

## Document Control

<b>Policy Name: Alcohol and Drugs Policy</b>	
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<b>Key Contact(s)</b>	Employee Relations and Policy Team
<b>Date issued</b>	December 2022
<b>Approving body/ bodies</b>	Policy Oversight Group
<b>Related Statutes, Ordinances, Regulations, Policies and Guidance</b>	<a href="#">Disciplinary Policy and Procedure</a> for staff <a href="#">Regulation 23 Student Disciplinary Offences</a> for students
<b>Equality Screening Form submission date and outcome</b>	Equality Screening undertaken on 12 September 2022
<b>Version Control</b>	
<b>Current Version Number</b>	2.0
<b>Date of Last review</b>	December 2022
<b>Date of Next review</b>	December 2025

## 1. Aims and objectives

1.1 The University's Alcohol and Drugs Policy is designed to ensure that individuals are aware of the risks associated with alcohol/drug misuse and the potential consequences.

1.2. The objectives of this policy are to:

- Create a climate that encourages individuals experiencing problems with drug or alcohol misuse to seek help.
- Provide a framework within which drug or alcohol misuse problems can be managed in an appropriate, fair and consistent manner.
- Achieve a balance between supporting those who require help with a problem and the overriding need to preserve the health, safety and welfare of other members of the University community, the University's reputation and image, and the delivery of a high-quality, effective service.
- Ensure the University complies with appropriate legislation.
- Minimise the risks associated with alcohol and drug misuse.
- Raise awareness of the risks and potential harm associated with alcohol or drug misuse.
- Set out clear rules regarding the use of alcohol and drugs so that individuals are aware of the likely consequences for their association with the University if they misuse them.
- To enable individuals to identify any alcohol and drug problems at an early stage.
- To enable the University to be a responsible employer.

## 2. Scope

2.1. This policy covers the use and misuse of alcohol and drugs. It includes:

- All employees of the University.
- Students, volunteers, workers, contractors, agency staff and others involved in work/study related activities or working on University premises.

2.2. For the purposes of this policy, "drugs" includes illegal drugs, prescribed and non-prescribed medication, intoxicating substances and solvents. Abuse in relation to drugs or alcohol is defined as "the intermittent or continual use of alcohol, drugs or substances which causes detriment to an individual's health, social functioning or work performance, and which affects efficiency, productivity, safety, attendance, timekeeping or behaviour in the place of work or study."

2.3. Further information for employees who are required to take prescribed drugs for medical reasons can be found in section 6.2.

## 3. Seeking help/support

3.1. Anyone who believes that they may have an alcohol or drugs related problem is advised to seek suitable professional help. In the first instance, they may wish to contact:

- Their GP or other medical professional
- A specialist alcohol and/or drug support referral agency (see section 11.2)
- Their immediate Line Manager, Head of Department, HR or Health and Safety Representative (for staff) or Personal Tutor (for students)
- Occupational Health can offer initial support via a management or HR Business Partner referral, and direct staff to appropriate services

- The University's [Employee Assistance Programme](#) (EAP). This is a confidential support service designed to help employees with personal and professional problems including psychological issues around alcohol/drug misuse. The EAP service is entirely confidential and individuals who use the service cannot be identified by the University.
- University's [Wellbeing and Student Support Services](#) or 024 7657 5570
- [Students' Union Advice Centre](#) or 024 7657 2824

#### 4. Employee responsibilities

4.1. Employees are responsible for familiarising themselves with this policy and complying with its provisions. Employees must report for work, and remain throughout the working period, in a fit and safe condition to undertake their duties, and not be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs.

4.2. Whilst on University business or related activity, employees are expected to uphold the standards of conduct required by the University including those set out in [Our Principles](#) and the [Dignity at Warwick](#) Policy even when under the influence of alcohol or prescribed or non-prescribed medication. They are expected to act in a way that will not have a detrimental effect or impact negatively on the University's reputation.

4.3. Employees should not 'cover-up' for a colleague with an alcohol and/or drug-related problem but encourage the individual to seek help. Employees who suspect that a person is under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs to such an extent that there is a risk to their own health and safety, or that of others exposed to their activities, must report this to their line manager, an alternative senior manager or member of HR immediately. If an employee falsely reports, with malicious intent, that another employee is misusing alcohol and/or drugs, then the disciplinary process may be invoked.

4.4. Employees are expected to cooperate with any support and assistance provided by the University to address an alcohol and/or drug misuse problem.

4.5. Absence from work for treatment or rehabilitation in connection with an alcohol and/or drugs related problem will be regarded and recorded in the same way as normal sickness absence. Reasonable continued assistance and support from the University will be given, but the employee is also expected to demonstrate a commitment to rehabilitation.

#### 5. Manager responsibilities

5.1. Managers should be aware of the signs of alcohol and drug misuse, the effects it can have on performance, attendance and health, and take appropriate but empathetic action. They should make sure that staff understand the policy and are aware of the rules and consequences regarding the misuse of alcohol and/or drugs, as well as the support available.

