

Greenwich Students' Union Drug and Alcohol Misuse Policy

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Introduction

This policy statement and guidelines outline the Greenwich Students' Union (GSU) stance on illegal drug use among students and provide guidance on addressing related incidents. It aims to support students struggling with drug misuse, safeguard others from its effects, and ensure compliance with the law.

The policy aligns with the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971, which prohibits the possession, distribution, and supply of controlled substances, including those listed under the Misuse of Drugs Act (1971) Order 2024 and the Misuse of Drugs and Misuse of Drugs (Designation) (England, Wales, and Scotland) (Amendment and Revocation) Regulations 2024.

1. Policy Statement

Possession and supply of drugs (as covered by the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971) is against the law. Section 8 of this Act places responsibility upon the institution to ensure that appropriate action is taken where there is suspicion that supply, production or possession of drugs is taking place on the premises.

All staff working across GSU Venues are trained in accordance to this policy, with particular attention to the legal implications, loss of business should the premises gain a reputation for such activity, and the risks to the health and safety of staff and other customers presented by someone under the influence of such drugs. Staff are also trained in behaviours and signs to look out for in those suspected of using or supplying illegal substances.

GSU will take appropriate action against students who commit such offences and who may thereby bring the Students' Union into disrepute. Alongside this, GSU recognises that it has a duty of care to its membership, who may be affected by drug problems either personally or as a third party. GSU will, therefore, endeavour to provide health education and information about the dangers of illicit drugs and will refer students who need help to the appropriate support and wellbeing services.

2. Police Contact and Powers

A good working relationship will be maintained with local Police. Advice on dealing with suspected drug problems is available from local police if staff feel this necessary. If GSU suspects a growing concern with drugs or a problem relating to specific events then the police should be contacted who may arrange a visit with a sniffer dog. Local Police can be contacted on 101.

The Students' Union's agreed process with the local Police is that the DPS will inform the Police of any allegations and/or evidence of drugs manufacture, production, and sale or supply no matter what the drug or the quantity and the Police will advise or attend if they feel necessary. They will advise on whether to store the item in a lockable safe or dispose of it.

The Students' Union will assist contact with the Police for individual students or staff wishing to make an allegation of possession of illicit drugs against a student and safeguard confidentiality if required.

Taking or dealing drugs as a student can have serious consequences that can negatively impact an individual's future in several ways:

- **Legal Consequences** – Possession or distribution of illegal drugs can lead to arrest, criminal charges, and imprisonment. A criminal record can make it difficult to get a job, obtain scholarships, or travel abroad.
- **Academic Failure** – Drug use can affect concentration, memory, and motivation, leading to poor grades, suspensions, or expulsion. This can limit educational and career opportunities.
- **Health Risks** – Drugs can have serious physical and mental health effects, including addiction, anxiety, depression, and long-term damage to the brain and body. Some drugs can be fatal.
- **Limited Career Opportunities** – Many employers conduct background checks and drug tests. A history of drug use or criminal charges can prevent you from getting hired in professional fields like medicine, law, teaching or government jobs.
- **Risk of Violence and Danger** – The drug trade is often associated with violence, theft, and dangerous situations that put your safety at risk.

3. Disciplinary Issues

All drugs related incidents involving students will be recorded on the University incident Management system- Evotex. The university will then assign the incident to the Head of Commercial Services or DPS depending on the nature of the case.

The Students' Union will operate a warning scheme for "softer" drugs (class B and below). In all cases involving, for example, a small amount of Cannabis, deemed for personal use, the student will be refused entry and the drugs will be confiscated. All offences involving larger amounts of drugs, Class A drugs and intent to supply will be referred straight away to the Disciplinary Process and put under Licensee ban in accordance with Students' Union Constitution By-law 3. The students(s) involved will be advised of the process.

Outside of the immediate premises, any found drugs will be confiscated and students' or their guests will be denied entry. This applies to all attendees of our license premises. In cases where a student's guest is the offender, the offender will be banned from the premises, and the student may be subject to disciplinary procedures as they are responsible for the actions of their guest.

