

Framework for developing a college alcohol policy

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Framework for Developing a College Alcohol Policy



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Framework for Developing a College Alcohol Policy

FRAMEWORK FOR DEVELOPING A COLLEGE ALCOHOL POLICY

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BACKGROUND

The National Alcohol Policy, published in 1996, aims to promote the health of the population by reducing the prevalence of alcohol-related problems. One of the actions called for in the policy was the development of *a campus alcohol policy which would promote sensible drinking among students and limit campus-related drinks industry sponsorship.*

In the last number of years university and college authorities have expressed concerns on a number of issues; alcohol promotion practices on campus, high-risk drinking among students, the impact of this drinking pattern on student academic achievement, student personal problems and student attrition. An initial response to these concerns was discussed among a small number of third level institutions regarding a code of practice for the promotion of alcohol on college campuses.

Further impetus was provided by the Minister for Health and Children, Micheál Martin, at the launch of a three year Alcohol Awareness Campaign when he *invited and encouraged all third level institutions to develop guidelines and campus alcohol policies* and offered to facilitate the process. The Higher Education Authority also provided support.

Professor Roger Downer, President, University of Limerick and Chairperson of Conference of Heads of Irish Universities (C.H.I.U.), invited the seven universities and thirteen Institutes of Technology to form a National Working Group on Alcohol Consumption in Higher Education and the Department of Health

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and Children provided expertise to guide the process (Appendix A). University of Limerick kindly hosted the National Working Group meetings.

The result of the process is this document which presents a framework for the development of a college alcohol policy, which each third level institution can adopt to reflect the needs and aspirations of their own campus environment. This publication also provides examples of college alcohol policies already in place in some third level institutions.

COLLEGE ALCOHOL POLICY

There are four broad elements to the development of a college alcohol policy.

- 1 Rationale
- 2 Policy formulation process
- 3 Policy Guidelines
- 4 Local Support Services

1. RATIONALE

1.1 Public health alcohol policy

The public health or health promotional perspective on alcohol problems, which provides the theoretical rationale for the alcohol policies proposed in this document, is perhaps best understood through comparison with the disease concept of alcoholism. The disease concept, prevalent in the 1950's and 1960's, viewed alcoholism as a specific or discrete disease, which was primarily attributed to individual vulnerabilities or predispositions, rather than to any negative properties of alcohol per se. Over the last three decades the public health approach, endorsed by the World Health Organisation, has emerged with the weight of evidence-based scientific research. This approach recognises alcohol as contributing to a spectrum of health, behavioural and social problems - in terms of its toxicity, its potential to create dependency and its negative impact on human behaviour. It sees consumption levels and drinking patterns as being highly predictive of the incidence and prevalence of problems in any

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given society or social group. Acute alcohol-related problems, such as accidents, violence, injuries and deaths, are linked to excessive drinking on any one occasion. In many cases these problems occur among light and moderate drinkers who engage in heavy drinking on some occasions.

1.2 College Environment

At all universities and colleges, diversity of opinion and freedom of choice have long been part of the academic tradition. However freedom of choice brings with it personal responsibilities which include the obligation to respect the rights of others and to comply with the college rules and regulations. The ethos of the college not only promotes positive learning experiences and academic excellence but also provides a caring and supportive community where students and staff in need of assistance are given the necessary supports. The college is also obliged to provide a safe working environment for all students and staff. Any activity or practice that constitutes a hazard must be eliminated or minimised to reduce injury or loss. When people engage in high-risk drinking, academic performance, health, personal relationships and safety suffer. However, alcohol issues cannot and should not be tackled in isolation and must be seen within a broader context of lifestyle issues and a supportive college environment. The Health Promoting College structure provides an ideal mechanism to address the alcohol issue.

1.3 Student Life

The period of late adolescence and early adult life is a transitional phase for students where new freedoms, new relationships and adapting to a different environment provides daily challenges, in addition to the academic challenges of new courses (Healy et al, 1999). Socialising is an important aspect of college life for students and the context for meeting friends in addition to clubs and societies is the college bar. However, the cost of socialisation can over-stretch students both financially and academically which can contribute to exam failure and student drop-out (Canavan, 1999; O'Malley & Doran, 2001). First year students are particularly vulnerable with poor coping skills to manage the stresses of the new college environment. This can lead to a range of negative reactions such as an over-reliance on alcohol (O'Malley & Doran, 2001).

While exam stress and difficulties adjusting to college are common problems for students, there is also a clustering of problems for a minority of students. This stage of life is also characterised by vulnerability to many mental health problems, all of which may be exacerbated by heavy alcohol consumption. Problems with alcohol can also be linked to problems in other areas such as problems with relationships, depression, difficulties with exams and financial problems (Canavan, 1999).

The national lifestyle survey (SLÁN, 1999) shows the vast majority of young adults consume alcohol, half of young people engage in high-risk drinking when they typically drink and about one-third drink over the recommended sensible weekly limits. There is also

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a higher prevalence of serious injuries among young male adults relating to sport, work, and car / bike transport. The high-risk drinking pattern has also been found in local student surveys.

