Student Drugs and Alcohol Policy

September
2016
| Document title | Student Drugs and Alcohol Policy  
September 2016 |
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| Approving body | Date of approval |
| University Executive Board (UEB) | 15 August 2016 |
| Review date | Edition no. | ID Code | Date of effect |
| August 2018 | 4 | 073 | 22 September 2016 |
| EITHER | OR |
| For public access online (internet)? | For staff access only (intranet)? |
| Tick as appropriate | Tick as appropriate |
| Yes | Y |
| For public access on request copy to be mailed | Password protected |
| Tick as appropriate | Tick as appropriate |
| Yes | Y |
| No | No |

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http://policies.docstore.port.ac.uk/policy-073.pdf
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Student Drugs and Alcohol Policy

Summary

What is this Policy about?
This Policy is part of a University and Students’ Union approach that promotes a safe and supportive environment in which to study and work. The overarching premise is one of support and education, focusing on making healthy choices, setting a framework of acceptable and responsible behaviour, and the action that may be taken in the event of a breach of acceptable and responsible behaviour.

Who is this Policy for?
The Policy applies to students in circumstances where there is a risk to themselves or others, or where their conduct or quality of work affects others or the reputation of the University or Students’ Union. It applies whether students are on University premises or elsewhere on University business or study activities. The Policy also applies to the Unions’ clubs and societies.

How does the University check this Policy is followed?
Each of the departments involved with this Policy will check it is followed. These departments include University Student Services, Students’ Union, Health and Safety, Academic Registry, Estates and the Faculties. The Policy will be reviewed and monitored via the Student Support and Advice Committee and University Health and Safety Committee and will be reviewed after three years.

Who can you contact if you have any queries about this Policy?
If you have any questions about this document please contact the University Student Services at wellbeing@port.ac.uk; Students’ Union at advice@upsu.net; Health and Safety at hsservicedesk@port.ac.uk or the University’s Quality Management Division (QMD) at qmd@port.ac.uk.

1. Scope and statement

1.1 Scope of Policy
This Policy is part of a University community approach to the provision of a safe and supportive environment in which to study and work. The overarching premise is one of support and education, focusing on making healthy choices and setting a framework of acceptable and responsible behaviour.

1.2 Statement
The University and Students’ Union will:

• encourage and support a culture of shared responsibility, across the whole University community, to enable and assist students to make healthy choices and respect different attitudes towards alcohol use;
• provide confidential support through University Student Support Services or the Students’ Union Advice Centre to students who are seeking help or have concerns about their alcohol or drug use or that of their friends;
• set a framework of acceptable and responsible behaviour and be clear regarding the disciplinary action for related misconduct;
• comply with the legal duty of care to students, staff and visitors;
• recognise that staff have a duty of care to be alert to indicators of alcohol and drug misuse and to provide guidance and information to staff and students to help them take appropriate action when necessary.
2. Student Alcohol and Drugs Policy

2.1 Definitions

- **Alcohol misuse**: the drinking of intoxicating liquor whereby a student’s ability to study and work is impaired, their attendance is interfered with, they endanger the safety of others or cause personal harm, or they exhibit physical, mental, emotional or behavioural changes.

- **Drug misuse**: the taking of drugs, including the use and abuse of other substances, whereby a student’s ability to study and work is impaired, their attendance is interfered with, they endanger the safety of others or cause personal harm, or they exhibit physical, mental, emotional or behavioural changes.

- The term ‘drugs’ has been used in this Policy to include all drugs and substances, legal or illegal, which adversely affect behaviour or performance.

- **Psychoactive substance**
  
  1. In the Psychoactive Substances Act 2016 ‘psychoactive substance’ means any substance which:
     a) is capable of producing a psychoactive effect in a person who consumes it; and
     b) is not an exempted substance (section 3/Schedule 1 of the Act).
  
  2. For the purposes of this Act a substance produces a psychoactive effect in a person if, by stimulating or depressing the person’s central nervous system, it affects the person’s mental functioning or emotional state; and references to a substance’s psychoactive effects are to be read accordingly.
  
  3. For the purposes of this Act, a person consumes a substance if the person causes or allows the substance, or fumes given off by the substance, to enter the person’s body in any way.

- **Legal highs**: A term that is still widely used, and before the Psychoactive Substances Act 2016 came into force, related to substances that were used recreationally but were not controlled under the Misuse of Drugs Act (1971), not licensed for legal use, and not regulated as a medicine (Medicines Act 1968). Now all such substances are illegal and the term ‘legal highs’ is incorrect.

