

University of Leeds Student Drug including Alcohol Policy

University of Leeds

Student Support and
Experience Directorate

June 2024



UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

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THE UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

University of Leeds Student Drugs including Alcohol Policy

Context

1. The University of Leeds aims to empower and enable students to take positive responsibility for their time at University, making the most of the opportunity of higher education and supporting students to reach their full potential.
2. The University of Leeds does not condone the use of drugs. We operate a policy of **harm reduction** that prioritises the welfare and wellbeing of our community, whilst paying due regard to the law. This recognises that some students will choose to use drugs during their time at University. Without condoning those choices, we want our students to be safe and to know where they can seek help, information, and support.
3. This policy relates to the use of drugs that are controlled by the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971, the Psychoactive Substances Act 2016 and the unauthorised use and possession of prescription medicines regulated by the Medicines Act 1968, by students. [Staff employed by and working for the University of Leeds should refer to the [HR Policy on alcohol and substance abuse](#).]
4. UUK has facilitated a [taskforce](#) to develop national guidance on this issue. The work aims to set out a common approach to reduce harm from drug use and to better tackle supply.
5. The University and Leeds University Union have committed to work in partnership to address student drug and alcohol use, participating in a [national accreditation scheme](#) to review and continually improve our approach through consultation with students and a range of internal and external stakeholders. The University and LUU achieved accreditation under the Drug and Alcohol Impact Programme in July 2022.
6. The scope of the outlined support and relevant procedures is not limited to the use of illegal drugs, and the policy also takes into account the potential impact of alcohol and prescription drug misuse on students and the wider community.

A Harm Reduction Approach

7. The University¹ and LUU² are committed to a harm reduction approach, which takes account of the risks of illegal drug use and alcohol and prescription drug misuse for individual students, and the impact on those around them and the wider University

¹ [University approach to students using drugs and alcohol](#)

² [Leeds University Union Drugs and Alcohol Policy](#)

community. The University and LUU intend to support students by providing relevant information, and access to specialist support and advice.

8. Our support offer recognises that illegal drug use and alcohol and prescription drug misuse can have a significant impact on the mental health and wellbeing of a person who is using drugs and alcohol, as well as those around them.
9. Our support offer recognises that illegal drug use and alcohol and prescription drug misuse can increase the risk of wrongful conduct, with serious implications for the mental health and wellbeing of those affected.
10. All support is confidential, unless there is a safeguarding concern or risk of harm to the student or others.
 - LUU Advice provide support for students who are concerned about substance misuse.
 - Forward Leeds work closely with LUU in providing advice and support for students who are affected by alcohol and drug use. They operate a term-time weekly drop in for any students who have question or concerns. In addition, Forward Leeds often run outreach and engagement activities in LUU.
 - Wellbeing appointments and counselling sessions are available for students whose mental health is impacted by alcohol and drug use, whether their own use or that of another person.
 - The Harassment and Misconduct Team are able to support students who are victims of, or witness to, any incidents of misconduct related to substance misuse.³
 - In addition to in-person support, students have access to online and self-help resources⁴ which they can use to independently seek out relevant information and advice.
 - The SafeZone app is available for University of Leeds students to download, for use in an emergency on campus, or if they have any safety concerns.
11. The University's Dignity and Mutual Respect policy defines and prohibits various behaviours. It explains the need for everyone across the University to contribute to the creation of a culture of mutual respect and an environment in which everyone is treated with dignity.
12. Formal regulations outline codes of conduct and disciplinary regulations, highlighting the implications of illegal drug use and alcohol and prescription drug misuse, and criminal convictions, as well as typical sanctions.
 - Student Regulations and Rules for Taught Students
 - Code of Practice on Student Health and Conduct
 - University of Leeds General University Disciplinary Regulations

³ This includes drink or needle spiking, which is a serious criminal offence and is not tolerated by the University.

⁴ See headstart cards; recommended resources 'Addictions and Harmful Behaviours.' See also Togetherall.

