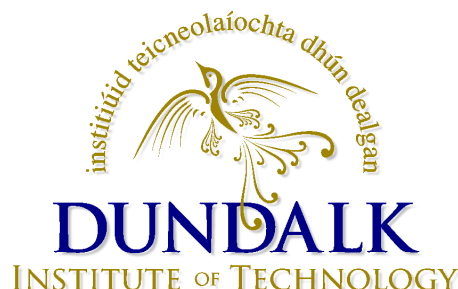


Alcohol, Drug and Substance Abuse Policy & Procedures (July 2014)



1. SCOPE OF THE POLICY

a. Introduction

- (1) Dundalk Institute of Technology (hereinafter called “the Institute”) recognises that it has a responsibility to maintain a safe and efficient work environment, and that it has a duty of care in relation to the well-being of its staff. While it is not the Institute’s policy to intrude on the privacy of individuals, the Institute must have concerns in situations where health or behaviour impair the conduct, safety or work performance of its staff. Alcohol and other drugs affect concentration, co-ordination and performance. It is recognised that the effects of alcohol and other drugs may spill over from ones private life into the workplace resulting in inefficiency, accidents and absenteeism. The Institute recognises its employees as its most valuable resource and is committed to providing a working environment, which is a healthy and safe one for the entire workforce. Therefore, this policy should be seen in the context of the promotion of health, safety and welfare of all employees of the Institute.

The Institute reserves the right to report the sale of controlled substances or the use, purchase, sale or possession of an illegal drug or drug paraphernalia to the Gardaí.

- (2) The Institute’s *Alcohol, Drug and Substance Abuse Policy* is applicable to all Institute staff irrespective of the position they hold and where conduct and performance of duty is, or may be, impaired as a result of substance abuse. It is supported by the Institute’s *Policy for Dealing with Alcohol, Drug or Substance Abuse*.
- (3) For the purpose of this policy the term drugs will be defined as all mood-altering substances, either legal or illegal. This includes alcohol, prescribed and other medications, in addition to illegal and illicit substances. This policy does not refer to tobacco use which is dealt with separately. Drug or substance abuse is the use of any drug, legal or illegal, which damages some aspect of the user’s life.

b. Principles

The Institute recognises the desirability of promoting the health and wellbeing of staff members by

- (1) Encouraging a healthy lifestyle through preventing the development of alcohol and other drug related problems
- (2) Offering assistance to staff members who need it to overcome problems caused by alcohol or drug misuse

- (3) Allowing a mechanism which allows the disciplinary process to be held in abeyance if work related problems emerge as a result of alcohol abuse while the employee is referred for consultation.

c. Aims

This policy aims to:

- (1) Raise awareness of the risks of alcohol and other drug related problems
- (2) Promote the health and wellbeing of staff members
- (3) Minimise problems at work arising from the effects of alcohol and other drugs
- (4) Identify staff members with possible alcohol and drug related problems at an early stage
- (5) Offer staff members with alcohol and other drug related problems referral to an appropriate source for intervention and treatment if necessary

d. Policy Statement

- This policy applies equally to all staff
- All Institute premises are alcohol and drug free during working hours
- Staff members shall be alcohol and drug free while on duty either in the Institute or away on training days, seminars, etc. during normal working hours
- Staff members shall not report, or endeavour to report, for duty whilst in an impaired condition resulting from the use of a substance.
- Staff members shall not unlawfully possess, store, distribute or consume any substance whilst on duty.
- Staff members shall not misuse legal or illegal drugs on Institute premises or while engaging in work related activity. Illegal drugs should not be used at any time.
- After work functions and other social events are outside the remit of this policy.

Any staff member found to be under the influence of a substance whilst on Institute duty, and who represents a risk to either him/herself or others, will be relieved from duty immediately and may be subject to appropriate disciplinary action up to and including dismissal/removal from office.

Any staff member who violates this policy may be subject to appropriate disciplinary action up to and including dismissal/removal from office in accordance with the agreed disciplinary procedure.

2. INTERVENTION

Early recognition of individual alcohol and drug problems is a shared responsibility of all staff members and not just management of the Institute. Early identification of addiction and substance abuse is more likely to lead to successful treatment. It is recognised that this is a complex and difficult issue and that supervisors and managers need training and support to recognise problems and deal with them effectively.

The Institute will

- Provide access to professional services, including training to assist staff in this regard
- Provide supportive facilities to enable staff members with an addiction or addictions to avail of suitable assessment and treatment programmes.

- Provide applicants for employment with the Institute advice of the Addiction and Substance Abuse Policy during the recruitment process.
- Provide a copy of the Addiction and Substance Abuse Policy to all new staff members at induction.

a. Identifying the Problem

Staff members are encouraged to seek assistance on a voluntary basis. However, a problem may become apparent due to the observances of a colleague or manager/supervisor. **NO ONE** characteristic identifies someone with an alcohol and drug related problem but the following **MAY** be indicators especially if occurring in combination or over a period of time.

