

Drugs and Alcohol

This guideline describes the management of drugs and alcohol in the workplace. It is university policy that persons working in or for the University, arrive at work unaffected by drugs or alcohol and remain that way while they are on duty. Illicit drugs are not permitted on university premises under any circumstances.

Definitions

For the purpose of this guideline:

Affected by drug use or alcohol consumption (including drugs prescribed by a Doctor), means that:

- a person's ability to work competently and safely is reduced, or
- there is increased risk of being involved in an accident and the safety of other people or property are in reasonable doubt, or
- if clinical tests are performed, biologically active concentrations of substances are measured in the body.

Unaffected by drug use or alcohol consumption (including drugs prescribed by a Doctor) means that:

- a person is fully aware of potential hazards to themselves and others around them, and
- if clinical tests are performed, results will be negative or biologically inactive concentrations of substances are measured in the body.

Illicit Drugs, means those drugs that are prohibited by the Controlled Substances Act, 1984. Examples include alkoxyamphetamines, cannabis, heroin, isomethadone and LSD

Roles

Executive Deans and Directors should undertake the following:

- follow this guidance for their area of responsibility and have the authority to act immediately should they have the need to do so
- manage the work performance of staff and/or monitoring the performance of persons working in their area of responsibility
- maintain confidentiality when a person, for whom they have responsibility under this procedure, advises that they have been prescribed medication by a medical practitioner if that medication can have an effect on their work performance or if it increases the risk to their own safety or the safety of others. (Staff shall not be disadvantaged or discriminated against when notifying a potential risk)
- provide opportunities and information for support and assistance for staff or others with alcohol or drug related problems, which affects their work performance through the University's Employee Assistance Program.

Staff, Students, Volunteers, Contractors and Visitors should:

- ensure that they are not, by the consumption of alcohol or a drug, in a state, which may affect job performance or endanger their own safety or the safety of any other person
- ensure that they are not adversely affected by drug or alcohol use during working hours, this includes staff engaged in afterhours work, casual or contract work
- ensure they are fit for duty and to meet established standards for job performance, conduct and safety
- consult with their manager in relation to concerns about the use of drugs or alcohol at university worksites
- advise their immediate supervisor that they have been prescribed medication by a medical practitioner if that medication can have an effect on their work performance or if it increases the risk to their own safety or the safety of others. (The manager or supervisor shall maintain confidentiality. Staff will not be disadvantaged or discriminated against by notifying a potential risk)
- immediately consult with their manager, supervisor or representative if they have concerns about working with another worker because of possible increased risk to health or safety from the use of non-prescription drugs or alcohol consumption.

Managing risk

The use of drugs including alcohol can reduce a person's ability to work safely and be fully aware of potential safety risks to themselves and others around them. Individuals should be aware of the reasons why they should not try to work under the influence of drugs or alcohol and understand the potential risks to themselves and others.

There is no uniform method available to assess the risk of drug or alcohol consumption in the workplace. The severity of drug effects is different for each person and the potential risk caused by drug impairment varies according to the task being performed. Each case should be assessed individually by taking into account the person involved, the type of work being performed and the risk created by the individual being affected by drugs or alcohol.

Commonsense should prevail.

A systematic approach shall be used to manage the issue of drug and alcohol consumption and its effect in the workplace by planning, educating, counselling or carrying out disciplinary action where appropriate.

Persons affected by alcohol or another drug

If a manager, supervisor or staff member observes a person behaving as if they are affected by drugs or alcohol while working, then action must be taken to preserve the safety of that person, others and university property. Inappropriate behaviour of this type should be reported to the manager or supervisor as soon as possible.

First occurrence of a person affected

It is recommended that the manager or supervisor provide the affected person with the opportunity to invite a colleague of their choice, such as a health and safety or union representative to be present during the initial discussion. The following steps are recommended:

- The staff member should be offered an opportunity to explain their behaviour and modify it.
- The staff member should be informed of the potential risk to their own safety and the safety of others due to their behaviour or impaired work performance.
- Where possible, the staff member should be redirected to alternative work areas or duties until assessed safe to return to previous duties.
- Where the above is not possible, the manager or supervisor should ensure that the affected person leaves the workplace for the day or shift and appropriate arrangements should be made to ensure safe transport of the staff member; the absence will be covered by sick leave.
- The incident should be documented, and the staff member counselled by the manager or supervisor at the commencement of the next scheduled shift or work period. The counselling interview, which also should be documented, should include the process to be implemented if the occurrence is repeated. This should be done in the presence of a representative of the staff member or Health and Safety Representative.
- The manager or supervisor should ensure that rehabilitation and assistance is offered to any staff member who is identified as having an alcohol or drug related problem, which affects their work performance.

Repeat occurrence of a person affected

If alcohol or drug related problems continue then disciplinary procedures in line with the provisions of the University Act, Statutes and By-Laws should be followed.

Students affected by alcohol or another drug

If it is considered that a student is affected by alcohol or another drug and it is possible that their actions will result in a compromise of safety, staff should call Security immediately. Security will attend and take the necessary action to ensure the safety of personnel and the student.

Social functions

Alcohol may only be provided at a management-endorsed social function on University premises when staff or others who consume alcohol will not be expected to return to work.

Where alcohol is provided, "good service practice" will apply, i.e. food must be provided, low alcohol, and non-alcohol alternatives must be available. A nominee will be selected by local management to oversee the function.

Employee Assistance Program

It is suggested that a staff member be offered counselling and referral to relevant rehabilitation providers, including the University's Employee Assistance Program. Access to such services is through self-referral. This service is funded by the University and is available by contacting **1300 277 924** for confidential assistance.

Illicit Drugs

The carrying, storing or use of Illicit drugs on University premises shall result in disciplinary action, which may include dismissal, and/or referral to the Police.

Sale, transfer or manufacture of illicit substances in the workplace will result in dismissal. This includes the distribution of prescription drugs except where a licence is held.

For further advice contact the [Safety & Wellbeing Team](#).