

Drugs and Alcohol Policy (Staff)

Human Resources Department

Lead Director: Director of Human Resources and Student Services
Date ratified by Council:
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Policy to be reviewed every 4 years. Date of next review: 2022

INTRODUCTION

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.

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.

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

This policy has been written in line with current legislative guidance:

- Health & Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Misuse of Drugs Act 1971
- Psychoactive Substances Act 2016

AIM

This policy sets out how the University expects to minimise the effects of drug and alcohol abuse on its services by:

1. Assisting managers, colleagues and individuals in the recognition of an individual with drink or drug related problems so that assistance may be offered.
2. Supporting individuals who seek rehabilitation
3. Clearly stating the rules governing the use of alcohol and drugs within the working environment

1. RECOGNISING INDIVIDUALS WITH ALCOHOL OR DRUG RELATED PROBLEMS

- 1.1. Signs of an 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.
- 1.2. Problems may also come to light as a result of HR Procedures including performance capability, disciplinary and absence procedure or accidents at work.

1.3. It is not the responsibility of Heads of Department/Line Managers to diagnose an individual as having an alcohol or drug problem; however they should be alert to the signs. If they suspect an individual is having problems they should follow the steps below.

2. SUPPORTING INDIVIDUALS WHO SEEK REHABILITATION

- 2.1 Where an employee is giving cause for concern, their Head of Department/Line Manager should arrange to meet with them. It is appropriate for a Head of Department/Line Manager to explain their concerns and offer if 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.
- 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 1)
 - d. their own GP
- 2.3. Individuals can be reassured that the usual rules of confidentiality will apply to discussions with the University's Counselling Service. The Occupational Health Service will release no information without the employee's consent.
- 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.
- 2.5. Any time taken to undergo treatment will be dealt with in accordance with the relevant sick leave arrangements.
- 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.
- 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.

3. RULES GOVERNING ALCOHOL AND DRUG USE AT WORK

3.1 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.

3.2 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.

3.3 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. work 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.

3.4 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. Staff should contact the Occupational Health and Safety Department for further advice.

3.5 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 Occupational Health and Safety Department should be consulted.

4. DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS

- 4.1 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.
- 4.2 Keele University discipline policy states 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 gross misconduct. While the University views alcohol and drug problems as primarily health issues it may still take disciplinary action where appropriate.
- 4.3 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.
- 4.4 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.
- 4.5 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.

Annex 1 - 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 update 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 their HR Link Advisor/Manager 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 or from Keele DOHS
Drug Misuse at Work – a guide for employers *HSE publication*
Don't mix it! – a guide on alcohol at work *HSE publication*