UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

POLICY ON DRUGS AND ALCOHOL

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The University of Aberdeen has a legal duty of care to ensure the health, safety and welfare at work of all staff, and the introduction of a drugs and alcohol policy is intended to form an integral part of that approach.

1.2 The primary purpose of this policy is to support staff and to ensure any problems are dealt with effectively and consistently. The University recognises that alcohol/drug dependency is an illness and will be treated in the same way as other illnesses. This policy is not intended to intrude upon the privacy of individuals, particularly in health matters where their condition does not affect conduct or performance at work. The University is however concerned where the inappropriate use of drugs or alcohol impairs; conduct, safety, work performance or has an adverse impact on colleagues/students.

1.3 Drugs can be defined as those controlled under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971, which divides substances and the penalties for their possession and sale into three categories, and can include prescribed medications, over-the-counter medications and recreational drugs. Medicines that are not classified according to the Misuse of Drugs Act may be covered by the Medicines Act. ‘Substance misuse’ is a broader term and covers the use of illegal drugs, prescribed drugs, alcohol and substances such as solvents.

The following legislation also has an impact on drugs and alcohol;

- Health and Safety at Work Act (1974)
- Road Traffic Act (1988)
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (1999)

1.4 Misuse in the context of this policy is defined as the habitual or intermittent use of alcohol, drugs or other substances which causes detriment to an individual’s health, safety, work performance or social functioning.

1.5 Impairment is defined as an individual’s inability to perform their normal work duties due to the misuse of drugs or alcohol. This includes being over the legal alcohol limit for driving in the UK, and adverse reactions to legal or prescription drugs.

1.6 The University expects staff to report for work free from the adverse effects of alcohol and drugs but also seeks to adopt a supportive and sympathetic approach to any member of staff who develops problems as a result of alcohol or drug misuse. Early interventions are recognised as an effective means of dealing with potential problems.

1.7 Special arrangements will apply in circumstances where the University provides alcohol at special events and hospitality (see Section 9). Prescription and over-the-counter drugs may be taken in accordance with medical advice and dosage guidelines (see Section 3.3)

2 SCOPE

2.1 This policy applies to all University employees regardless of status. The policy also applies to; contractors, casual & temporary staff including interns and volunteers.

2.2 It applies on all university premises including premises managed on behalf of the university by a third party. The policy also applies to those off-campus on university business or on study/research activities.
2.3 A zero-tolerance approach to all illegal drugs applies at all times. A zero-tolerance approach to alcohol will apply in the following circumstances:

- driving university vehicles and driving on university business
- the operation of potentially dangerous equipment and machinery
- laboratory operations involving potentially hazardous equipment, substances and materials
- dealing with patients
- advising students
- meeting with parents

2.4 The University reserves the right to suspend any member of staff from work pending further investigation, if he or she is suspected of being unfit for work due to the misuse of alcohol, drugs and/or other substances.

3 RESPONSIBILITIES

Individuals

3.1 Individuals are expected to follow the guidelines in this policy by taking personal responsibility and reporting for work free from the adverse effects of alcohol or drugs.

3.2 Those that suspect or know that they have a problem related to their use of alcohol or drugs are encouraged to seek help and treatment voluntarily by making a direct approach to the Occupational Health Service, the Counselling Service, their Line Manager, their Head of School/Administrative Section, a Human Resources Adviser or their own General Practitioner.

3.3 There will be occasions when individuals are required to take legitimate prescription and over-the-counter drugs to relieve a temporary condition or as part of a course of treatment. Employees are responsible for checking medical advice and dose recommendations to ensure this does not impair their performance.

3.4 Anyone who is offered illegal drugs at work should report the incident immediately to their Head of School/Administrative Section.

Colleagues

3.5 Members of staff who suspect or recognise that a colleague may have an alcohol or drug related problem should encourage the individual to acknowledge their problem and to seek advice either through their General Practitioner or the agencies described above. If this fails, colleagues are encouraged to alert the Head of School/Administrative Section to the situation. Colleagues who are aware of the supply of illegal drugs should report the incident immediately to their Head of School/Administrative Section.

Line Managers

3.6 If a line manager suspects performance has been impaired by the misuse of alcohol or drugs he/she should inform the Head of School/Administrative Section immediately. If appropriate, the line manager may also suspend the individual pending further investigation.

Heads of School/Administrative Section

3.7 Where the Head of School/Administrative Section is made aware that a member of staff appears to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol at work, he or she should make arrangements to see the individual immediately. The Head of School/Administrative Section should treat individual cases as a health issue in the first instance, taking the opportunity to highlight their concern for the individual and advise him/her where support can be found. The Head of School/Administrative Section should urge the individual to seek help.
immediately. Where an incident involves the supply of illegal drugs this should be investigated under the terms of the University’s disciplinary procedure. In such circumstances, the University reserves the right to refer the matter to the police.

Human Resources

3.8 Human Resources are responsible for providing support to line managers on personal cases and to review the policy regularly. A copy of the approved policy will be available from the policy area on the Staff Net website. Human Resources (Staff Development) will also carry out training for managers as part of the ongoing management training programmes. Education on the impact of alcohol and drugs in the workplace will be embedded into Healthy Working Lives road shows and new members of staff will be informed as part of the University’s monthly induction programme. At launch, all staff will be made aware of this policy via a ‘dept staff’ communiqué.

