



The Church of Scotland

Faith Nurture Forum – Initial Ministerial Education (IME) Student Policy

Alcohol and Substance Abuse

1. Introduction

The Faith Nurture Forum of The Church of Scotland (Faith Nurture Forum) is committed to ensuring the health, safety and welfare of all our students. This policy places an emphasis on supporting students who have alcohol or drug related problems.

Faith Nurture Forum will take all reasonable steps to reduce, if not eliminate, the risk of injuries or incidents occurring due to individuals suffering from the effects of alcohol or substance abuse. In certain circumstances drug and/or alcohol misuse can be considered a matter of conduct dependent on the exact circumstances.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to state clearly the standard Faith Nurture Forum requires of its students regarding alcohol consumption and substance misuse and its implications.

Faith Nurture Forum recognises alcohol and drug dependency primarily as a health and wellbeing issue requiring treatment and assistance. Faith Nurture Forum will ensure, through the Pastoral Support Team, the most appropriate help, support, understanding and encouragement for any student suffering from this problem, so that they can be restored to good health.

This policy provides guidance for dealing with alcohol and drug related problems and to ensure that where students have problems associated with abuse of alcohol or drugs that they have access to support.

3. Terminology & Definitions

Alcohol misuse: the drinking of intoxicating liquor whereby a student's ability to study and work is impaired, their attendance is interfered with, they endanger the safety of others or cause personal harm, or they exhibit physical, mental, emotional or behavioural changes.

Drug misuse: The term 'drugs' has been used in this policy to include all drugs and substances, legal or illegal, which adversely affect behaviour or performance.

The taking of drugs, including the use and abuse of other substances, whereby a student's ability to study and work is impaired, their attendance is interfered with, they endanger the safety of others or cause personal harm, or they exhibit physical, mental, emotional or behavioural changes.

Psychoactive substance. In the Psychoactive Substances Act 2016 'psychoactive substance' means any substance which: a) is capable of producing a psychoactive effect in a person who consumes it; and b) is not an exempted substance (section 3/Schedule 1 of the Act).

Legal highs: A term that is still widely used, and before the Psychoactive Substances Act 2016 came into force, related to substances that were used recreationally but were not controlled under the Misuse of Drugs Act (1971), not licensed for legal use, and not regulated as a medicine (Medicines

Act 1968). Now all such substances are illegal and the term 'legal highs' is incorrect, however, still widely used.

4. Alcohol Consumption

There may be times where alcohol is served on a Church of Scotland premises. This includes at social, hospitality and celebratory occasions (e.g. dinner events or farewell events). Students are permitted to engage in this but are encouraged to be mindful of moderation and not drink to excess.

Alcohol may be served during Holy Communion as part of the Sacrament and students are permitted to participate.

Students should note that drinking alcohol before placement, before active participation in study and during lunch breaks can impair performance and they should not consume alcohol in these circumstances.

If a student acts contrary to this policy, this will be dealt in accordance the Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.

If a student is intoxicated, under the influence of drugs, or showing behaviour that indicates they will be placing themselves and others at risk at work they will be sent home immediately. If this occurs on university premises, then Faith Nurture Forum and the student will comply with university procedures, if this takes place on Church of Scotland premises then a responsible and nominated person should ensure that the student will be able to reach home safely and where required should arrange transport.

Students are reminded that alcohol consumption outside of studies and training leading to hangovers can also be detrimental to performance.

Students are reminded that the Road Traffic Act 1988 makes it illegal for any person to drive or attempt to drive a motor vehicle while unfit to drive through the use of a substance (this includes prescribed and over-the-counter medication, as well as illegal drugs and alcohol); and this is likely to result in the involvement of the police.

This section also applies to the use of illegal drugs and substances.

5. Dependency and Sources of Support

Any student suffering from drug or alcohol dependency should declare such dependency, and Faith Nurture Forum will subsequently provide reasonable assistance. Students may contact the Pastoral Support Team for confidential advice or guidance. Students are also encouraged to contact their GP or other relevant health professionals.

Faith Nurture Forum recognises that the majority of students will not be affected by alcohol or drug misuse but, where a student declares that they have a problem, their case will be treated sympathetically and in confidence. Support will be offered through the Pastoral Support team where possible and referrals to external support agencies, including Occupational Health, may be made where the support required is outside the expertise of those services.

It is important to acknowledge that students who have or develop alcohol or drug-related problems may cause harm to themselves and to others and these risks will be considered in any course of

action. Any misuse of alcohol or drugs can affect students' performance, conduct and relationships. It can also have consequences for their future career.

The Faith Nurture Forum has a duty of care to its students and aims to provide a safe, healthy and high-quality study and work environment. This includes addressing the risks posed by alcohol or drug misuse, informing students of their responsibilities and providing information, advice, guidance and support on request. All students have a responsibility to take care of their own safety and that of others.

6. Relevant Legislation

The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 places a duty of care on organisations to ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of students and other users of its premises.

The Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 states that the misuse of drugs applies to the 'non-medical use of drugs that are only intended for use in medical treatment and the use of drugs that have no medical purposes.' Such drugs are controlled under this legislation.

7. Monitoring and Review

The impact of this policy will be monitored and the policy is subject to amendments as necessary. This policy will be reviewed every two years as a minimum.

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