

Alcohol, Drugs & Substance Use & Misuse Policy

Policy Owner	Director of Student Life
Approving Body	Executive Board
Version number	4
Related policies, procedures, and guidelines	Student Conduct Regulations Student General Regulations
Reviewed by	Directorate of Student Life, Student Journey Division Security, Estates Directorate
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1. INTRODUCTION & POLICY STATEMENT

- 1.1 Royal Holloway University of London (the University) has a responsibility, and recognises and is committed, to the importance of providing a safe and healthy environment for its students, staff, and visitors.
- 1.2 The University does not condone the misuse of alcohol, or the use and abuse of drugs and psychoactive substances, or possession or selling of illegal substances on any of its campuses and premises, including individual student rooms in our halls of residence.
- 1.3 The University recognises that substances may play a part in the lives of some members of our community, and we are committed to ensuring that the use or misuse of substances does not have a negative impact on the living, studying, working and social conditions of our campuses and community. The University recognises that the use and misuse of alcohol, drugs, and other substances (such as psychoactive substances) by students may have negative and damaging consequences including the risks of:
 - Damaging the mental and physical health and wellbeing of the user.
 - Undermining the user's ability to study and perform academically.
 - Involving both the user and others in situations where their safety and wellbeing may be compromised.
 - Increasing the likelihood of crime and anti-social behaviour on campus and in the local area and of University students and others being the victims of crime and anti-social behaviour.
 - Jeopardising the University and Students' Union's licenses to service alcohol and provide on-campus entertainment and social opportunities.
 - Adversely affecting the University's reputation locally and nationally.
 - Serious consequences for future career opportunities or travel plans.

2. SCOPE AND PURPOSE OF THE POLICY

- 2.1 The foundation of the policy is one of support, advice, and education, focussing on enabling students to make responsible, healthy, and legal choices and to set a framework of acceptable and responsible conduct and the actions which may be taken in the event of a breach of this Policy. The University also understands our need to ensure compliance with legislation relation to alcohol, drug, and other substance use.
- 2.2 The purpose of the policy is to:
 - Educate and raise awareness of alcohol, drug and substance issues and act as the framework to providing a safe and healthy campus community in accordance with the relevant legislation and to support harm reduction awareness.
 - Encourage students to seek support and advice where they are worried their health, wellbeing and academic engagement may be adversely affected by substance use or misuse and enable their access to professional harm reduction advice and guidance.
 - Provide an understanding of the possible actions taken by the University following reports of student involvement in the use, possession or selling of illegal substances or of dangerous misuse of alcohol.
- 2.3 The policy applies to all students at the University. All students are expected to abide by this policy and to ensure guests they bring onto campus also understand and abide by the expectations.
- 2.4 The policy covers conduct in all aspects of student life including participation in University related activities off site, such as field trips, placements, or years abroad. Likewise, conduct in the local community that brings the University into disrepute by statutory action may also result in University action under this policy and the Student Conduct Regulations.

3. LEGISLATION AND LEGAL BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Policy is necessary to ensure the University's compliance with legislation including:

The Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 (& amendments in subsequent legislation) It is a criminal offence to produce, supply, possess, or import a controlled drug, as defined under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971. It is also stated in the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 that it is an offence for the occupier, or someone concerned with the management of any premises knowingly to permit or suffer on those premises the smoking of cannabis;

or the production, attempted production, supply, attempted supply, or offering of supply of any controlled drug.

The Psychoactive Substances Act 2016 The following criminal offences were created by this Act: producing a psychoactive substance (section 4); supplying or offering to supply a psychoactive substance (section 5); possession of a psychoactive substance with intent to supply it (section 7); importing or exporting a psychoactive substance (section 8). The University does not condone the use of any psychoactive substance; anyone found in possession of any psychoactive substance may be subject to student conduct actions and support sought from Police.

The Road Traffic Act 1988 This states a person is guilty of an offence if driving or attempting to drive a motor vehicle in a public place while unfit through alcohol or drugs.

The Drug Driving (Specified Limits) (England & Wales) Regulations 2014 This states it is illegal to drive if either a person is unfit to do so because of legal or illegal drugs; or if there are certain levels of certain drugs in their blood.

The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 The Act requires the University to undertake what is reasonable to protect the health and safety of students, staff, and visitors. Substance use and misuse can negatively impact on the health and safety of an individual and others in our community for example other students in communal or shared accommodation and faculties or staff having to respond to incidents who may have to handle illegal substances or related paraphernalia.

The Licensing Act 2003 The Act aims to reduce both alcohol misuse and crime and disorder.