2.2 Support

The University recognises that the majority of students will not be affected by alcohol or drug misuse but, where a student declares that they have a problem, their case will be treated sympathetically and in confidence. Support will be offered through University Student Support Services and the Students’ Union Advice Centre where possible and referrals to external support agencies may be made where the support required is outside the expertise of those services.

It is important to acknowledge that students who have or develop alcohol or drug-related problems may cause harm to themselves and to others and these risks will be considered in any course of action. Any misuse of alcohol or drugs can affect students’ performance, conduct and relationships both on their course and in their accommodation. It can also have consequences for future career choices.

The University has a legal duty of care to its students, staff and visitors and aims to provide a safe, healthy and high quality study and work environment. This includes addressing the risks posed by alcohol or drug misuse, informing students of their responsibilities and providing information, advice, guidance and support on request. All students have a legal responsibility to take care of their own safety and that of others.

2.3 Legislation

- **The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974** places a duty of care on employers to ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of staff, students and other users of its premises.

- **The Misuse of Drugs Act 1971** states that the misuse of drugs applies to the ‘non-medical use of drugs that are only intended for use in medical treatment and the use of drugs that have no medical purposes.’ Such drugs are controlled under this legislation. The University works within this framework and is therefore clear that the possession and/or use of illegal drugs on its premises is unacceptable and breaches may be subject to disciplinary or legal action.

- **Psychoactive Substances Act 2016** creates the following criminal offences covering the supply of a psychoactive substance:
  - producing a psychoactive substance (section 4 of the Act)
  - supplying, or offering to supply, a psychoactive substance (section 5)
  - possession of a psychoactive substance with intent to supply it (section 7)
  - importing or exporting a psychoactive substance (section 8)
  - possessing a psychoactive substance in a custodial institution (section 9)

The University does not condone the use of any illegal drug and/or psychoactive substance; anyone found in possession of any illegal drug and/or psychoactive substance or using such substances on its premises may be subject to disciplinary or legal action as the University is clear this is unacceptable.
- The Road Traffic Act 1988 states that a person is guilty of an offence if driving or attempting to drive a motor vehicle in a public place while unfit through drink or drugs.

- The Drug Driving (Specified Limits) (England and Wales) Regulations 2014 states that it is illegal to drive if either: a person is unfit to do so because of legal or illegal drugs; or if there are certain levels of certain drugs in their blood.

- The University operates licensed premises according to the terms of The Licensing Act 2003.

2.4 Code of Student Behaviour and disciplinary procedures

The Code of Student Behaviour outlines acceptable behaviour of students of the University, both on and off the University campus. The University of Portsmouth has common rules and regulations to ensure that students, staff and the wider community can work together to achieve our ambitions without damaging each other’s interests.

Disciplinary procedures may ensue if a student’s behaviour results in a breach of this Code. Students may be subject to disciplinary action under the University’s Code of Student Behaviour or the Students’ Union disciplinary procedures. In certain circumstances students may have their services withdrawn, be asked to leave and/or be reported to the police. The University/Students’ Union does not wish to criminalise its students or visitors, but it has a legitimate interest in protecting the University community and each organisations’ own reputation from the potential consequences of alcohol or drug misuse by students.

It is expected that all students will take personal responsibility for ensuring that alcohol or drug misuse does not affect work or study performance. Students are also expected to adhere to the restrictions across the University where the consumption of alcohol is prohibited.

Section 5.1 of the Code states that: ‘Students on certain professional courses will also be subject to the professional standards that are expected of them at all times. Students will be informed of these standards at the start of the course and this Code is complementary to, and does not replace, these professional standards.’

Where a student has been arrested, disciplinary action against the student may be considered only when the police have concluded their process. Also the Procedure for Dealing with Students Under Arrest for a Criminal Offence should be followed.

Heads of Department or equivalent should follow the procedures for disciplinary action, as laid out in the Code of Student Behaviour, against students alleged to have committed misconduct, in relation to drugs or alcohol, and should also advise the student to seek help and advice from the University Student Support Services or the Students’ Union Advice Centre. The Students’ Union may follow its own procedures.

Students with alcohol or drug dependency issues will be strongly encouraged and supported to engage with sources of help but will not be exempt from disciplinary procedures resulting from any breach of University or Students’ Union regulations. Students are strongly advised that any disruption of academic, University or Students’ Union-related activity due to alcohol or drug misuse will be investigated by the relevant party.

Students should not compromise their own safety by working with or being reliant upon (e.g. as a vehicle passenger) someone who they believe to be misusing alcohol or drugs.

Pressure should never be applied on others to drink alcohol. The University and Students’ Union support a zero tolerance approach to disrespectful, offensive or exclusive behaviour and the spiking of drinks.

