

## BIRMINGHAM CITY UNIVERSITY

### Student drug and substance misuse policy

#### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 We are committed to providing you with a supportive, safe and healthy environment in which to study. We do not approve of the use of illegal drugs or the misuse of alcohol or other legal substances but recognise our role in supporting students where they seek help for these problems.

#### 2 Aims of the policy

- 2.1 To make students aware of support and guidance which is available for students who may have problems with alcohol and / or drug use.
- 2.2 To promote an awareness of the health and legal ramifications caused by alcohol and substance misuse;
- 2.3 To explain our approach to issues arising from the misuse of alcohol or the use of illegal substances.

#### 3 Scope of the policy

- 3.1 This policy applies to all enrolled students of the University and all students on franchised provision.

#### 4 Definitions

- 4.1 "Substance" in this policy includes:

- illegal or controlled drugs;
- prescription drugs;
- new psychoactive substances (often called 'legal highs'), which when used inappropriately or excessively can be dangerous;
- alcohol;
- other substances, for example, over-the-counter medication, caffeine, or nicotine.

#### 5 Support, advice and information

- 5.1 We encourage any student concerned about their use of alcohol or drugs to seek advice from the Counselling and Wellbeing Team, who can provide assistance to enable appropriate help or treatment to be accessed. Our focus will be on supporting the student by confirming support available within the University and directing the student to appropriate external agencies and support networks.
- 5.2 Student Affairs offers access to a free one-to-one counselling service staffed by fully qualified counsellors for students experiencing emotional difficulties and distress, including in association with the misuse of alcohol or the use of illegal substances. The Counselling Team has links to specialist external agencies dealing with these matters and will signpost students as appropriate.

5.3 Information leaflets, details of relevant books (available in the University's libraries) and links to external agencies is available online at <https://icity.bcu.ac.uk/student-affairs/health-and-wellbeing> and <https://icity.bcu.ac.uk/Student-Affairs/Health-and-Wellbeing/Mental-Health-and-Wellbeing/Self-help-resources>.

5.4 The BCU Students' Union also offers a confidential advice service and can offer support: <https://www.bcusu.com/advice/>.

## 6 University Procedures

6.1 Our primary focus in regard to issues arising from the misuse of alcohol or the use of illegal substances is providing support to those affected. However, any behaviour which is a criminal offence can constitute general misconduct under the Student Disciplinary Procedure. Anti-social behaviour resulting from alcohol or drug use is also unacceptable and may result in disciplinary action. Disciplinary action can result in exclusion from the University. The Student Disciplinary Procedure is available at <https://icity.bcu.ac.uk/student-affairs/appeals-and-resolutions/student-disciplinary-procedure>.

6.2 If you are on a course leading to registration with professional, regulatory and statutory bodies (PRSBs), drug use or excessive alcohol use may also result in you being referred for consideration under the Fitness to Practise Procedure. Action under the Fitness to Practise Procedure can result in withdrawal from your programme of study or exclusion from the University. The Fitness to Practise Procedure is available at: <https://icity.bcu.ac.uk/Student-Affairs/Appeals-and-Resolutions/Fitness-to-Practise>.

6.3 Where serious concerns are raised about your conduct, we may consider whether it is necessary to impose a temporary suspension and/or other measures as a precaution, in line with the Student Suspensions Guidance: <https://icity.bcu.ac.uk/Content/Document/Student-Suspension-Guidance-2017-1>.

6.4 We will not consider being under the influence of alcohol or otherwise intoxicated as an excuse for offensive, abusive or illegal behaviour, and we may regard it as an aggravating feature.

6.5 Where there are concerns that you may be too unwell to continue your studies or are struggling to cope with your personal circumstances then we may use the Fitness to Study Procedure to address these concerns. The Fitness to Study Procedure is available at: <https://icity.bcu.ac.uk/Student-Affairs/Appeals-and-Resolutions/Fitness-to-Study-Procedure>.

6.6 If you are living in University accommodation, there are specific Terms and Conditions of the Licence Agreement relating to illegal substances: <https://icity.bcu.ac.uk/Estates-and-Facilities/Accommodation-Services/Policies>.

### *Reporting concerns*

6.7 If you believe that someone has difficulty in controlling their use of alcohol or drugs you should encourage them to seek support. Excessive drinking can be the first outward sign that someone is having problems and needs help.

6.8 If you are concerned that a student may be a danger to themselves or others you should inform a senior member of staff or discuss your concerns with someone from

the Counselling and Wellbeing team: <https://icity.bcu.ac.uk/Student-Affairs/Health-and-Wellbeing/Index>.

- 6.9 If you become aware of, or suspect, drug use or supply on campus, you should report your concerns to Security Services: <https://icity.bcu.ac.uk/Estates-and-Facilities/Security-Services/Index>. If concerns are about activity in any University accommodation then you should report these concerns to Security Services and / or Estates and Facilities: <https://icity.bcu.ac.uk/Estates-and-Facilities/Security-Services/Contact-Us>.

## 7 The University and the law

- 7.1 We recognise that the following are offences under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971:

- possession of a controlled drug;
- possession with intent to supply another person;
- production, cultivation or manufacture of controlled drugs;
- supplying another person with a controlled drug;
- offering to supply another person with a controlled drug;
- import or export of controlled drugs;
- allowing premises to be used for the consumption of certain controlled drugs or for the supply or production of any controlled drug.

- 7.2 We also recognise that the following are offences under the Psychoactive Substances Act 2016:

- production of a psychoactive substance
- supplying, or offering to supply, a psychoactive substance
- possession of a psychoactive substance with intent to supply
- importing or exporting a psychoactive substance.

- 7.3 The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 requires us to do what is reasonable to protect the health and safety of staff, students and visitors. Misuse of legal or illegal substances can have an impact on the health and safety of the individual concerned and also on others, for example students in shared accommodation or staff they come into contact with.

- 7.4 We may report criminal offences to the Police or other authorities as appropriate.

## 8 You and the law

- 8.1 The consequences which can result from a police caution or a prosecution for the possession, supply or trafficking of illegal drugs are not limited to fines and prison sentences. A criminal record can have a serious impact on employment prospects, particularly for professions such as law, teaching or medicine. Even your travel plans can be affected as you may be denied a visa to enter certain countries if you have been cautioned or convicted for a drugs related offence.

- 8.2 A criminal record arising from drunken behaviour can also have a serious impact on employment. Receiving a police caution for drunk or disorderly conduct should not be treated lightly as this could have an adverse effect on your future career.

### *Declaring charges and convictions*

- 8.3 As set out above, we have a duty of care to our staff, students and visitors and so need to be informed of any alleged criminal activity by our students. If at any time during your registration on a course at the University you are arrested by the police

and charged with a criminal offence, you should report this immediately to the Deputy Director of Student Affairs (Queries and Resolutions): <https://icity.bcu.ac.uk/Student-Affairs/Appeals-and-Resolutions>.

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