- 3.2 The University recognises activities to do with the misuse of drugs are frequently illegal and that the University may itself be in breach of the law if it permits use or misuse of drugs to take place upon its premises. The University notes that activities connected with the misuse of alcohol and other substance abuse can also have legal consequences and sanctions. (See Appendix 2)
- 3.3 The University has a duty to uphold the law, and this may require the University to report students, suspicious activity, or circumstances where there may be a danger or risk to students or staff to the Police. The University will also take action, including making reports to the Police and disciplinary action where appropriate, to address the use of illegal drugs by its students when involved in University linked activities off University premises or when such behaviour may bring the University's name into disrepute.

4. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- 4.1 The Director of Student Life and Head of Security are responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented and monitored with input from the Head of Residences.
- 4.2 All members of the student community are expected to be aware of and understand the expectations of this policy. Students should engage with information and education about alcohol, drugs, and substances to enable healthy, responsible, and safe choices to be made for themselves and other students. Students should also commit to taking personal responsibility for their own actions and conduct if choosing to consume alcohol or use drugs / substances.
- 4.3 We ask that all members of the University community remain alert to the behaviour and presentation of students, and to the signs of possible misuse of substances, and commit to doing what they can to ensure the health and wellbeing, safety, and support of students.

5. HARM REDUCTION, PREVENTION AND EDUCATION

- 5.1 We acknowledge that a zero-tolerance approach may be considered damaging and more harmful as it can prevent students seeking support for fear of being sanctioned or subject to punitive action. The University will work to provide educative resources and campaigns to increase understanding and awareness of the issues related to alcohol, drug and substance use and misuse.
- 5.2 We acknowledge that a zero-tolerance approach may be considered damaging and more harmful as it can prevent students seeking support for fear of being sanctioned or subject to punitive action. Harm reduction is an approach which we believe acts in the best interests of the student community and removes any barriers to students seeking support, advice, and guidance. A harm reduction approach does not mean that we accept anti-social or criminal behaviour and as such conduct of this nature will be robustly managed under the Student Conduct Regulations.

- 5.3 We understand that some students may choose to use drugs and substances during their time as a student. We strive to ensure students have the resources, support, and knowledge to make informed personal choices and reduce harm to themselves. This will include:
- Running wellbeing events or campaigns throughout the year and to promote national campaigns where appropriate.
 - Provision of staff training where needed to enable them to be aware of signs of misuse of substances, and to raise awareness of support and signposting.
 - Display printed or electronic material aimed at raising student awareness and encouraging healthy and responsible choices.
 - Access to internal support services and signposting or referrals to external specialist support services (see section 6).
 - Working with external support services, charities, and organisations to provide educative content and awareness campaigns including in relation to harm reduction awareness and support.
 - Recognising the differences between the use of substances and the involvement of people in the supply of illegal drugs – a criminal offence.

6. SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS

- 6.1 The University recognises that most students will not be affected by drugs, alcohol or substance misuse and where a student discloses they have an unhealthy relationship or addiction to substances, where they have been approached to purchase or use substances against, or where they wish to share concerns or information about misuse their case will be treated with discretion and treated with empathy.
- 6.2 All students named in security and Police reports received that relate to use or misuse of drugs, alcohol or substance will be contacted by a Wellbeing Adviser for follow up support and guidance and access to specialist advice where required.
- 6.3 Students are encouraged to seek support and advice for any matters of concern about their use of or dependency on alcohol, drugs, or substances. Within the University students may talk to a Wellbeing Adviser, Counsellor, Mental Health Practitioner, Personal Tutor, or the NHS GP Surgery. The Wellbeing teams in the Directorate of Student Life will also be able to provide guidance, signposting, and referral to external specialist services. (See also Appendix 1).
- 6.4 If a student has concerns that another student seems to be experiencing difficulties in their use of alcohol, drugs, or substances they should encourage them to seek support and advice from one of the services listed above.
- 6.5 If it is believed that a student is at immediate or imminent risk, or that they may pose a risk to themselves or others this should be reported as a cause for concern. In an emergency this can be reported to the Campus Security team and all other concerns should be reported to the Wellbeing department for assessment of risk and for prompt support or intervention.

7. STUDENT CONDUCT

- 7.1 **Conduct Procedures:** Each case will be assessed individually, however, any student believed to be dealing or supplying drugs or psychoactive substances may be subject to our conduct and disciplinary processes. Repeat offences will lead to an immediate escalation in the conduct processes.

If the conduct is to be formally heard the processes of the Student Conduct Regulations will be followed by the Student Conduct Officer (or nominated delegate). Under the formal process a student may face sanctions which may include a formal reprimand, campus restrictions, a financial penalty or in serious cases of misconduct consideration of a suspension of studies or the ending of their studies for misconduct. The burden of proof in formal misconduct cases will be on the balance of probability and not beyond reasonable doubt as required in criminal cases.