2.5 Confidentiality and data protection

All cases will be dealt with in confidence and all personal information will be processed securely in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998. Information may be used by relevant personnel to establish any support that may be needed and to manage the academic relationship. Confidential disclosure of information by students will be honoured except in extreme circumstances where the student or someone else is at serious risk of harm. University and Students’ Union staff should clearly state from the outset that limited confidentiality applies and that confidentiality will not be maintained if the withholding of information constitutes a serious risk to the individual or others.

3. Commitments

The wellbeing of the student community is the key driver for this Policy and to enable this Policy’s approach of shared responsibility, we have established a set of commitments from key stakeholders:
3.1 Students
- Be aware of and understand this Policy, supporting documents and services.
- Engage with information and education about alcohol and drugs to enable healthy choices to be made for themselves and their fellow students.
- Commit to taking personal responsibility for their own actions and behaviour if choosing to consume alcohol or take drugs.
- Be aware of the behaviour of students around them and do their best to ensure their support, safety and wellbeing taking action where appropriate.

3.2 The Students’ Union
- Education, information and campaign work relating to alcohol and drugs will form part of our commitment to student wellbeing and will be run regularly by the Students’ Union, in partnership and agreement with University student support services, to encourage students to make healthy choices.
- We will work with our students to set out (and uphold) clear expectations of student members and our clubs and societies regarding their behaviour relating to drug alcohol consumption on and off campus.
- We will form strong partnership and communication links with the University and City networks for information, education and support relating to drugs and alcohol and work to ensure that students are engaged with relevant messages and services.

3.3 University
- Ensure that the University community is proactive with regard to setting policy, procedures (including site specific restrictions and processes as appropriate) alongside available support services and referral procedures available for dealing with student alcohol/drug related issues.
- Encourage students to comply with the Student Charter and behave responsibly and respectfully towards our neighbours and the local community and do nothing that might damage the University’s reputation.
- Provide support services that help to maintain a proactive approach to supporting students to make healthy choices around alcohol and drugs and act as a confidential self-referral facility for students.
- Liaise and communicate with internal stakeholders other alcohol and drug support agencies to help maintain ongoing focus and development of student wellbeing activity with regard to drugs and alcohol.

3.4 Portsmouth City Council
- Proactively support the University and Students’ Union in delivering a community-based information, advice and guidance approach to student alcohol and drug use.
- Take practical steps to ensure that direct communication and innovations from students are included in the City activity and information relating to alcohol and drugs.
- Deliver support and training for University/Students’ Union staff – e.g. knowledge and skills development around alcohol and drugs interventions where appropriate.
- Work with all relevant partners to ensure that students are safe and supported during their time in Portsmouth and that, as residents of the Portsmouth community, they are proactively informed and signposted to the relevant services.

3.5 The campus bar(s)
As a responsible retailer of alcohol we will adhere to the following best practice:
- Pricing in the bars will be set at a level that encourages students to access the facility but not so low as to encourage excessive consumption.
- The most expensive non-alcoholic drink on sale will always be cheaper than the cheapest alcoholic drink on sale.
- Free drinking water will be provided at the request of patrons.
- ‘Initiation’ ceremonies involving excessive alcohol consumption will not be permitted.
- Take active steps to maintain the bar(s) as inclusive venues, eliminating ‘lad culture’ and removing those patrons who display disrespectful or offensive behaviour.
- Strive to ensure that events are accessible for those students who choose not to drink alcohol.
- Be proactive in the provision of healthy drinking and other wellbeing campaign literature in partnership with the Students’ Union and City partners.
- Operate a zero tolerance policy regarding illegal drug use and work in partnership with the Students’ Union and City partners in support and/or statutory action as appropriate.
4. **Procedures to manage misuse of drugs or alcohol-related incidents and those resulting in breach of acceptable and responsible behaviour**

Incidents involving students whilst under the influence of drugs or alcohol should be referred to Security (on extension 3333). Security may contact the Emergency Services depending on the nature or severity of the incident.

Residential Services have established staff guidance for dealing with illegal substances used in Halls of Residence.

Any accident or incident involving misuse of drugs or alcohol should be reported via the HS1 form and Accident Reporting Procedure.

5. **Related policies**

This Policy has mentioned and should be read in conjunction with the following policies and guidance documents:

- University of Portsmouth Code of Student Behaviour
- UPSU Disciplinary Procedure (Students)
- UPSU Student Groups Code of Conduct
- University of Portsmouth Student Charter
- Procedure for Dealing with Students Under Arrest for a Criminal Offence
- Accident Report Policy (HS1 Form)
- Data Protection Statement: Students
- Halls of Residence information
- Student Handbook
- Library Zones
- Residential Services – staff guidance for dealing with illegal substances use in Halls of Residence (document available for viewing upon request to Residential Services Head of Department)