

Student Drug and Alcohol Policy

Introduction

This policy relates to the use of alcohol and other drugs that are controlled by the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971, the Psychoactive Substances Act 2016 and the unauthorised use and possession of prescription medicines regulated by the Medicines Act 1968, by students.

Drug and alcohol misuse amongst our students risks impacting negatively not only on their physical health, psychological wellbeing, finances and relationships, but also on their academic performance and attainment, the residential, social and recreational experiences of fellow students and others and damage to the University's reputation. Additionally, a drinking culture amongst one group of students, particularly if this is a dominant group, can seriously undermine attempts to integrate students with different cultural and behavioural norms into the UEA community.

The University is committed to providing a safe, healthy and sustainable working, learning and living environment for all students, staff and visitors.

1. Purpose and scope

1.1 The aims of the Student Drug and Alcohol policy are:

- to promote a healthy lifestyle and minimise drug and alcohol-related harm to individuals and to UEA and local communities, and
- to fulfil the University's relevant legal, welfare, health and safety and educational responsibilities.

1.2 Its objective is to provide a framework for responding to student drug and alcohol-related difficulties and concerns by:

- raising awareness of the risks of drug and alcohol misuse to UEA students and staff
- promoting campus-wide measures to reduce drug and alcohol-related harm and nuisance
- guiding students and staff in respect of their responsibilities
- ensuring that appropriate guidance and training is available for staff whose duties may bring them into contact with students whose behaviour suggests that they may be risking harm to self or others
- ensuring that students who are at risk of serious drug or alcohol dependency are offered guidance and support, including sign-posting to specialist agencies when appropriate
- ensuring that students are provided with opportunities to undertake treatment without undue negative impact on the achievement of their academic objectives with the appropriate use of study procedures

- ensuring that UEA’s disciplinary procedures are appropriate and effective in reducing the incidence and impact of drug and alcohol misuse
- promoting good relations with the local community by responding effectively to concerns raised about student behaviour
- developing a range of opportunities, on campus, that are accessible and welcoming to students who do not wish to consume alcohol.

The University’s approach to tackling drug and alcohol misuse takes a mainly educative approach, with disciplinary procedures used where appropriate.

1.3 Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy

UEA and uea(su) have made the mental health and wellbeing of our community a strategic priority. We have committed to working towards the Student Minds Mental Health Charter, where we will proactively strive to create an environment and a context that promotes and enhances mental and emotional wellbeing.

We recognise that, for reasons that are complex, multifactorial and personal, some of our students have difficulties with their mental health and the support we provide must reflect this. The use of drugs and alcohol can impact on mental health and some use alcohol and drugs to try to cope with a mental health condition. Drugs and alcohol may trigger or worsen a health condition and some students with a mental health condition are more vulnerable to problematic use and related harms. We aim to support students with underlying mental health problems by empowering them to learn healthier coping strategies.

2. Definitions

- Alcohol misuse: the drinking of intoxicating liquor can be detrimental, whereby a student’s ability to study and work is impaired, their attendance is interfered with, they endanger the safety of others or cause personal harm, or they exhibit physical, mental, emotional or behavioural changes.
- Drug misuse: the taking of drugs, including the use and abuse of other substances, whereby a student’s ability to study and work is impaired, their attendance is interfered with, they endanger the safety of others or cause personal harm, or they exhibit physical, mental, emotional or behavioural changes.
- The term ‘drugs’ has been used in this policy to include all drugs and substances, legal or illegal, which adversely affect behaviour or performance.
- “Dealing” is the term used in this policy to include possession with intent to supply which is a criminal offence and a matter taken very seriously by the University. Students involved in this activity will be subject to disciplinary procedures.
- Psychoactive substance
 1. In the Psychoactive Substances Act 2016 ‘psychoactive substance’ means any substance which:
 - (a) is capable of producing a psychoactive effect in a person who consumes it; and
 - (b) is not an exempted substance (section 3/Schedule 1 of the Act).

2. For the purposes of this Act a substance produces a psychoactive effect in a person if, by stimulating or depressing the person's central nervous system, it affects the person's mental functioning or emotional state; and references to a substance's psychoactive effects are to be read accordingly.

3. For the purposes of this Act, a person consumes a substance if the person causes or allows the substance, or fumes given off by the substance, to enter the person's body in any way.

- Legal highs: A term that is still widely used, and before the Psychoactive Substances Act 2016 came into force, related to substances that were used recreationally, but were not controlled under the Misuse of Drugs Act (1971), not licensed for legal use, and not regulated as a medicine (Medicines Act 1968) . Now all such substances are illegal and the term 'legal highs' is incorrect.

3. Legislation

- The Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 states that the misuse of drugs applies to the 'non-medical use of drugs that are only intended for use in medical treatment and the use of drugs that have no medical purposes.' Such drugs are controlled under this legislation. The University works within this framework and is therefore clear that the possession and/or use of illegal drugs on its premises is unacceptable and breaches may be subject to disciplinary or legal action.

- The Psychoactive Substances Act 2016: defines 'psychoactive substance' and makes it an offence to produce, supply, offer to supply, possess with intent to supply, import or export psychoactive substances

4. Roles and responsibilities

4.1 **Chief Resource Officer** is the University's Safeguarding and Prevent Lead and is responsible for:

- the oversight and management of safeguarding policies
- ensuring these policies are easily accessible to students and staff
- ensuring that these policies are monitored and reviewed in accordance with changes to legislation and guidance on substance misuse
- the strategic oversight regarding appropriate university staff being provided with information, advice and training regarding drug and alcohol use.

