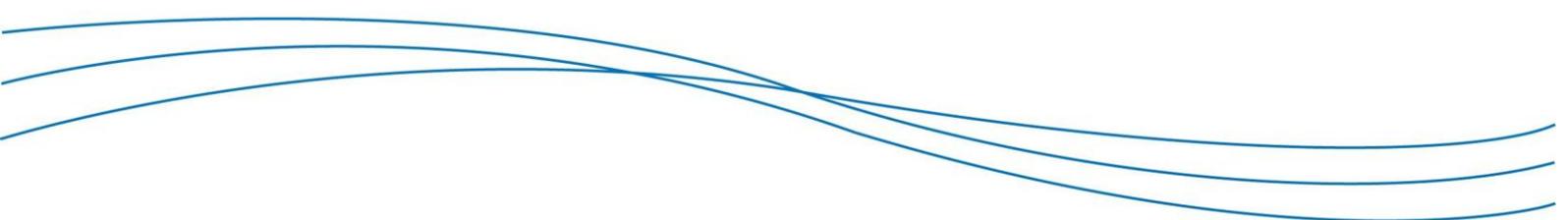




Swansea University
Prifysgol Abertawe

Alcohol Policy

Swansea University and Students' Union



Alcohol Policy for Swansea University and Students' Union

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INTRODUCTION

This Policy has been produced by a joint University/Students' Union Working Group which comprised elected Students' Union and Athletic Union Officers, Students' Union Bar and Advice Centre staff, University staff from the College of Human and Health Science, Security, Academic Registry, Residential Services, Wellbeing Services and a representative of the NHS.

The Working group took as its starting point the 'Exemplar Policy for Welsh HE Institutions, incorporating Universities and Students Unions'.

The draft policy was circulated for consultation to a broad range of personnel including the PVC Student Experience, the Healthy University Group, the Student Services Management Team and all Students' Union Full-Time Officers.

ALCOHOL POLICY STATEMENT

Swansea University and Students' Union are committed to promoting a safe and supportive environment in which to study and work.

In order to do so, we will:

- Encourage and support mutual respect within the whole of the university community
- Work to create an understanding of acceptable behaviour and sanction responsible use of disciplinary action where appropriate
- Assist students to make informed decisions about alcohol use
- Promote a community which is supportive and which recognises and respects different attitudes towards alcohol use
- Recognise the link between responsible behaviour and an enjoyable learning experience and seek to promote a social environment from which all may benefit
- Take very seriously our legal duty of care to our students, staff and visitors and aim to provide a safe, healthy and high quality work and study environment
- Recognise that staff have a duty of care to be alert to indicators of alcohol misuse and to take appropriate action when necessary
- Provide guidance and information to staff and students to help them develop the confidence to know what action to take if they are concerned about alcohol misuse which puts the wellbeing of students at risk

- Provide confidential support through [Student Services](#) or the [Students' Union Advice Centre](#) to students who are seeking help or have concerns about their alcohol use or that of their friends.
- Work with all relevant partners to deliver responsible commercial services where alcohol is available on site.

Alcohol Policy

1. Introduction

This policy is part of a University and Students' Union approach that promotes a safe and supportive environment in which to study and work. The overarching premise is one of support and education, focusing on boundaries of acceptable and responsible behaviour.

The harmful use of alcohol in Wales is far more widespread than that of illegal drugs and other substances. Up to 40% of adults in Wales consume more than the recommended limits of alcohol and 20% admit to binge drinking¹, making it a significant public health concern, both within and beyond a university setting.

The University and Students' Union will endeavour to enable students to make informed decisions relating to alcohol use, and information on current guidance will be available through Student Services and the Students' Union. In addition, the University and Students' Union will explore the extent to which alcohol can be a barrier to student participation, especially in regards to religion and belief.

The University recognises that the majority of students will not be affected by alcohol misuse but, where a student declares that they have a problem, their cases will be treated sympathetically and in confidence. Support will be offered through [Student Services](#) and the [SU Advice Centre](#) where possible and referrals to external support agencies may be made where the support required is outside the expertise of those services.

It is important to acknowledge that students who have or develop alcohol related problems may cause harm to themselves and to others and these risks will be considered in any course of action. The misuse of alcohol often affects students' performance, conduct and relationships both on

¹ Welsh Assembly Government 2008, Working Together to Reduce Harm: The Substance Misuse Strategy for Wales 2008-2018

their course and in their accommodation. It can also have consequences for future career choices.

