

National University of Ireland Galway

Policy concerning Misuse of Drugs by Students.

Introduction

The misuse of drugs is inconsistent with the ability of students to apply themselves fully to their academic work. The University recognises that it has a duty of care to help and support those students who by use of legal and illegal drugs put their wellbeing at risk. The University has therefore developed this policy to specify its own responsibilities and those of the students of NUI Galway.

Policy Statement

The University, in recognition of its pastoral care responsibilities towards students, exercises a role in helping and supporting students who by their use of drugs put their health and wellbeing at risk. However, the University does not condone the use, manufacture, sale or distribution of illegal drugs.

Students who fail to comply with this policy may be subject to the disciplinary procedures as laid down in the University's Code of Conduct.

Scope of Policy

This policy applies to students of the University and outlines procedures applicable to drug related incidents that occur within grounds owned and administered by NUI Galway as interpreted in the NUI Galway Code of Conduct.

It is considered that activities arranged by a student organisation that is affiliated to NUI Galway and occur outside of the grounds of NUI Galway are governed by the Code of Conduct and such procedures as set down by that body.

Policy Measures

Education

The University has a duty to educate members of its community on drug related issues in order to assist them:

- To fulfil their legal, academic, personal and social responsibilities.
- To be better informed of the effects of using and misusing drugs.
- To be aware of the potential consequences including legal implications of using drugs.
- To be aware of the help and support available (within and outside the college) to those with drug related problems.

Information on drugs and treatment services and education about drugs will be made available to students and staff.

A Drug Education Group will be set up to determine how and what information and education will be delivered to students and staff. This group will consist of

representation from the student body and staff of NUI Galway as well as from relevant external agencies.

The aim of drug education will be to protect students from the potential harmful effects of drug use. Drug education will discourage the use of potentially harmful illegal and legal drugs. Initiatives will also be undertaken to protect those students who continue to use drugs and others who may consequently be affected (a harm reduction approach).

Managing Drug Related Situations

The University, in exercising its duty of care towards its students, will be alert to the need to identify students who have developed or are thought to be at risk of developing drug related problems.

Those students in need of help will be encouraged to seek it. Students and staff will be made aware of the current opportunities for receiving help or advice. Support services available to students include the Student Counselling Service, the Student Health Unit and the Student Services Health Promotion Officer.

Guidelines for dealing with distressed students, including those presenting with concerns regarding the use of drugs, are available to staff in the booklet 'Supporting and Responding to Students in Distress' (NUI Galway, 2007).

The Involvement of External Agencies

Agencies external to the University, including student accommodation managers, Gardaí, and community health services, may have contact with students regarding drug-related issues. These organisations will be provided with information regarding the University and support services.

Representatives of external agencies and other relevant stakeholders will be encouraged to participate in the drug education and policy review groups.

Review, Monitoring and Evaluation

A Drug Policy Review Group will be set up and include representation from the student body and staff of NUI Galway as well as from relevant external agencies.

The group will review how the policy is being implemented and take steps to ensure implementation. The group will evaluate the impact of the policy with respect to its stated aims and objectives.