

THE SCHOOL OF ORIENTAL AND AFRICAN STUDIES

Alcohol and Substance Misuse Procedure

1. Introduction

This procedure should be used in conjunction with the School's Alcohol and Substance Misuse Policy. Whilst it does not replace specific advice from the HR Directorate, it aims to provide general information, key points and steps to follow in relation to alcohol and substance misuse by School employees.

2. Principles

2.1 The School will ensure that an employee with an alcohol and/or substance misuse problem is treated in strictest confidence.

2.2 Disciplinary action for alcohol and/or substance misuse will only be used as a last resort. However, the School does have both a legal and moral responsibility to ensure the welfare and safety of employees, students and visitors. Therefore, an alcohol and/or substance misuse problem might be referred to a disciplinary hearing if an employee has:

- Been dealing unlawfully in drugs on any of the School's sites or other designated work area; in this circumstance the matter would also be referred to the police
- Rejected offers of help and support and where their conduct, capability or performance continues to be unacceptable
- Put themselves or others at risk, including not abiding by the appropriate safety standards.

3. Identification by the employee

If an employee suspects they have an alcohol and/or substance misuse problem, they are encouraged to seek support voluntarily either via their manager, their HR Manager, Occupational Health, their GP or the School's Counselling Service provider.

4. Identification by a colleague

Employees who become aware, or suspect, a colleague has a problem with alcohol or drugs may wish to encourage the employee to recognise their problem and to seek advice, either through their GP, Occupational Health, the Student Counselling Service or the Employee Support Programme. Otherwise colleagues are encouraged to alert the individual's line manager or the appropriate HR Manager.

5. Identification by the manager

- 5.1 As soon as a manager becomes aware, or is made aware, that an employee may have an alcohol and/or substance misuse problem, they should discuss this with the employee in a sensitive way and in private.
- 5.2 A manager is not expected to diagnose any problem. However, they should encourage the employee to seek professional help either from using the School's Occupational Health service or from other medical professionals.

6. Support

- 6.1 The School's Occupational Health service provides advice to employees and managers on health problems arising within the workplace and those that can have an impact on work. Occupational Health is a distinctive branch of preventative health care which specialises in the relationship between work and health.
- 6.2 Referrals to Occupational Health are advisable in situations involving alcohol and/or substance misuse.
- 6.3 The reason for the referral and the process should be fully discussed with the employee before the referral is made.
- 6.4 Managers should liaise with their nominated HR Manager who will arrange the referral to Occupational Health; the information contained in the referral form will provide Occupational Health Advisors with the information that they require to take the issue forward.
- 6.5 The employee will be asked to attend Occupational Health for a medical assessment and must not unreasonably refuse to do so. Occupational Health may seek information from the employee's General Practitioner or Medical Specialist in accordance with the Access to Medical Reports Act 1988.
- 6.6 If the employee refuses to co-operate in providing medical evidence or to undergo an Occupational Health medical examination, the manager should explore the reasons for the refusal. Where appropriate, the employee should be informed that a decision may be taken on the information available to the manager. Formal action may then be taken in line with the relevant Disciplinary Policy.
- 6.7 The School provides a Student Counselling Service which is also available to School employees in emergencies.
<http://www.soas.ac.uk/counselling/contacts/>
- 6.8 The School also has an Employee Support Programme which provides a 24 hour, 7 day access Employee Support Helpline, allowing members of staff and their immediate dependants to contact someone at any time of the day or night, seven days a week. The free phone line number is 0800 282 193.
- 6.9 Employees can make direct contact with the Student Counselling Service and the Employee Support Helpline on a confidential basis.

- 6.10 Further sources of external advice and information can be found in Appendix A of this document.

7. Human Resources Directorate

- 7.1 The HR Directorate has a key role in supporting managers in implementing policies and procedures at department and directorate level. It is advisable to involve the HR Directorate as soon as an alcohol and/or substance misuse problem is identified.
- 7.2 HR can provide advice and support to managers in dealing with the employee and ensure that the appropriate policies and procedures are being fully and correctly implemented and applied.

8. Treatment and/or Counselling

- 8.1 Prior to any treatment and/or counselling, the manager, on the advice of Occupational Health, should seek a reasonable timeframe within which the employee would require specific support.
- 8.2 On the advice of Occupational Health, a manager may advise the employee that they should remain absent from work during this period or will be allocated adjusted duties during this period. An appropriate period of time should be agreed for a gradual return to full duties. This would be treated as absence under the School's Sickness Absence Policy and should be covered by a Fitness for Work medical certificate provided by the member of staff's GP for a continuous absence of more than 7 days.
- 8.3 In the event of a relapse, further support may be offered in cases where the employee's circumstances indicate that this is likely to be successful. Guidance should always be sought from Occupational Health.
- 8.4 Where an employee, having received treatment, suffers a relapse, the School will consider the case on its individual merits. Further medical reports (with the permission of the employee in line with the requirements of the Access to Medical Reports Act 1988) will be sought in an attempt to ascertain how much more treatment/rehabilitation time is likely to be required for a full recovery. At the School's discretion, more treatment or rehabilitation time may be given in order to help the employee to recover fully. Further referral to Occupational Health should be made.
- 8.5 If, after an employee has received treatment, recovery seems unlikely, the School will have to consider the most appropriate course of action to resolve the situation. In such cases, dismissal may result but in most cases a clear warning will be given to the employee beforehand, after a full medical investigation has been undertaken.
- 8.6 Where an employee fails to respond to treatment and conduct or work performance continues to be affected, it will be necessary to consider termination of employment.

9. Misconduct

- 9.1 Intoxication in the workplace whether resulting from a dependency problem or not, is considered serious misconduct, and could be considered gross misconduct in accordance with the School's Disciplinary Procedures.
- 9.2 If an employee is known to be, or strongly suspected of being, intoxicated by alcohol or drugs during working hours, and where this is affecting work performance, HRD should be consulted. Arrangements should be made by the line manager for the employee to be sent home on full pay.
- 9.3 Employees who take drugs not prescribed on medical grounds on the School's premises will, in the absence of mitigating circumstances, be deemed to be committing an act of gross misconduct and may be subject to the disciplinary process as will any employee believed to be buying or selling drugs, in possession of unlawful (i.e. non-prescribed) drugs, or the attempted manufacture of drugs on the School's premises.
- 9.4 Where an employee fails to respond to treatment and conduct or work performance continues to be affected, it will be necessary to consider termination of employment.

10. Approval

This Procedure was agreed with the School recognised trade unions, UCU and UNISON on 10 June 2011 and reviewed and revised in January 2012.

**HR Directorate
SOAS
June 2011
(Revised January 2012)**

Appendix A: Further sources of information and support

Addaction – Providing services and support to adults with a drink or drugs problem
<http://www.addaction.org.uk/>

Alcoholics Anonymous – Offers advice and information and details of local groups.
National Helpline: 0845 769 7555
<http://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk/>

Kenward Trust – Offering help to individuals who have or think they have a problem with alcohol or drugs and their families and carers
<http://kenward-trust.org/what-we-do/drug-alcohol-services/>

Drink Aware – A website promoting healthy drinking habits and giving general information
<http://www.drinkaware.co.uk>

Turning Point – Providing services for individuals affected by alcohol or substance misuse
General Enquiries: 020 7481 7600
<http://www.turning-point.co.uk/Pages/home.aspx>