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# SUBSTANCE MISUSE POLICY (STUDENTS)



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## 1. Introduction

The misuse of alcohol or drugs can have an impact on a student's academic work, mental health, social relationships and physical wellbeing.

This policy aims to facilitate the early identification of such problems and to encourage students to seek advice, help and assistance voluntarily before their studies are adversely affected. Staff will provide guidance as to where appropriate professional assistance is available. The University will balance disciplinary action, educational approaches and appropriate support for students who misuse these substances.

In this context alcohol misuse is defined as;

- (a) the habitual or occasional excessive drinking of alcohol by students, whereby;
  - (i) their ability to make sound judgements is impaired, or
  - (ii) their conduct becomes unacceptable, or
  - (iii) they endanger the health and/or safety of others or themselves.

Drugs misuse is defined as;

- (a) dealing (to students or non-students)
- (b) the taking of illegal drugs
- (c) the taking of drugs, illicit or otherwise, whereby;
  - (i) their ability to make sound judgements is significantly impaired, or
  - (ii) their conduct becomes unacceptable, or
  - (iii) they endanger the health and/or safety of others or themselves

## 2. Support

The University regards an individual's dependence on either drugs or alcohol as a health problem. If someone is experiencing difficulties Student Services has information, helpline numbers and a confidential counselling service, some of which are accessible online:

<http://insight.glos.ac.uk/departments/ss/counselling/Pages/CodeofPractice.aspx>

For those wishing to discuss problems related to their own or another's misuse of drugs or alcohol, advice is available internally through the University from;

- (a) Student Services
  - (i) Student Helpzones
  - (ii) Accommodation Residential Support Team

### Section 3.6: Substance Misuse Policy (Students)

- (iii) Counselling & Mental Health and Wellbeing Service
  - (iv) Disability & Welfare Manager
  - (v) Chaplaincy & Faiths team
  - (vi) Medical Centre
  - (vii) Student Health Adviser
- (b) Students' Union

There will be no unnecessary disclosure of information and confidentiality will be respected when using any of the above services. The Student Services Confidentiality Policy is available on-line:

<http://insight.glos.ac.uk/departments/ss/counselling/Pages/EthicsandConfidentiality.aspx>

Students may wish to seek advice from their Academic Review Tutor who will not provide direct advice on substance misuse, but can provide guidance as to where professional help is available.

Support is also available external to the University from external organisations such as:

- (a) Gloucestershire Drug & Alcohol Services (GDAS): <http://www.gdas.co.uk/>
- (b) Frank: <http://www.talktofrank.com/>

### 3. Behaviour and conduct if under the influence

Students with an alcohol or drug-related problem may come to the notice of staff or students through a change in their conduct and performance. It is in the interest of any student with a problem to be offered help and guidance at the earliest opportunity.

Any student attending University under the influence of alcohol or drugs who is deemed by staff to be disruptive or in breach of Health and Safety regulations or the Student Code of Conduct, will be asked to leave the premises. The staff members in asking a student to leave will make all reasonable efforts to ensure that the student can leave safely to an appropriate place. Note is particularly drawn to the importance of safe operating practice of dangerous machinery.

### 4. The Legal Framework

The use and supply of illegal drugs is a criminal offence in the United Kingdom. The Misuse of Drugs Act (1971) is intended to prevent the use of recreational drugs as well as the non-medicinal use of medicinal drugs.

Drugs are categorised from Class A to Class C with the latter carrying the lowest penalties. Further information is available on-line:

<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/drugs/drug-law/>

Please note;

- (a) These categories are subject to change
- (b) Criminal conviction for drugs misuse or supply can restrict future career and travel choices.

Whilst consumption of alcohol is not illegal, any resultant inappropriate behaviour may contravene the law.

## 5. University Consequences

The University will take appropriate investigatory action in the case of the use, possession or supply of illegal drugs and also in the case of unacceptable behaviour arising from excessive consumption of alcohol and/or drugs. As a consequence, this may lead to disciplinary action or the Fitness to Study procedures being invoked. This investigatory process may lead to a number of actions ranging from a verbal reprimand to a formal written warning, and ultimately to expulsion from the University.

Outcomes of both informal and formal stages of discipline will include positive support for the students wherever possible.

It is anticipated that an informal approach will resolve many disciplinary issues resulting from a student's substance misuse, and this will ordinarily be attempted first. When this is possible and the issue is resolved, no record will be kept in a student's file.

The University has and continues to have excellent relationships with the police in both Cheltenham and Gloucester; regular liaison meetings have established a proactive approach to student welfare issues. Where an informal approach has not been effective or where offences are more serious or repeated, the police may decide a criminal investigation is necessary, the University will fully support this action or instigate it if appropriate.

Any person who is not a member of the University found on University premises, possessing or suspected of being involved with illegal drugs will be removed from the premises immediately by Security. Where appropriate the police will be informed and the person concerned may be banned from the University for life. Any member of the University who had invited them on to the premises will be subject to investigatory action themselves for allowing the incident to take place.

Attention is drawn to the relevant paragraphs referring to substance misuse within the Halls of Residence terms and conditions for students living in University managed accommodation:

<http://insight.glos.ac.uk/departments/ss/accommodation/Pages/DisciplinaryProcedures.aspx>

Students may be immediately suspended or excluded from any of the University's facilities<sup>1</sup> by their Faculty Dean, by the Deputy Vice Chancellor or by the Director of Student Support in the following cases:

- (a) where their continued presence constitutes a threat to themselves or others;
- (b) where their behaviour seriously breaches the Student Charter or Student Code of Conduct:  
<http://www.glos.ac.uk/supporting/studentcharter/policies/pages/defaultx.aspx>
- (c) where their behaviour compromises the reputation of the University;
- (d) where students are found dealing drugs.

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<sup>1</sup> this covers field trips, placements, sports fixtures, SU events etc.