



# POLICY ON ALCOHOL AND DRUGS IN EMPLOYMENT

## Personnel Services

Date approved: 24 July 2007      Date Policy will take effect: 24 July 2007      Date of Next Review: July 2012

Approved by **Administrative Committee**

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Responsible Faculty/Division & Unit      OHS Unit, Personnel Services

Supporting documents, procedures & forms of this policy      University documentation relating to this policy includes:

- University of Wollongong OH&S Policy
- University of Wollongong Guidelines on the Use and Management of Alcohol at University Functions
- University of Wollongong Policy on Children on Campus
- University of Wollongong Risk Management Guidelines
- University of Wollongong Employee Assistance Program
- University Code of Conduct
- University of Wollongong Sick Leave Guidelines
- University of Wollongong Fieldwork Safety Guidelines
- University of Wollongong Prevention of Sexual Harassment Policy
- Rules for Student Conduct and Discipline

Audience       Internet – public access  
 Staff Intranet – UOW Staff Only

Expiry date of Policy      2012

## Table of Contents

1.	Policy Statement.....	2
2.	Purpose of Policy.....	2
3.	Definitions.....	3
4.	Application & Scope .....	3
5.	Policy Principles .....	3
6.	Responsibilities.....	4
7.	Risk Assessment.....	5
8.	Consequences of Breaching This Policy .....	5
9.	Information and Assistance .....	6
10.	Policy Review .....	6
11.	Review and Change History .....	6

## 1. Policy Statement

- 1.1. At the University of Wollongong, it is a requirement that employees do not work under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Being affected by alcohol or drugs at work, particularly in at risk environments, can seriously compromise the health, safety and welfare of employees, students and others in the workplace, and also impair an individual's ability to perform their work competently and professionally. Further, inappropriate or unlawful conduct arising out of alcohol or drug use may expose the University to legal liability in some circumstances.
- 1.2. As such, the University will not tolerate employees:
  - Possessing, selling, distributing or consuming prohibited drugs in the workplace;
  - Consuming alcohol while at work, other than in accordance with this policy, or
  - Being affected by alcohol or drugs including medically prescribed or over the counter drugs in the sense that their ability to work safely, competently and professionally is impaired.
- 1.3. Failure to comply with this policy may result in disciplinary action, which may lead to the termination of employment.

## 2. Purpose of Policy

- 2.1. The purpose of this policy is to:
  - Assist the University in fulfilling its OH&S obligations and duty of care to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all employees, and others, in the workplace;
  - Assist employees to fulfil their duty of care towards themselves and others in the workplace;
  - Preserve the reputation of the University in the community;
  - Promote awareness of personal safety and security in relation to alcohol and drug consumption;
  - Minimise the University's exposure to legal action arising out of the abuse or inappropriate use of alcohol and prohibited drugs;
  - Ensure that individuals preserve the dignity and professionalism expected of them by students, co-workers and the community;
  - Provide University employees with adequate information about the ways in which drugs and alcohol can impair safe and competent performance of work and the consequences of their inappropriate use, and,
  - Provide guidelines to employees who work in a supervisory role in relation to managing alcohol and drug problems in the workplace.

### 3. Definitions

Word/Term	Definition (with examples if required)
<b>Prohibited drug</b>	Those drugs which are prohibited according to Schedule 1 of the <i>Drug Misuse and Trafficking Act 1985</i> . Examples include alkoxyamphetamines, cannabis, heroin, isomethadone and LSD.
<b>Medically prescribed drugs</b>	Drugs which are prescribed by a medical practitioner and issued by a pharmacist.
<b>Over the counter drugs</b>	Drugs which can be purchased legally i.e. chemist store.

### 4. Application & Scope

- 4.1. This policy applies to all work based activities of University employees, whether on or off campus. The Guidelines on the Use and Management of Alcohol at University Functions must also be considered in conjunction with this policy.

### 5. Policy Principles

- 5.1. Employees must not possess, distribute, sell or consume prohibited drugs in the workplace.
- 5.2. Employees must not consume alcohol, medically prescribed drugs or over the counter drugs while at work or on University business, other than in accordance with this policy.
- 5.3. Employees must not be impaired, in their ability to perform their duties safely, competently and professionally, by alcohol or drugs including medically prescribed or over the counter drugs.
- 5.4. Employees on duty in high and medium risk work areas observed to be affected in any degree by alcohol or drugs may face disciplinary action, which may include dismissal.
- 5.5. The application of risk control measures in consultation with the employee and their supervisor to ensure side effects of medically prescribed or over the counter drugs do not impact on work performance or occupational health and safety, e.g. drowsiness.
- 5.6. A risk management approach will be used to determine those areas where the University expects staff not to be impaired by drug and alcohol consumption at all times.
- 5.7. It is recognised that some occasions, restricted to low risk areas only, may involve limited and responsible consumption of alcohol, as outlined in Section 7.
- 5.8. Assistance and support will be offered to employees where there is a perceived or identified substance abuse or dependency problem.

