

## **Alcohol and Substance Misuse Policy**

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### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Queen's University (the University) is committed to promoting a safe and supportive environment in which to study and work. The University wishes to ensure that the health, safety and welfare of students and staff, and the reputation of the University, are not jeopardised through alcohol or substance misuse.
- 1.2 The University recognises its responsibility to promote safe behaviours regarding the consumption of alcohol and to comply with its legal requirements regarding the misuse of alcohol and substances on University premises. It also recognises its responsibility to consider the needs of those who, for personal, cultural or religious reasons, do not drink alcohol.
- 1.3 The University is committed to raising awareness of the dangers of alcohol or substance misuse and to actively discourage the misuse of alcohol or substances on University premises.
- 1.4 The University will offer support and encouragement to staff, who have a health problem caused by alcohol or substance misuse, to seek help and guidance.

### 2. Scope

- 2.1 This policy relates to all staff of the University, when working on University premises or elsewhere or undertaking activities on behalf of the University.
- 2.2 Contractors are also required to ensure that their staff are not permitted to work for the University or on University premises under the influence of alcohol or substances.

### 3. Purpose

3.1 The policy clarifies to staff:

- a) the University's view on alcohol or substance misuse;
- b) their responsibilities and those of others if they suspect they, a colleague, or student may have a problem with alcohol or substance misuse;
- c) how they can seek support if they consider that they or a colleague may have a problem with alcohol or substance misuse;
- d) how the University's duty of care interacts with other University policies, for example those relating to conduct and sickness absence;
- e) misconduct in relation to alcohol and substances will be dealt with in relation to the [Disciplinary Policy](#);
- f) poor performance in relation to alcohol and substances will be dealt with in line with the [Capability Policy](#).

#### 4. Legislative background

- 4.1 The University has statutory responsibilities and a duty of care for staff under a number of legislative instruments which include the:
- a) Disability Discrimination Act (Northern Ireland) 1995
  - b) Misuse of Drugs Order (N.I.) 2001
  - c) Psychoactive Substances Act (UK) 2016
  - d) Health & Safety at Work (N. I.) Order 1978
  - e) Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations (N.I.) 2000
- 4.2 The Health & Safety at Work (N.I.) Order also places a responsibility on staff to take reasonable care for the health & safety of themselves and others.
- 4.3 Some Faculties, Institutes, Schools & Directorates have staff who work in Healthcare Trusts, care settings or potentially hazardous working environments. These Faculties, Institutes, Schools & Directorates are also required to consider not only the risks to staff in such locations but also the safety of students, patients, children and vulnerable adults in such settings.
- 4.4 Addiction to alcohol or substances (other than properly prescribed medications) is not a disability under current disability legislation.

#### 5. Definitions

- 5.1 Alcohol or Substance Misuse – the intermittent or continual use of alcohol or substances (legal or illegal) which causes detriment to the member of staff's health, social functioning or work performance, and which affects efficiency, productivity, safety, attendance, timekeeping or conduct in the workplace.
- 5.2 Substances – illegal drugs, prescribed and non-prescribed medication, and solvents. This relates to any substance (other than alcohol) that produces physical, mental, emotional or behavioural changes in the user.
- 5.3 Staff – employed staff (including research assistants), people employed on contracts for services and students employed through the Student Job Shop or otherwise.

#### 6. Policy statement

- 6.1 During working hours and at all times whilst on work premises employees must be free from the influence of alcohol\* and substances (other than properly prescribed and administered medication). This will help to ensure the health and safety of employees and others with whom they come into contact, to maintain the efficient and effective operation of the business, and to ensure customers receive the service they require. For those reasons, the following guidelines will be strictly enforced.
- 6.2 Staff and contractors shall not:
- attend, or endeavour to attend work having consumed alcohol or substances likely to render him/her unfit or unsafe to do so;
  - attempt to sell or supply substances to any other person on University premises;
  - attempt to sell alcohol to any other person on University premises, except in relation to areas licenced for such sale;
  - be in possession drugs (other than over the counter or properly prescribed medication) in the workplace;

