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**NEWMAN UNIVERSITY**

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**ALCOHOL, DRUG AND SUBSTANCE MISUSE AT WORK**

**1. Introduction**

1.2 The University has a legal responsibility to provide a safe and healthy working environment for its staff, students and visitors and to take appropriate action when the health and safety of those individuals is threatened or compromised. The University does not intend to intrude upon the privacy of individuals however it will concern itself with the use of alcohol or controlled drugs (not prescribed drugs) by any of its staff (as listed in 3.1) where behaviour impairs their conduct and or has a detrimental effect on work performance or may be prejudicial to the safety of other individuals.

**2. Aims**

2.1 This procedure aims to take positive action to prevent alcohol, drug and substance misuse affecting employees as far as is practicable. It will endeavour to achieve this by facilitating the early identification of such problems and to encourage employees to seek advice, help and assistance voluntarily before their health, wellbeing, and work are adversely affected. The University will achieve these goals through educational, wellbeing support and, where appropriate, disciplinary approaches.

2.2 Support and guidance will be available through the University's Employee Assistance Programme (EAP), Occupational Health Service and Human Resources.

2.3 All those involved with managing and supporting staff affected by alcohol, drug and substance misuse will do so with respect and dignity, maintaining confidentiality as far as is safe and practicable to do so.

2.4 Support and other appropriate interventions for staff affected by alcohol, drug and substance misuse should result in the restoration of acceptable standards of behaviour and or performance at work.

**3. Scope**

3.1 This procedure applies to all employees, workers and volunteers including those on work placement and associated assignments.

3.2 The use and or possession of controlled drugs by individuals whilst at work or on work premises is strictly prohibited at all times unless taken on prescription. This will include those under the influence of drugs and substance misuse whilst at work. Anyone in breach may be subject to disciplinary action or criminal proceedings. Where relevant, the University will also report the incident to the appropriate professional or statutory bodies associated with the employee.

3.3 The University prohibits the drinking of alcohol by employees (and contractors) in the workplace or on company business other than reasonable drinking of alcohol in connection with approved social functions.

The University regards drinking to an "unreasonable level" as any of the following situations:

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**NEWMAN UNIVERSITY**

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- The individual is over the legal limit stipulated for driving (i.e.35mcg/100ml of breath alcohol concentration.)
- In the opinion of management, the individual's performance is impaired. This may be at less than the legal limit stipulated for driving.
- In the opinion of management, the individual's behaviour may cause embarrassment, distress or offence to others.
- The individual continues to drink when instructed to stop by a manager.

3.4 The consumption of alcohol off site during the normal working day (e.g. lunch breaks) is strongly discouraged. It is particularly unacceptable when undertaking duties that include, but are not limited to, driving, the use of machinery and electrical equipment; working at heights or in confined spaces, handling hazardous chemicals or other dangerous substances. The University may take appropriate disciplinary action against anyone whose performance, or work activities are compromised by alcohol consumption.

3.5 Ill health in relation to alcohol, drug and substance misuse will be dealt with in the first instance in accordance with the University's Sickness absence procedures.

3.6 Misconduct in relation to alcohol, drug and substance misuse will be dealt with in accordance with the University's disciplinary procedures.

3.7 Persistent poor performance in relation to alcohol, drug and substance misuse will be dealt with in accordance with the University's capability procedures.

#### **4. Duties and Responsibilities**

4.1 Individuals are responsible for seeking professional help if they have any form of alcohol, drug or substance abuse problem. Employees are advised to speak to their line manager, the Human Resources Department, or Occupational Health for help and guidance.

4.2 Under the management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, employees have a legal duty to inform their employer of any situation that could be considered to constitute risk; therefore management must be notified of any employee who appears to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

4.3 Individuals should inform their line management immediately if they are taking any type of prescription or proprietary medication that could affect their ability to work safely or in any way impair their performance. Individuals are responsible for seeking advice from their doctor or pharmacist if they are concerned about the possible side effects of any medication they are taking.

4.4 Managers will try to assist an individual who approaches them for help over alcohol, drug or substance abuse issues. Such approaches will not be subject to disciplinary sanctions. In such cases, management reserves the right to refer an employee to Occupational Health.

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**NEWMAN UNIVERSITY**

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4.5 Managers are expected to consider granting reasonable time off with pay to staff undergoing alcohol, drug or substance misuse counselling or treatment. They should contact Human Resources to discuss any other arrangements they feel should apply or any particularly prolonged treatment programmes.