Legal Responsibilities

13. Alcohol use by adults is not illegal and its consumption subject to the Licensing Act 1964 is permitted on University of Leeds premises.
14. Under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971, it is a criminal offence for the University of Leeds to knowingly permit the use, production or supply of any controlled drugs on its premises. Under the Psychoactive Substances Act 2016, it is an offence for The University of Leeds to knowingly permit the production, supply, import or export of any substance if it is likely to be used for its psychoactive effects and regardless of its potential for harm.
15. The University must operate in the context of national legislation and would be committing a criminal offence were it to knowingly permit the use, production or supply of any controlled drugs on its premises. Therefore the University cannot allow the possession, use or supply of controlled drugs or psychoactive substances on its premises.
16. The University is required by the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 to ensure as far as is reasonable, the health and safety of its employees, students and others at work.

Student Responsibilities and Awareness

The University has a responsibility to provide a clear and visible policy on illegal drug use and alcohol and prescription drug misuse. It is important for students to engage with this, and for students to understand that a harm reduction approach does not mean that there will never be any consequences for illegal drug use and alcohol and prescription drug misuse.

17. Help, advice and support are available (as outlined in 10 above) for any student who is concerned about their own drug use, or that of those around them.
18. All students are bound by the terms and policies of the Student Contract.
19. Students have a responsibility to ensure that they are familiar with the regulations around illegal drug use, and the implications of non-compliance. The University and LUU are committed to continuous and effective promotion of this policy, to facilitate awareness of regulations and support.
20. The University takes an especially serious view of students involved in the supply and distribution of drugs. 'Supply and distribution' includes the sharing of a personal supply of drugs with peers.
21. Students should be mindful of the potential consequences of a drug conviction or a caution, and consider the possible impact on their continuation at University, or their eligibility or opportunities for future careers;

22. Students on programmes which are accredited or regulated by statutory bodies have a responsibility to familiarise themselves with the Code of Practice on Student Health and Conduct, and the potential consequences of substance misuse / criminal convictions. Students on these programmes who engage in illegal drug use or alcohol or prescription drug misuse could be referred to professionalism committees, or to Fitness to Practise / Health and Conduct processes.
23. The University's policy on illegal drugs is not limited to behaviour on-campus, but also extends to off-campus activities that impact the University, its students, or staff.
24. All University accommodation contracts include disciplinary regulations concerning the use of illegal drugs. Students in university accommodation have a responsibility to familiarise themselves with relevant regulations and policy.

Response to student drug use: Possession and individual use

25. Where a student is believed to be in possession of drugs for individual use, the University response will carefully consider individual case and context to ensure a response that is proportionate to the suspected offence.⁵ This will always include offers of and referral to appropriate support. All suspected illegal drugs will be confiscated and destroyed by the appropriate means.⁶
26. Considerations will include the scale of the offence; the class of drug; prior offences; involvement of third parties (especially any who are legal minors); considerations relating to addiction; student engagement with support.
27. Residences discipline
- a. Students who are found to be in possession of illegal substances for individual use in their place of residence are in breach of their Residences contract, and this will be dealt with considering individual case and context (26-27).
 - b. Where disciplinary action is carried out under the General University Disciplinary Regulations, typical sanctions are listed in section 7.3 of the Regulations document.
28. University discipline
- a. Students who possess illegal substances for individual use at the University are in breach of the Student Contract, and this will be dealt with considering individual case and context (26-27).
 - b. Where disciplinary action is carried out under the General University Disciplinary Regulations, typical sanctions are listed in section 7.3 of the Regulations document.

⁵ When responding to an incident, Security teams may identify *suspected* drugs on sight. They do not have the ability to undertake substance testing. Testing, where necessary, must be carried out by the appropriate authorities in West Yorkshire Police.

⁶ In agreement with West Yorkshire Police, University Security Services may confiscate and destroy certain drugs when found in small amounts.

