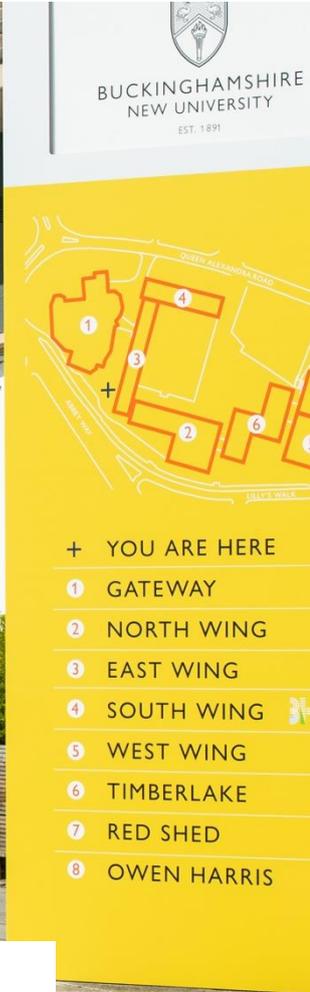




BUCKINGHAMSHIRE
NEW UNIVERSITY

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Student Drug and Alcohol Policy



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Owner:

Director of Student Success

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Background and Purpose

- 1 There is no clear, universal point at which drug and alcohol use becomes misuse, but any amount of drug or alcohol use can become harmful, problematic, or dependent. There is a higher risk of misuse in communities where the use of drugs and alcohol may have become normalised, such as in university student populations. Students who misuse drugs and/or alcohol are more likely to engage in illegal activities, come to physical or mental harm, and to not attend learning events. Some students are also at risk of developing a dependency on drugs or alcohol to revise, concentrate, complete academic work, or just to get through the day.
- 2 As part of the University's commitment to providing a safe environment which fosters a supportive community for the wellbeing of students, this policy presents a harm reduction approach to drug and alcohol use among students.

Applicability and Scope

- 3 This policy concerns the drug and alcohol use of all students enrolled at the University, including undergraduate, postgraduate, postgraduate research, and apprentices.
- 4 For BNU students enrolled at partner colleges, partners must be responsible for any support and actions required.
- 5 This policy refers to the use and misuse of legal and illegal substances by BNU students both on and off the University's premises. The supply of illicit substances on any of the University's campuses or accommodation sites is *not* in scope and may instead be considered within the behavioural standards outlined in the [Student Code of Conduct/Disclosing Criminal Convictions Policy](#) and other appropriate regulatory or legal recourses. The supply of illicit drugs on University sites will not be tolerated.
- 6 This policy should not be interpreted as the University's condonation of drug and alcohol misuse, nor does it supersede the University's regulatory or legal responsibilities, including those outlined in the [Misuse of Drugs Act 1971](#). Where disciplinary forms of action are necessary, this policy should be used in conjunction with other regulatory or legal frameworks.
- 7 Similarly, this policy does not supersede the University's responsibilities to meet professional standards on those programmes which fall within the remit of the [Fitness to Practise Procedure](#).
- 8 This policy does *not* apply to the drug and alcohol use of staff at the University.

Response to Drug and Alcohol Misuse

- 9 Students should be treated with respect and dignity, regardless of the level, quantity, and nature of their drug and alcohol use, or their cultural heritage.
- 10 Students should be directed to suitable educational resources and advice about the risks and effects of drug and alcohol use and misuse.
- 11 Students should be directed to confidential support services for their drug and alcohol use, including counselling and health services, regardless of the level, quantity, and nature of their drug and alcohol use, or their cultural heritage. Where specialist drug and alcohol services are required, students should be signposted to external organisations, as appropriate.
- 12 In the event of police intervention under, for example, the [Misuse of Drugs Act 1971](#) (e.g. for possession of a controlled substance) or the [Criminal Justice Act 1967](#) (e.g. for drunk and disorderly conduct), the University's primary focus should be on the safety and wellbeing of the individual and other students and staff. In the event that the offence is deemed to require further action by the University this will be considered under the [Disclosing Criminal Convictions Policy](#). The University will maintain its responsibilities of dignity and respect, and care and support for the student.
- 13 Students and staff of the University who are concerned about a student's drug or alcohol use should seek advice from the Student Hub, Students' Union Advice Centre or visit the [Report + Support webpage](#) for guidance.
- 14 Any witnessed or suspected incidents of 'spiking' should be reported immediately to the appropriate authorities (e.g. security staff, police) at the time, or via [Report + Support](#) for follow up.

Response to Drug and Alcohol Misuse in Halls of Accommodation

- 15 Where the University becomes aware of a student's personal use and/or possession of illicit drugs in our halls of residence, then action will be taken under the 'Licence to Occupy a Room in Halls of Residence'.
- 16 If a student is found in possession of illicit drugs in our halls of residence on more than one occasion, then action will be taken under the 'Licence to Occupy a Room in Halls of Residence', and the student will be asked to leave the accommodation, which is in line with our response to any breach of the Licence. The case may also be reported to the police and referral to [Student Code of Conduct/Fitness to Practise Procedure](#).

- 17 If a student is found in possession of a large quantity of drugs in our halls of residence, which could be considered sufficient for supply or sale, then action will be taken under the 'Licence to Occupy a Room in Halls of Residence', and the student will be asked to leave the accommodation. Such a case will also be considered a breach of the [Student Code of Conduct](#) and will be referred accordingly.
- 18 Illicit drugs found on University premises (including accommodation) will be confiscated and disposed of in line with protocols agreed with police and/or other appropriate authorities.

