

Drugs and Alcohol Policy

Introduction

1. This policy addresses the use and abuse of legal (eg alcohol, prescription drugs, and performance enhancing drugs) or illegal drugs by students.
2. The University recognises that drinking can be an enjoyable and harmless feature of student life. The vast majority of students are over 18 years old and therefore legally free to consume alcohol. However, the University has a concern for its students and wishes to try and protect its students from the harmful effects of **excessive** consumption of alcohol.
3. The University recognises that it is a **criminal offence** to take, possess, manufacture or sell illegal drugs. At the same time we are concerned for students' wellbeing and the impact drugs may have on their health, academic and personal life. It is strongly recommended that any student experiencing drug-related issues should seek medical help and counselling.
4. The misuse of legal drugs (including alcohol, prescription drugs, and performance enhancing drugs) can similarly have impacts upon your health, academic and personal life. Any student who feels they are forming a dependency upon legal drugs (or forming some other kind of deleterious relationship with them) should seek medical help.

Statement on the Use and Misuse of Drugs

5. The possession and supply of those drugs covered by the Misuse of Drugs Act (1971) is illegal.
6. The use and misuse of drugs that are not classed as illegal can also have severe detrimental effects upon the wellbeing of the user and those around them. The use and abuse of such drugs may also bring the University into disrepute.
7. Students should note that a criminal record arising from the possession or use of illegal drugs can lead to students being barred from certain professions (such as teaching and certain health professions) after University. As such the University has a duty to inform certain professional bodies in the event of a student breaching the Policy on Drugs and Alcohol, or receiving a criminal conviction for such a breach; such actions would be taken in accordance with the University's Fitness to Practise policy and procedures.

University Response to the Misuse of Drugs and Alcohol

8. The University has a duty of care to all its students and will seek to offer help and support to any of its students who come to it with problems relating to the use and abuse of legal and illegal drugs (including referral to suitable external services/agencies).

9. The duty of care extends to the wider University community. As such it may be that the University may use disciplinary measures if the conduct of students affected by legal or illegal drugs impacts upon the wellbeing of their peers or otherwise brings the University into disrepute (whether such incidences occur on University premises or not).
10. The University could bring disciplinary proceedings against those whose behaviour is illegal, in breach of the Regulations for Conduct or otherwise brings the University into disrepute. Being under the influence of drugs is not seen as a mitigating factor in disciplinary matter.
11. Penalties incurred will depend upon the circumstances and severity of the case, but may ultimately lead to expulsion from the University.

See also

Related Policies

- Calendar (see §G for 'Regulations for Conduct')
www.reading.ac.uk/calendar
- Fitness to Practise
www.reading.ac.uk/web/FILES/qualitysupport/FitnesstoPractise.pdf
- Smokefree Policy
www.reading.ac.uk/web/FILES/health-and-safety/University_of_Reading_Smoking_Policy_Issue_1_May_08.pdf

Guidance and further information

- Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 (including list of Controlled Drugs under Schedule 2)
www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1971/38
- Halls Handbook
www.reading.ac.uk/internal/student/student-community/currentstudents/CurrentStudentsInHalls.aspx
- Guidance for students
www.reading.ac.uk/internal/student/OnlineStudentHandbook/osh-drugs-and-alcohol.aspx
- Guidance for Wardens
To be distributed to Wardens
- Personal Tutors' Handbook
www.reading.ac.uk/internal/personaltutor/Commonissues/pt-Alcoholanddrugs.aspx