



JESUS COLLEGE CAMBRIDGE

Jesus College Alcohol Policy

Introduction

Alcohol is a drug, albeit a legal one; indeed, it is the UK's favourite drug. Its misuse is a growing social problem nationwide, one which is of particular concern among younger age groups. You should think about the effects that drinking has on your body and your mental state. Some students choose not to drink alcohol at all; many others drink safely without any problems or impact on their studies – but not all. This policy is designed to advise of the potential dangers of the abuse of alcohol, to establish some guidelines for its proper use, and to encourage a culture of self-regulation and a respect and care for others and oneself.

Personal Safety

An estimated 23,000 alcohol-related incidents take place in Britain each week. Being on the streets under the influence of drink puts you at greater risk of physical or sexual assault. So for safety, stay with friends, look out for your friends, don't walk back to your accommodation alone at night, and take extra care on night-time roads. You should also be alert to the risk of drink spiking. Antisocial behaviour is often associated with excessive drinking. Although alcohol is a depressant, it can exaggerate whatever mood you are in when you start drinking. When drunk, you may unwittingly seem more threatening to others, influencing how they react to you. Avoiding violence when not fully in control of yourself can be difficult; your perceptions will be dulled, it will take you longer to react and think things through, and your judgement may be impaired. Aim to talk your way out a situation, avoiding aggressive language, and using open body language. But always bear in mind that when you have been drinking, you will be more vulnerable to difficulties and danger than when sober.

Health and Safety Issues

Official guidelines recommend no more than 3-4 units of alcohol a day for adult men and 2-3 units a day for adult women. As a general rule, 1 unit is half a pint of beer, lager or cider, one small glass (125 ml) of wine, or a 25 ml measure of spirit. So safe drinking means about 14 units for women and 21 units for men per week – that is, spread over the week. Binge-drinking all 14 or 21 units at once is bad for your health and potentially very dangerous. Some useful resources, including information on the amount of alcohol in commercial drinks, can be found at the Drinkaware website (www.drinkaware.co.uk) along with wider advice from the Portman Group (www.portmangroup.org.uk). You might be surprised to find that a small (125 ml) glass of Jacob's Creek red wine (as a popular example) contains 1.6 units of alcohol.

It takes your body about an hour to process one unit of alcohol, so you need to pace your drinking so that your body can cope. Also, metabolisms vary, and you need to know how much you can safely drink and remain in control of yourself and the social situation. The effects of drinking alcohol can start within ten minutes and depending on the individual can last for many hours.

Slurred speech, vomiting, loss of balance, distorted vision are just some of the more immediate

effects of drinking on the body, if you consume too much at once; so is unconsciousness. Very high amounts consumed rapidly can lead to alcohol poisoning, which can be fatal, as can the combination of unconsciousness and vomiting. Excessive consumption can lead to anti-social conduct, aggression, intimidation or violence. Long-term use is linked to liver damage, heart disease, brain damage, some cancers and several disorders of the reproductive system and sexual organs. Remember that it is possible to remain under the influence of alcohol the morning after a heavy drinking bout. Take 48 hours without alcohol to allow your system to recover.

You should not drink alcohol if:

You might be in the early stages of pregnancy;

You will be operating machinery, or equipment in a practical class;

You may be driving a car. CUSU has a policy that no-one should drive on official CUSU business within 48 hours of drinking.

National statistics indicate that the prevalence of hazardous drinking in the 16-24 age group is over 50% for men and 30% for women – the highest prevalence for any age group. In common with many university towns, the local NHS Trust has expressed concern about the level of alcohol-related admissions to Addenbrookes Hospital.

Alcohol is an addictive drug and there is strong evidence that abuse of alcohol and alcohol dependency may stem from drinking in order to relieve stress, anxiety, and depressive thoughts – all of which are not uncommon among a student population, and for all of which help is available.

Alcohol is a depressant and can exacerbate pre-existing depressive conditions as well as precipitate them. If your drinking habits are affecting your life and studying and you need help with underlying issues, or if you know somebody in this situation, you are strongly encouraged to discuss those issues in confidence with a Tutorial Adviser.

The following organisations can also offer help:

University Counselling Service, 2-3 Bene't Place, Lensfield Road Tel: 01223 332865

Web: www.counselling.cam.ac.uk/alcohol.html

Cambridge Drug and Alcohol Service, Brookfields Hospital, 351 Mill Road Tel: 01223 723020

Drinksense, 185 East Road Tel: 01223 302850

www.drinksense.org

College

Alcohol still plays a major part in the social life of most students. The College wants to encourage students who choose to use alcohol to do so responsibly.

A strong social emphasis on alcohol can be insensitive to those whose cultures do not endorse the use of alcohol and to those who choose not to use it. It is foolish, irresponsible and dangerous to encourage others to drink more than they ought or wish by failing to offer non-alcoholic drinks, or worse still by forcing participation in competitive drinking games – including forms of 'initiation' to some student societies, which are strongly discouraged.

Organisers of events should always make sure that:

good quality alcohol-free drinks are available,

excessive quantities of alcohol are not available to guests, and

only sensible drinking takes place.

This holds for events organised by the JCSU and the MCR and by College clubs and societies.

The College Bar Staff have a responsibility to ensure that College members and their guests do not drink to excess; those who do will be refused further service and may be asked to leave the Bar. It

is illegal for Bar staff to serve someone who is clearly inebriated, or who is under the age of 18, and it is illegal to purchase drinks on behalf of someone under the age of 18.

The JCSU and the MCR should consider carefully the appropriateness of the range of drinks available and the prices charged for them at any events for which they are responsible.

College Staff have a responsibility to ensure that Dinner in Hall is enjoyable and civilised for all present. Diners should exercise restraint and not drink to excess; hosts should look after their guests and friends should look after one another. If a diner doesn't exercise restraint, he or she will be asked to leave the Hall, as will any diners playing competitive drinking games who do not desist when asked. Diners whose drinking leads them to behave without consideration for the Staff may also be required to leave.

Codes of Conduct for the College Bar and for Dining in Hall can be found on JNet at:
<https://jnet.jesus.cam.ac.uk/departments/dean/conduct/codesofconduct.xml>

Disciplinary Matters

Drunkenness is not a defence; it cannot be regarded as a mitigating circumstance in any matter concerning a breach of discipline.

Anyone who causes damage to property not his or her own, or who harms another person, or whose behaviour is so affected by drinking as to make others feel threatened, or who disturbs the peace, or who requires the involvement of the emergency services because of alcohol consumption, will be considered to be in breach of discipline.

Anyone who encourages another to consume alcohol to the point of drunkenness or beyond will be considered to be in breach of discipline. The offence will be considered aggravated if there is an element of intimidation or bullying, that is, if the person being encouraged to consume alcohol has indicated his or her reluctance to do so.

In Conclusion

Like many things in life, alcohol can be safe and enjoyable when consumed in moderation. Take care of your own consumption and be responsible in relation to that of others.

With acknowledgements to St Catharine's College, Cambridge, Fitzwilliam College, Cambridge, and the University of Leeds.