Response to Drug and Alcohol Misuse in Placements

19. The University is committed to ensuring the safety, well-being, and professional development of its students during placements.
20. Students should not use any drugs or alcohol during any placement activities unless it is prescribed medication which has been approved by a registered clinician such as General Practitioner or Occupational Health.
21. Students found in possession or under the influence of illicit drugs and alcohol whilst on placement will be referred for investigation under the relevant policy (this may include Fitness to Practice or Disciplinary Policy), including the possibility of termination from the placement and further academic consequences.

Education and Prevention

- 19 The University is committed to maintaining a safe and healthy environment for all students, staff, and the community.
- 20 The University will facilitate education and prevention programmes aimed at raising awareness of substance use and misuse. These programs will include educational sessions, workshops, and peer-led discussions to inform the campus community about the risks associated with substance abuse and the importance of making informed decisions.
- 21 The University in partnership with external organisations such as One Recovery Bucks will provide access to counselling services, support groups, and confidential resources to assist students seeking help.
- 22 The University will further maintain a dedicated [web space](#) for information about drug and alcohol use and misuse with accessible online resources and the promotion and signposting of campaigns for safer drug and alcohol use.
- 23 By fostering a culture of awareness and support, the University aims to empower its community to make responsible choices and contribute to a safe, productive academic environment.

Related University Policies/Guidance/Regulations

24 The following policies and procedures should be considered alongside this Student Drug and Alcohol Policy:

- [Academic Regulations](#)
- [Student Code of Conduct](#)
- [Support to Study Policy](#)
- [Fitness to Practice Policy and Procedures](#)
- [Data Protection Policy](#)
- [Disclosing Criminal Convictions Policy](#)

Partnerships and Communication

25 The University is represented in the Drug and Alcohol Multiagency Group (D&A MAG), led by Public Health, Buckinghamshire, as part of an information sharing relationship with organisations including the Oasis Partnership, One Recovery Bucks, and Thames Valley Police. Any information shared will be anonymised and in accordance with current UK Data Protection legislation, and for the sole purpose of identifying patterns and trends in drug and alcohol use for the improvement of policy and services.

Responsibilities

- 26 All staff at the University have a personal responsibility to support the health and wellbeing of students, including those living with drug or alcohol misuse issues, and should raise awareness and signpost sources of information and support.
- 27 The University's role is one of education, support, and signposting, as opposed to treatment or formal referral for drug and alcohol misuse issues. Students seeking support may be encouraged to self-refer to appropriate services, which may include, but are not restricted to, the student's General Practitioner (GP), [One Recovery Bucks \(ORB\)](#), or Phoenix Lifestyle Innovations.

Table of Definitions

Drug use	The consumption of drugs, legal and illegal, in a way that is not considered harmful, problematic, or dependent. However, there is often little clarity about where drug use becomes misuse.
Alcohol use	The legal consumption of alcohol in moderation, especially within healthy limits. However, like with drug use, healthy limits are disputed and there is often little clarity about where alcohol use becomes misuse.
Drug/alcohol misuse	Drug or alcohol use that becomes harmful, problematic, or dependent.
Spiking	The act of administering drugs or alcohol to another person without their knowledge e.g. by adding to a drink or food.
Zero-tolerance	The use of set of procedural consequences for any and all infractions of a law, regulation, or code, regardless of extenuating circumstances or an individual's culpability.
Harm reduction	An approach that aims to reduce negative consequences of behaviours (such as drug and alcohol misuse) by focusing on positive change, without judgement, coercion, or discrimination.

Appendix: Equality Impact Assessment

As a university, we are committed to enhancing equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI). We have a legal (Equality Act 2010) and ethical obligation to ensure our policies, systems and processes are fair, inclusive and ensure every member of the BNU community can thrive.

Whilst we all have protected characteristics, we know there are certain characteristics and communities that are marginalised and underrepresented in Higher Education and the workplace. These are: different ethnicities (including Gypsy, Roma, Traveller, Showmen and Boaters, migrants, refugees and asylum seekers) Disabled individuals; neurodiverse individuals; pregnancy (including maternity and paternity impact); the LGBT+ community; carers; people of different faiths; people impacted by menopause and individuals from a range of backgrounds including: socio-economic disadvantage, homeless, alcohol and/or substance misuse, people experiencing domestic and/or sexual violence, ex-armed forces, looked after children and care leavers. We also know individuals have multiple intersectional experiences and different points in their lives and careers.

1. With reference to the above characteristics, in what ways does this policy enhance equality and the access of opportunity at BNU?

While we know that cultural tolerances to drug and alcohol use vary greatly by ethnicity and faith, including prohibition in some cultures, this policy does not discriminate and seeks to ensure education and support for all who need it. The harm reduction approach is non-judgemental and provides a platform for openness that might not otherwise be available to all students.

2. In what ways does the policy adversely impact individuals from marginalised and underrepresented communities?

It is not expected that any individual will be adversely impacted by this policy.

3. How does this proposal work towards achieving the BNU Equality Objectives as outlined in the [Equality Strategy 2023-2028](#)? Please signpost objectives and actions in the BNU Equality Strategy.

While this policy is not directly linked to the Equality Strategy, it does seek to forge stronger ties with community organisations, including One Recovery Bucks, the Oasis Partnership, and Phoenix Lifestyles to better understand the needs of drug and alcohol users and provide the best possible support for our students (Priority 1, Objective E). The policy also ensures that our students can access online advice and support for drug and alcohol misuse issues at any time (Priority 3, Objective E).

Signed:

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