

STUDENT DRUGS AND ALCOHOL HARM REDUCTION POLICY AND FRAMEWORK

Purpose and Context

The University of Huddersfield does not condone the use of illegal drugs, or the misuse of alcohol or prescription drugs. We operate a harm reduction approach that prioritises the welfare and wellbeing of our community, whilst paying due regard to the law. Our approach recognises that some students will choose to use drugs during their time at university and responds in a way that is relevant, educative, and promotes safety and support. Evidence shows that harm reduction services tailored to the unique needs of a person are most effective at reducing the risks associated with harmful substance use, especially when combined with other health and social services.

[Universities UK Guidance](#) released in summer 2024, shapes and informs this policy and framework.

The University and Huddersfield Students' Union have committed to work in partnership to address student drug and alcohol misuse through a harm reduction approach.

1.0 Scope

- 1.1 This policy and framework cover the use of all illicit drug use, including illegal drugs as well as the misuse of prescription drugs and alcohol (hereafter referred to as 'substance use').
- 1.2 The outlined support and relevant procedures also consider the potential impact of substance use on the whole University community.
- 1.3 This policy and framework are applicable to all students including postgraduate research students (PGRs). Staff employed by and working for the University of Huddersfield should refer to relevant staff policies and procedures.

2.0 A Harm Reduction Approach: Support

- 2.1 The University and Huddersfield Students' Union have jointly committed to a harm reduction approach, which takes account of the risks of substance use for individual students, and the wider University community. We work together to support students by providing relevant information and access to specialist support and advice [detailed in 3.6 below.]
- 2.2 Understanding risks and trends is core to the development of our harm reduction priorities, student and staff communications, and interventions. We achieve this through working with Change Grow Live (Kirklees Drug and Alcohol Service) and West Yorkshire Police.
- 2.3 Our support offer recognises that substance use can have a significant impact on the mental health and wellbeing of the person who is using drugs and alcohol, as well as those around them. It can increase the risk of misconduct, with further serious implications for the mental health and wellbeing of those affected.

- 2.4 Students who come forward with substance use issues will receive confidential support from the University.
- 2.5 Where the University identify risk of harm to others because of substance use, supplying of drugs, or safeguarding concerns, the University may refer cases to other procedures including Fitness to Practise, Support to Study, Student Disciplinary or Safeguarding.
- 2.6 Support is available from a variety of services and teams, and sometimes these teams will work together to best meet a student's needs. For more information about any of these services visit the University Harm Reduction web page.

University Services

- **The Student Engagement Team** can help students to understand and access specialist support. Contact justask@hud.ac.uk.
- **Wellbeing appointments and counselling sessions** are available for students whose mental health is impacted by alcohol and drug use, whether their own use or that of another person. Contact studentwellbeing@hud.ac.uk.
- **The Students' Union Student Advice Centre** provide support and signposting advice for students who are concerned about substance use. Contact advice-centre@hud.ac.uk.
- **The Student Casework Team** work with the **Wellbeing Service** to support students who wish to complain about any incidents of misconduct related to substance use. Contact studentconduct@hud.ac.uk.
- **Security Services Team** in emergencies or where there is an immediate risk of harm on campus the [Security Services Team](#) may be contacted on their Emergency Line Number: 01484 472222.
- **Campus Safer Students Officer** the University works in Partnership with West Yorkshire Police to provide a campus based Safer Students Police Officer who can provide advice and guidance to students experiencing harm related to substance use. [Online contact details](#).

External Support

Change Grow Live work closely with the Student Wellbeing Service and Huddersfield Students' Union in providing confidential advice and support for students who are affected by alcohol and drug use. This support extends to those affected by substance use such as family members, friends or housemates. This includes confidential weekly drop-ins, and a variety of educational activity. Contact [CGL Kirklees](#) / [CLG Kirklees Referral and access form](#) / 01484 353333.

- **Emergency Services** should be contacted for incidents off campus via 999.

- **Staff in purpose-built student accommodation** are briefed on the University harm reduction approach and CGL services.