4. Drink Spiking

GSU recognises that drink spiking (the addition of a drug, legal or illegal, which may include

alcoholic substances, to a person's drink) is a risk in its licensed venues. Customers are advised via signage to be aware of this, not to leave their drinks unattended, and if they believe a substance may have been added to their drink, to stop drinking it, and hand to bar staff for testing (this will be sealed as evidence). Venue staff will alert the Duty Manager on shift. Customers are advised to stay with people they trust, not consume any more alcoholic beverages and seek medical attention if needed. Staff are trained to look out for behaviours which may suggest a person is adding something to a someone else's drink. GSU venues also operate the 'Ask for Angela' and 'Ask for Andrew' schemes to enable anyone who may feel vulnerable or in danger to ask for support discreetly.

The DPS will notify the Police in cases of drink spiking and relevant evidence (confiscated drink, appropriate CCTV footage etc.) will be supplied. Wellbeing support will also be available for any affected students.

Drink spiking will be considered as a drug-related incident; please refer to Section 4 of this policy; 'Disciplinary Procedures', outlining how offenders will be dealt with.

5. Duty of Care

Whilst GSU follows a strict zero tolerance approach to the use and sale of illegal substances in its venues, a duty of care to its members is also acknowledged. Drug awareness posters are displayed in GSU venues, providing contact details for students struggling with substance abuse and their concerned friends. Students who are issued warnings or going through disciplinary procedures following drugs-related offences will be provided with information regarding substance support and signposted to wellbeing services.

If a person in a GSU venue is suffering adversely from the use of any drug (including alcohol), medical help will be sought by the onsite Duty Manager/First Aider. As much information as possible must be obtained from the user and their companions in order to understand what was consumed and in what quantity, whether the drugs were legal prescription drugs or an illegal substance, whether mixed with alcohol, and over what timescale the drugs were taken/symptoms were noted. Student details must be noted, and any necessary disciplinary procedures must be followed if illegal drugs have been used or purchased on the premises.

Appendices

The following appendices are supporting documents to this policy:

- Appendix 1. Drugs & The Law
- Appendix 2. Guidelines for Drug Charges
- Appendix 3. University of Greenwich Drugs and Alcohol Policy
- Appendix 4. GSU Constitution Bye-law 3: Conducts and Complaints
- Appendix 5. GSU Members Disciplinary Procedure Section 2: Immediate Action on Misconduct
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APPENDIX 1**DRUGS & THE LAW - INFORMATION & REFERENCES**

The Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 is the primary UK legislation regulating the use and distribution of controlled substances. It aims to prevent drug misuse by imposing restrictions on the production, supply, and possession of certain drugs.

Key Points:

Classification of Drugs: Divides controlled substances into three classes based on harm potential:

Class A (most severe): Heroin, cocaine, LSD, ecstasy

Class B: Cannabis, amphetamines, ketamine

Class C (least severe): Anabolic steroids, benzodiazepines

Main Offenses Under the Act**1. Possession of a Controlled Drug**

Having an illegal drug in your possession without authorization. Penalties depend on the drug's classification (Class A, B, or C).

2. Possession with Intent to Supply

Holding drugs with the intention of distributing them to others. A more serious offense than simple possession, with harsher penalties.

3. Supply or Offering to Supply a Controlled Drug

Selling, distributing, or even offering to provide illegal drugs. Applies even if no money is exchanged.

4. Production and Manufacture of Controlled Drugs

Growing, creating, or processing controlled substances (e.g., running a cannabis farm). Considered a serious criminal offense.

5. Importation and Exportation of Drugs

Bringing controlled substances into or out of the country without authorization. Often prosecuted under the Customs and Excise Management Act 1979 in addition to the Misuse of Drugs Act.

6. Allowing Premises to Be Used for Drug Offenses

Property owners or managers can be charged if they permit drug production, use, or supply on their premises.

7. Obstruction of Drug Law Enforcement

Preventing police from carrying out searches, destroying evidence, or providing false information.

8. Attempting, Conspiring, or Assisting in Drug Offenses

Being involved in planning or assisting with any of the above offenses is also illegal.

To enforce this law the police, have special powers to stop, detain and search people on 'reasonable suspicion' that they are in possession of a controlled drug.

More information on [Drug Laws & Licensing](#) can be found on the UK Home Office website.