29. Inclusion of support information

- a. Offers of specialist support and appropriate referrals are made following detailed consideration of the individual case. See Point 10 for information about possible avenues of support.

30. Involvement of the police

- a. The University cannot allow the possession, use, or supply of controlled drugs or psychoactive substances on its premises and may involve West Yorkshire Police in any case where students are suspected to be in breach of regulations / contractual obligations.⁷

Response to student drug use: Supply and intent to supply

31. The University takes a particularly serious view of anyone involved in the supply of illegal drugs.⁸ Engaging in such activities is strictly prohibited, and any individuals found to be involved will face severe consequences, including disciplinary action and police involvement.

32. Residences discipline

- a. West Yorkshire Police will be informed in cases where there is reason to believe that a student is involved in supply of drugs, or intends to supply drugs.⁹
- b. Where disciplinary action is carried out under the General University Disciplinary Regulations, typical sanctions are listed in section 7.3 of the Regulations document.

33. University discipline

- a. West Yorkshire Police will be informed in cases where there is reason to believe that a student is involved supply of drugs, or intends to supply drugs.¹⁰
- b. Where disciplinary action is carried out under the General University Disciplinary Regulations, typical sanctions are listed in section 7.3 of the Regulations document.

34. Inclusion of support information

- a. Offers of specialist support and appropriate referrals are made following detailed consideration of the individual case. See Point 10 for information about possible avenues of support.

⁷ The University is not legally obligated to report all instances of drug use to West Yorkshire Police, but can choose to do so in cases where Police involvement may be warranted. For example, WYP will be contacted in **all** cases where a) there is reasonable belief that there is Class A drug use taking place within the residence and b) there is reasonable belief that drug dealing and/or manufacture is taking place.

⁸ This is not limited to sale. 'Supply' and 'distribution' include sharing a personal supply of drugs with friends or peers.

⁹ This is irrespective of the class of (suspected) substance. Security Teams do not have the ability to undertake substance testing. Testing, where necessary, must be carried out by the appropriate authorities in West Yorkshire Police.

Response to student drug use: Off campus scenarios

35. The University's policy on illegal drugs extends to off-campus activities that could bring the University into disrepute and impact its students or staff.¹¹
36. Where student involvement in illegal drug activities off university premises affects the welfare of the University community, disciplinary action may be taken, and students may be reported to the police.
37. If the university becomes aware that a student has been arrested or charged with criminal offences relating to the use or supply of drugs, this will be managed by through the General University Disciplinary process.¹²
38. Response to reports of antisocial behaviour¹³ in this context will be managed by the General University Disciplinary process.
39. Students involved in illegal drug activity off-campus will be offered specialist support and appropriate referrals when the University becomes aware of such activity.
40. Students in privately rented accommodation should be aware that their landlords must similarly operate in the context of national legislation, and under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 would be committing a criminal offence were they to knowingly permit the use, production or supply of controlled drugs on their premises.

¹¹ "Conduct (wherever occurring) likely to bring the university into disrepute...As well as on University premises, this would include in a public place, in the local community, on the premises of other educational institutions, when abroad as part of the requirement of a University course and when on work placement." [GUDR 2.8](#)

¹² [GUDR 4: Criminal Convictions](#).

¹³ See also: [Community Rules](#)

List of related links

[UoL Harm Reduction website](#)

[LUU Drugs and Alcohol website](#)

[National Accreditation Scheme](#)

[General University Disciplinary Regulations](#)

[Code of Practice on Student Health and Conduct](#)

[Student Contract](#)

[Community Rules](#)

[Residence Contract](#)

[Residence Discipline](#)

[Dignity and Mutual Respect](#)

Document Control	
Document title: University of Leeds Student Drug including Alcohol Policy	Owner: Student Support and Experience Directorate
Version: 1.0	Version date: June 2024

To ensure that our policy remains current and aligned with national guidance and developments, it will be subject to regular review and update, via the University Drugs and Alcohol Impact Steering Group.