** the University's employee counselling service
- c)** an external specialist agency (see Annex A)
- d)** their own GP

3.2.3. Individuals can be reassured that the usual rules of confidentiality will apply to discussions with the University's Counselling Service. Also the Occupational Health Service will not information without the employee's consent.

3.2.4. Any individual, who is concerned that they themselves may have an alcohol or drug problem, is actively encouraged to seek help and treatment voluntarily.

3.2.5. Any time taken to undergo treatment will be dealt with in accordance with the relevant sick leave arrangements.

3.2.6. Where an employee’s alcohol or drug problem has contributed to their poor performance or misconduct, if work performance or conduct should again suffer as a result of alcohol or drug related problems, a further opportunity to improve may be offered. Each case will be decided on its merits.

3.2.7. Where an employee chooses not to disclose an alcohol or drug misuse or refuses rehabilitation, the manager must proceed with the relevant HR procedure to address the concerns raised.

4. RELATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

- Disciplinary and Appeals Procedure (Staff)
- Disciplinary and Appeals Procedure for Academic Staff
- Performance Capability Policy and Procedure
- Probation Procedure
- Staff Sickness Absence Policy and Procedure
- Stress Management Policy
- Supporting Attendance Policy – Operational Staff

5. REVIEW, APPROVAL & PUBLICATION

5.1. As a general principle, the Procedure will be reviewed by the HR Department, in consultation with recognised Trade Unions, after three years or where operational and/or legislative requirements change. Any revisions will be approved in accordance with UEC and Council procedures, where applicable.

5.2. This Policy is not contractual and is not intended to be incorporated into individual terms and conditions of employment. It may be subject to review, amendment or withdrawal.

6. ANNEXES

- Annex A – Further Information

7. DOCUMENT CONTROL INFORMATION

Document Name	Drugs and Alcohol Policy (Staff)
Owner	Chief People Officer, Human Resources
Version Number	1.3
Equality Analysis Form Submission Date	[Decision from Equality Analysis and form submission date]
Approval Date	19 December 2023
Approved By	Chief People Officer (minor edits)
Date of Commencement	April 2011
Date of Last Review	14 December 2023
Date for Next Review	14 December 2026
Related University Policy Documents	Disciplinary and Appeals Procedure (Staff) Disciplinary and Appeals Procedure for Academic Staff Performance Capability Policy and Procedure Probation Procedure Staff Sickness Absence Policy and Procedure Stress Management Policy

	Supporting Attendance Policy – Operational Staff
<i>For Office Use – Keywords for search function</i>	

Annex A – Further Information

Many organisations give advice on issues related to this policy and can provide information and support for individuals coping with alcohol and/or drug misuse.

For the most up-to-date information please visit the Keele Health and Wellbeing at Work pages at www.keele.ac.uk/hww.

Guides for Employers

Line Managers who are concerned about a staff member should contact a member of the HR team or may wish to read further information from the Health & Safety Executive below:

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/alcoholdrugs/>

The following publications are available from the HSE website:

Drug Misuse at Work – a guide for employers *HSE publication*

Don't mix it! – a guide on alcohol at work *HSE publication*