

# ALCOHOL AND DRUG

## Advice booklet

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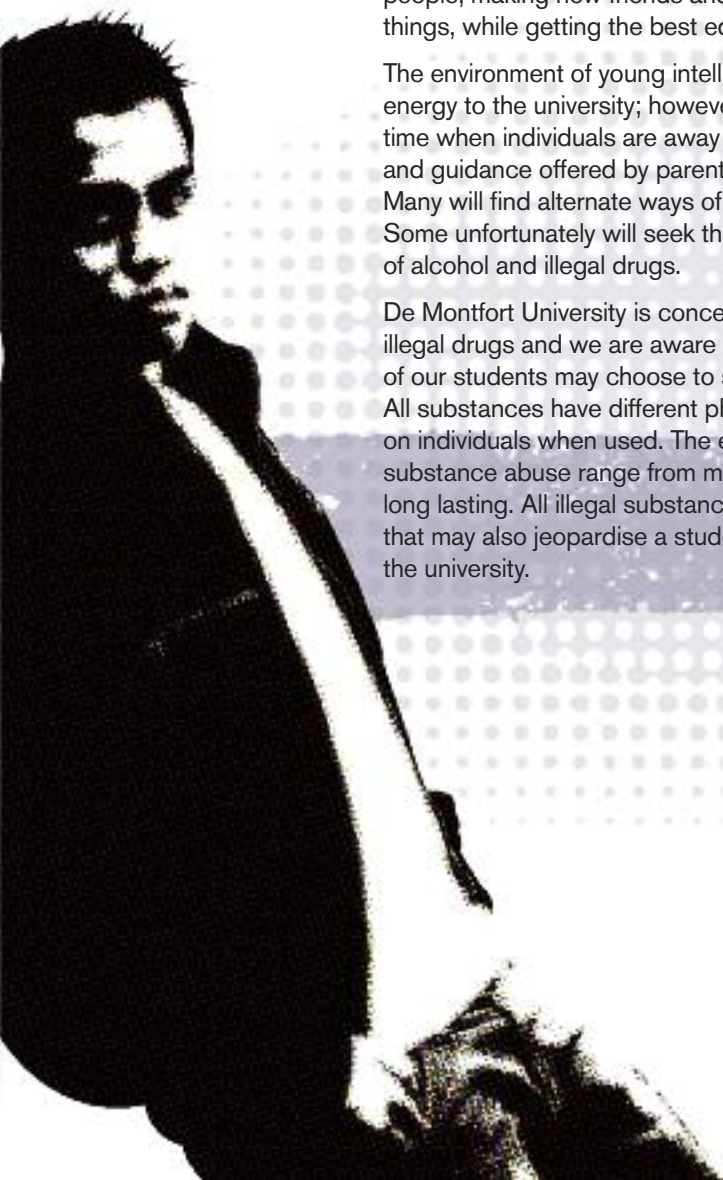
# Student Services

# About this booklet

Coming to university is a fantastic experience and you will have a great time here in Leicester at De Montfort University (DMU). University is all about meeting new people, making new friends and trying out lots of new things, while getting the best education possible.

The environment of young intelligent minds brings a lot of energy to the university; however, we are also aware it is a time when individuals are away from home and the support and guidance offered by parents, carers and guardians. Many will find alternate ways of enjoying their time here. Some unfortunately will seek that enjoyment in the abuse of alcohol and illegal drugs.

De Montfort University is concerned about the use of all illegal drugs and we are aware as an institution that some of our students may choose to seek out access to them. All substances have different physical and mental effects on individuals when used. The effects of alcohol and substance abuse range from minor effects to extreme and long lasting. All illegal substances carry a criminal penalty that may also jeopardise a student's continuance at the university.



## **The university has a zero tolerance policy on the possession or supply of illegal substances.**

That said we do understand that those involved in abuse or thinking about it may be in a desperate situation and need advice and support. As well as access to Counselling and Personal Support through Student Services, we have produced this booklet to guide you through a few facts, the effects (both physical, mental and on your ability to study) plus where to turn to for help and support with these issues.

We want you to be informed, so that you can assess the risks and consequences of the actions you take, as well as staying healthy, safe and happy so that you get the very best out of your time at university. We want you to make the best decision for you.

## **Alcohol**

Despite being legal, alcohol is still a drug and you should think about the effects drinking has upon your body and mental state. Many students come to university and drink safely without any problems or impact on their studies whatsoever. If you choose to drink alcohol we hope that you are part of this group. However, there are issues about drinking and staying safe when you are out which you should think about.



