

Policy on Alcohol and Drug Use - Students

Introduction

This policy is designed primarily to:-

- ☑ Explain our approach to alcohol and drug consumption and attendant problems;
- ☑ Raise awareness of the risks;
- ☑ Safeguard you from the hazards of such abuse;
- ☑ Promote the early identification of problems;
- ☑ Provide advice and support to you in overcoming any problems.

Alcohol and drug misuse affects performance, behaviour and relationships at study and at home.

There is overwhelming evidence of links between alcohol misuse and social, psychological and medical problems, accidents and violence. We have a duty and a desire to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all our students and we view the promotion of good health as an integral part of our educational philosophy.

We will adopt a supportive and sympathetic approach to any student who develops problems as a result of alcohol or drug use. Similarly, all teaching staff are encouraged to be alert to possible problems and to take a constructive approach if problems do emerge;

However, our premises remain a drug-free zone and anyone found in possession of illegal drugs on the premises will be immediately asked to leave the site. If you are one of our students, you will be suspended pending a full investigation in accordance with our Student Disciplinary Procedure.

Definitions

Substance Misuse - drinking alcohol, taking drugs or a controlled substance, either intermittent or continuous which interferes with an individual's health, work capabilities or conduct, or which affects the work performance and/or safety of themselves and others.

Drug – means and includes any substance (other than alcohol) that produces physical, mental, emotional or behavioural change in the user, the sale, possession or consumption of which is illegal. This term includes prescription drugs where such prescription drugs have not been prescribed for the person possessing or using such drugs and/or such prescription drugs are not taken in accordance with a physician's direction.

Controlled Substance - means and includes all chemical substances or drugs listed in any controlled substances acts or regulations applicable under the law.

Our Aims

Our aims are to:

1. Provide information on drugs and their effects outlining potential hazards, safer drug/alcohol use and information on local, helping agencies;
2. Ensure the provision of a confidential support service where you may discuss drug/alcohol related problems or be referred to a specialist agency;
3. Provide or make available training for key staff in awareness of drug/alcohol related problems and also in respect of appropriate responses.

Aim 1

We will make information available to you via our Student Support Team on:

- The short and long-term effects of drug and alcohol;
- Identification of potential hazards;
- Drugs and the law;
- Information on associated hazards, e.g. transmission of HIV and hepatitis;
- Identification of local drug/alcohol agencies.

This information will be available from Student Support throughout the year with particular emphasis during Freshers' Week.

Aim 2

We will make available a confidential counselling service via the Student Support Manager (note: you may be referred to the student counselling service at LJMU).

Following initial presentation and discussion of the problem, you may be referred for counselling.

Information shared with the Student Support Manager, counsellor or other members of the Student Support team will be treated as confidential within the agreed framework for confidentiality. This means that information will only be passed on to another party if it is in the interests of your welfare or the safety of other students, and as far as possible, with your permission.

In the event of academic under-performance as a result of drug/alcohol problems, the Student Support Manager may, with your permission, notify your Head of Discipline that you are experiencing difficulties.

This will allow the Head of Discipline, if appropriate, to ensure that allowances are made for your situation in academic assessment procedures. Such allowance however will be conditional on following a programme of management of the problem as agreed between yourself and your counsellor or the Student Support Manager.

Where appropriate, your counsellor or the Student Support Manager may, with your agreement, refer you to a specialist agency outside of LIPA.

Aim 3

Key staff receiving appropriate awareness training will include:

- Teaching staff;

- Members of the Student Support team;
- Security staff;
- Bar staff.

Training will take several forms including seminars on drug use from specialist agencies and from the police.

The training will be aimed at providing an insight into:

- the nature and variety of drugs;
- the effects of drug and alcohol on the user;
- familiarity with identification of illegal substances;
- internal policies and procedures;
- attitudes of the police to the use and trafficking of drugs;
- the legal context.

Identification of a problem

Students with drug or alcohol problems may present in a number of ways, e.g. through disclosure:

- To a Learning Guidance Tutor or other member of teaching staff as a result of performance or attendance problems or disruptive behaviour;
- To the Student Support Manager through information volunteered on student health questionnaires;
- Through self-referral to the Student Support Manager or one of his staff.

Other signs include:

- Deterioration in general health;
- Absence from lectures or work or poor time-keeping;
- A pattern of unexplained underachievement;
- Loss of concentration, poor judgement or decision-making;
- Erratic or unacceptable behaviour;
- Deterioration of working and living relationships;
- Change in appearance (unkempt, tiredness, distracted);
- Denial of the negative and harmful consequences of substance use;
- Financial difficulties.

What to do if you think another student has a problem

We are a community and we encourage our students to look out for each other. If you think one of your peers has problem you should:

- Treat the situation as serious;
- Share your concern with the student and encourage them to seek support;
- If they deny they have a problem, encourage them to reflect on how their behaviour is affecting their work/health

What not to do:

- Ignore or make light of the problem;

- Assume that experimenting with drugs or alcohol is harmless;
- Agree not to mention their difficulties when they request you do not disclose to other staff here at LIPA.

Our Approach - random instances of drug-taking or excessive drinking, trafficking

Random instances of misuse of alcohol or of drugs, which do not involve addiction, will be handled through normal student disciplinary processes.

Students are not obliged to work with someone who has consumed alcohol or drugs if they consider that by doing so they put themselves or others at risk; anyone in this position should immediately report their concerns to a members of teaching staff or support.

Individuals considered incapable of performing duties safely or competently due to consumption of alcohol or drugs will immediately be removed from classes and the Head of Discipline informed.

We are clear in our view that the use or possession of proscribed drugs and the trafficking in such drugs are criminal offences and will be regarded as major offences in line with our Student Disciplinary Procedure.

Potential Disciplinary Action

However, when invoking disciplinary procedures, we may make allowance if you have already agreed to co-operate in a programme of management agreed with the Student Support Manager.

Nevertheless, In the event of a major offence, particularly one involving drug trafficking, police charges, or a conviction, we reserve the right to suspend any student concerned in the case to report the matter to the police and to expel him or her.

In the event of a student exhibiting drug/alcohol problems which are not considered to constitute major offences in line with our Student Disciplinary Procedure, we will proceed under Aim 2 of this policy - i.e. we will seek to take appropriate action to minimise the harm or potential harm which may accrue to you or other students.

See also:

Fitness to Study Policy;
Fitness to Practise Policy;
Safeguarding of Vulnerable Adults Policy.