University recognises that illegal drug, alcohol, and substance misuse is a complex area; that there can be welfare and educational issues underlying drug, alcohol and substance use and that the classifications of substances are subject to revision. The University will take this into account when deciding on conduct and will vary its actions in response to the severity and context of the offence. Outcomes may include mandatory

engagement with support, financial penalties, a notice to leave University accommodation, suspension, or deregistration from the University.

Where an alleged incident is being investigated by the Police the University may wait for the outcome of the Police investigation and consider the findings in its own procedures. However, the Student Conduct Officer may proceed immediately with internal procedures if appropriate. Further guidance on this can be found in the *Student Conduct Regulations (Appendix 2 – Temporary Suspensions, Campus Restrictions and Police Investigations)*. If the Police decide not to investigate, or the courts do not find the responding student(s) guilty the University may still proceed with a misconduct process under the Student Conduct Regulations as determining matters under these are subject to judgments on the balance of probability and not beyond reasonable doubt. Formal hearings remain as private as possible, but discretion and confidentiality may be expended to other witnesses and / or your academic department if required. A student who is formally sanctioned can have the outcome noted on their student record if appropriate or sanctions may be shared if certain restrictions are put in place.

- 7.2 **Dealing in or supplying illegal drugs to others:** Dealing, selling, or supplying illegal substances or psychoactive substances is a criminal offence and is also regarded as Major Misconduct under our Student Conduct Regulations under which appropriate action shall be taken in addition to any penalty or sanction imposed under criminal law. This may include de-registration from their academic studies or an enforced interruption of their studies.

All members of the University community are expected to report evidence of suspected dealing promptly to Security or the Student Conduct Officer. A student suspected to dealing or supplying illegal substances will be reported to Police. The Student Conduct Officer may temporarily suspend or restrict the activities of a student suspected of this offence.

- 7.3 **Possession or use of illegal drugs - including paraphernalia – and psychoactive substances:** Possession or use of illegal substances is a criminal offence and may be considered Minor or Major Misconduct under our Student Conduct Regulations following an assessment of the circumstances of the alleged offence. This includes the possession of paraphernalia which is not permitted on campus even in an unused condition. Sanctions may include a requirement to engage with education and support, a financial penalty, and restrictions to their access to and use of campus. Our Halls of Residence accommodation contracts prohibit the use and misuse of controlled substances on campus and students who fail to comply with these terms may serve with a Notice to Quit or a suspended Notice to Quit. All students will be encouraged to seek support through the Wellbeing teams. In the interests of student wellbeing and safety the University reserves the right to ban all psychoactive substances from campus and to treat possession of these substances as a misconduct offence. The University will treat possession or supply of Nitrous Oxide, Synthetic Cannabinoids, other synthetic derivatives, or similar substances in the same way as the possession of illegal substances.

- 7.4 **Violent, threatening, or dangerous behaviour or conduct:** The University does not tolerate any drug, alcohol or substance related conduct that endangers the health, wellbeing and safety of other students, staff, visitors, or University property. Incidents of violent, threatening, or dangerous behaviour will generally be regarded as Major Misconduct under our Student Conduct Regulations. Being under the influence of drugs, alcohol or substances is no defence against a breach of our regulations.

- 7.5 **Driving under the influence of drink or drugs:** Driving under the influence of drink or drugs is a criminal offence and may also be regarded as Major Misconduct under our Student Conduct Regulations under which appropriate action shall be taken in addition to any penalty or sanction imposed under criminal law. This may include de-registration from their academic studies or an enforced interruption of their studies if considered.

- 7.6 **Conduct of non-students:** Any individual who is not a member of the University community who is found on our premises or campus, possessing, or suspected of being involved with controlled substances will be removed from the campus immediately by Security. Where appropriate the Police will also be informed, and the individual may be subject to a campus exclusion and restriction order. The member of the University community who invited this individual onto campus may be subject to a student conduct investigation if considered to be enabling or allowing the incident.

- 7.7 **Encouragement of individuals to misuse or overindulge in alcohol:** The University prohibits the encouragement, overt or covert, of individuals to misuse or over-indulge in alcohol (for example through initiations or 'pub crawls') and confirms its resolve to take appropriate actions, including disciplinary actions

where appropriate, when alcohol is misused on University premises or by students when involved in University-linked activities off University premises. Action may also be taken against those who encourage or pressurise others to misuse alcohol.

7.8 Substance use or misuse to gain advantage to take advantage or another student: The University notes that students can on occasions be tempted to misuse substances for a variety of reasons, including the gaining of unfair academic and sporting advantage, to harass others and to gain sexual, personal, or other advantage. University confirms its resolve to act, including conduct actions where appropriate, when substances are misused in such a way on University premises or by students when involved in University-linked activities off University premises.