## Safe drinking

The Department of Health's recommended guidelines are three to four units of alcohol a day for men and two to three units of alcohol a day for women. So, safe drinking means around 21 units a week for men and 14 units a week for women. Please don't try to drink your weekly unit allowance all in one night. This is known as 'binge drinking' and is not healthy for your body.

When under the influence of alcohol your perceptions are dulled. It takes longer to think things through, your reactions are slower and your judgement of factors such as speed and distance are reduced.

You are also more vulnerable and at risk of having your drink spiked when under the influence of alcohol because alcohol dulls your instincts and your awareness of danger. If your drink has been spiked you will not be able to see, taste or smell any difference, so it is important to try to prevent it from happening.

- Keep your drink in your hand, and hold your thumb over the opening if you are drinking from a bottle
- Keep an eye on your friends' drinks
- Do not leave your drink unattended at any time
- Never accept a drink from anyone you do not know or trust
- Where possible, drink from a bottle rather than a glass because it is more difficult to spike a drink in a bottle
- Stay away from situations you do not feel comfortable with
- If you go on a date with someone you don't know, tell a friend or relative where you will be and what time you will be back
- Do not give away too much information, such as your address to anyone you have just met
- Do not show off expensive equipment, such as mobile phones or MP3 players, as you may attract unwanted attention
- Remember, if you have already been drinking you will be more vulnerable because alcohol dulls your instincts and your awareness of danger





## Alcohol, anti-social behaviour and crime

With cheap alcohol available there may be the temptation to consume excessive amounts. However you will put yourself at greater risk of becoming involved in anti-social behaviour, often associated with drinking, or a victim of crime.

## Alcohol and your studies

Alcohol is the UK's favourite drug and many people drink without it adversely affecting them. However, abuse of alcohol and alcohol dependency can have a serious effect on your life and studying.

Many people drink to forget about stresses in their family or personal life or to deal with anxiety or depression. Alcohol is very widely used as a coping mechanism to help people feel relaxed or to help overcome their feelings.



## Drugs

Drugs affect the brain which in turn affects the mood of the person taking them. There are different types of drugs which affect users in different ways.



## Depressants

Depressants depress the activity of the central nervous system, calming nerves and muscles and slowing down reactions. They make the user feel calm and relaxed and can reduce feelings of stress and anxiety. They can also make the user feel sleepy or drowsy and can have tranquilizing and sedative effects. There are both legal and illegal depressants. Some depressants are prescribed by doctors to help medical and psychological conditions but are also taken recreationally by others.

Depressant drugs include:

- Alcohol
- Cannabis
- Opiates such as heroin, opium, morphine, codeine and methadone
- Sedatives such as valium
- Barbiturates
- Some solvents and inhalants such as petrol, glue, lighter fluids and paint thinners.

## Stimulants

Stimulants increase the heart rate, body temperature and blood pressure; dilate the pupils and suppress appetite. They make the user feel more awake and alert. Stimulants can boost self-confidence and positivity, although they can also lead to feelings of agitation, anxiety and even delusion. There are both legal and illegal stimulants.

Stimulant drugs include:

- Caffeine
- Amphetamines (eg speed or methamphetamine)
- Cocaine
- Ecstasy (MDMA).







## Hallucinogens

Hallucinogens change the user's perceptions of reality by distorting their impressions of time and space and altering their senses, thought patterns and emotions. Users may experience visual or auditory hallucinations known as 'trips'. 'Trips' can be enjoyable and produce feelings of euphoria, amusement and delight but some users also experience feelings of paranoia or anxiety. A 'bad trip' can be terrifying and last until the effects of the drug wear off, which can be as long as 12 hours.

Hallucinogenic drugs include:

- Cannabis (strong strains of 'skunk' weed may have hallucinogenic effects as well as depressant effects)
- LSD (acid, trips)
- Magic mushrooms
- Mescaline.

There are ways to reduce the potential short-term negative effects of taking recreational drugs such as understanding what it is you are taking, making sure you are with close friends or people you feel comfortable with, sipping water to stay hydrated and not mixing different types of drugs and alcohol. However sometimes it is hard to know how a drug is going to affect you until you have taken it, meaning it is hard to be fully prepared for what is going to happen. Some drugs also have long-term implications on physical health and can trigger or intensify mental health problems such as psychosis in the short-term and depression in the long-term.

The Talk to Frank website has a complete A-Z of drugs and their effects, visit [talktofrank.com](https://talktofrank.com)



## The legal bit

Illegal drugs are divided into three classes by law: A, B and C. Penalties for possessing drugs can range from a caution to a fine to life imprisonment depending on what the drug is, the amount you have and whether you intend to supply it to others. Your current criminal record and personal circumstances may also be taken into account.