2.7 In addition to the in-person support outlined, students have access to online and self-help resources which they can use to independently seek out relevant information and advice.

- [Togetherall](#) offers confidential advice, peer support, online support programmes and a place to express yourself – all you need to do is log in with your University email address. This a confidential service, the University will not know you have accessed the service.
- [Alcohol and drug advice and info](#) from Change Grow Live provides guidance if you are concerned about drinking or drug use but are not sure what steps to take.
- [FRANK](#) – provides a range of facts and information about drugs including a 24/7 phone line, text, email and life chat services.

3.0 Related University policies and codes of conduct

3.1 The University's Code of Conduct defines expectations and exemplifies unacceptable behaviours which may result in disciplinary investigation and action. It explains the need for everyone across the University to contribute to an environment of Respect and Courtesy, Professionalism, Self-Control, and Community.

3.2 Our student regulations outline the procedures we may follow if substance use leads to a breach of those regulations, as well as typical sanctions which might be applied. The most up to date versions of relevant procedures can be located via the Regulations for Taught Students and Regulations for PGR Students. The following sections are relevant:

- Support to Study.
- Fitness to Practise.
- Student Disciplinary.

4.0 Legal Responsibilities

4.1 Alcohol use by adults is not illegal in the UK but it is subject to some legal restrictions around sale and consumption. Consumption of alcohol is only permitted on University of Huddersfield premises at specified events subject to approvals from the Vice Chancellor's Office.

4.2 The University must operate in the context of national legislation and would be committing a criminal offence were it to knowingly permit the use, production or supply of any controlled drugs or psychoactive substances on its premises. Any student found engaging in such activities may face disciplinary action and/or be reported to the police.

4.3 The University is required by law to ensure, as far as is reasonable, the health and safety of its employees, students and others in the workplace.

5.0 Student Responsibilities and Awareness

5.1 Help, advice and support are available (as outlined in 3.6 above) for any student who is concerned about substance use, whether their own or someone else's.

5.2 All students are bound by the terms and policies of the Student Regulations.

5.3 Students are responsible for ensuring that they are familiar with policy and regulations and the implications of non-compliance.

5.4 An especially serious view is taken of the production, supply and distribution of controlled substances. 'Supply and distribution' include the sharing of a personal supply of controlled substances with other people.

5.5 Students should be aware of the potential consequences of a drug conviction or a caution and consider the possible impact on their continuation at the University, and their eligibility for their chosen profession, or opportunities for future careers.

5.6 Students on programmes which are accredited or regulated by statutory bodies must familiarise themselves with the University's Fitness to Practise Regulation and the professional standards of their profession, including the potential consequences of substance use and criminal convictions. Students on these programmes who engage in illegal drug use or alcohol or prescription drug misuse could be referred to the Fitness to Practise procedure.

5.7 Students who are engaged in online programmes and not living in the UK must take care to observe the laws of their country of residence. Support as outlined in 3.6 above is available to all students, but legal ramifications in a local context may vary.

5.8 The University's policy on substance use is not limited to behaviour on-campus but also extends to off-campus activities that impact the University, its students, or staff.

5.9 Accommodation contracts normally include regulations prohibiting illegal and harmful substance use. Students have a responsibility to familiarise themselves with relevant regulations and policy.

6.0 Response to student drug use

6.1 Our response to student drug use recognises that every incident is individual and will without exception include offers of relevant support to the student(s) involved. Our response must also acknowledge the impact of incidents related to drug use on the wider University community. Our response must pay due regard to the law.

6.2 Response to possession and individual use

- 6.3 Where a student is believed to be in possession of drugs for individual use, the University response will carefully consider each individual case and context to ensure a response that is proportionate to the suspected offence. This will always include offers of and referral to appropriate support. In agreement with West Yorkshire Police, University Security Services may confiscate and destroy certain suspected substances when found in small amounts. Confiscation will be recorded.
- 6.4 Considerations will include the scale of the offence; the class of drug; prior offences; involvement of third parties (especially any who are under 18 years old); addiction; student engagement with support.