- consume alcohol on site, during work time, other than at work events where alcohol may be provided by the University, or with the prior knowledge/agreement of management<sup>1</sup>;
  - consume illegal substances or abuse alcohol or substances whilst at work;
  - bring illegal substances on University premises under any circumstances.
- 6.3 The University recognises that addiction to alcohol or substances is a medical condition and staff who have such a condition are encouraged to seek help and treatment, voluntarily and at an early stage, through their General Practitioner (GP).
- 6.4 In addition to services provided by their GP, medical advice and monitoring can be offered by the University Occupational Health Service and/or the staff counselling service, in confidence and with the informed consent of the staff member. Information relating to fitness for work, attendance for appointments and compliance with recommended programmes of treatment may be disclosed to People and Culture staff.
- 6.5 Inappropriate behaviour, conduct or performance will be managed through the application of the relevant University policy. Excessive use of alcohol or abuse of substances will not be accepted as a mitigating circumstance in the initiation of action under such policies.
- 6.6 The University's policies in relation to other matters, such as conduct and sickness absence, may be implemented in such a way as to provide an opportunity to seek appropriate treatment, if a member of staff has accepted he/she has a medical problem related to alcohol or substance misuse and is willing to accept such treatment. Continued implementation in this way will be conditional upon the individual complying with all medical treatment, monitoring and advice, including advice on abstinence or compliance with an agreed programme of phased reduction in alcohol or substance misuse.

## 7. Responsibilities

### 7.1 Staff:

- a) are responsible for ensuring their own behaviour and work performance remains appropriate whilst engaged in University activity and is not adversely affected by alcohol or substance misuse;
- b) who develop a disability (see 4.4) should update their online Equality information on Queen's Online, and where applicable enquire from the Head of Diversity and Inclusion whether or not a reasonable adjustment to their duties or ways of working would be supportive.
- c) who suspect they have an alcohol or substance related problem should seek professional help at an early stage, through their GP. Staff can access free, independent counselling services and can also confidentially refer themselves to the University Occupational Health Service. The Support section (Appendix 1) provides further information on sources of advice;

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<sup>1</sup> It is recognised that alcohol may be available at some University related events (whether held on the premises or not), such as parties, entertaining visitors or other work-related events. However, employees must be fit for work when conducting duties and are always expected to maintain and be responsible for their own standards of behaviour, with the emphasis on avoiding any actions that could lead to a complaint of misconduct or could harm the reputation of the University. Such complaints will be fully investigated and may lead to disciplinary action being taken. Non-alcoholic beverages should always be available as an alternative.

- d) should notify their line manager if they are taking prescribed and properly administered medication which may affect efficiency, productivity, attendance, timekeeping or conduct in the workplace (a referral to University Occupational Health may be required to determine fitness for work);
- e) should notify their line manager if they are taking prescribed medication which may affect their ability to work safely (a referral to University Occupational Health may be required to determine fitness for work);
- f) should inform their line manager if they suspect a contractor, student or another member of staff is under the influence of alcohol or substances whilst engaged in University activity, especially if the individual is exhibiting behaviour which could result in an accident or danger to themselves or others, or adversely impact on students. Members of staff may additionally decide to speak directly with the individual, however this should be done sensitively and ensuring their own personal safety. Immediate contact with University Security may also be necessary;
- g) should take immediate action if they suspect that a student is under the influence of alcohol or substances, or that their performance is impaired through consumption of alcohol or substances - guidance is available from Academic and Student Affairs.

## 7.2 Senior Managers:

- a) should ensure that this policy is implemented fairly and equitably within their Faculty, Directorate or School;
- b) should ensure that, at events where alcohol is being served, non-alcoholic alternatives are available;
- c) should ensure, where relevant, there are systems for notification of third parties (e.g. healthcare trusts, regulatory bodies or the Police Service for Northern Ireland (PSNI)) of their concerns relating to a member of staff's alcohol or substance misuse. This should only be necessary when they have reasonable grounds to believe the person may pose a safety risk to themselves or others, or if there is a legal requirement to do so. In these circumstances the Director or Head of School will normally notify the member of staff before proceeding.