Classification under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971:

Class	Drug	Possession	Supply and production
A	Crack cocaine, cocaine, ecstasy (MDMA), heroin, LSD, magic mushrooms, methadone, methamphetamine (crystal meth)	Up to 7 years in prison, an unlimited fine or both	Up to life in prison, an unlimited fine or both
B	Amphetamines, barbiturates, cannabis, Gamma hydroxybutyrate (GHB) gamma – butyrolactone (GBL) codeine, ketamine, methylphenidate (Ritalin), synthetic cannabinoids, synthetic cathinones (for example mephedrone, methoxetamine)	Up to 5 years in prison, an unlimited fine or both	Up to 14 years in prison, an unlimited fine or both

C	Anabolic steroids, benzodiazepines (diazepam), (piperazines (BZP), khat, nitrous oxide (laughing gas)	Up to 2 years in prison, an unlimited fine or both (except anabolic steroids - it's not an offence to possess them for personal use)	Up to 14 years in prison, an unlimited fine or both
Temporary class drugs*	The government can ban new drugs for 1 year under a 'temporary banning order' while they decide how the drugs should be classified.	None, but police can take away a suspected temporary class drug	Up to 14 years in prison, an unlimited fine or both

Source: <https://www.gov.uk/penalties-drug-possession-dealing> (correct as of February 2025)

APPENDIX 2

GUIDELINES FOR DRUG CHARGES

Penalties for drug possession, supply and production

The maximum penalties for drug possession, supply (selling, dealing or sharing) and production depend on the drug class.

	Maximum penalty for possession	Maximum penalty for supply and production
Class A	Up to 7 years in prison, an unlimited fine or both	Up to life in prison, an unlimited fine or both
Class B	Up to 5 years in prison, an unlimited fine or both	Up to 14 years in prison, an unlimited fine or both
Class C	Up to 2 years in prison, an unlimited fine or both (except anabolic steroids - it's not an offence to possess them for personal use)	Up to 14 years in prison, an unlimited fine or both
Temporary class drugs	None, but police can take away a suspected temporary class drug	Up to 14 years in prison, an unlimited fine or both

Psychoactive substances penalties

Psychoactive substances are things that cause:

- hallucinations
- drowsiness
- changes in alertness
- changes in perception of time and space
- changes in mood or empathy with others

Food, alcohol, nicotine, caffeine, medicine and illegal drugs do not count as psychoactive substances.

Possession penalty

There is no penalty for carrying psychoactive substances, unless you're in prison.

Supply and production penalty

You can get up to 7 years in prison, an unlimited fine or both if you:

- carry a psychoactive substance and you intend to supply it
- make a psychoactive substance
- sell, deal or share a psychoactive substance (also called supplying them)

Possessing drugs

You may be charged with possessing an illegal substance if you're caught with drugs, whether they're yours or not.

If you're under 18, the police are allowed to tell your parent, guardian or carer that you've been caught with drugs.

Your penalty will depend on:

- the class and quantity of drug
- where you and the drugs were found
- your personal history (previous crimes, including any previous drug offences)
- other aggravating or mitigating factors

Cannabis and khat

Police can issue a warning or an on-the-spot fine of up to £90 if you're found with cannabis or khat. You may be able to pay your penalty without getting a formal warning or caution. If you're repeatedly found with cannabis or khat, your penalty may vary from treatment to their maximum penalty for possession.

Dealing or supplying drugs

The penalty is likely to be more severe if you are found to be supplying drugs (dealing, selling or sharing).

The police will probably charge you if they suspect you of supplying drugs. The amount of drugs found and whether you have a criminal record will affect your penalty.

Source: [Drugs penalties - GOV.UK](#) (correct as of February 2025)

Further information can be found on the UK Home Office website.

APPENDIX 3

UNIVERSITY OF GREENWICH ALCOHOL AND DRUGS POLICY

The University of Greenwich's Student Policy Statement on Alcohol and Drugs (2024) outlines its commitment to maintaining a safe and healthy environment.

The policy prohibits drug misuse, possession, and supply on university premises, including halls of residence. It emphasizes education, support services, and disciplinary actions for violations. The university provides guidance on substance misuse, including referrals to external support services.

