

## **Student Alcohol Policy**

Aberystwyth University and the Students' Union have jointly produced this policy to set out, clearly and concisely, the expectations and responsibilities for all – staff and student, in relation student alcohol issues.

### **1. Introduction**

Alcohol is legal in the UK and Aberystwyth University supports responsible behaviour and enjoyment of its consumption.

It is a common perception that whilst at university, students will embrace the opportunity to discover themselves and engage in various activities, some of which focuses on drinking alcohol. Whilst this may not be true for all students, and some may take a more responsible approach to their enjoyment of alcohol, for others, alcohol plays a large part in their student life. Some students view drinking alcohol during their time at University to be an integral part of the student experience and alcohol misuse can quickly become a significant problem.

Health problems, poor academic performance and criminality may well be the result of alcohol misuse; therefore the focus of this policy is to highlight the University's position in relation to alcohol misuse issues. The policy also lays out the University's code of student conduct in relation to alcohol misuse and University business, with an aim to provide a consistent and sensitive approach in offering advice and support.

It is acknowledged that those affected by alcohol misuse can pose certain risks to the university community, and such risks will need to be addressed in order to protect other students, staff, visitors and the wider community.

This policy should be read in conjunction with other University policies as appropriate.

### **2. Alcohol policy statement**

Aberystwyth University is dedicated to ensuring that a safe and supportive environment is maintained, so that students, staff and visitors can have a positive experience whilst on campus. Aberystwyth University will therefore:

- Encourage and support mutual respect within the whole of the university community.
- Work with staff and students to create an understanding of acceptable behaviour and will approve the responsible use of disciplinary action where needed.
- Assist students to make informed decisions about alcohol use.
- Promote a community which is supportive, which recognises and respects different attitudes, cultures and religions 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, its legal responsibility for the health, safety and welfare of its students, staff and visitors and aim to provide a safe, healthy and high quality experience.
- Recognise that all staff needs to be alert to indicators of alcohol misuse and to take appropriate action when necessary.
- Ensure that students can have confidential access to appropriate support and advice as appropriate via Student Support Services and/or Student's Union.
- Responsibly support commercial services where alcohol is available on site.

### **3. Who is covered by this policy?**

This policy applies to all students enrolled at Aberystwyth University, whilst:

- On university premises (campus, halls etc.).
- Elsewhere on university business.
- Elsewhere during study activities.
- Representing the university at various sporting/academic events etc.
- On premises managed on behalf of the University by a third party.
- Using university or Student's Union vehicles.
- Participating in events/activities at university and/or Student's Union accredited societies.

Students are reminded that whilst registered at Aberystwyth University, they are the public image of the University; therefore they represent the University at all times. Students must not bring the University into disrepute at any time, especially so when engaged in alcohol fuelled activities outside of the main campus and other University/SU managed establishments as described above. Failure to do so may result in the instigation of disciplinary procedures.

### **4. Aims of the policy**

- Provide definitions and information in relation alcohol issues.
- Promote safe and responsible drinking of alcohol.
- Outlines the code of student conduct in relation to alcohol misuse and university business.
- Outlines the support options available in relation to the misuse of alcohol.

### **5. Definitions of drinking behaviours<sup>1</sup>**

In relation to this policy, the key terminology associated with alcohol issues are defined below, so that a consistent understanding of the subject is ensured.

#### ***Alcohol misuse***

Essentially, alcohol misuse refers to drinking alcohol excessively; more than the recommended daily guidelines for alcohol consumption.

Alcohol misuse can cause short and long term harm and dependent on the severity of alcohol misuse, health problems can develop as well as being the cause for other related problems. For students, these can include:

- Breach of license.
- Fire safety (cooking in halls when drunk).
- Violence and fights.
- Police cautions.
- Academic problems.

### ***Alcohol dependence***

Alcohol dependence refers to a situation where a person has lost control over their drinking and has developed dependence for alcohol. In determining dependence, a person would begin to suffer side effects should they try to stop or reduce their levels of drinking.

In situations of alcohol dependence, a person generally craves alcohol and can tolerate increased levels, whilst also being aware of the negative impact it can have on their lives in terms of health, education and socialisation.

### ***Binge drinking***

The term binge drinking is where significant amounts of alcohol are consumed in a short period of time, over a few hours for example, which leads to intoxication and drunkenness.

Binge drinking is viewed as harmful behaviour as it can have far reaching consequences. An intoxicated person with reduced inhibitions may be more likely to engage in destructive behaviours, for example, students might:

- become argumentative.
- start fights.
- be the subject of criminality.
- have unprotected sex.

### ***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 do pre-load, they are generally four times more likely to consume over 20 units on a night out (to include pre-loading and bar/club drinking). This level of consumption is strongly associated with increased health risks and destructive behaviours, as one study found that those who had 'pre-loaded' were two-and-a-half times more likely to be involved in violence than other drinkers<sup>2</sup>.

## **6. Safe and responsible drinking**

Enjoyment and responsible drinking is advocated UK wide. Alcohol is measured in units and the current guidelines for alcohol consumption are:

- 14 units per week for both men and women
- It is best to spread this evenly over 3 days or more.

It's also recommended that both men and women should have at least two alcohol-free days each week.

