

# Policy and Procedures

## UCW Drugs and Alcohol Policy

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UNIVERSITY  
CENTRE  
WESTON

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## Background

University Centre Weston (UCW) recognises that issues relating to the use of alcohol, tobacco and drugs cross the boundary between legal and illegal activity.

Drug dependence is defined as the taking of illicit or other chemical substances, including those known as New Psychoactive Substances (NPS), into the body, in an un-prescribed manner, which affects a student's attendance and work, impairs their judgements and endangers the safety of others.

Smoking dependence is defined as the addiction to nicotine which as a drug has many different effects on the body at the same time. Nicotine affects chemicals in the brain and artificially induces a feeling of relaxation and reduced anxiety, which can affect a student's judgement.

Alcohol dependence is defined as a level of drinking which persistently affects a student's attendance and work, impairs their judgements and endangers the safety of others. This is regarded as an illness.

Safe and sensible drinking can be a positive feature of university student life. For many, it is part of the student experience. UCW is committed to try and protect students from the harmful effects of excessive substance misuse and its impacts upon the physical, social and/or academic aspects of students' lives.

## The Policy

UCW is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for its students, staff and visitors. It seeks to promote a community which is supportive and which recognises different attitudes towards drug and alcohol use. UCW will:

- aim to provide a safe, healthy and supportive environment for its students and staff
- promote supportive and caring harm minimisation strategies which reduce the risks associated with drug use/misuse
- not tolerate i) the possession or use of illegal drugs ii) the supply of any drugs iii) the misuse of alcohol and iv) the misuse of other

substances on its premises (or its associated premises such as the HE student accommodation) and will offer support and guidance where possible.

Any UCW student who is concerned that he/she may have a dependence on alcohol or drugs is encouraged to seek help and advice from his/her G.P. They can be supported to do this by the HE Academic Registry Team (HEART). Any UCW student who wants to have support in stopping smoking is encouraged to access support from the Health Care Assistants in conjunction with the NHS and North Somerset PCT.

UCW believes in the principle of harm minimisation and HEART will offer free confidential support to students who are seeking help in resolving an alcohol or drug related problem. It may not be possible to uphold complete confidentiality if a student is considered to be a danger to themselves or others. They would be made aware of this at the time.

The primary concern for any student found having used or being suspected of having used illegal drugs will be their health and safety and that of others. Each case will be assessed individually and a decision will be made by at least two members of staff (usually the Head of Faculty and a member of HEART) as to whether any action under the UCW Student Code of Conduct is appropriate and if referral to the Police is necessary.

## Procedures

### **Students perceived to be/are under the influence of alcohol**

If a student is perceived to be under the influence of alcohol in UCW, or its associated premises (including the student accommodation), the matter will be reported to their Head of Faculty (HoF), immediately who will assess the situation and discuss with the Welfare and Retention Officer or the Deputy Academic Registrar. The HoF will arrange for the student to go home and will meet with the student the following day.

Prior to this meeting the HoF will gather any associated evidence. If sufficient evidence is provided that the student was under the influence then the matter should be considered either a 'serious' or 'gross' breach of the UCW Student Code of Conduct (depending on the severity of the situation) and be dealt with in accordance with the policy. If there is insufficient evidence then a verbal warning should be issued and placed on the student's eILP. A referral should be made to the HE Academic Registry Team (HEART).

### **Students perceived to be/ are under influence of drugs**

If a student is perceived to be under the influence of drugs or other chemical substances in UCW, or its associated premises, the matter will be reported to their Head of Faculty immediately who will assess the situation and discuss with the Welfare and Retention Officer or the Deputy Academic Registrar. The HoF will arrange for the student to go home and will meet with the student the following day.

Prior to this meeting the HoF will gather any associated evidence. If sufficient evidence is provided that the student was under the influence then the matter should be considered either a 'serious' or 'gross' breach of the UCW Student Code of Conduct (depending on the severity of the situation) and be dealt with in accordance with the policy. If there is insufficient evidence then a verbal warning should be issued and placed on the student's eILP. A referral should be made to the HE Academic Registry Team (HEART).

### **Students in possession of non-prescribed/controlled drugs**

If a student is discovered to be in possession of non-prescribed/controlled drugs in UCW, or its associated premises (such as the HE student accommodation), the matter will be reported to their Head of Faculty immediately who will deal with the situation through 'gross' breach of the UCW Student Code of Conduct. In consultation with the Assistant Director: HE Academic Registry, a decision will be made whether to inform the Police.

### **Students supplying non prescribed / controlled drugs/ alcohol / NPS in UCW or its associated premises**

If a student is discovered to be supplying non-prescribed / controlled drugs in UCW, or its associated premises, the matter will be reported to the Assistant Director HE: Academic Registry who will inform the Police, taking their guidance on how to deal with the student in the first instance. The matter will also be dealt with from UCW's perspective by their Head of Faculty through 'gross' breach of the UCW Student Code of Conduct. It may also be necessary to inform the student's partner university to ascertain whether their Code of Conduct should be invoked in this instance. Guidance will be given to the student on this as part of the UCW Student Code of Conduct procedure. Please refer to this policy for further guidance.

### **Smoking on UCW premises (including Electronic Cigarettes/Vapes)**

If a student is discovered to be smoking within UCW buildings, or its associated premises (including the HE student accommodation) outside of the designated areas, the matter will be reported to their Subject Area Manager. They will then deal with the situation; this is discretionary

depending on the circumstances but could be deemed as a 'serious' breach of the UCW Student Code of Conduct.

### **Discovery of Substances**

If substances are discovered in UCW, its associated premises or whilst on residential/field trips, the responsible member of staff should store the substance securely and take them to HEART at the earliest opportunity with details of time, date and place of discovery. HEART will then dispose of the substance(s) safely and in consultation with the police if necessary.

## **Other Relevant Policies**

Alleged failures by students to comply with this policy may result in UCW taking action in other policies (including those of the partner university). The HE Assistant Director: Academic Registry will determine the appropriate policy to be followed in any matter.

Other related and relevant policies may include, but are not limited to:

- UCW Student Code of Conduct
- UCW Student Charter
- UCW Complaints Procedures
- UCW Fitness to Student Policy