## **5. Recognising Alcohol, Drug and Substance Misuse**

5.1 In many cases of alcohol, drug or substance abuse there are 'warning signs' to indicate a potential problem. These signs may appear singularly or in combination, and in varying degrees. It is important to recognise however that these signs can have a medical explanation too – for example, a diabetic who has not taken their insulin, an individual with a mental or emotional disorder, or may be due to an individual experiencing symptoms of stress.

Below is listed some of the potential warning signs:

### 5.2 Behaviour

- frequent mood swings
- appears to be anxious or depressed
- irritable
- excitable and unpredictable
- disengaged with work and colleagues
- overly dependent on work and colleagues
- complains about others
- withdrawn or improperly talkative
- spends excessive amount of time on the telephone
- avoids talking with supervisor/manager regarding work issues

### 5.3 Physical signs

- weariness, exhaustion
- signs of crying, shaking and emotional distress
- untidiness
- yawning excessively
- blank stare
- slurred speech
- sleepiness (nodding)
- unsteady walk
- bumps and bruises, scarring and unaccounted injuries to the body
- sunglasses worn at inappropriate times
- changes in appearance

### 5.4 Absenteeism

- high rate of absenteeism, especially on Mondays or Fridays, before and after holidays, or on paydays
- frequent unreported absences later explained as "emergencies"
- frequent unauthorised absence and or lateness

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**NEWMAN UNIVERSITY**

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- unusually high incidence of common ailments such as colds, flu, upset stomach, headaches
- frequent use of unscheduled vacation time
- leaving work area more than necessary (e.g. frequent trips to the toilet or water fountain)
- unexplained disappearances from the job site, with difficulty in locating the employee
- requests to leave work early for various reasons
- leaving the University premises on lunch or breaks for short periods of time

### 5.5 Accidents and incidents

- taking of needless risks
- disregard for safety of others
- higher than average accident rate on the job
- Lack of concern for the cause or consequence of an accident or near miss

### 5.6 Work Patterns

- inconsistency in quality of work
- high/low periods of productivity
- poor judgment
- more mistakes than usual
- general carelessness
- lapses in concentration
- difficulty in recalling instructions
- difficulty in multi-tasking
- disproportionate time to complete work
- continually missing deadlines
- increased difficulty in handling complex situations
- making poor decisions
- acting impulsively

### 5.7 Relationship to others on the job

- overreacts to real or imagined criticism
- avoids or withdraws from peers and supervisors
- causes complaints from co-workers
- borrows money from fellow employees
- complains of problems at home such as separation, divorce, or child discipline problems

## **6. Management Process**

6.1 The line manager should discuss with the individual, as soon as possible, any concerns they may reasonably have about alcohol, drug or substance misuse which manifests itself in behavioural or performance problems.

**NEWMAN UNIVERSITY**

6.2 Line managers are advised to seek advice from Human Resources and where appropriate Occupational Health in such cases and agree the action to be taken to support staff affected by alcohol, drug and substance misuse.

6.3 Line Management should remove from the workplace any employee or other individual who they consider to be under the influence of alcohol or controlled drugs.

6.4 Where there is physical evidence of illegal substances having been used on campus or items found that are believed to be illegal substances then the University's Security Manager (or nominated person) will be informed. If safe to do so, found items may be removed for the evidence and to prevent persons from committing or continuing to commit a drug related offense. The removal will be conducted by Security Staff. The University has a legal obligation under the protocol to report all such cases to the Police and to hand over any related items / evidence, which have been found / removed.

6.5 The Security Manager will convene an incident management group to consider the incident and to initiate any additional appropriate actions.

6.6 The Security Manager (or nominated person) has the power to search the University estate, including employee offices, where there is reasonable suspicion that illegal activities are taking place. Searches will be carried out by security staff in the presence of the employee's line manager (or nominated deputy) and the employee. If the employee is not present the University still has the right to search the room, if there is reasonable suspicion that illegal activities are taking place, although this would not be an in-depth search.

6.7 All cases will be referred to Human Resources for advice on the employee sickness absence, disciplinary and or capability processes.

**7. Procedure Review**

This procedure will be reviewed 3 years from the date of implementation and earlier if circumstances or legislation dictates. Any proposed amendments will be subject to consultation. Such amendments will be notified to employees through the normal communication channels and/or e-mail. The policy will be maintained on the Human Resources site on SharePoint.

<p><b>Authorised By:</b> Chair of Health &amp; Safety Committee</p>	<p><b>Signature:</b> </p>	<p><b>Issue Date:</b> <b>December 2017</b></p>
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