It also highlights the risks of County Lines exploitation and offers assistance to affected students. Disciplinary actions may include police reporting and termination of accommodation agreements.

University of Greenwich's Student Policy Statement on Alcohol and Drugs Policy statement

a) The university does not condone the misuse of alcohol or drugs, or possession and selling of illegal drugs on any of its premises, including individual student rooms in our halls of residence.

b) The production, possession and supply of drugs is a criminal offence. The university may take disciplinary action in response to any misconduct by those who commit such offences and who may, by their actions, bring the university into disrepute or put others at risk. As such, appropriate cases will be reported to the police.

c) The university acknowledges that it has a duty of care and a responsibility to provide evidenced-based health information about drug and alcohol use and will refer those

who request help to the appropriate support agencies.

For full details, see the [policy document](#).

APPENDIX 4

STUDENTS' UNION CONSTITUTION BY-LAW 3: CONDUCTS AND COMPLAINTS

Bye-Law 3.c: Disciplinary Procedure

1. The Union shall maintain a disciplinary procedure
2. The disciplinary procedure shall be reviewed on a three-yearly basis subject to the approval of Trustee Board
3. Any breaches in law or University regulations/policies shall be dealt with by the Police or University respectively ahead of proceeding through the Union's disciplinary procedure.
 - a. Exceptions to this are in the case of the Union taking precautionary measures and/or actions as necessary whilst investigations are ongoing to ensure the duty of care to the wider membership and/or the accused.
4. Proceedings through the Union's disciplinary procedure may proceed in advance of or alongside a University investigation in cases where the Union has some delegated responsibility for University Policy. Examples of this are in instances related to speakers or spaces, in line with university guidance for safeguarding and compliance.
5. All disciplinary matters will be dealt with fairly and promptly. The disciplinary procedure shall provide guidance on the timing of disciplinary panels and appeals and the Union shall abide by these timings.

Bye-Law 3.d: Members Disciplinary Procedure

1. Alleged breaches of the Code of Conduct by members of the Union shall be referred to the Members Disciplinary Panel
2. The membership of the panel shall be:
 - a. A GSU Officer who is not the President;
 - b. one Student Representative as defined by by-law 6 (Representation) who is not a GSU Officer; and
 - c. one member of Union Staff.
3. No member of the Members Disciplinary Panel may have had prior involvement with the matter to be considered.
4. Decisions shall be made and communicated in a timely manner in accordance with the Disciplinary Procedure.

Bye-Law 3.e: Members Disciplinary Appeals

1. Appeals against the decisions of the Members Disciplinary Panel shall be heard by the Members Disciplinary Appeals Panel.

2. Appeals may be made against:

- a. the finding of a breach of the Code of Conduct;
- b. the sanction imposed; or
- c. the process applied.

3. The membership of the panel shall be:

- a. The President (chair);
- b. one non-sabbatical Trustee; and
- c. one member of Union Staff.

4. No member of the Members Disciplinary Appeals Panel may have had prior involvement with the matter to be considered and may not simultaneously serve on any Members Disciplinary Panel.

5. Decisions shall be made and communicated in a timely manner in accordance with the Disciplinary Procedure

Bye-Law 3.f: Sanctions

1. The Members Disciplinary Panel and Members Disciplinary Appeals Panel may impose sanctions.

2. Sanctions may be imposed up to and including the indefinite suspension of any or all of the privileges of membership of the Union as outlined in the Union's Disciplinary Procedure.

APPENDIX 5

STUDENTS' UNION MEMBERS DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE SECTION 2: IMMEDIATE ACTION ON MISCONDUCT

Section 2 of the [GSU Members Disciplinary Policy](#) states the following:

2. Immediate action on misconduct

Immediate action may be taken at the time of an alleged incident, in order to prevent further risk of harm to any people or property. This action will be recorded, and an incident report will be logged as a Stage One Report.

2.1 Immediate Action: incidents in GSU licensed spaces

A member may be immediately removed and suspended from GSU venues pending a disciplinary investigation. This will be in incidents where it is necessary to uphold licensing terms and ensure the safety of people and property. This will not prejudice the outcome of any further disciplinary procedures. The decision to suspend will be made by the relevant GSU Senior Leader or by a GSU licensee if it relates to an incident in one of our licensed premises. A member may receive a short-term ban from a licensed premises for up to 1 week as part of this immediate action. Any further sanctions will be reported into the disciplinary procedure at Stage One.