4  COUNSELLING

4.1 Where an individual's work performance or attendance is causing concern but has not yet reached a disciplinary stage, and it is suspected that the problem(s) may be alcohol or drug related, the individual will be offered the opportunity to discuss the problem with a skilled counsellor via the Occupational Health Service. Individuals may also refer themselves to the Occupational Health Service or seek advice from the University's Counselling Service. Counselling is an opportunity for a member of staff to discuss any personal problems in confidence. It may prevent such problems continuing to impact on with the individual's work performance and/or attendance patterns.

5  DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES

5.1 The levels of misconduct and failure in performance which may result from alcohol or drug misuse extend over a considerable range, however the University may consider disciplinary action in cases where the health and safety of staff and/or students is placed at unacceptable risk. Where the University recognises that alcohol or drugs may be a contributory factor and is aware that the member of staff may have acknowledged a problem, the University may be willing to consider suspending disciplinary action if there is a willingness on the part of the individual to undergo a course of treatment.

5.2 Staff voluntarily disclosing that they have a problem with alcohol or drugs will be treated fairly and equitably, the same as any other employee with an illness, and in line with the University’s sickness absence policy. Where employees admit to having a drug or alcohol problem, which is confirmed by the University’s Occupational Health Service, they will not be subject to the University’s disciplinary procedure (except in cases of gross misconduct), provided that:

- they undergo and complete the programme of rehabilitation agreed by the University’s Occupational Health Adviser, and
- their subsequent workplace behaviour and performance is satisfactorily maintained.

5.3 Where an individual refuses to accept treatment or where the risk to other students and employees is too great, the University may consider termination of employment due to ill health.

6  RETURN TO WORK

6.1 Individuals will be entitled to reasonable time off whilst undertaking treatment in normal hours, providing there is cooperation with professional bodies and appointments/consultations are maintained. On returning to work after a course of treatment, the individual will be permitted to return to the same job unless it is deemed, that they are
unfit or unsuitable to continue in that employment (eg by Occupation Health, their GP, Line Manager etc). In such instances, every consideration will be given to finding suitable alternative employment within the University.

6.2 If after returning to work following a course of treatment, the individual's work performance again begins to suffer, the individual may be offered the opportunity to accept a further course of treatment. This will be decided at the University's discretion. When a member of staff has accepted help or treatment and the problem has been resolved, their work status and promotional prospects will not be adversely affected.

7 CONFIDENTIALITY

7.1 Appropriate records will be kept and treated confidentially in line with the Data Protection Act and other relevant legislation. These will include records of discussions and training received by individuals. Occupational Health records will be subject to medical confidentiality.

8 SUPPORT

8.1 Staff will be entitled to receive support during working time. In the first instance individuals are encouraged to talk to their line manager or Human Resources Adviser. Staff may be referred to the University’s Occupational Health Service or they can refer themselves at any time. The University’s Counselling Service will also be available to provide support. Staff who are off sick will be entitled to sick pay in accordance with the terms of the University's Sickness Absence Policy.

9 HOSPITALITY AND SPECIAL EVENTS

9.1 Alcohol may be provided as part of University hospitality at special events and ceremonies. In these circumstances approval will be given by the Head of School/Section. On such occasions where alcohol is available as part of University hospitality, suitable non-alcoholic alternative drinks must be available. Where possible, hospitality and special events should be organised at a time when staff will not be expected to return to their normal place of work.

9.2 The Students’ Union operates licensed bars within the University premises and staff may be invited to use such facilities on occasions. Staff should take personal responsibility for ensuring they are fit to carry out their duties at all times and to observe the zero-tolerance approach in the circumstances outlined at paragraph 2.3 of this policy.

10 LOCAL ARRANGEMENTS

10.1 This policy represents the University position; however, there may be circumstances when a local arrangement is necessary to accommodate a joint working environment (eg with the NHS). In such circumstances any local arrangement should be approved by the Head of School/Section.

11 RESOURCES

11.1 Further information on drugs and alcohol is available from the Healthy Working Lives website:

Drugs: http://www.healthyworkinglives.com/advice/workplace-hazards/drugs.aspx

12 IMPLEMENTATION AND REVIEW

12.1 This policy was approved on 9 December 2013 and will be reviewed by Human Resources on an annual basis.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Title</strong></th>
<th>Policy on Drugs &amp; Alcohol</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Author / Creator</strong></td>
<td>Gordon Robertson, Organisational Development HR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Owner</strong></td>
<td>HR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Date published / approved</strong></td>
<td>09/12/2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Version</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Date for Next Review</strong></td>
<td>09/12/2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Audience</strong></td>
<td>Staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Related</strong></td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subject / Description</strong></td>
<td>To support staff and to ensure any drugs and/or alcohol problems are dealt with effectively and consistently.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Equality Impact Assessment</strong></td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Section</strong></td>
<td>HR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theme</strong></td>
<td>Policy on drugs and alcohol.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Keywords</strong></td>
<td>Drugs alcohol policy wellbeing support health</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>