- Absenteeism
- Accidents and unusual incidents
- Fluctuating work performance
- Fluctuations in concentration and energy
- Late returns to work
- Unpredictable mood changes
- Poor co-operation with colleagues
- Unkempt appearance
- Frequent borrowing of money
- Hand tremor
- Smelling of Alcohol
- Excessive sweating
- Unreliability
- Aggression or irritability
- Confusion or drowsiness

b. Procedure

I. Voluntary Referrals for Alcohol related problem

If a member of staff chooses to refer himself/herself to Institute's Employee Assistance Programme (EAP), his/her action will be entirely confidential. In such circumstances the member of staff can contact the referral agency directly or seek advice from a member of the Human Resources Office.

- Neither the Human Resources Office nor the Head of School/Department/Function/Centre or Supervisor need be advised of the voluntary referrals in this instance unless it directly affects the ability to work or the availability for work.
- If time off work is required then sick leave may be approved.
- A medical certificate will be required only when time off work is required for Medical treatment.
- If sick leave is required the referral agency or staff member's GP will confirm, to the Human Resources Office, that the appointments have been kept.

II. Referrals by Management

- Where a Supervisor/Manager identifies a work performance or behaviour indicator of a possible alcohol and drug related problem, he/she should raise this with the staff member and make them aware of the availability of support services (Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)). The manager should only deal with work-related issues and not try to diagnose the personal problem.

- (b) The Supervisor/Manager should keep factual and accurate written records of incidents and interaction with the employee. These records should be stored in a confidential file. The file will be anonymous until or unless suspicion is confirmed.
- (c) Where this occurs, the Manager following consultation the Human Resources Manager should interview the staff member and advise him/her of the seriousness of the situation. The staff member has the right to be accompanied by a trade union representative or a colleague in such discussions. The Manager should document all misconduct or significant job performance problems attributable to addiction and substance abuse. An interview note should be prepared detailing all matters discussed and a copy given to the staff member.
- (d) If a staff member agrees that he/she has an alcohol-related or substance abuse problem then he/she will be referred to the Human Resources Office for action under the procedure, alternative courses of action such as discipline will be suspended in the case of alcohol related problems. An approved course of treatment which will be arranged and monitored by the EAP.
- (e) If the staff member agrees to participate in an approved treatment programme, Human Resources will be notified and the required time off for attendance at the programme will be facilitated. Such attendance may be deemed as sick leave and will be treated in accordance with the Institute's Absence Management Policy. Medical certification from a medical practitioner or consultant will be required.
- (f) If, however, the employee rejects the offer of referral or does not accept that there is an alcohol-related or substance problem the original matter (the issue which first triggered the action e.g. a shortcoming in conduct or attendance) will be dealt with in the normal way.
- (g) If the employee agrees to the treatment but subsequently breaks this agreement, then management will resume suspended action or alternatively a new agreement for a course of treatment will be drawn up.
- (h) If the agreed treatment is successfully completed then suspended action will be rescinded, after six months if there has been no reoccurrence of the problem.
- (i) After this time if problems recur each case will be reconsidered on its own merits.
- (j) Following successful completion of a course of treatment the staff member will return to work, either on a partial or whole-time basis (as appropriate). He/she will be required to submit a medical report from a medical practitioner or consultant including confirmation that they are fit to resume.

3. MONITORING

If a staff member, who has received treatment under this programme, subsequently comes under notice related to further alcohol or substance abuse, he/she may, at the management's discretion, be afforded one further opportunity to participate in an approved treatment programme. Progress of the staff member will be monitored directly by his/her Manager (if this is source of referral).

Where an employee fails to avail of supports made available to him/her, fails to co-operate with prescribed forms of counselling/treatment or fails to respond to treatment, the Institute will apply or continue disciplinary proceedings in respect of the original disciplinary matter. Further disciplinary action will be taken if the problems associated with poor performance, conduct or attendance persists.

In instances where an employee comes under notice for a serious irregularity (e.g. assault, theft, fraud etc.) and misuse of substances is deemed to be a contributory factor, the Institute reserves the right to deal with the matter in accordance with the Institute's agreed Disciplinary Procedures which may include the application of a sanction up to and including dismissal/removal from office. The application of the Institute's Disciplinary Procedures in such instances may apply even if the employee commits to an approved process of treatment or rehabilitation.

4. CO-ORDINATION OF THE POLICY

The successful implementation and establishment of this policy is the responsibility of all employees of (the organisation). However, overall co-ordination and responsibility lies with Managers, Supervisors, union reps and the Human Resources Office have special responsibilities in relation to the policy. These include:

- Being familiar with the policy and its procedures
- Providing information on the policy and encouraging staff members who may have an alcohol and other drug related problem to seek assistance voluntarily.
- Assisting the staff member and monitoring job performance where he/she remains and/or returns to work
- Having up-to-date information on alcohol and drug advice and treatment agencies
- Ensuring the policy is kept under review and, if necessary, that amendments are proposed.