

## ***Appendix 5: Information for Teaching Staff: Managing Drug and Alcohol Impairment in a Learning Environment***

Academic Staff may form the opinion that a student is adversely affected by drugs or alcohol where the student is exhibiting typical signs of alcohol or drug intoxication such as:

- speaking too loudly or too softly
- slurred speech
- bloodshot eyes
- lack of alertness, for example, responding slowly to questions
- poor motor control (stumbling, bumping into others, difficulty picking things up, etc.)
- drowsiness
- scent of alcohol on breath or person
- rude or aggressive behaviour.

*If a student appears to have an impaired capacity to function effectively or safely, the lecturer or relevant staff member has the responsibility to ensure the safety of the student, other students and staff.*

### **A Suggested Response to Students Believed to be adversely affected by Alcohol or Drugs:**

1. Do not accuse the student of drug taking or being drunk. The student could be tired, unwell or have a medical condition (e.g. diabetes) that presents symptoms that may lead people to suspect drug or alcohol use.
2. The student's impaired capacity to function effectively and safely is the issue and this should be the focus of any discussion or report on the incident.
3. Approach the student calmly and quietly. Talk with the student and assess if the student is capable of working effectively or safely.
4. If the student is assessed as incapable of working effectively, being unsafe or a risk to others, the lecturer and other staff member may:
  - a. Disallow participation in class activities until the student is capable of working effectively.
  - b. Quietly and respectfully remove or refuse admission to the classroom or workshop until the student is safe to return.
  - c. Escort the student to the first aid room (where available) – ensuring supervision and attention of the first aid officer or/and suggest to the student that they may choose to “go home sick”. (call First Aiders?– would it be realistic for an academic staff member to escort students?)
5. Discourage the student from driving. Allow the student to arrange alternative transport (e.g. telephoning to arrange for their collection) or alternatively send the student home by an Uber/taxi, ensuring that there is someone to receive them.
6. In an emergency situation contact the next of kin, as recorded on the student's enrolment records. When talking to the next of kin, state the student is unwell, rather than suggesting alcohol or other drug use.

Any behaviour that may have been influenced by a student's mental state or use of alcohol or other drugs does not in any way limit the responsibility of the student for the consequence of their actions. Students who are suspected of being adversely affected by a substance are to be managed in the same way that any other student who is assessed as being unwell or unsafe would be managed.

Where the behaviour of a student appears to be adversely affected by alcohol and other drug use and this behaviour is inappropriate, unsafe or constitutes a risk to themselves or others, this issue must be addressed immediately. Lecturers are to avoid acting in a manner that may itself be unsafe or aggravate the situation, and must bring the matter to the attention of their immediate nominated supervisor or National Head of School.