

HR Policy: Alcohol, Drug and Substance Misuse and Dependency Policy

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1. Introduction and Purpose

- 1.1 In line with UWE's Healthy University Strategy: the University is committed to providing a safe, healthy and sustainable working, learning and living environment for all employees, students and visitors involved in its operation.
- 1.2 This policy sets out the University's position with regard to drugs, alcohol and substance misuse and dependency within the workplace and the approach it will take when the consumption of drugs, alcohol or substances affects staff performance at work. The policy covers the courses of action which will be taken in one-off situations of staff being under the influence of drugs, alcohol or substances whilst at work, as well as the action to be taken when a member of staff has an underlying drug, alcohol or substance related problem.
- 1.3 The policy applies to all staff employed by and working for the University.
- 1.4 The purpose of this policy is to:
 - a) encourage those with a dependency problem to seek help;
 - b) support staff in dealing with alcohol, drugs and substance misuse problems before it becomes a disciplinary matter;
 - c) identify the circumstances in the ill health, performance and conduct procedures may be instituted for alcohol, drugs and substance misuse;
 - d) meet the University's legal obligations to ensure the health and safety of its staff, students and others at work;
 - e) promote the safe use of alcohol and provide information on alcohol, drugs and substance misuse;
 - f) State clearly the responsibilities of managers, employees and support services when dealing with an employee's alcohol, drugs and substance misuse problems;
 - g) In addition, useful information is provided in respect of the impact of alcohol consumption on occupational health, as well as risk factors to be considered via the [Health and Safety Guidance, "Alcohol in the Workplace" \(G032\)](#).

2. General Principles

- 2.1 The University seeks to provide a caring and supportive environment in respect of the welfare of employees.
- 2.2 Employees are encouraged to seek medical assistance or counselling once any alcohol, drug or substance misuse problem has been identified or at an earlier stage where there are concerns that alcohol or drugs may be becoming an issue. The University will support this through the Employee Assistance Programme and the internal Occupational Health Service.
- 2.3 Time off for a recommended course of treatment in cases of dependency will be supported in accordance with the "Time off for Medical Appointments" Policy and where this represents a reasonable adjustment for someone with a disability, paid time off will be granted.
- 2.4 Employees who declare an alcohol, drug or substance misuse problem will be treated in accordance with the guidelines outlined in this policy; having an identified alcohol, drug or substance misuse problem will not absolve an individual from disciplinary action if they are involved in an act of misconduct.

- 2.5 Where a member of staff, having received treatment, suffers a relapse the University will consider the case on its individual merits.

3. Responsibilities

Employees' Responsibilities:

- 3.1 To familiarise themselves with this policy.
- 3.2 To take responsibility for their own health and safety in the workplace and that of others who could be affected by what they do at work.
- 3.3 To report for work, and remain throughout the working day, in a fit and safe condition to undertake their duties and to ensure their performance and judgement at work are never impaired by alcohol, drugs or other substances. Employees are not permitted to present themselves at work under the influence of alcohol, drugs or other substances.
- 3.4 To seek advice in the first instance from their GP at the point where they feel that alcohol or drugs misuse may be becoming a problem. The GP should be able to provide advice, support and referral to suitable agencies for counselling.
- 3.5 To ensure that if they buy or are prescribed medicines which warn that "use may impair driving or affect ability to operate machinery" and where relevant to that employee's role, they seek advice from their pharmacist or doctor as to whether taking the medicine may affect their ability to work safely.
- 3.6 To inform their manager or a senior member of staff if they have genuine reason to believe that an employee may have a problem with the misuse of alcohol, drugs or other substances which threatens to impact on that individual's ability to do their job.

Line Managers' Responsibilities:

- 3.7 To ensure employees are familiar with this policy.
- 3.8 To ensure this policy is applied consistently.

If an alcohol, drug, or substance misuse problem is revealed:

- 3.9 To meet with the employee in a confidential setting in order to offer support and advice and to determine the extent of the issue.
- 3.10 To assess what action is appropriate and to seek advice from Human Resources if necessary.

If an employee is involved in an act of misconduct as a result of a problem with alcohol, drug or substance misuse:

- 3.11 To take action in accordance with the University's procedure for dealing with matters of conduct.

Identifying a potential alcohol, drugs or substance abuse problem. The following characteristics, especially in combinations, **may** indicate the presence of an alcohol, drugs or substance related problem. It should be noted that these symptoms could be caused by other factors and managers should monitor the situation carefully before jumping to conclusions.