The unit measurements for popular alcoholic drinks are listed below:

Wine 13% - 125ml	1.4	Beer 4% - pint	2.3
Wine 13% - 175ml	2.3	Cider 4.5% - pint	2.6
Wine 13% - 250ml	3.3	Alcopops 4% - 275ml	1.1
Spirits 37.5% - 25ml	0.9	Speciality drinks 23% - 25ml	0.6

## 7. Code of Student Conduct

- 7.1 Students are reminded that they must comply with the University's rules and regulations.
- 7.2 No-one should undertake university related business or represent the university while unfit through alcohol use.
- 7.3 Staff reserve the right to terminate contact with a student who presents as being under the influence of alcohol (see also point 8)
- 7.4 Students must comply with the law at all times; involvement in situations such as verbal or physical violence, aggressive behaviour, sexual violence etc. may result in criminal prosecution. See also point 7.5, 7.8 and 7.9.
- 7.5 Being under the influence of alcohol during any criminal activity (as per 7.4) will not be considered as mitigation or an excuse. See also point 7.8 and 7.9.
- 7.6 Academic activities must not be disrupted due to alcohol misuse.
- 7.7 Pressure must not be applied to others to drink alcohol. This includes disrespectful or exclusive behaviour, participation in drinking games and the spiking of drinks with any/extra alcohol.
- 7.8 Any breaches of the above may result in University disciplinary procedures.
- 7.9 Intoxication will not be accepted as special circumstance at any time, especially so in the case of students breaching university rules and regulations.
- 7.10 Students with alcohol dependency issues will be strongly encouraged to engage with sources of help and support but they will not be exempt from disciplinary procedures resulting from any breach of university rules and regulations.
- 7.11 Students are strongly advised not to compromise their own safety by working with or being reliant upon other students who have consumed more than the recommended daily units of alcohol.

## 8. Support options

If concerns are identified regarding a student in relation to alcohol misuse, support options are available. Students should be encouraged to access support voluntarily; this is so that they are empowered to take control of their health and wellbeing.

### **University Support:**

- Student Support Services
  - Student Advisors
  - Student Wellbeing Services
- Students Union
- Supporting Students Toolkit (Aberystwyth University on-line resource)

The support offered will be needs led, confidential, non-judgemental and may include external referrals to community/professional services as appropriate.

Should students refuse to seek help regarding their alcohol misuse and where further risk is identified and/or where university business is disrupted, staff should consider consulting the appropriate policy. Students may be the subject of the Fitness to Attend policy, Disciplinary policy and/or others as appropriate.

Students should be advised that staff are strongly advised not to compromise their own safety by working with students who have consumed more than the recommended daily units of alcohol, who are thought to be misusing alcohol and/or presents as being under the influence of alcohol.

### **9. Alcohol at University Events**

The University, at various times during the year, may host events and social gatherings, which could include the provision of alcoholic drinks. As the University advocates responsible drinking, the following principles will apply:

- The provision of alcoholic drinks will be managed in a responsible way.
- Non-alcoholic drinks must also be provided.
- The emphasis of the event must not be focused on drunkenness.
- No pressure is put on any students to drink alcohol.

### **10. Confidentiality and Data Protection**

Please see:

*Confidentiality Guidelines:*

<https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/student-support/staff/confidentiality-disclosure/>

*Data Protection Policy:*

<https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/infocompliance/policies/dp/>

*Personal Information Storage:*

<https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/infocompliance/rm/>

For further information, please contact:

[infocompliance@aber.ac.uk](mailto:infocompliance@aber.ac.uk)

### **11. Aberystwyth University's commitment to students**

- Alcohol pricing on University premises, will be set at a responsible level so as to encourage the consumption of non-alcoholic drinks.
- Free drinking water will be provided on request.
- Individual choices whether to drink alcohol or not will be respected.
- Initiation ceremonies, welcome events and other social meetings involving excessive alcohol consumption will not be permitted.
- The University welcomes groups/societies who wish to host events where the focus is not on excessive drunkenness.

- The University will support responsible drinking initiatives and campaigns as appropriate.
- The University will strive to ensure that facilities/events are accessible for those students who choose not to drink alcohol and will respond to demand for alcohol free events where possible.
- For students wishing to have University accommodation, the University will strive to provide an alternative choice of alcohol free accommodation.
- Alcohol education and campaign work will form part of the University's commitment to student welfare and will be run by the Student's Unions and/or Student Support Services to encourage moderate sensible drinking.
- Aberystwyth University will continue to work with partners, including Ceredigion County Council and Dyfed Powys Police in particular, to look at risk reduction and prevention in relation to alcohol consumption.
- The University will respond appropriately to any concerns or complaints relating to alcohol misuse i.e. noise disturbances.

## 12. References

1. <http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/Alcohol-misuse/Pages/Introduction.aspx>
2. Hughes, K., Anderson, Z., Morleo, M. and Bellis, M.A. (2008), *Alcohol, nightlife and violence: the relative contributions of drinking before and during nights out to negative health and criminal justice outcomes*, *Addiction*, 103 (1), pp 60-5

## 13. Supporting Information

The Alcohol in Higher Education Toolkit, (2013), *Welsh Government Publication*

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Other Stakeholders:			
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