The Talktofrank website gives details of the classification of each drug and the range of possible penalties for possessing and supplying it to others.

The misuse of drugs and alcohol can have unpredictable results and serious health consequences.

Combining drugs and alcohol will significantly increase health risks which can vary greatly from person to person.

Drugs can cost you more than just your health; you could be subjected to a search if a police officer suspects you have illegal drugs in your possession.

Passing drugs among friends is 'supplying' in the eyes of the law.

Allowing people to use drugs such as cocaine or cannabis in your room/flat or house or any other premises is illegal.

A drug conviction could cost you **your place at university**, stand between you and **your ideal job** or stop you from visiting certain countries such as **America** and **Australia**.

## The university's position

The university has a policy and guidelines on the misuse of illegal drugs and the following has been taken from chapter two, annexe four of the University General Regulations and Procedures Affecting Students 2010/2011:

### Policy statement

The possession, supply and production of drugs covered by the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 is against the law. Many drugs not covered by the Misuse of Drugs Act (including some so called 'legal highs') are controlled through other legislation such as the Medicines Act 1968, making their possession and/or supply without a licence unlawful. Accordingly the university undertakes to deal with students who commit such offences and who may thereby endanger themselves or others, or may bring the university into disrepute. In addition to this, however, the university recognises that it has a duty of care towards its student members.

It will therefore endeavour to restrict availability of dangerous or illicit substances at the university and provide health education and information about the dangers of illicit drug use and will refer those who need help to the appropriate support agencies.

## Disciplinary issues

It is an offence under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 to possess, manufacture, produce, sell or give controlled drugs to another or to knowingly allow anyone to possess, use, manufacture, produce, sell or give controlled drugs to another. Other legislation creates offences such as possessing prescription drugs without a prescription and supplying certain drugs without a licence.

## Reporting suspected drug use

Disciplinary action will be taken against any student who commits any such offence on university premises, or elsewhere in circumstances likely to endanger other students or bring the university into disrepute.

## Students in private accommodation

Details of any suspected illegal drug use must be reported to the Head of Security so that, if appropriate, the matter may be referred to the police for investigation.

Any student or member of staff who becomes aware that students in non-university accommodation are involved in the supply or use of a suspected illegal substance must report the matter to the Head of Security or Provost so that the appropriate action may be taken. This may include disciplinary action and/or advising students of the support and help available to them, and keeping the appropriate people informed.

## Support

If you are in need of help or support about any aspects of your own alcohol or drug use or that of a friend or flat/house mate, advice and support can be sought from the Counselling and Personal Support department. This service operates a 9am–5pm drop-in service. Alternatively you can email [121counselling@dmu.ac.uk](mailto:121counselling@dmu.ac.uk) or [mentalhealthadvice@dmu.ac.uk](mailto:mentalhealthadvice@dmu.ac.uk)



**Counselling and Personal Support**  
**Student Services, Gateway House, First Floor Reception, Leicester**  
**T: (0116) 257 7602**  
**E: [121counselling@dmu.ac.uk](mailto:121counselling@dmu.ac.uk)**  
**W: [dmu.ac.uk/counselling](http://dmu.ac.uk/counselling)**

The team can help arrange a referral to the Leicestershire Community Project Drug/Alcohol Advice team. Or you can go directly to them, their numbers are given below.

**Leicestershire Communities Project Trust Drug Advice – (0116) 222 9555**  
**Leicestershire Communities Project Trust Alcohol Advice – (0116) 222 9545**

You can also contact De Montfort University Students' Union Welfare and Education Centre  
First Floor, Campus Centre Building  
Monday to Wednesday 9.30am–3.45pm  
Thursday 9.30am–6.30pm (Term time)  
Thursday 9.30am–3.45pm (Vacation)  
Friday 1–3.45pm  
Call in or telephone (0116) 257 6307

Advice can also be sought from the student health centre.  
Call in or telephone (0116) 255 3388

If you are concerned about the conduct of other students, Security staff can be contacted on (0116) 257 7642 24 hours a day. There is also a 'Be Smart Be Safe' confidential reporting service that is run by the De Montfort University Security Department. If you wish to contact DMU Security to report any concerns or experiences you can email in confidence by following the below link:  
**[dmu.ac.uk/besmartbesafe](http://dmu.ac.uk/besmartbesafe)**

## **Alternative formats**

Where possible DMU publications or specific sections can be supplied in alternative media. For further information on how we can help, please contact the Enquiry Centre on 08459 45 46 47 or +44 (0)116 257 7513, [enquiry@dmu.ac.uk](mailto:enquiry@dmu.ac.uk) or text phone +44 (0)116 257 7908.