



RHODES UNIVERSITY
Where leaders learn

DRAFT ALCOHOL POLICY

1. Particulars to follow

2. POLICY STATEMENT

The University encourages an enlightened, mature and responsible approach to moderate alcohol consumption, based on the undeniable fact that social drinking is normal for large numbers of people. However, in the past few years, growing concern has been expressed about excessive levels of use of alcohol by our students. Concerns include high-risk drinking among students, the impact of this drinking on academic achievement, personal safety, addiction and student attrition. In addition, there is growing dissatisfaction among the local Grahamstown population, who complain about unacceptable noise levels and rowdy, drunken behaviour of students in town.

2.1 POLICY DECLARATION:

This document recognises that the excessive use of alcohol contributes to a spectrum of health, behavioural and social problems, and has negative effects in terms of its toxicity, its potential to create dependency and its impact on behaviour (often resulting in violence, injuries and death). The period of late adolescence is a phase of freedom, adaptation to new environments, new relationships and financial and academic challenges. All may be exacerbated by heavy alcohol consumption. This policy aims to counteract these effects.

2.2 POLICY OBJECTIVES:

This policy aims to create and maintain a safe and pleasant campus environment which supports the health and well-being of students. Specifically, the objectives are to:

- a. encourage students to make healthy choices as regards alcohol consumption, and promote personal responsibility and social obligation to the community
- b. control marketing, promotions and sponsorship of alcohol
- c. create an atmosphere free from pressure to drink, which encourages low-risk social drinking as the norm and discourages high-risk drinking
- d. increase awareness and education about the dangers of heavy drinking
- e. encourage alternatives to drinking, creating choice and a balanced social programme
- f. promote a caring environment which will support those experiencing alcohol-related difficulties

- g. develop a partnership with stakeholders, including the SRC, Counselling Centre, Sanatorium, Wardens, police and proprietors of local bars.

3. POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

Specific strategies are outlined in terms of six areas:

- increasing awareness and education
- encouraging alternatives and choice
- limiting availability of alcohol on campus
- limiting harm in the drinking environment
- controlling marketing, promotions and sponsorship
- providing campus support services.

3.1 STRATEGIC INTERVENTIONS:

A Increasing awareness and education

- * the office of the Dean of Students will provide appropriate information on alcohol-linked problems in the Orientation Booklet and Student Support Booklet
- * advice on alcohol will routinely be included in the annual sub-warden and house committee training workshops, and in workshops for all first-years during orientation week
- * the SRC will be actively involved in the development, promotion and delivery of alcohol education to promote a message of low-risk drinking (See Appendix A)
- * wardens will repeat such advice during the course of the year.
- * the Sanatorium and Counselling Centre will display appropriate notices in public spaces
- * all staff who serve alcohol will regularly be reminded of the risks involved in serving alcohol to people who are already intoxicated
- * this policy will be widely distributed to all members of the University community, included in the University Calendar and will be prominently displayed on the Dean of Students website.

B Encouraging alternatives and choices

- * the University community will encourage events which promote “low-risk” social drinking and give special support to alcohol-free events in terms of provision of venues and resources
- * all social events on campus must provide suitable non-alcoholic refreshments for students.
- * the University will give special consideration to providing after-hours alcohol-free environments on campus (e.g. a coffee bar)

C Limiting availability of alcohol on campus:

- * No function (including residence and inter-residence functions) which involves the consumption of liquor may be held during the first ten days of the first term without the Vice-Chancellor’s permission
- * In residences, only wine and punch may be served at special functions, usually only once a term, and only when Wardens are present.

- * Students are permitted to have only beer, cider, wine or fortified wine in their rooms
- * the Registrar's permission must be obtained to serve alcohol at any official University event (including all society's evenings)
- * residence bars are permitted to operate only at restricted times in Halls which allow such pubs to operate, closely supervised by the Hall and House Wardens, and only the residents of a particular House may participate in the pubs.
- * events where rapid and/or excessive consumption of alcohol is encouraged are prohibited, and all SRC societies are prohibited from holding such events both on and off campus.

D Limiting harm:

- * training in responsible serving of alcohol will be mandatory for all those serving alcohol on campus. Such training will be supplied by XXX
- * alcohol may not be served to intoxicated persons.
- * low-cost non-alcoholic drinks and food must be on sale at all events and venues where alcohol is served
- * intoxicated students are encouraged to seek a lift or an escort home
- * the Dean of Students and SRC will seek outside sponsorship to provide off-campus support, such as trained staff to intervene in pubs and provide safe transport home for heavily intoxicated students

E Controlling promotions and sponsorships:

- * Student Societies should seek alternatives to drinks companies for sponsorship
- * Sponsorships from drinks companies should be in monetary form and not material form. Where sponsorship is in the form of a product, a monitoring system should be in place to restrict free drinks to two per person.
- * functions which encourage rapid and/or excessive consumption of alcohol will not be permitted.
- * prizes may not take the form of alcohol (e.g. cases of beer)
- * off-campus drink suppliers, pubs and bars should be requested not to offer special alcohol promotions which result in high-risk drinking
- * advertisements promoting alcohol consumption must be restricted to the Students Union, and must be approved by the Registrar, whose stamp of approval must be clearly visible on all posters
- * adverts may not portray alcohol as necessary to social or sexual success.
- * University societies functioning under the auspices of the SRC shall not use their membership funds for alcohol-related events and may not identify access to free or cheap alcohol as a primary incentive to join.
- * advertising of social and entertainment events on campus should not use low-cost alcohol or large quantities of alcohol as an inducement to attend
- * all advertisements for social functions must receive an official stamp of approval from the office of the Registrar.

F Providing support services

- * The Sanatorium and Counselling Centre should continue to play a key role in identifying and referring students who appear to have alcohol-related problems and

providing them with confidential and effective support.

- * special training workshops should be held regularly on alcohol-linked problems and the value of brief interventions
- * the Counselling Centre will help students to form self-help support groups.
- * students worried about their own use or another person's use of alcohol are encouraged to seek confidential assistance on or off campus.
- * students appearing before Hall wardens and proctors for disciplinary offences which are alcohol related must be referred for confidential assessment and counselling

3.2 REVIEW PROCEDURE:

The Dean of Students should set up a sub-committee to reconsider the effectiveness of the Rhodes Alcohol Policy at the beginning of 2010. This committee should include the following people, or their nominees:

- President and Vice President of the SRC
- Head: Counselling centre
- Head: Sanatorium
- 2 Hall wardens (one male and one female)
- University Proctor

The Committee will submit the revised policy to Student Services Council, and then to Senate and Council for consideration. If revisions are recommended and approved, a copy of the revised policy must be widely distributed and the web version must be updated.

Breaches of the policy will be addressed via the University's Disciplinary Code.

Acknowledgement: this policy is closely based on the recommendations of the working group consisting of representatives from tertiary institutions in Ireland:
<http://www.healthpromotion.ie/pdf/College.pdf>

APPENDIX A: LOW-RISK DRINKING TECHNIQUES

BEFORE YOU GO OUT:

- Eat a full meal
- think about whether you will drink, what you will drink and how much you plan to drink.
- plan how you will get home safely
- be aware of what you are drinking, watch where your drink comes from and keep it with you at all times
- avoid mixing alcoholic drinks
- watch yourself for signs of intoxication (ringing in the ears, dizziness, slurred or slow speech, unsteady walking)
- pace yourself to about one drink per hour
- sip your drink slowly and focus on enjoying the taste

- alternate between alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks all night
- don't let others persuade you to have more to drink than you had planned