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## **PROTOCOL FOR STUDENTS ON THE USE OF ILLICIT DRUGS**

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### **Definition:**

Illicit drugs are forbidden in terms of South African legislation.

### **The University's view on illicit drug use**

Possession and supply and use of any controlled substance or dangerous drug, as defined by the South African law, is prohibited. The University undertakes to deal firmly with students who commit such offences and who break the Disciplinary Code and thereby bring the University into disrepute. However, the University also recognises that in some cases substance abuse can become a medical problem, rather than solely a disciplinary matter, and we therefore supply information about the dangers of illicit drugs and will refer those who need support to the relevant support services. Students who have a substance abuse problem are encouraged to seek treatment in the first instance

### **EDUCATIONAL INITIATIVES**

The aim of these educational initiatives is to lower the incidence of psychosis and to improve the physical and emotional health of students, so that they can succeed academically.

1. These guidelines must be widely disseminated annually
2. Health campaigns will be organised regularly by the Counselling Centre and Health Care Centre
3. Wardens and sub wardens must be provided with opportunities to learn how to recognise the signs of illicit drugs use, how to deal with incidents and what support services are available.
4. The Dean of Students Division must devise strategies to raise awareness about the dangers of substance abuse.
5. The SRC should be invited to cooperate in all educational and awareness raising strategies.
6. Students should be made aware of all support services that are available
7. Information about the nature and numbers of incidents involving illicit drug use must be monitored and reported via the Dean of Students to the Student Services Council, based on the annual reports submitted by the appropriate divisions.

### **PSYCHOLOGICAL AND MEDICAL SUPPORT**

A range of sources of support is available to students involved in substance abuse. The students must be advised of the help that is available and encouraged to make use of it:

1. Students with substance abuse problems must be encouraged to contact the Counselling Centre ([counsellingcentre@ru.ac.za](mailto:counsellingcentre@ru.ac.za)) (046) 603 7070) or the

Health Care Centre ([healthcarecentre@ru.ac.za](mailto:healthcarecentre@ru.ac.za)) (046) 603 8523 / 082 8011 409 for information or assistance. Confidentiality will be maintained.

2. Students with problems should be encouraged to attend Narcotics Anonymous (NA) meetings, which take place twice a week. Tuesdays at St. Georges Hall in High Street from 19h00-20h00 and Thursdays in the RA room of the Steve Biko building opposite Rhodes Music Radio from 19h00-20h00 (NA/AA: 082 784 7685). Confidentiality will be maintained.
3. Lifeline can offer assistance: 0861 322 322 or 0800 567 567

## **DISCIPLINARY MEASURES**

Office-bearers of the University may not disregard any substance abuse problem and are required to assist in promoting an environment in which use of illicit drugs is actively discouraged, and to report the matter to the relevant authority.

The Disciplinary Code must be strictly adhered to in cases of substance abuse *on campus*. Wardens must establish a clear sequence of 'boundaries' for students caught committing an offence. Normally the following steps should be followed on campus:

1. In all cases, the substances must be confiscated and handed over to CPU.
2. In cases where drug abuse is suspected, the matter should be reported to a Warden or Head of Department or some other responsible person.
3. The matter must be reported to the University Prosecutors for investigation.

Over and above disciplinary interventions, the student must receive support as follows:

- a. *1<sup>st</sup> Offence*: student receives counselling support and education. Student is requested to go for counselling. At this stage parents could be informed. If not, the student must be warned by the Hall Warden or Dean of Students that parents will be informed if there is a repeat offence;
- b. *2<sup>nd</sup> offence*: Parents are informed, and are involved in the rehabilitation programme. The student is required to sign up for random testing by the HCC.

## **DEALING WITH THE DISCOVERY OF ILLICIT DRUGS**

### **1. Non-emergency:**

- i. If a student is in possession of or using what is believed to be an illicit substance in residence, report the matter to the Warden.
- ii. The Warden is obliged to adhere to the Disciplinary Code if there has been a serious breach of a rule or law, regardless of whether this is a first or subsequent offence.
- iii. If the incident takes place elsewhere on campus, report it to CPU or an academic staff member.
- iv. Write down all details of the incident clearly and accurately. This will help those who are involved later.

2. **Medical Emergency:** Acute intoxication, physical collapse, loss of consciousness or substance induced psychosis can result from even one experiment with illicit drugs. In the case of a student displaying signs of acute physical or psychological distress, where there is immediate risk to life or long term health, the individual **must** be medically assessed:

i. *If the person is unconscious:* call Netcare immediately (082911 or 073 065 6660). Notify a warden, CPU (046) 603 8146, the Health Care Centre (046 603 8523 or 082 8011409) or contact the Counselling Centre (046 6037070 or 0828030177).

While waiting for help to arrive:

- do not put the person to bed to sleep it off: death can result from choking on vomit;
- lie them in the recovery position: on their side, with support;
- loosen tight clothing around their neck and chest;
- keep them warm;
- Keep a careful watch on them until medical help arrives.

ii. *If a student is conscious and cooperative:*

- Help the person stay calm and give reassurance;
- Escort the student to the Health Care Centre for evaluation and monitoring. The nurse will then make a recommendation based on the evaluation of the patient, i.e. hospitalisation, counselling, or informing significant others.
- The Health Care Centre may also contact the Counselling Centre for assistance.

iii. *If the student is conscious but uncooperative* (usually displaying symptoms of a psychotic episode):

- do not crowd or threaten the person, or expect normal behaviour; they could react with uncharacteristic violence;
- call Netcare immediately (082911 or 073 065 6660).
- call CPU (046 603 8146) for extra assistance;
- If the student refuses to co-operate, even with CPU assisting, call the South African Police (SAPS) (046 603 9111) to assist with transporting the student to Settlers Hospital.

iv. CPU or the SAP must confiscate the substances;

v. If a student is admitted to Settlers Hospital, notify the Warden and the Counselling Centre.

vi. Write down details of the incident clearly and accurately. This will help those who are involved later;

vii. Once the student is discharged from Settlers Hospital, the student must report to the Counselling Centre for an assessment.

viii. Recommendations regarding the way forward will be made by the Counselling Centre to the Dean of Students. Options will include

disciplinary intervention, counselling (which may include drug testing at the health care centre) and/or extended Leave of Absence based on psychological or medical grounds).

3. **Death:** In the event of accidental death or apparent suicide
  - i. CPU must be contacted immediately, as well as the Dean of Students and Hall Warden. (CPU will call the police).  
The Counselling Centre should be informed (046 6037070 or 0828030177).
  - i. The student's parents / immediate family should be informed as soon as possible by a University official (usually the Dean of Students or Hall Warden)
  - ii. The Counselling Centre will be available to offer counselling to students affected by the death.