

Student Drug and Alcohol Policy

Introduction

This policy addresses student use of alcohol, controlled drugs (as defined by the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 and Psychoactive Substances Act 2016), and unauthorized prescription medications.

Misuse can harm students' health, wellbeing, finances, relationships, and academic performance, while also affecting others' experiences and the University's reputation.

The University is committed to ensuring a safe, healthy, and inclusive environment for all.

Scope

All students, apprentices, and researchers at the university with guidance for all staff in relation to the issues outlined

Policy Statement

1. Purpose and scope

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

- 1.1.1 to reduce drug and alcohol-related harm to individuals and to UEA and local communities
- 1.1.2 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:

- 1.2.1 raising awareness of the risks of drug and alcohol misuse to UEA students and staff
- 1.2.2 promoting UEA community wide measures to reduce drug and alcohol-related harm and nuisance
- 1.2.3 guiding staff in respect of their responsibilities
- 1.2.4 highlights the requirements of students under the Student General Regulations
- 1.2.5 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 placing others at risk of harm

- 1.2.6** ensuring that students who are at risk of serious drug or alcohol dependency are offered guidance and support, including sign-posting to and support to access specialist agencies when appropriate
- 1.2.7** 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 like any other health, medical or personal issues
- 1.2.8** ensuring that UEA's disciplinary procedures are appropriate and effective in dealing with reported cases of drug and alcohol use
- 1.2.9** the university takes a primarily harm reduction approach to drug and alcohol misuse, with disciplinary procedures used where appropriate
- 1.2.10** promoting good relations with the local community by responding effectively to concerns raised about student behaviour
- 1.2.11** maintain and promote a range of extra-curricular opportunities, on campus, that are accessible and welcoming to students who do not wish to consume alcohol.
- 1.2.12** UEA and uea(su) recognise the appropriate consumption of medicinal cannabis and will create clear processes to support this use safely

2 Definitions

- 2.1** Alcohol misuse: the drinking of intoxicating liquor causes detriment or harm, including circumstances where 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.
- 2.2** Drug misuse: the taking of drugs not prescribed by a registered healthcare professional, including the use and abuse of other substances as defined in 2.3, where 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.
- 2.3** The term 'drugs' has been used in this policy to include all drugs and substances, legal or illegal, which adversely affect behaviour or performance.

3 Legislation

- 3.1** 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.
- 3.2** 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** The Registrar and University Secretary is the University's Safeguarding and Prevent Lead and is responsible for:

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

4.2 Deputy Director of Student and Academic Services (Student Journey and support services) is responsible for the welfare and good order of students

4.3 Student Journey and Support Services will

- 4.3.1** Recognise the effects of alcohol and drug consumption or misuses on mental health and wellbeing, put in appropriate support measures and consider Drugs and Alcohol in wider work in this area.
- 4.3.2** provide a clear referral point for individual students who are concerned about their own drinking or drug use or those of fellow students
- 4.3.3** develop and maintain a range of up-to-date information, support and guidance resources for students
- 4.3.4** 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
- 4.3.5** 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
- 4.3.6** provide advice and guidance to staff dealing with issues relating to student drug and alcohol use
- 4.3.7** 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
- 4.3.8** provide practical advice, support and life skills to students, e.g. budgeting, debt advice and signposting to hardship funds
- 4.3.9** provide individual generic (ie. not specialist drug and alcohol) therapeutic support and interventions
- 4.3.10** 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.
- 4.3.11** in collaboration with the Director of Legal, Governance and Compliance, the Deputy Director SAS (SJS), the Student Conduct and Complaints Team, Security and Accommodation, ensure all UEA 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
- 4.3.12** engage with uea(su) to maintain effective policies and procedures relating to student drug and alcohol use with a harm reduction approach

4.4 Student and Academic Services Staff - UEA staff members have a responsibility to:

- 4.4.1** 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
- 4.4.2** 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 Journey and Support Services
- 4.4.3** 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 Journey and Support Services Risk Management and Safeguarding team as per the safeguarding policy and procedures [Safeguarding \(uea.ac.uk\)](http://uea.ac.uk)
- 4.4.4** 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 and for support
- 4.4.5** 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.

5 The sale and consumption of alcohol

- 5.1** 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.
- 5.2** 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.
- 5.3** UEA's policy and procedures for the protection of students on UEA undergraduate and postgraduate degree programmes who are **under-18 years old** state 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.

6 Response to students found in possessions of illegal substances

- 6.1** UEA and uea(su) recognise the complexity of issues relating to drugs including alcohol and supports further debate and research.
- 6.2** Where a student is found in possession of substances believed to be illegal the UEA confiscation Policy will be enacted.
- 6.3** if there is reason to believe the amount witnessed could warrant possession with intent to deal, the drugs are confiscated and the police are called and given full details of the incident including student details.

6.4 Where a student may wish to voluntarily give up their drugs security will dispose of the drugs via their drug disposal standard operating procedure.

6.5 In all cases of the above students will be offered support options

6.6 This approach minimises the risk of harm to individual students and the University community.

7 Debate and research

7.1 UEA is committed to academic freedom, freedom of speech and to leading and contributing to research with impact.

7.2 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.

7.3 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.

8 Further relevant information

8.1 Find out more about the full range of services and support available from Student Journey and Support Services: [Student Services - UEA](#)

8.2 Student Journey and Support services resources and self help, including Drug and Alcohol section [Resources and Self-Help \(uea.ac.uk\) //](#)
<https://my.uea.ac.uk/divisions/student-services/student-life/community/drug-alcohol-support>

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

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

Governance	Detail
Policy owner	Deputy Director of Student and Academic Services (Student Journey and Support)
Underlying University strategy or plan	<i>SEE strategy</i>
Underlying legislation	Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 (legislation.gov.uk) Psychoactive Substances Act 2016 (legislation.gov.uk)

Recommended by	Deputy Director of Student and Academic Services (Student Journey and Support)
Approved by	<i>Senate June 2025</i>
Effective working date	June 2025
Review date(s)	<i>First review April 2025</i> <i>Second review April 2026</i>
Future review date	To be reviewed every three years (or as required) thereafter <i>Third review to take place April 2028</i>
Supporting regulations	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)
Supporting operational processes	
Supporting guidance for those running the process	
Supporting guidance for this using the process	
Enquires	Queries on this policy should be addressed to the Deputy Director SAS (SJS)
Key web search terms	Drug and Alcohol Policy Substance misuse Drug misuse Alcohol misuse