See the [full policy](#) for further details.

APPENDIX 6

GSU STAFF TRAINING: LICENCE TRADE EXTRACT 2024

Drunk or Drugged?

The majority of our patrons visit to enjoy a few drinks, engage in activities like pool or dancing, and socialise with friends. While most do not resort to illegal substances for entertainment, it's essential to acknowledge the potential risk. The repercussions of disregarding this policy range from legal consequences, including the potential loss of our licence, to reputational damage and risks to the well-being of staff and customers posed by intoxicated individuals.

Signs of Potential Drug Use:

- Torn beer mats, train tickets, or cigarette packs
- Traces of wraps or packaging resembling sweet wrappers, are often found in toilets
- White powder on credit/resource/NUS cards or blood/powder on banknotes
- Requesting straws without a drink, or finding straws in toilets
- Powder residue on surfaces, particularly in toilet areas
- Discovery of syringes (Note: Avoid direct contact due to infection risk; alert management immediately)

The behaviour of someone under the influence of drugs is also something to watch out for; all drugs can produce “out of character” behaviour, and this must be borne in mind when dealing with the individual suspected of drug use. Some typical signs to look out for are:

- Dilated pupils
- White powder around the nose, excessive sniffing, or nose wiping
- Unexplained laughter or giggling
- Aggression, possibly fuelled by paranoia or refusal of service
- Restlessness or shaking
- Heightened surprise reactions
- Vacant expression

If someone is using drugs on the premises, they must have got them from somewhere. Which brings us to the next thing to watch out for – dealing on our premises.

Some behaviour to look out for:

- Frequent phone use, short calls, few words, often stepping outside
- Money exchange, particularly in notes, and the presence of small paper/foil packs or thick plastic bags
- Paranoia, frequent surveillance checks
- Unusual interactions with different individuals, trips to secluded areas
- Maintaining standards on premises reinforces our anti-drugs stance.
- Regular clearing of glasses and bottles enhances surveillance and demonstrates adherence to policies.
- Building rapport with regular customers encourages reporting of suspicious behaviour.
- Periodic checks of hotspots, like the garden and toilets, ensure proactive monitoring without causing discomfort to innocent patrons.
- If serving another drink poses a risk to the individual or others, refrain from serving.
- By remaining vigilant and enforcing our policies, we promote a safer and more secure environment for all patrons and staff.

Keeping up standards on the premises backs up our anti-drugs policy:

- Clearing away glasses and empty bottles not only removes potential weapons but gives us a chance to see what customers are up to and lets them know we're maintaining standards and our own policies.
- Getting to know the regular customers, being approachable means they're more likely to let us know if they pick up on any dodgy behaviour, and it's easier for us to pick up on it as well.
- Regular checks on hotspots – garden, toilets (preferably without annoying innocent customers – no-one likes to think they're being watched)
- If another drink's going to make them a danger to themselves or other people, don't serve them

