

Student Drugs and Alcohol Policy

1. Introduction

The University is committed to providing a safe, healthy and productive working environment for all its students, staff and visitors. This policy sets out the University's aim to reduce and prevent alcohol and drug problems within the student body.

Staff and students have worked together to develop our Student Charter. It recognises the importance of an effective partnership commitment, in which the University and its staff have professional obligations but where students are also responsible for themselves as learners and as individuals.

This policy has been implemented following consultation with the Reading University Students Union (RUSU).

2. Policy Aims and Objectives

Aim

- To clearly state the University's position on the use of alcohol and drugs.

The University will:

- Ensure the University complies with appropriate legislation;
- Have clear rules regarding alcohol and drugs;
- Provide students with education about the adverse health effects of alcohol and drugs;
- Encourage the early identification of students who may be experiencing alcohol or drug problems;
- Provide support for students experiencing alcohol and drug problems.

3. Definitions

- **Alcohol misuse** - Alcohol misuse is defined as any drinking, either intermittent or continual which interferes with a person's health and/or social functioning and/or work capability or conduct.
- **Drugs** - Any drug or psychoactive substance, whether illegal, prescribed or over the counter or solvents such as glue, butane, etc. In the case of prescribed and over the counter drugs, their possession and use is acknowledged as legitimate if taken responsibly and as per the instruction of the GP or Pharmacist where appropriate.
- **Drug misuse** - The use of illegal drugs or psychoactive substances, the deliberate use of prescribed or over the counter drugs (when not for a medical condition) and the use of solvents, either intermittent or continual which interferes with a person's health and/or social functioning and/or work capability or conduct.

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4. Education

The University is committed to promoting healthy lifestyles to its students and recognises that many students will consume alcohol in a safe and controlled environment. However, the University has a duty of care to ensure the necessary guidance and support is available if the consumption of alcohol becomes a problem for that student or for others.

The University does not, however, tolerate the use of illegal drugs or psychoactive substances in any way and will take strict disciplinary action against any student who is found in possession of these substances. In addition, any students who are identified as having misused these substances will be referred to specialist support as it may lead to physical and psychological harm.

Alcohol and drug problems are prevalent in society and are associated with a wide variety of issues for students. These issues include ill-health, absence, reduced work performance, accidents and unacceptable behaviour. The consumption of alcohol and drugs has implications for the wider University community since these substances can impair co-ordination, judgement and decision making.

Advice and guidance on the use of alcohol and drugs is available to students via Student Services and the Reading University Students Union. Information on the support available can be found here:

- http://student.reading.ac.uk/essentials/_support-and-wellbeing/medical-and-general-health/drugs-and-alcohol.aspx
- <https://www.rusu.co.uk/advice/welfare/>

Updates on current health guidance in relation to safe and sensible drinking and the risks associated with using drugs will be disseminated by means of written material and email communication. New students will be made aware of their responsibilities in relation to this policy via the relevant induction programme. This policy will be sent to all students and staff on launch and will thereafter be held on Essentials.

5. Support

Alcohol and drug problems may become apparent through a number of means, for example the following (particularly in combination) may result in problems being suspected:

- Persistent short-term absence;
- Unauthorised absence;
- Poor time keeping;
- Reduced work performance;
- Poor working relationships;
- Deterioration in appearance;
- Poor or unacceptable behaviour;
- Absence due to ill health.

However, it must be remembered that these factors can have many other causes. Students experiencing alcohol or drug problems may first become apparent to their peers or colleagues. If a student or member of staff suspects alcohol or drug problems in a student, they should:

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- Encourage the student to seek help from the Student Welfare Team. Information about the Student Welfare Team can be found here: <https://www.rusu.co.uk/advice/welfare/>;
- Encourage the student to seek help from local support agencies. Information on the support available can be found here: <http://student.reading.ac.uk/essentials/support-and-wellbeing/medical-and-general-health/drugs-and-alcohol.aspx>

Staff and students can also contact the Student Welfare Team directly for advice on how to support a student whom they suspect may have an alcohol or drug problem.