4.2 **Director of Student Services** is responsible for the welfare and good order of students

4.3 Student Services

- provide a clear referral point for individual students who are concerned about their own drinking or drug use or those of fellow students
- develop and maintain a range of up-to-date information, support and guidance resources for students

- develop and maintain relationships with local drug and alcohol harm reduction experts and service providers and refer students for specialist drug and alcohol support as appropriate
- maintain confidential records of reported drug and alcohol abuse. All personal data will be processed by the University in accordance with the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulations 2018
- provide advice and guidance to staff dealing with issues relating to student drug and alcohol use
- develop health promotion and educational activities focused on reducing drug and alcohol-related harm and to help students understand the risks and potential consequences of drug and alcohol use
- provide practical advice, support and life skills to students, e.g. budgeting, debt advice and signposting to hardship funds
- provide individual counselling and other therapeutic interventions
- where a student has caring responsibilities for children or vulnerable adults and the nature of their use of drugs or alcohol presents a potential risk to those they care for, information may need to be shared externally under UEA's Safeguarding policy.
- in collaboration with the Director of Governance and Assurance, the Director of Student Services, the Student Misconduct Team, Security and Accommodation, ensure all UEA disciplinary policies and processes are kept under review to make sure that they act as both a deterrent to breaches of UEA Regulations and provide incentives and support to modify harmful behaviours
- support uea(su) in its aim to develop and maintain effective policies and procedures relating to student drug and alcohol use.

4.3 Academic and Professional Services staff

UEA staff members have a responsibility to:

- be aware of the signs and symptoms of disruptive behaviour or impaired performance when drug or alcohol consumption is a possible cause, attending relevant training sessions or consulting guidance materials as appropriate
- refer students whom they suspect to have drug or alcohol dependency problems to relevant internal or external services for support, seeking guidance as appropriate from Student Services
- if a student has caring responsibilities for children or vulnerable adults and their use of drugs including alcohol may have a potential risk to those they care for, contact Student Services' Safeguarding team by emailing safeguarding@uea.ac.uk
- ensure that students who display symptoms of drug or alcohol use that disrupt teaching events, study or living environments or present behaviours that breach UEA General Regulations or other regulations relating to student behaviour, are referred to UEA's non-academic disciplinary procedures

- if a student, studying on a professional course, presents behaviours that breach the standards defined by the relevant professional bodies, ensure that appropriate action is taken.

The **sale and consumption of alcohol** is regulated at both national and a local level. There are several parts of UEA's campus that are licensed for the sale and/or consumption of alcohol. These include some UEA catering outlets, parts of UEA(su) and the University shop. In relation to those venues where UEA is the licensee, the University is responsible for ensuring adherence to current licensing laws and the terms and conditions of the individual licenses held. Similarly, UEA(su) bears the licensee responsibility for those venues where UEA(su) is the licensee.

UEA's policy and procedures for the protection of students on UEA undergraduate and postgraduate degree programmes who are **under-18 years old** reminds the institution that it is an offence for a person under-18 to purchase alcohol and for anyone to sell alcohol to such a person. It is also an offence to purchase alcohol on behalf of some under-18, whether this is for consumption in licensed premises or publicly elsewhere.

UEA and uea(su) recognise the complexity of issues relating to drugs including alcohol and supports further debate and research.

Where a student is found in possession of substances believed to be illegal the police will be informed. This approach minimises the risk of harm to individual students and the University community.

5. Debate and research

UEA is committed to academic freedom, freedom of speech and to leading and contributing to research with impact. UEA appreciates the continuing need to understand use of and attitudes to the use of drugs and alcohol, within its own population, in order to implement the most effective harm reduction initiatives. As part of this commitment, UEA and uea(su) will jointly promote the annual national Students Alcohol and Drug Survey to help us understand patterns of behaviour relating to drugs and alcohol in our community.

6. Further relevant information

Find out more about the full range of services and support available from Student Services: <https://my.uea.ac.uk/division/student-services>

Students can report concerns to the University via Report and Support: <https://reportandsupport.uea.ac.uk>

UEA Security aims to provide a safe and secure environment for all staff, students and visitors to campus:

<https://my.uea.ac.uk/divisions/estates/our-departments/access-and-security>

The Residential Life Team provide support to students overnight living on campus and can be contacted directly here: Residentiallife.managers@uea.ac.uk

The Student Information Zone is a point of contact, on campus, for information about all aspects of university life and runs regular drop-ins with external agencies: <https://www.uea.ac.uk/uea-life/student-support/student-information-zone>

Advice(SU) is the Student Union's independent advice and advocacy service: <http://www.uea.su/advice-housing>

UEA Medical Centre (UMS) keeps an updated list of local support groups: <https://www.umsuea.co.uk>

The Matthew Project provides counselling for those with problems related to their own or another's drug or alcohol use: www.matthewproject.org Tel: 01603 764754 (24 hr helpline) or Tel: 01603 626123 (general number)

Norfolk Alcohol and Drug Behaviour Change Service:

[Norfolk Alcohol and Drug Behaviour Change Service \(changegrowlive.org\)](http://changegrowlive.org)

The Government have a comprehensive website for reference:

<https://www.talktofrank.com/drugs-a-z>

Related UEA policies, regulations and procedures

General Regulations for students: [Policies and Regulations \(uea.ac.uk\)](#)

UEA's Disciplinary procedures:

[University Disciplinary and Investigative Procedures and Powers - About \(uea.ac.uk\)](#)

Extenuating Circumstances procedure: [Extenuating Circumstances \(uea.ac.uk\)](#)

7. Review of the Student Drugs and Alcohol Policy

The University's Student Experience Committee will receive further updates and the policy will be formally reviewed in the academic year 2023/24.

Review of Policy	
February 2023	Head of Student Services (Life and Learning)