7.9 Appropriate use of campus space: It will be considered an offence for students to allow a room, flat, communal area, or other space on campus to be used by people using illegal drugs or psychoactive substances or dangerously misusing alcohol. As part of the policy of promoting responsible alcohol use, University requests that students do not consume alcohol outside of the appropriately allocated areas. Appropriate areas include licensed bar areas and surrounding seating, dining halls and other areas where alcohol is supplied for sale and consumption, students' private residential accommodation and other areas that might be from time to time set aside for such consumption. Students should not take open containers of alcohol from permitted areas out onto campus. University reserves the right to ask students consuming alcohol in inappropriate areas to desist, particularly where this consumption might give rise to nuisance or disturbance and in addition if necessary to take possession or otherwise dispose of this alcohol.

FURTHER INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE

If anyone considers that this Policy has not been followed or for further information on the interpretation and application of the policy, please contact the policy owner.

SUPPORT AND SOURCES FOR FURTHER INFORMATION AND ADVICE

Emergency and out of hours sources of support

<https://intranet.royalholloway.ac.uk/students/help-support/get-help-with-an-emergency/get-help-with-an-emergency-or-contact-security.aspx>

Internal

Counselling & Mental Health	counselling@royalholloway.ac.uk mentalhealth@royalholloway.ac.uk
Disability & Neurodiversity	disability@royalholloway.ac.uk
International Advice	internationaladvice@royalholloway.ac.uk
Multifaith Chaplaincy	chaplaincy@royalholloway.ac.uk
Wellbeing Support	wellbeing@royalholloway.ac.uk
Students' Union Advice Centre	advice@su.rhul.ac.uk
Security	securityrhul@royalholloway.ac.uk
Academic Personal Tutor	See School Helpdesk for more information.
Surrey Police	www.surrey.police.uk/ or 101 (non-emergency) Call 999 in an emergency.

External

i-access drug & alcohol service	https://www.surreydrugandalcohol.com/
Catalyst Surrey	https://www.catalystsupport.org.uk/
Catch 22	www.catch-22.org.uk/find-services/surrey-young-peoples-substance-misuse/
Healthy Surrey (Drugs & Alcohol)	https://www.healthysurrey.org.uk/drugs-and-alcohol
Talk to Frank	https://www.talktofrank.com/
Drug Wise	https://www.drugwise.org.uk/
Drink Aware	https://www.drinkaware.co.uk/
Alcohol Change UK	https://alcoholchange.org.uk/about-us

DRUGS PENALTIES IN THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

Via www.gov.uk/penalties-drug-possession-dealing (September 2024)

You can get a fine or prison sentence if you: take drugs; carry drugs; make drugs; or sell, deal, or share drugs (also called 'supplying' them). The penalties depend on the type of drug or substance, the amount you have, and whether you're also dealing or producing it. The maximum penalties for drug possession, supply (selling, dealing, or sharing) and production depend on what type or 'class' the drug is.

	Maximum penalty for possession	Maximum penalty for supply and production
Class A	Up to 7 years in prison, an unlimited fine or both	Up to life in prison, an unlimited fine or both
Class B	Up to 5 years in prison, an unlimited fine or both	Up to 14 years in prison, an unlimited fine or both
Class C	Up to 2 years in prison, an unlimited fine or both (except anabolic steroids - it's not an offence to possess them for personal use)	Up to 14 years in prison, an unlimited fine or both
Temporary class drugs	None, but police can take away a suspected temporary class drug	Up to 14 years in prison, an unlimited fine or both
Psychoactive substances	None, unless you're in prison	Up to 7 years in prison, an unlimited fine or both

*The government can ban new drugs for 1 year under a 'temporary banning order' while they decide how the drugs should be classified.

Psychoactive substances penalties

Psychoactive substances include things like nitrous oxide ('laughing gas'). You can get a fine or prison sentence if you: carry a psychoactive substance and you intend to supply it; make a psychoactive substance, or sell, deal, or share a psychoactive substance (also called supplying them). Food, alcohol, nicotine, caffeine, medicine, and the types of drugs listed above do not count as psychoactive substances.

Possessing drugs

You may be charged with possessing an illegal substance if you're caught with drugs, whether they're yours or not. If you're under 18, the police are allowed to tell your parent, guardian, or carer that you've been caught with drugs. Your penalty will depend on:

- the class and quantity of drug
- where you and the drugs were found
- your personal history (previous crimes, including any previous drug offences)
- other aggravating or mitigating factors

Cannabis and khat: Police can issue a warning or an on-the-spot fine of up to £90 if you're found with cannabis or khat. You may be able to pay your penalty without getting a formal warning or caution. If you're repeatedly found with cannabis or khat, your penalty may vary from treatment to their maximum penalty for possession.

Dealing or supplying drugs: The penalty is likely to be more severe if you are found to be supplying drugs (dealing, selling, or sharing). The police will probably charge you if they suspect you of supplying drugs. The amount of drugs found and whether you have a criminal record will affect your penalty.