5.2. Managers should intervene at an early stage, where changes in performance, behaviour, sickness levels, and attendance patterns are identified, to establish whether alcohol and/or drug misuse is an underlying cause, in line with the relevant University Policy e.g., the Sickness Management Policy or the Management of Underperformance Policy.

5.3. Managers should provide support and assistance, where appropriate, and for a reasonable period to help the recovery of staff who are dependent upon drugs and/or alcohol. A decision on what is a reasonable period will be determined on a case-by-case basis taking into account any professional advice. This should be agreed in conjunction with the HR Business Partner. Where there is a consistent concern for a member of staff's performance,

behaviour or attendance and there is not sufficient improvement, disciplinary measures may also be instigated where appropriate to do so. Managers are recommended to seek advice from their HR Business Partner when drug or alcohol misuse is suspected.

## 6. Working time

6.1. Individuals must not consume, or be under the influence of, alcohol or illegal drugs at any time at work where the effects would impact on their fitness to work. This includes during rest or meal breaks spent at or away from work premises or when undertaking hybrid working off-campus.

6.2. Individuals should inform their manager if they are prescribed medication, or plan to take over the counter medicines, that are likely to have serious side effects, and impair their ability to perform their duties safely and effectively. A risk assessment should be undertaken and, if necessary, the employee should be reassigned suitable tasks or, if advised by their GP or by Occupational Health, then they should be signed off work whilst taking the medication. Individuals are responsible for the security of any prescription medicines that they bring into work with regard to the safety of others.

## 7. Outside working hours

7.1. Employees should not consume alcohol or illegal drugs in the time period prior to commencing work, where the effects would impact on their fitness to work at the start of their working period. Employees also have a personal responsibility to be in a fit state for work when they may be required to attend work at short notice, for example when they are 'on call'.

7.2. Alcohol may remain in the system and have an impact on performance or conduct for some time; even small amounts can impair performance and jeopardise safety. Employees are personally responsible for allowing sufficient time for the alcohol to leave their system before reporting for work.

7.3. Individuals who wear a University uniform or name badge as part of their role (e.g. Community Safety Team, Porters, Accommodation, Campus Cleaning Services, Maintenance and Facilities Staff etc.) must not consume alcohol whilst wearing uniform, even if they are off duty as they could be perceived as representing the University.

7.4. These restrictions must be brought to the attention of all staff as part of their induction.

## 8. Hospitality

8.1. This policy does not seek to place restrictions on the provision of alcohol at social or work-related functions in the University (e.g. Christmas parties etc). However, employees whose roles involve entertaining for business purposes or representing the University at events where alcohol is served are considered to be attending work. Even though there may not be restrictions on drinking alcohol at these events, it is expected that consumption of alcohol at these events is not excessive. Employees are expected to comply with all other University policies including the Dignity at Warwick Policy. Conduct which is deemed to be in breach of the Alcohol and Drugs Policy, or any other University policy may be the subject of disciplinary action.

8.2. In addition, departments must consider whether there could subsequently be an increased risk of harm (e.g. to people undertaking potentially hazardous work, see section 9 Safety Critical Activities). Departments should always ensure that non-alcoholic drinks are available at functions.

## 9. Safety critical activities

9.1. Examples of safety critical activities are:

- Driving vehicles
- Handling potentially dangerous substances
- Using potentially dangerous machinery
- Work in confined spaces or at height
- Work with live electrical equipment
- Clinical settings
- Roles in the University Nursery

Further information can be found on the University's [Health and Safety](#) webpages.

9.2. Departments have a duty to assess and control work related risks. As part of this process, they may place further restrictions on alcohol consumption before or during certain activities where there is a significant risk of serious accidents if performance is impaired. Further information relating to the management of risk in these scenarios can be found [here](#).

9.3. Likewise, further restrictions or adjustments to duties may be applied if the manager feels there is a significant risk because of the potential side effects of prescribed drugs that an employee is taking (see 6.2).

9.4. These further restrictions should be incorporated into any local safety rules and be brought to the attention of all concerned.

9.5 Being under the influence of alcohol or drugs whilst undertaking safety critical activities will be considered a disciplinary matter and may result in summary dismissal if individuals are a danger to themselves or others in the workplace (see point 10.6).

## 10. Breaches of the policy

10.1. The University will endeavour to adopt a constructive and supportive approach when dealing with employees and students who may be experiencing alcohol and/or drug dependency.

10.2. Staff suspected of being under the influence of alcohol and/or illegal drugs may be suspended from work activities as a precaution, and a subsequent investigation should then be carried out, in line with the University's [Disciplinary Policy](#).

10.3. Action on suspected alcohol or drug misuse issues should be initiated by the Head of Department (or their nominated representative). Individuals should be treated sympathetically and, with their agreement, be referred to Occupational Health for advice and assistance.

