Frequently asked questions (FAQs)

1. **When is the closing date for signing up to the REACT Award and Accreditation Scheme?**
   There is no closing date for signing up to the REACT Award and Accreditation scheme. Sign-ups will be accepted on an ongoing basis.

2. **Over what period of time does an institution have to complete the award and accreditation scheme?**
   Each college/university/institute of technology can take up to 3 years to complete each of the mandatory action points and a selection of the optional action points.

3. **Do you have to wait the 3 years before you are awarded? What happens if you have completed all the action points after 2 years?**
   No, you do not have to take the full 3 years to complete the Award and Accreditation Scheme. If all mandatory action points and the optional action points selected by your college/university/institute of technology have been achieved, your institution may apply to the REACT team for accreditation. An evaluator from REACT will visit your college/university/institute of technology to meet the steering committee and discuss implementation of the REACT programme.

4. **What does the REACT award consist of?**
   The REACT award comprises a flag and a certificate confirming that each mandatory action point and a suite of optional action points have been achieved by the particular college/university/institute of technology.

5. **Who has to sign the Memorandum of Understanding?**
   The President of the college/university/institute of technology must sign the Memorandum of Understanding.

6. **A Web-App was mentioned in the REACT report and at the REACT Forum. What is this Web-App?**
   Web-App is an online reporting system that allows each participating college/university/institute of technology to log their progress regarding REACT in a centralised location. Web-App was developed and delivered in collaboration with SpunOut.ie. Once your college/university/institute of technology has decided to participate in the REACT Award and Accreditation Scheme and returned the signed Memorandum of Understanding, login details for the Web-App will be provided to your college/university/institute of technology. You will then be responsible for updating and inputting new data concerning progress on the action points for your college/university/institute of technology.

7. **What is REACT?**
   REACT (Responding to Excessive Alcohol Consumption in Third-level) is an award and accreditation scheme which recognises efforts by third-level institutions to reduce excessive alcohol consumption among their students. The initiative is a collaboration between UCC Health Matters, the Irish Student Health Association (ISHA), the Union of Students in Ireland (USI), Healthy Ireland and the Health Service Executive (HSE).

8. **Does the term 'all incoming students' include both undergraduates and mature students?**
   The REACT project is focused on undergraduate students. Mature students represent a different group of students. Therefore, 'all incoming students' refers to undergraduate students only.

9. **Once an institution has completed both the mandatory and required optional action points, what are the next steps?**
   As you progress through the REACT Award and Accreditation Scheme, you will record your progress using the Web-App. In addition, an external reviewer from the REACT team will visit your college/university/institute of technology at the end of this process to confirm that all the measures have been implemented.

QUESTIONS SPECIFIC TO MANDATORY ACTION POINTS

Mandatory Action Point 1: "All incoming students are strongly encouraged to take e-PUB (or other brief intervention tool if already in place), with the statistics being presented to a relevant college committee on an annual basis."

10. Are all incoming students required to complete e-PUB?

e-PUB is an online brief intervention tool with a proven record in reducing alcohol consumption and related harm among third-level students. Much research has been published on its effectiveness. See link:
http://www.echeckuptogo.com/irl/research/).

In relation to University College Cork (UCC), all incoming students are issued a letter about e-PUB in addition to their course offer letter regarding their CAO application. The e-PUB letter outlines that: *"Completion of the e-PUB is strongly expected for all incoming students. If you are unable to complete this electronic assessment prior to coming to UCC, we will remind you to complete the module via your student email over the coming weeks."*

Therefore, we are re-wording Mandatory Action Point 1 to read as follows: *"All incoming students are strongly encouraged to take e-PUB (or other brief intervention tool if already in place), with the statistics being presented to a relevant college committee on an annual basis".* It will be a requirement of REACT that 33% of incoming first-year students complete e-Pub before an institution is deemed to have achieved this Mandatory Action Point.

11. E-PUB requires specific pieces of information prior to completing the questionnaire, one piece being your student number. Why is the student number requested as part of e-PUB?

e-PUB is taken without entering any personally identifiable information. When a campus chooses, they may use the verification of completion data at the end of the program, which is separate from the data that the student has entered into the program itself. If the campus chooses to use the verification, a student can electronically verify that they have completed the program to a specified individual or campus office. Again, this information is stored separately from their answers within the program, and is only available if a campus chooses to use it. Many campuses do not use the electronic verification of completion.

12. E-PUB collects a substantial amount of data and it is e-PUB who will safeguard all of this data. However, questions arose over how REACT would handle this data.

REACT, acting on behalf of the HSE, retains the Intellectual Property rights to the information gathered as part of the evaluation of the REACT Award and Accreditation Scheme. REACT, acting on behalf of the HSE, also reserves the right to collect, analyse and publicise aggregate data collected from all the colleges/universities/institutes of technology. Data obtained will not be used in a manner that allows data specific to each college/university/institute of technology to be distributed, circulated or published.

13. Who monitors the completion of e-PUB for my institution?

Each college/university/institute of technology will only be able to access data relating to their own institution, and this will be controlled by assigning administration rights to one or more named individuals. This individual(s) will be assigned by each college/university/institute of technology.

It is a useful practice to use e-PUB data, sharing it with students at presentations and orientation events to highlight its features and encourage completion of e-PUB. For instance, data on the median number of drinks per month, median spend and median audit score are useful results for presentations.

14. A. UCC issues a letter about e-PUB in addition to their course offer letter regarding their CAO application to all incoming students. Do you have a copy of the e-PUB template letter?