Students who suspect or know they have a drug or alcohol problem are encouraged to seek support at an early stage and if they chose to self-refer to either University or external support agencies, confidential advice will be given to them.

It is also recognised that staff and students may be supporting relatives/cohabiters who themselves are suffering from alcohol or drug problems. Whilst the University is not able to support the relatives/cohabiters directly, appropriate support and advice will be given to the staff or student to help them manage the situation.

6. Policy Rules

Students are reminded of the following specific Regulations for Student Conduct:

a) A student must act within the law and not engage in any activity or behaviour that is likely to bring the University or any of its staff, officers, students, subsidiaries or trusts into disrepute.

d) A student must not use, supply or be in possession of illegal drugs or psychoactive substances.

j) A student must not engage in conduct which significantly or repeatedly disrupts or obstructs, or is likely to disrupt or obstruct, any member of the University in the performance of their duties. This includes students who are under the influence of drink or drugs during academic activities.

o) A student must not do anything or neglect to do something which creates a fire risk or in any way, puts the health and safety of others or property at risk.

The University requires all students to attend academic related activities free from the effects of alcohol and non-prescribed/prescribed/over the counter drugs, unless medicines are taken to treat health conditions as advised by a health care practitioner

It is not acceptable to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs or consume alcohol or drugs during academic activities and University employment (including paid and un-paid breaks during employment), work placements and study abroad periods.

Students of the University found in possession of illegal drugs or using illegal drugs will be considered under the Student Disciplinary Procedures and the University may choose to report the matter to the police. Any incidents involving the illegal supply of drugs will always be reported to the Police.

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Students are responsible for themselves and their guests, regardless of what substances they have taken. The University may take disciplinary action in response to any misconduct, whether or not related to the misuse of alcohol or drugs, that occurs on University owned or operated premises and facilities and during any University related activities. This also includes (but is not limited to) work placements, fieldtrips and study abroad.

7. Misconduct

Where the use or misuse of alcohol and drugs causes the behaviour of student to fall below the expected standard, the University reserves the right to utilise its Disciplinary Procedures to investigate and deal with such behaviour.

All students are required to comply with the Regulations for Student Conduct, as per the Terms and Conditions, and any students living in halls of residence are also required to comply with the Residency Agreement.

Misconduct in relation to drugs and alcohol will normally be investigated by a Warden or other senior member of staff. The matter may be referred to the Student Disciplinary Committee which has a range of sanctions available to it, up to and including the permanent removal of a student from the University.

The Student Disciplinary Procedures, Regulations for Student Conduct can be found here:

<http://student.reading.ac.uk/essentials/the-important-stuff/an-a-to-z-of-policies-and-procedures.aspx>

The staff responsible for managing the University's licensed premises also have authority under the Licensing Act to impose penalties and deal with misconduct in an appropriate manner. This authority is independent of the University's own procedures and can be applied in conjunction with, or separately to, any University proceedings and may include exclusion from parts of the University.

8. Confidentiality

It is the University's aim to deal with conduct matters sensitively and with due respect for the privacy of any individuals involved. All parties must treat as confidential any information communicated to them in connection with a matter which is subject to this policy, subject to the need to seek appropriate advice and guidance. The University will, during or at the conclusion of any procedures, inform such members of its staff as it considers necessary, having due regard to all the relevant circumstances.

In cases where the University holds personal data relating to individuals as a result of this policy, the University will comply with the provisions of the Data Protection Act 2018, and all associated legislation at all times. This includes, but is not limited to, ensuring that any personal data help on such individuals is:

- not excessive but relevant and limited to the purpose for which it is held;
- held securely (and in accordance with the university policies);
- not shared with any other third parties (unless this can be lawfully shared in accordance with data protection legislation); and

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- not held for longer than is necessary and in line with our retention schedules.

9. Equal Opportunities

This policy will apply equally to all students of the University.

10. Monitoring and Review

This policy will take effect from 01 July 2020 and will be reviewed annually by the University Board for Teaching and Learning and Student Experience.

Version	Owner	Reviewed	Approved by	Approval Date	Effective From
1	Governance	Annually	UBTLSE	17 June 2020	01 July 2020