## **6. Responsibilities**

### **6.1. Deans and Directors**

- 6.1.1. Deans and Directors are responsible for the implementation and review of this policy in their area. They are also responsible for ensuring risk assessments of work tasks are completed to ensure that work can be appropriately categorised for the purposes of this policy.
- 6.1.2. Compliance with the University's procedures on the use of alcohol at University Functions is also the responsibility of Deans and Directors.

### **6.2. Heads of Department, Managers and Supervisors**

- 6.2.1. Heads, Managers and Supervisors are responsible for ensuring that this policy is implemented in their area. This includes ensuring that:
- All employees are made aware of the policy.
  - Risk assessments are undertaken on work tasks in consultation with employees as per the OH&S Risk Management Guidelines.
  - Employee behaviour is observed to ensure adherence with the policy.
  - Any concerns or issues are addressed proactively and expediently to ensure all employees' health and safety.
  - Support is provided to employees where appropriate.
  - The Guidelines on the Use and Management of Alcohol at University Functions are complied with.
  - Any suspected breaches of this policy are reported to the Manager OH&S and seek advice on management of that specific case.
  - The Rules for Student Conduct and Discipline are complied with, particularly in relation to field trips.

### **6.3. Employees**

- 6.3.1. All employees must adhere to their duty of care and their specific obligations as outlined in this policy. This includes:
- Observing all directions from their supervisor in regards to this policy.
  - Advising their supervisor if they have a concern for, or believe themselves or a co-worker presents a threat to the health and safety of themselves or others.
  - Recognising that performance of duties could be affected by alcohol or drugs and raising this with their supervisor to instigate appropriate risk control measures if required.
  - Not undertaking duties if their ability to perform their duties safely, competently and professionally is impaired by alcohol or drugs.
  - Not consuming alcohol while on duty, other than in accordance with this Policy.
  - Not possessing, distributing or otherwise consuming any prohibited drugs while on duty or on University premises.
  - Compliance with the Guidelines on the Use and Management of Alcohol at University Functions.

## **6.4. OH&S Committee**

- 6.4.1. The OH&S Committee will be considered the main forum for consultation with employees on this policy.

## **7. Risk Assessment**

- 7.1. This section is to be read in conjunction with the Policy Principles in Section 5.
- 7.2. Where an employee has a legitimate need to use a medically prescribed drug or over the counter drug that could impair their work performance, the employee is required to notify their supervisor so that a risk assessment can be conducted to ensure the safety of the individual and others. The risk assessment will be undertaken in accordance with the University of Wollongong OHS Risk Management Guidelines
- 7.3. A risk management approach will also be used to determine those areas where zero tolerance of alcohol consumption will apply. All work will be considered high or medium risk unless assessed as low via the completion of a risk assessment.
- 7.4. Examples of high and medium risk activities are, but not limited to, work involving:
- Operating or driving any mobile equipment, including commercial vehicles, lawn mowers, excavation equipment, forklifts, tractors and the like,
  - Workshop or laboratory locations,
  - Medium to high levels of physical exertion, whether for short or long duration,
  - Exposure to medium to high risk substances, such as dangerous goods, hazardous substances, genetically modified organisms, biohazardous or radioactive substances,
  - First aid – including all employees who are receiving a first aid allowance hence are on call for this activity whilst at work,
  - Operating hand held power tools,
  - All construction work,
  - All licensed work e.g. plumbing, electrical tasks.
- 7.5. Examples of low risk activities may include but are not limited to:
- Administrative duties i.e. clerical work, checking email;
  - Literary research activities.

## **8. Consequences of Breaching This Policy**

- 8.1. The University views any breach of this policy extremely seriously. Depending on the severity of the breach, an employee may face disciplinary action in accordance with the University's disciplinary procedures, which may include a warning, final warning or dismissal.
- 8.2. Where appropriate, the University may recommend, or direct an employee to attend, internal or external drug and alcohol counselling.

## 9. Information and Assistance

- 9.1. The University is committed to providing information to employees on the policy. Education forms a key part of the implementation phase of this policy. In addition, information on alcohol and prohibited drugs will be made available to employees upon request.
- 9.2. The University will support any employee requiring assistance through provision of an Employee Assistance Program at the University's Counselling Service. The Counselling Service is free and confidential. It can be contacted on 4221 3445.
- 9.3. Employees should seek advice from their medical practitioner or pharmacist in regards to information on the possible effects of taking medically prescribed drugs or over the counter drugs.

## 10. Policy Review

- 10.1. This Policy will be reviewed as required or at least every 5 years for the date of last review.

## 11. Review and Change History

Version Control	Date the Review occurred	Date Effective	Approved By	Change Details
Version 2	April 2007	24 July 2007	Administrative Committee	Reviewed for currency and formatting.