

## Policy on the misuse of alcohol

The University recognises that drinking can be an enjoyable and harmless feature of student life. The vast majority of students are adults and therefore legally free to consume alcohol. Nonetheless, the University is concerned to try to make students aware of the potentially harmful effects of excessive drinking.

### Recommended levels of consumption

The overconsumption of alcohol can damage health, both in the short term and long term, and all students should be aware of the medically recommended maximum levels of consumption. The NHS recommends that:

- Men should not regularly drink more than 3-4 units of alcohol a day.
- Women should not regularly drink more than 2-3 units a day.
- If you've had a heavy drinking session, avoid alcohol for 48 hours.

*('Regularly' means drinking this amount every day or most days of the week.)*

Information on units of alcohol, and how to calculate the number of units in an alcohol drink, is available at [NHS Choices](#).

### Risks of alcohol

Alcohol is a common factor in anti-social behaviour and in disinhibited behaviour that can very soon be regretted, and in accidents leading to physical injury. Both male and female students should be aware of the danger of "date-rape drugs" or "drink spiking" (even of soft drinks). Drinks should not be left unattended and if there is even the slightest suspicion that a drink has been tampered with, it should not be drunk. Tips for safer nights out can be found on the [Oxford Students website](#).

Heavy drinking can also impair academic achievement. While extreme cases of drunkenness may come to the attention of college authorities, the more subtle effects of repeated overdrinking on a student's academic performance - missed tutorials, poor concentration, late submissions - might not be immediately recognised, but are nonetheless serious.

### Education and publicity

The University undertakes regular education and publicity to raise awareness of the health and other risks associated with the misuse of alcohol. The Sub-Committee on Student Health and Welfare discusses issues around this area and makes recommendations on ways of raising awareness.

### Disciplinary procedures

Depending on the individual circumstances, unruly behaviour caused by excessive drinking, including that associated with finals celebrations, may lead to disciplinary action under university or college codes. Fines are frequently imposed on individuals and groups. Being under the influence of alcohol or otherwise intoxicated is not an excuse for offensive, abusive or illegal behaviour, and may be regarded as an aggravating feature.

## Advice & support

Excessive drinking can be the first outward sign that a student is under stress and needs help. Students can seek support from a variety of sources within their college (tutor, chaplain, college doctor, college nurse) or from the University's [Student Counselling Service](#).