The University has a legal duty of care to its students, staff and visitors and aims to provide a safe, healthy and high quality study and work environment. This includes addressing the risks posed by alcohol misuse, informing students of their responsibilities and codes of conduct and providing information, advice, guidance and support on request. All students have a legal responsibility to take reasonable care of their own safety and that of others.

In certain situations individuals may be subject to disciplinary action under the [University's disciplinary procedures](#), be asked to leave and/or be reported to the police. The University does not wish to criminalise its students or visitors, but it has a legitimate interest in protecting the University community and its own reputation from the potential consequences of alcohol misuse.

2. Who is covered by the policy?

The policy applies to students in circumstances where there is a risk to themselves or others, or where their conduct or quality of work affects others or the reputation of the University (such as students on university-organised work placements, working in laboratories on research projects or as members of university sports teams). It applies whether students are on university premises or elsewhere on university business or study activities, including premises managed on behalf of the University by a third party, such as privately managed halls of residences or SAS properties off campus.

The policy also applies to Students' Unions, independent bodies which conduct and manage their own affairs in accordance with their constitutions.

3. Aims of the policy

The purpose of the policy is to:

- Promote health, safety and wellbeing through the provision of information, advice, guidance and support
- Inform students about the potential consequences of alcohol misuse
- Provide information on support options where appropriate
- Encourage individuals with alcohol-related issues to seek help
- Signpost information to students and staff regarding students' responsibilities and the required code of conduct

- Inform students how alcohol misuse and its potential consequences may lead to disciplinary and/or legal action

4. What is meant by 'misuse'?

Alcohol misuse is defined as the habitual or intermittent use of alcohol which causes detriment to an individual's health, social functioning or study/work performance. It can impair the safety of themselves or others and affect attendance, time keeping, efficiency and conduct.

Dependency

The problems associated with alcoholism, or alcohol dependence, are wide ranging and can be physical, psychological and social. For someone with a drink problem, drinking becomes a compulsion and takes precedence over all other activities.

Someone with alcohol dependence:

- has a strong desire to drink alcohol
- has difficulty controlling their use of alcohol
- persistently uses alcohol despite being aware of the harmful effects
- shows increased tolerance for alcohol
- shows signs of withdrawal when without alcohol

Binge drinking

Binge drinking is defined as drinking eight or more units of alcohol in one session if you are a man, and more than six units in one session if you are a woman. Studies are starting to reveal that drinking a large amount of alcohol over a short period of time may be significantly worse for your health than frequently drinking small quantities. To reduce health risks from drinking, the [Department of Health](#) recommends that adult males should drink no more than three to four units of alcohol a day, and that adult females should drink no more than two to three units of alcohol a day. Measurements of alcohol for some other popular drinks are listed below.

- A standard glass of wine (175ml) at 12% abv is 2.1 units, and a large 250ml glass is 3 units.
- A measure (35ml) of spirit (40% abv) is 1.4 units.
- A bottle (275ml) of ordinary strength alcopops (5% abv) is 1.4 units.
- A shot (35ml) of spirits, typically between 35-40% abv, is 1.3 units.

- A pint (568ml) of low strength (3.5-4% abv) beer, or lager, is 2.3 units.
- A standard measure of port, or sherry, (50ml) is 1 unit.

The quantity of alcohol in a person's bloodstream (or blood alcohol content) is used to measure their level of intoxication (drunkenness). It is calculated in milligrams of alcohol per 100 millilitres of blood. The UK BAC limit for legal driving is 80mg/100ml².

Pre-Loading

Pre-loading is the practice of consuming alcohol at home before going out to bars and clubs. More than half of students who consume alcohol have been found to 'pre-load'. When people pre-load they are generally four times more likely to consume over 20 units on a night out (including pre-loading and bar/club drinking). This level of consumption is strongly associated with increased health risks and also involvement in other behavioural issues such as nightlife violence and unsafe sexual behaviour.