## 7.3 Managers:

- a) should ensure risk assessments are carried out for work under their control;
- b) should discuss with the member of staff, as soon as practicable, if behaviour, performance or absence indicates a possible problem with alcohol or substance misuse. If the member of staff indicates that they have, or may have, an alcohol or substance misuse problem they should be referred to the University Occupational Health Service;
- c) suspecting that a member of staff is under the influence of alcohol or substances at work, or that their performance is immediately impaired through consumption of alcohol or substances, should seek guidance, where practically possible, from their HR Business Partner prior to taking action.

7.4 The member of staff should be sent home for the day due to incapacity. The manager may need to consider whether it is safe for the member of staff to travel home independently. It may be necessary to make arrangements for the member of staff to be accompanied, to contact a friend or family member or to arrange a taxi.

- 7.5 The manager should arrange to see the member of staff the following working day to investigate the incident. If the member of staff discloses an alcohol or substance misuse problem or if after investigation, the manager considers the abnormal behaviour or performance may be due to alcohol or substance misuse, the member of staff should be referred to the University Occupational Health Service for assessment.
- 7.6 The University Occupational Health Service (OHS):
- a) will advise managers on the employee's ability to perform their duties;
  - b) will assess staff referred for a medical opinion on their fitness for work;
  - c) will monitor progress and advise on the rehabilitation of staff back to work after treatment of an alcohol or substance problem;
  - d) will record and provide anonymised information to the Director of People and Culture on the implementation of this policy.
- 7.7 The Wellbeing Team (through a network of providers) will:
- a) provide information to staff, through health promotion / wellbeing activities, on safe drinking, on the harmful effects associated with alcohol/substance abuse and their effects on health and safety, alternatives to alcohol and skills to enable individuals to limit the potential for abuse;
  - b) provide advice to staff on the early recognition of individuals misusing alcohol or substances and the resources available to support these individuals.

## 8. Compliance

Adherence to this policy will be reported annually via the Health & Safety Compliance Committee and will review:

- Number of alcohol/substance related accidents
- Number of staff disciplined in relation to alcohol/substance misuse
- Number of staff referred to OHS with alcohol/substance health related issues

## 9. Implementation of Policy

This policy will be regularly reviewed in light of changing circumstances or new legislation and guidance

## 10. Section 75 Screening

This policy has been screened out with mitigation as per Equality Commission's guidance on screening with no adverse impact with regard to equality of opportunity and/or good relations for people within the equality and good relations categories.

Support Available

## 1. University Support

The Occupational Health Service is available for guidance and advice to help staff return to work.

The University's Employee Assistance Programme, delivered by Inspire, also provide free, confidential and professional help 24 hours per day – 0808 800 0016

## 2. External Support Organisations

## NIDacts

<http://www.drugsandalcoholni.info/>

## Addiction NI

40 Elmwood Avenue, Belfast, BT9 6AZ

Tel. (028) 90664434

<http://addictionni.com/>

## Dunlewey Addition Services

247 Cavehill Road, Belfast, BT 15 5BS

Tel: 02890 392547

<http://dunlewey.net>

## Alcoholics Anonymous

Camden Street, Belfast, BT9 6AT

Tel. (028) 90321114

<https://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk/>

## Al-Anon (group support for family members)

Peace House, 224 Lisburn Road, Belfast BT9 6GE

Tel: 02890 68 2368

[www.al-anonuk.org.uk](http://www.al-anonuk.org.uk)

## Alcohol Concern

Waterbridge House, Loman Street, E1 0EE

Tel. (020) 7928 7377

[www.alcoholconcern.org.uk](http://www.alcoholconcern.org.uk)

## FRANK (friendly, confidential drugs advice)

Tel. 0300 123 6600, Text 82111

[www.talktofrank.com](http://www.talktofrank.com)

## Narcotics Anonymous

Tel. 0845 373 3366

[www.ukna.org](http://www.ukna.org)