Disciplinary Procedures

- 6.5 Students who possess illegal substances for individual use at the University are in breach of the Student Regulations. Consideration of their case will take into account individual circumstances and context (7.3 -7.4).
- 6.6 It is recognised that PGRs may also hold staff roles, and as such PGRs will be considered under the relevant policy and regulations depending on individual circumstances.
- 6.7 Where disciplinary action is carried out under the student disciplinary regulations, typical sanctions are clearly provided in the procedure in section 12 and will depend on the detail of the case.

Support available

- 6.8 Offers of specialist support and appropriate referrals are made following detailed consideration of the individual case.

Involvement of the police

- 6.9 The University cannot allow the possession, use, or supply of controlled drugs or psychoactive substances on its premises and may involve West Yorkshire Police in any case where students are suspected to be in breach of regulations.

6.10 Response to student drug use: Supply and intent to supply

- 6.11 The University takes a particularly serious view of anyone involved in the supply of and distribution of drugs. This is not limited to sale, 'supply' and 'distribution' include sharing a personal supply of drugs with friends or peers. Engaging in such activities is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action and police involvement.

Involvement of the police

- 6.12 West Yorkshire Police will be informed in cases where there is reason to believe that a student is involved in the supply of drugs or intends to supply drugs.

Disciplinary Procedures

- 6.13 Where PGRs also hold staff roles, the matter will normally be considered under the staff disciplinary procedure.
- 6.14 Where disciplinary action is carried out under the student disciplinary regulations, this is likely to be viewed as gross misconduct and could lead to permanent exclusion from the University.

Inclusion of support information

- 6.15 Offers of specialist support and appropriate referrals are made following detailed consideration of the individual case.

6.16 Response to student drug use: Off campus scenarios

- 6.17 The University's policy and framework extend to off-campus activities that could harm students, staff or others or bring the University into disrepute.
- 6.18 Students involved in illegal drug activity off-campus will be offered specialist support and appropriate referrals when the University becomes aware of such activity.
- 6.19 Where student involvement in illegal substance use off-campus premises affects the welfare of the University community, disciplinary action may be taken, and students may be reported to the police.
- 6.20 If the University becomes aware that a student has been arrested or charged with criminal offences relating to the use or supply of drugs, this will be managed through the student disciplinary regulations.
- 6.21 If the University becomes aware that a student who is also a member of staff has been arrested or charged with criminal offences relating to the use or supply of drugs, this will be managed through the staff disciplinary process.
- 6.22 Reports of antisocial behaviour in this context will be investigated under the University's disciplinary regulations.
- 6.23 Students in privately rented accommodation should be aware that their landlords must operate in the context of national legislation and would be committing a criminal offence if they knowingly permitted the use, production or supply of controlled drugs on their premises.

POLICY SIGN-OFF AND OWNERSHIP DETAILS	
Document name:	Student Drugs and Alcohol Harm Reduction Policy & Framework
Version Number:	1.0
Equality Impact Assessment:	[Completion date or confirmation that equality considerations have been previously documented]
Privacy Impact Assessment:	New PIA not applicable – Any required personal information sharing would be undertaken in line with existing student regulations procedures and PIA.
Approved by	Senior Leadership Team
Date Approved:	4 December 2025
Date for Review:	December 2028
Consulted with (Departments / Area of Service / Job Title):	Director of Registry and Academic Development Director of Student Services University Secretary University Solicitor Students' Union SU/SLG
Author:	Director of Student Services
Owner (if different from above):	
Document Location:	This should be the link to the policy on the main policies and procedures home page
Compliance Measures:	SLT to receive summary of formal and support cases involving substance use and insight as part of Annual Safeguarding Report
Related Policies/Procedures:	Student Regulations Staff Disciplinary Rules and Regulations

REVISION HISTORY			
Version	Date	Revision description/Summary of changes	Author
V1.0		First draft of new policy	Director of Student Services