5. The legal position

Six actions, amongst others, are illegal:

- (a)** selling alcoholic drinks without a meal where the licence is for drink accompanying meals;
- (b)** serving alcoholic drink to a customer who is already drunk in the opinion of the person serving;
- (c)** serving alcoholic drink to persons under the legal age of 18 years (with some exceptions relating to table meals);
- (d)** allowing a drunken person to be on the premises without good reason (e.g. illness);
- (e)** allowing gambling to take place, with minor exceptions;
- (f)** allowing arguments or anti-social behaviour to take place.

All licensees are required to attend a suitable training course.

² <http://www.nhsdirect.wales.nhs.uk>

[The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974](#) places a duty of care on employers to ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of staff, students and other users of its premises.

[The Road Traffic Act 1988](#) states that a person is guilty of an offence if driving or attempting to drive a motor vehicle in a public place while unfit through drink or drugs.

The University and the Students' Union operate licensed premises according to the terms of the [Licensing Act 2005](#).

6. Pricing and Promotions

The prices in Students' Union bars are generally appreciably lower than those in the pubs closest to the campus, but can often be matched in other pubs not far away. This pricing policy is believed to be in the interests of students by encouraging those who drink to do so in University/Students' Union premises rather than elsewhere, but not so low as to encourage excessive consumption³.

7. Code of conduct

The code of conduct describes the legal health and safety obligations and the expected standards of behaviour for students and staff. It is expected that all students will take personal responsibility for ensuring that alcohol misuse does not affect work or study performance. A breach of the code may result in [disciplinary action](#).

The code states that:

- No one should undertake university-related business or represent the university while unfit through alcohol use.
- Alcohol use resulting in a risk to the safety of oneself or others is likely to lead to disciplinary action. Examples of this may include clinical work with patients, driving, sports activities, using machinery or hazardous substances or any other activities identified as hazardous on a risk assessment.
- Failure to comply with any statutory registration requirements, professional codes of ethics or accreditation provisions with reference to alcohol misuse (e.g. in clinical work with patients, work with schools) is likely to lead to disciplinary action .

³ <http://www3.imperial.ac.uk/hr/procedures/health/alcohol>

- Intoxication will not be accepted as a mitigating circumstance in the case of students breaching university regulations. Students with alcohol dependency issues will be strongly encouraged to engage with sources of help and support but will not be exempt from disciplinary procedures resulting from any breach of University regulations.
- Students are strongly advised not to compromise their own safety by working with or being reliant upon (e.g. as a car or bus passenger) someone who has consumed alcohol over the legal limit
- Students are strongly advised that a disruption of academic activity due to alcohol misuse will be investigated by the relevant college.
- Pressure should not be applied to others to drink alcohol. This includes disrespectful or exclusive behaviour and the spiking of drinks with any/extra alcohol.

8. Confidentiality and data protection

All cases will be dealt with in confidence and all personal information will be processed securely in accordance with the [Data Protection Act 1998](#). It may be used by relevant personnel to consider any support needed and to manage the study relationship. Wherever possible, confidential disclosure of information by students will be honoured, unless the student or someone else is at serious risk of harm. Staff should clearly state from the outset that limited confidentiality applies and that confidentiality will not be maintained if the withholding of information constitutes a risk to the individual or others.

9. Our Commitment

The wellbeing of the student body is the key driver for this policy and, as a responsible retailer of alcohol; we will adhere to the following best practice:

- Pricing in the bars will be set at a level which encourages students to access the facility but not so low as to encourage excessive consumption.
- The most expensive non-alcoholic drink on sale will always be cheaper than the cheapest alcoholic drink on sale
- Free drinking water will be provided on request to all patrons.
- 'Initiation' ceremonies involving excessive alcohol consumption will not be permitted on or off the premises, however we will welcome groups/societies who wish to host events where the focus is not on drunkenness.
- We will strive to ensure that facilities/events are accessible for those students who choose not to drink alcohol, either due to personal preference, culture or because of religion or belief. We will consider alcohol free alternatives that engage students from all religion or belief groups where possible.
- We will participate in the [Best Bar None Scheme](#) and will achieve the standards required for accreditation.

- Alcohol education and campaign work will form part of our commitment to student welfare and will be run regularly by the Students' Union and/or Student Services to encourage moderate sensible drinking.
- We will work with local services in the community i.e. Police, residents associations etc, to build good relations and to raise awareness of the positive impacts of students in local communities and we will respond appropriately to any concerns or complaints relating to alcohol misuse i.e. noise disturbances.