- 3.12 Absenteeism: instances of unauthorised leave, frequent Friday and/or Monday absences, leaving work early, lateness (especially returning from lunch), excessive

sickness absence, unusually high level of short-term and intermittent absences with, or without, explanation;

- 3.13 High accident level: at work, elsewhere, driving or at home;
- 3.14 Work performance: difficulty in concentration, work requires increased effort, individual tasks take more time, problems with remembering instructions or own mistakes;
- 3.15 Mood swings: irritability, depression, and general confusion;
- 3.16 Appearance: deterioration in physical appearance and/or wellbeing

Human Resources Responsibilities:

- 3.17 To provide confidential advice and support to both managers and employees experiencing difficulties with alcohol, drug or substance misuse problems.
- 3.18 To complete an Occupational Health referral if applicable and to meet with the manager and the employee to discuss any recommendations.

4. Possible Action

- 4.1 Appropriate action will take into account the individual circumstances of each case. Our initial approach to anyone that presents themselves to us with a suspected problem in relation to alcohol or drugs will be to support them in trying to overcome their dependency/misuse. We appreciate that there are times in a person's life where it can be difficult to cope and there may be related circumstances which may lead to problems associated with drugs/alcohol.
- 4.2 We would, in most instances, seek to resolve issues informally, providing a flexible approach but with clear expectations on the part of the individual in terms of taking ownership of the problem.
- 4.3 Where this approach is not possible, or does not resolve the situation, appropriate action will take into account the individual circumstances of each case, in accordance with the following procedures:

5. Dealing with matters of ill health

- 5.1 Absence from work due to illness linked to the misuse of alcohol, drugs or other substances will be dealt with under the University's procedure for dealing with matters of staff Ill Health.
- 5.2 The line manager and Human Resources may seek to support employees by making a referral to Occupational Health for further advice and guidance.
- 5.3 Whilst dependency on alcohol or drugs does not necessarily constitute a disability under the Equality Act (2010), it is acknowledge that conditions may arise resulting from the dependency which may be covered. Any such condition will be dealt with accordingly.

6. Dealing with matters of performance

- 6.1 Issues of underperformance related to an employee's alcohol, drug or substance misuse will be dealt with in accordance with the University's procedure for dealing with matters of performance.

7. Dealing with matters of conduct

- 7.1 Issues of misconduct related to an employee's alcohol, drug or substance misuse will be dealt with in accordance with the University's procedure for dealing with matters of conduct.
- 7.2 As a university, we allow the consumption of alcohol on our premises in various licensed outlets. Inappropriate use of such venues, either during the working day/shift or excessive use during social events either on or off site may lead to disciplinary action, dependent upon the circumstances.
- 7.3 Where it is suspected that alcohol, illegal drugs or substances have been misused at work, or if an employee is found to be under the influence due to consumption prior to work, the manager should wherever possible, contact Human Resources immediately for advice. The Vice Chancellor (or nominee) may suspend from duty on full pay any employee for alleged gross misconduct or for other good and urgent cause.
- 7.4 Employees who commit a drink driving offence and who are required to hold a full UK Driving licence to fulfil their job role, may put their employment at risk.
- 7.5 Employees who break the law by consuming or trafficking in illegal drugs or substances at work are liable to be summarily dismissed.
- 7.6 Drugs related offences committed outside work which have the potential to bring the University's reputation into disrepute could lead to further action.
- 7.7 Employees found to be in breach of the provisions of this policy will be dealt with under the University's procedure for dealing with matters of conduct.

Note:

In this policy the term "substance abuse" includes misuse of controlled and prescription drugs, and use of illegal and designer drugs and other substances such as solvents. Drugs are defined as any substance that affects the way the body functions physically, emotionally or mentally. Misuse is defined as any use that harms social or physical functioning.

8. Useful Contacts

- 8.1 Employee Assistance Programme Right Carecare (24hr free confidential helpline): **0800 1116 387**
- 8.2 Bristol Drug and Alcohol Misuse treatment team: <https://www.bristol.gov.uk/social-care-health/drug-and-alcohol-misuse-treatment>
- 8.3 TALK TO FRANK is the United Kingdom government's national anti-drug campaign. It's principally aimed at teenagers but has lots of useful information available for all age groups.
Website: <http://www.talktofrank.com/>
- 8.4 Safer South Gloucestershire Community Safety and Drugs partnership website: <http://www.southglos.gov.uk/health-and-social-care/staying-healthy/drugs-and-alcohol/>
- 8.5 Alcoholics Anonymous: <http://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk/>