10.4. Disciplinary procedures may be suspended for a defined period while the employee co-operates fully with any alcohol and drug treatment services which are taking place. Management will inform the employee what activities they are fit to continue with whilst they are receiving treatment/support, and they will have regular meetings with the employee. The advice of the HR Business Partner should be sought should there be a relapse or a refusal to cooperate.

10.5. If there are no improvements in terms of performance, conduct and/or attendance, despite any reasonable support and assistance that can be offered, ultimately this may lead to dismissal or expulsion.

10.6. Notwithstanding the above, there will be circumstances where breaches of the policy, whether dependency-related or not, will be treated as a disciplinary matter and may result in the summary dismissal or expulsion of the

individual. Examples of issues that will be subject to disciplinary action, including the possibility of dismissal/expulsion are:

- Disregard for personal safety and that of others associated with the use of drugs or alcohol.
- Unacceptable behaviour associated with the use of drugs or alcohol.
- Being found incapable of performing normal duties satisfactorily and safely as a result of consuming alcohol and/or taking illegal drugs.
- Consuming drugs or alcohol during the working day or when officially 'on call'.
- Dealing/trafficking, selling and misuse of controlled drugs.
- Being disqualified from driving as a result of alcohol or drug related offences (employees required under their contract of employment to drive a vehicle).
- Making malicious or vexatious allegations that a colleague/student is misusing drugs or alcohol.

This list is illustrative only and should not be regarded as exclusive or exhaustive. Disciplinary action will be, in all cases, proportionate to the circumstances of the breach of the policy.

10.7. Any contravention or suspected contravention of the Misuse of Drugs Act must be reported as soon as possible to a line manager, an alternative senior manager or to the [Community Safety Team](#) (tel. 22083) in circumstances of:

- Production, possession or use of a controlled drug on University premises
- Supplying, attempting to supply, or offering to supply a controlled drug to others.

10.8 Students who knowingly or are suspected of using or possessing illegal drugs on campus will be addressed with in line with the procedures and sanctions that can be applied under [Regulation 27](#): On-Campus Residential Accommodation Regulations or [Regulation 23](#): Student Disciplinary Offences.

10.9. The University reserves the right to report any suspected criminal activity to the police.

## 11. Further information

11.1. Further information on the effects of alcohol and drugs on health and safety is available from Occupational Health at [www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/healthsafetywellbeing/guidance/occupationalhealth](http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/healthsafetywellbeing/guidance/occupationalhealth).

11.2. In addition to those referenced in Section 3.1 other external sources of help and advice are detailed below:

- Change Grow Live – a charity organisation specialising in alcohol, drug and substance misuse. Services are free and confidential. <https://www.changegrowlive.org/get-in-touch/contact-us>
- Drinkline – a government-funded free service, which can provide advice to the alcohol drinker, or anybody concerned about the drinker. Has a database of local support and treatment services that can help the drinker. *Helpline: 0800 917 8282 Website: [www.drinkaware.co.uk](http://www.drinkaware.co.uk)*
- Talk to FRANK – a government-funded free service, previously named the National Drugs Helpline. Can provide advice to the drug user or anybody concerned about the drug user. Has a database of local support and treatment services that can help the drug user. The focus of the helpline is for young people and concerned parents, but will also assist adult drug users. *Helpline: 0800 77 66 00 Website: [www.talktofrank.com](http://www.talktofrank.com)*
- Alcoholics Anonymous – the largest self-help group for people who acknowledge they cannot handle alcohol, and want a new way of life without it. Services are free. *Helpline: 0845 769 7555 Website: [www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk](http://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk)*

- Narcotics Anonymous – the largest self-help group for people who want to stop using drugs. Services are free. *Helpline: 0845 373 3366 Website: [www.ukna.org](http://www.ukna.org)*
- Adfam National – the largest non-statutory organisation that works with and on behalf of families affected by drug and alcohol problems. Helpful for the family of the alcohol or drug user. *Helpline: 020 7553 7640 Website: [www.adfam.org.uk](http://www.adfam.org.uk)*
- The Home Office website for drugs policy includes a contact list of drug and alcohol action teams responsible for co-ordinating drug and alcohol treatment services in each English local authority area. These local teams should be able to advise on which specific treatment agency the alcohol/drug user should approach in their local area. *Website: <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/drugs/>.*

## 12. Impact Assessment

12.1. The University of Warwick recognises its responsibility to ensure that no-one is discriminated against or disadvantaged in relation to any protected characteristic including age, disability, sex, trans identity (gender reassignment), adoption, maternity, or paternity, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, or sexual orientation. For additional information please refer to the University's Social Inclusion [website](#).

12.2. As part of the policy approval process an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening has been completed and will be reviewed when any significant changes are made to the policy. If the EIA indicates any potential for disadvantage, the policy will be amended and/or mitigating action will be taken to ensure there is no discrimination or disadvantage to any particular group as a result of this policy.