Appendix A

Guidance

Students should:

- Be aware of this policy and supporting documents.
- Seek help voluntarily if they are concerned about their alcohol use. Within the university, help is available from personal tutors, Student Services, Welfare Wardens and the Students' Union. For sources of help within the community please refer to our website: <http://www.healthycitydirectory.co.uk/> or contact the sources stated above.
- Seek help or advice if they have been asked to do so, including as part of a disciplinary sanction.
- Encourage other students to seek help if they have a problem.
- Access information about the potential impacts on alcohol misuse on finances, health and other people. This is available through Student Services and the Students' Union.
- Alert an appropriate member of staff to any problems they see developing within the institution, particularly where legal or health and safety concerns are an issue
- Be aware of the behaviour of students around them and do their best to ensure their safety and well-being

Staff should:

- Be aware of the policy, procedures, available services and referral procedures available for dealing with student alcohol-related issues. This information should be included in student induction. Encourage students to access appropriate support if there are concerns about their well-being in relation to alcohol. Contribute to the development and facilitation of awareness raising activities.
- Be mindful of the potential impacts of excessive alcohol when conducting risk assessments on proposed activities.
- Investigate accidents and incidents for signs of alcohol misuse and liaise with the relevant departments.
- Ensure there is no misuse of/pressure to misuse alcohol during university social functions. Non-alcoholic drinks must be available at these occasions.

Students' Union should:

- Offer information and advice about services available to students who have concerns about their alcohol use.
- Encourage and promote a sensible approach to alcohol use.
- Provide and support educational events, awareness campaigns and activities that promote health and well-being in cooperation with other departments.
- Ensure that student related policies reflect attitudes to alcohol which are conducive to student well-being.
- Provide support for student societies or clubs entering into any sponsorship contracts with alcoholic venues to ensure they promote student wellbeing and discourage excessive drinking.
- Ensure that social events are not themed around excessive drinking and that publicity for these events is not themed exclusively around alcohol.
- Uphold the requirements of the licensing laws.

Student Support Services should:

- Act as a confidential self-referral facility for students.
- Provide information, advice, guidance and support to students presenting with alcohol related issues.
- Operate appropriate confidentiality and referral policies to ensure students receive the most appropriate support
- Develop and publish information for students on the potential impacts of alcohol misuse.
- Adhere to confidentiality guidelines and the Data Protection Act when a student presents for support for an alcohol related issue.
- Have in place systems of referral to community based alcohol support agencies
- Raise concerns to appropriate university personnel if a particular alcohol related welfare issue is presenting repeatedly for the service.
- Take all necessary steps to ensure that students with alcohol related issues do not present a risk to themselves or others

Residential Services staff should:

- Be aware of alcohol-related support services within the institution and signpost accordingly.
- Liaise and communicate with other personnel within the institution in relation to alcohol related incidents eg Security; Student Support Services
- Monitor and record alcohol related incidents within the Residences and ensure these reports are available to relevant staff.
- Report and/or investigate any alcohol related incidents that contravene University regulations.

Appendix B

Recommended actions for alcohol related incidents

The duty of care to students is paramount. If a student living in University residences presents a risk to themselves or others due to intoxication, this should be reported to Residential Services staff or, outside working hours, to Security staff who will take the appropriate action. It is recommended that a student who is highly intoxicated is kept under observation until assistance can be summoned.

If a student living in private accommodation presents a risk to themselves or others due to intoxication, it is recommended that action be taken if possible to ensure their safety until they are no longer intoxicated. In extreme circumstances, this may include calling the Police. If the student becomes unconscious, they should be taken to the Accident and Emergency Unit of the nearest hospital or NHS Direct should be contacted for advice.

If a student is known to repeatedly abuse alcohol to the extent of putting themselves or others at risk, they should be advised to seek advice from Student Support Services or a community based alcohol support agency. If they are unwilling to do so, those concerned about their behaviour can contact Student Support Services to discuss the case anonymously.

Where repeated incidents have occurred involving the same student or where alcohol misuse is known or suspected to have led to performance or conduct related problems, the student should be given the opportunity to discuss the matter with the appropriate support services. Ongoing monitoring of the situation may be necessary and the student should be given every opportunity to engage with relevant services.