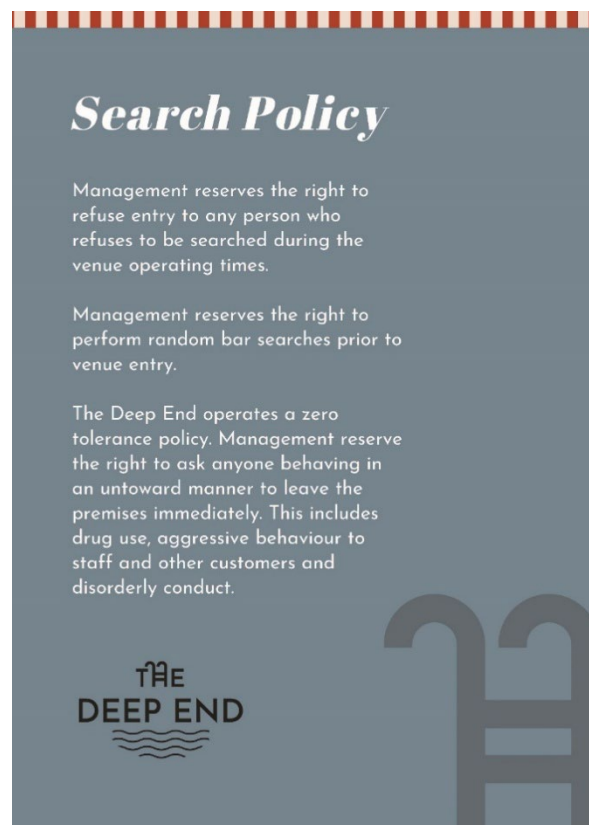
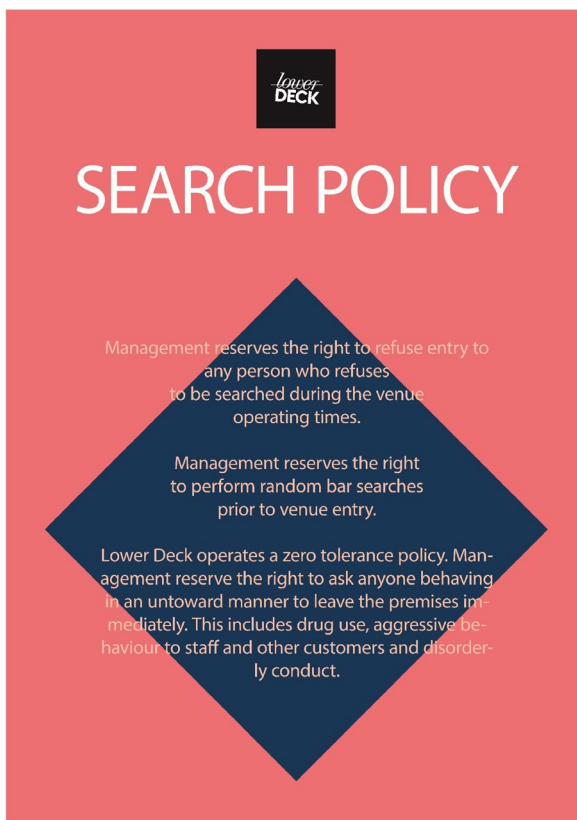
Drink spiking

Drink spiking is the addition of a drug, legal or illegal, which may include alcoholic substances, to a person's drink. It's a crime and a risk in all licensed venues.

- When you're working behind the bar it's important to be alert to less obvious forms of spiking including customers attempting to buy double spirits instead of singles for someone they're with who has requested a single – listen to the order from the person who's going to be drinking the product.
- The Police should be notified in cases of drink spiking, and relevant evidence (confiscated drink, appropriate CCTV footage etc.) supplied, which is the responsibility of the Bar Manager or appropriate senior member of staff.
- It is illegal for you to work under the influence of drugs or to be drunk. You have a responsibility to us as your employers, your colleagues, and for your own safety, irresponsible behaviour will result in disciplinary action.
- Fine for permitting drunk/violent conduct = min £500. Fine for serving someone under 18 = £1,000 (that's your own fine; the licensee will have to pay the same, and could risk losing the licence)
- Street drinking is against the law in most areas now; this is particularly strictly enforced in Greenwich. Hence extra vigilance is required at the end of the night to ensure no open vessels leave the premises.

APPENDIX 7

SEARCH AND ZERO TOLERANCE SIGNAGE



APPENDIX 8

WELLBEING SUPPORT

Drinkaware

<https://www.drinkaware.co.uk/>

Drinkaware aims to get people to think differently about alcohol. Our entire focus is on getting people to understand the harm it can do to our health, our families and those around us.

FRANK

<https://www.talktofrank.com/>

Honest information about drugs; Find out everything you need to know about drugs, their effects and the law. Talk to Frank for facts, support and advice on drugs and alcohol today.

University of Greenwich - Spectrum Life

<https://www.gre.ac.uk/articles/public-relations/introducing-spectrum-life-our-new-student-assistance-programme>

Spectrum Life is a 100% confidential, in the moment, support service that is designed to support you as a university student. Spectrum Life is available 24/7, 365 days a year offering help with things like: stress, anxiety, low mood, financial worries, loss & grief, relationship problems, substance misuse concerns and much more.