A copy of the UCC template letter is available on request and will also be uploaded to Slack. This can be taken and edited by each participating college/university/institute of technology.

B. Who signs it?

It is best to get it co-signed by the President or welfare officer from the Students Union and by a senior official of the college/university/institute of technology (e.g. Head of Student Health or Counselling, Head of Student Experience or even the Vice President).

C. How is it distributed?

In the case of UCC, Student Health pays for the letter's printing and the Admissions Office distributes it with the offer letters.

15. Why use e-PUB?

e-PUB is an online brief intervention tool with a proven record in reducing alcohol consumption and related harm among third-level students. Much research has been published on its effectiveness. This can be found here: http://www.echeckuptogo.com/irl/research/.

The e-PUB tool has a high degree of penetration and a low cost. It helps to track behaviour trends. It contains the AUDIT screening tool. e-PUB can be personalised to your institution. It can put in local contacts for support. After completing e-PUB, participants get a personal assessment of their drinking and a personalised plan or suggestions for change.

16. Can I use another tool instead of e-PUB?

This action point now reads: *"All incoming students are strongly encouraged to take e-PUB (or other brief intervention tool if already in place), with the statistics being presented to a relevant college committee on an annual basis"*.

Your college/university/institute of technology may therefore choose any brief intervention tool in place of e-PUB, as long as it is evidence-based to reduce alcohol consumption and related harm.

Mandatory Action Point 2: "Develop a college alcohol policy in line with the National Framework to Develop a College Alcohol Policy."

17. **Staff and students make up the population of every college/university/institute of technology. Should the college alcohol policy include both students and staff or just students?**

    Previous alcohol policies focusing on third-level colleges/universities/institutes of technology have focused on students only, failing to include the community of staff working within the institution. However, any college/university/institute of technology who wishes to include both staff and students in their alcohol policy should do so.

Mandatory Action Point 4: "Form a Steering Committee of staff and students, chaired by a senior college official, that meet twice a year (minimum) and review the Action Plan annually."

18. **How many people should there be on the Steering Committee?**

    There is no set number, but the Steering Committee should ideally include 8-12 people. Members of the Steering Committee could include nurses, doctors, counsellors, psychologists, academic staff, chaplaincy, bar management staff, accommodation staff, students Union, sports officers etc. It is also compulsory to have a member of the Gardaí, a member of the local council and a member of the Local Drugs and Alcohol Task Force as committee members.

19. **It says the Steering Committee needs to be chaired by a senior college official. Who might this include?**

    A senior college official to chair the Steering Committee could include, for example, Head of Student Services, a Head of School, Professor or Registrar.

20. **What is the role of the council member in the Steering Committee?**

    The council member is supposed to add to the group in terms of knowledge of local policy, while also giving feedback to the council on the efforts of the REACT project. Their role relates to knowledge translation, support and advocacy.

Mandatory Action Point 7: "The College completes its own evaluation of the effectiveness of the alcohol action plan every 3 years."

21. **The evaluation strategy will monitor the effectiveness of of the alcohol action plan every 3 years but completes the evaluation?**

    This is to be decided by the Steering Committee.

22. **Evaluations can vary greatly in length and in the depth of information that is provided so how long or how much information needs to be provided in this evaluation?**

A template for the evaluation will be provided to all participating colleges/universities/institutes of technology. The evaluation is for the benefit of your own college/university/institute of technology. It will not be too detailed or technical, and will mainly help to determine how your action plan is progressing.

We are aware that this will be adequate for smaller colleges/universities/institutes of technology as they may want this evaluation to be short and easy. However, we are also aware that other colleges/universities/institutes of technology may have an academic lead interested in evaluations who may want to deepen their exploration. Therefore, there is no limit on how long or in-depth the evaluation should be. However, there is a minimum within the template provided.

Mandatory Action Point 8: "Train relevant staff in Brief Intervention Training."

23. **Who should attend Brief Intervention Training?**

Anyone working in the area of the Student Health and Wellbeing or Student Experience should attend Brief Intervention Training – for example, staff members working in accommodation, student services, admissions, student health, counselling or career guidance.

QUESTIONS SPECIFIC TO OPTIONAL ACTION POINTS

Optional Action Point 2: "Develop a calendar of events in conjunction with local Students' Union."

24. Does this action point refer to both staff and student events?
Yes, this action point refers to both staff and student events. However, the majority of events will probably be Students' Union events. By developing this calendar of events, the idea is that the REACT Steering Group will be able to promote safety at these events, with specific emphasis on alcohol as this may not be a top priority for the organisers of events such as mystery tours, rag week and freshers' week.

Optional Action Point 3: "Develop a reporting mechanism for tracking high-risk promotions by local licenses."

25. How would one track high-risk promotions by local licenses?
The idea behind this action point is to build evidence or a database of such practices. It will also highlight if premises are promoting alcohol even if they say they are not in their code of conduct. A toolkit will be available for this action point.

Optional Action Point 7: "Develop a visible and accessible referral pathway to a range of internal and external alcohol support services for students."

26. Is there a specific type of training that needs to be offered to frontline staff of the college/university/institute of technology every two years?
The training is to be delivered by your own college/university/institute of technology. The training should explain to staff that this is the referral pathway. Frontline staff may include GPs, nurses, counsellors, student support services, heads of societies, etc.

Optional Action Point 8: "Provide alcohol-free housing and alcohol-free social spaces."

27. Is it necessary to have both alcohol-free housing AND alcohol-free social spaces to meet this action point or will one of them suffice?
Yes, you must provide BOTH alcohol-free housing and alcohol-free social spaces to meet this action point.