Alcohol and Legal Highs
Guidance for Students

Introduction
The University has a duty of care to its students, staff and visitors and aims to provide a safe, healthy and high quality study and work environment. Students also have a responsibility for their own safety and that of others.

While students misusing alcohol and legal highs may not be breaking the law, they may still be:

- subject to disciplinary action under the University’s disciplinary procedures
- suspended
- asked to leave
- reported to the police.

Regulation 7 outlines the code of conduct students of the University should abide by and the conditions in which students may face disciplinary action.

Definitions
Legal Highs
These are substances which produce effects similar to illegal drugs but are not controlled under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971. They are considered illegal under current legislation to sell, supply or advertise as for “human consumption”. Many contain substances that are not safe to consume or legal to possess. If a ‘legal high’ bought by a student then becomes illegal after they have acquired it, that the student bought it before its illegalisation will not be accepted as an excuse.

Prescription drugs
The University of York does not place restrictions on use or possession of prescribed medication beyond what the law denotes. However, if a student feels that they or one of their peers is misusing prescribed medication, the University of York recommends they contact Student Support Service.

Misuse
This is the habitual or intermittent use of any substance which causes detriment to an individual’s health, social functioning or study/work performance. Substance misuse can impair the safety of themselves or others and affect attendance, time keeping, efficiency and conduct.

Dependency
When a person feels a physical or psychological need to drink alcohol or take substances to the point that it takes precedence over other activities. Someone with substance dependence may exhibit signs such as: a strong desire to drink alcohol or take legal highs, a difficulty in controlling their use of substances, a persistent use of substances despite being aware of the harmful effects, an increased tolerance for substances and withdrawal when without alcohol or legal highs.

Binge drinking
The consumption of an excessive amount of alcohol in a short period of time. The
NHS defines it as drinking more than double the lower risk guidelines for alcohol in one session (on average this means 8 or more units for men in a single session and 6 or more units for women in a single session).

‘Pre-drinking/pre-lashing/pre-loading’
The practice of consuming alcohol at home before going out. When people pre-drink they are over four times more likely to consume over 20 units of alcohol on a night out (including the pre-drinking and drinking when out). This excessive level of consumption is strongly associated with increased health risks and also involvement in other behavioural issues such as nightlife violence and unsafe sexual behaviour.

Statement
The University does not condone excessive drinking or the use of ‘legal highs’. The University of York is committed to promoting a safe and supportive environment in which to learn and work. It will do this as outlined below.

- Encourage and support mutual respect within the whole of the University community.
- Work with staff and students to create an understanding of acceptable behaviour.
- Take educational and pastoral steps to raise student awareness of the dangers of substance misuse and assist them in making informed decisions.
- Promote new social norms around responsible drinking habits in order to create a community which is inclusive, supportive and which recognises and respects different attitudes to drug and alcohol use.
- Recognise the link between responsible behaviour and an enjoyable learning experience and promote a social environment from which all may benefit.
- Discourage students from indulging in excessive and harmful alcohol consumption, binge drinking, pre-drinking or ‘legal highs’.
- Encourage students who are concerned about their use of substances to seek advice, help, support and assistance.
- Encourage students who feel peers have a substance dependency or misuse problem to seek support and advice.
- Commit to acting promptly when concerns are raised (by student, peer or member of staff) providing early intervention and support where possible.
- Take action to support those in distress and invite students with substance misuse issues to discuss their problems and offer them the opportunity to take professional and confidential advice, help and support through medical, counselling and other pastoral help.
- Be sympathetic to problems that arise from substance misuse without condoning such misuse. The University of York regards problems like substance dependency as a health problem and will be sympathetic to students who report to a Member of a College Welfare Team, YUSU, the GSA or Student Support Services and agree to a programme of rehabilitation. The University will also be sympathetic to students who suffer relapses during or after a period of treatment.
- Provide guidance and information to staff and students to help them develop the confidence to know what action to take if they are concerned about drug and alcohol misuse, the health and safety of fellow students, of staff members, or of themselves.
- Take seriously its legal responsibility for the health, safety and welfare of its students, staff and visitors and aim to provide a safe, healthy and high quality learning environment.
- Recognise that staff with responsibilities for teaching and the support and welfare of students and those who manage others have additional responsibilities to promote, to be alert to indicators of drug and alcohol misuse and to take appropriate actions when necessary.
- Work with all relevant partners to deliver responsible commercial services where alcohol is available on campus.
- Sanction disciplinary action if and when appropriate. Lack of engagement with the policy or a failure to respond may lead to formal disciplinary action being applied. If disciplinary action is applied, the University will vary its responses to the severity of the situation.
- Undergo an annual review process in order to ensure the statements, roles, aims and information presented in this policy is accurate, in order to check that the policy is being implemented and in order to check that the policy has been effective at reducing the level of substance misuse on campus.
Contacts

On Campus

Colleges
Each college has a welfare team, check your college website for details or ask at your college reception.

Department
Academic Supervisor

Campus Security
01904 323333 (for urgent calls)
01904 324444 (for non-urgent calls)

Graduate Students’ Association (GSA)
Representation, Advice and Welfare Coordinator advice@yorkgsa.org

Student Support Services
student-support@york.ac.uk

YUSU
Welfare and Community Officer
Academic and Welfare Manager

Off-campus

Alcoholics Anonymous
www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk

Drug and Alcohol Support
www.gdas.co.uk

Al-Anon
http://www.al-anonuk.org.uk/

FRANK
http://www.talktofrank.com/

Compass
http://www.compass-uk.org/