

POLICY STATEMENT ON ALCOHOL AND DRUGS AT WORK

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This policy statement applies to all employees, affiliates, contractors, temporary staff and visitors to the University's campuses.
- 1.2 The University has a legal responsibility to provide a safe and healthy working environment for its staff, students and visitors and to take appropriate action when the health and safety of those individuals is threatened or compromised. The University will only concern itself with the use of alcohol or controlled drugs (not prescribed drugs) by any of its employees, and others listed at 1.1, where it is seen to have a detrimental effect on work performance or is, or may be, prejudicial to the safety of other individuals.

2. Policy

- 2.1 The use and possession of controlled drugs by individuals whilst at work or on work premises is forbidden at all times unless taken on prescription. Anyone in breach may be subject to disciplinary action (which may include suspension or termination of employment) or criminal proceedings.
- 2.2 The consumption of alcohol by individuals whilst at work or on work premises is strictly forbidden other than in an authorised social context such as a leaving party or formal hospitality event. During such occasions individuals are expected to act responsibly and with moderation.
- 2.3 The consumption of alcohol off site during the normal working day (e.g. lunch breaks) is strongly discouraged. It is particularly unacceptable when undertaking duties that include, but are not limited to, driving, the use of machinery and electrical equipment; working at heights or in confined spaces, handling hazardous chemicals or other dangerous substances. The University will take appropriate disciplinary action against anyone whose performance, or work activities, are compromised by alcohol consumption.

3. Duties and Responsibilities

- 3.1 Individuals are responsible for seeking professional help if they have any form of alcohol or drug abuse problem. Employees are advised to speak to their line manager, the People Directorate, or Occupational Health for help and guidance.
- 3.2 Employees should draw to management's attention any reasonable suspicions they have of colleagues working under the influence of alcohol or controlled drugs. Managers will treat any such information in the strictest confidence.

- 3.3 Managers should discuss with employees, or other individuals at 1.1, as soon as possible any reasonable concerns they have about alcohol or drugs abuse which manifests itself in behavioural or performance problems. They are advised to seek advice from Occupational Health in such cases. Management should remove from the workplace any employee or other individual who they consider to be under the influence of alcohol or controlled drugs.
- 3.4 Individuals should inform management immediately if they are taking any type of prescription or proprietary medication that could affect their ability to work safely or in any way impair their performance. Individuals are responsible for seeking advice from their doctor or pharmacist if they are concerned about the possible side effects of any medication they are taking.
- 3.5 Managers will try to assist any individual who approaches them for help over alcohol or drugs abuse issues. Such approaches will not be subject to disciplinary sanctions. In such cases, management reserves the right to refer an employee to Occupational Health.
- 3.6 Managers are expected to grant time off with pay to staff undergoing drug or alcohol counselling or treatment. They should contact the People Directorate to discuss any other arrangements they feel should apply or any particularly prolonged treatment programmes.

Recognising Substance Abuse

In many cases of substance abuse there are 'warning signs' to indicate a potential problem. These signs may appear singly or in combination, and in varying degrees. It is important to recognise however that these signs can have more innocent explanations too – for example, a diabetic who has not taken their insulin, or an individual with a mental or emotional disorder

Below is a list of some of the potential warning signs to look out for.

Work Patterns

- inconsistency in quality of work
- high/low periods of productivity
- poor judgment
- more mistakes than usual
- general carelessness
- lapses in concentration
- difficulty in recalling instructions
- difficulty in remembering own mistakes
- using more time to complete work
- missing deadlines
- increased difficulty in handling complex situations
- making poor decisions
- acting impulsively
- numerous jobs in short periods of time
- unexplained periods of unemployment

Absenteeism

- high rate of absenteeism, especially on Mondays or Fridays, before and after holidays, or on paydays
- frequent unreported absences later explained as "emergencies"
- frequent lateness
- unusually high incidence of colds, flu, upset stomach, headaches
- frequent use of unscheduled vacation time
- leaving work area more than necessary (e.g. frequent trips to the toilet or water fountain)
- unexplained disappearances from the job site, with difficulty in locating the employee
- requests to leave work early for various reasons
- leaving company property on lunch or breaks for short periods of time

Accidents

- taking of needless risks
- disregard for safety of others
- higher than average accident rate on the job

- when he/she caused an accident and considers it "no big deal"

Behaviour

- frequent mood swings
- appears to be anxious or depressed
- irritable
- behaves in a way you find suspicious
- complains about others
- emotional unsteadiness
- withdrawn or improperly talkative
- spends excessive amount of time on the telephone
- avoids talking with supervisor regarding work issues

Relationship to others on the job

- overreacts to real or imagined criticism
- avoids or withdraws from peers and supervisors
- causes complaints from co-workers
- borrows money from fellow employees
- complains of problems at home such as separation, divorce, or child discipline problems
- persistent job transfer requests

Physical signs

- weariness, exhaustion
- untidiness
- yawning excessively
- blank stare
- slurred speech
- sleepiness (nodding)
- unsteady walk
- sunglasses worn at inappropriate times
- changes in appearance after lunch or breaks