1.4 Aims of a College Alcohol Policy

The aims of a College Alcohol Policy are to:

- (i) Ensure that the social and academic life on campus is conducive to the health and well being of students and staff.
- (ii) Ensure that the college environment is safe for students and staff and complies with health and safety regulations.
- (iii) Promote the college as a supportive environment which enables students and staff to make healthy choices that promote health and well being.
- (iv) Provide supportive services for those who may require assistance during their time at college.

The specific objectives could include:

- Promoting the health and well being of students and staff.
- Promoting personal responsibility and social obligation to the college community.

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- Enhancing a campus environment where low-risk drinking is the “social norm”.
- Promoting low-risk drinking and discouraging high-risk drinking (Appendix B).
- Providing an atmosphere free from pressure to drink for those who choose not to drink.
- Providing alcohol-related information and education for all students and staff.
- Supporting and promoting alternatives to drinking thus creating choice and a balanced social programme.
- Promoting opportunities for brief interventions to reduce high risk drinking.
- Promoting a caring environment for those who experience difficulties related to alcohol.
- Providing confidential and effective supports for those who seek assistance as a result of problem drinking.
- Reducing the incidence of alcohol-related problems among college students and staff.

2. POLICY FORMULATION PROCESS

2.1 Raise awareness

Setting the context for a College Alcohol Policy in terms of the rationale and benefits to the college community helps raise awareness and harness support. A commitment (oral or written) by the President, Head of the Institution or the Governing Body can provide the first step in highlighting the importance given to the development of the College Alcohol Policy.

2.2 Develop a partnership with stakeholders

Many colleges have existing structures and committees where the alcohol policy initiative could be incorporated. This would ensure the alcohol issue is embedded within the broader health and well-being concept, such as the Health Promoting College structure, and also allows a speedy start-up process. Student services could take the lead and co-ordinate the start-up phase. However, in some colleges a new working group may be the desired option. All those affected by the policy such as student services, students union, health services, registrar, head of student affairs, welfare services, housing, staff and representatives from campus bars, if relevant, could be involved in the process. Participation from all the key players and an inclusive process will enhance ownership and commitment to making the policy work.

2.3 Develop a college profile

The task is to gather as much information as possible about college alcohol-related issues. It is essential to know and understand what the current policies and practices are on campus in relation to alcohol use, alcohol promotions and alcohol services.

- What is known about the drinking patterns of students, especially high-risk drinking?
- What is known about alcohol-related incidents? (Discuss with local groups i.e. Gardai, etc.)
- What are the different types of alcohol promotions, both on and off campus targeted at students?
- What alternative choices are available for those who wish to have an alcohol free evening?
- What support services are available for those who experience alcohol-related problems during their time at college?
- What college policies are in place that relate directly to alcohol?
- What are the current college policies such as Code of Behaviour, Code of Discipline etc. that have implications for an alcohol policy?

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The information can be gathered in a variety of different ways - review written college policies, collect a sample of the flyers, posters, advertisements that are displayed around campus, examine level of promotions and sponsorship across clubs and societies, monitor the level of alcohol-related problems through the college health services, college security, counselling services and welfare and housing services and undertake a college survey to establish drinking patterns.

2.4 Develop a comprehensive policy mix

Success hinges on a range of policy measures that reflect and respond to the needs of the college population, the local environment and the complexity of the issues to be addressed. In other words there are no quick fixes or easy solutions. Therefore, several strategies need to be developed and integrated for a comprehensive approach. The college needs to take the lead by developing an alcohol policy and be seen to implement effective measures. This will demonstrate, to concerned local organisations such as residents' associations, the college's commitment to promoting positive community relations.

2.5 Draft an Action Plan

Creating an action plan helps to set realistic targets for each year and to keep the implementation of the policy on track. It should also identify who takes responsibility for the different actions and the funding requirements needed. Timing and sequencing is vital,



given the natural peaks in the college year and student attendance. The college year provides opportunities for implementing policy measures such as freshers week, rag week, social activities, sport and social events. There are also many national and international health awareness days such as Healthy Eating Week and World Aids Day etc that provide opportunities to reinforce a message of making healthy choices.

2.6 Review and evaluate at regular intervals

Regular meetings of the working groups will ensure that the plan of action is being implemented and provides for a forum to receive feedback. A communication strategy that *talks* and *listens* to students and staff is essential. People should know what the issues are, what is happening and what are the successes and barriers? The college population is in a permanent state of change with a new student enrolment each year. Evaluation of the stated objectives needs to be undertaken on an annual basis, with a major policy review every four years to ensure a relevant policy.

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3. POLICY GUIDELINES

For an integrated approach, policy measures should, on the one hand, encourage those who drink to do so responsibly thus moderating the demand for alcohol, and on the supply side prevent commercial interests from excessive alcohol promotion. In developing a college alcohol policy, elements of the following five policy areas should be considered.

- Controlling marketing, promotions and sponsorship
- Limiting harm in the drinking environment
- Increasing awareness and education
- Encouraging alternatives and choice
- Providing campus support services

3.1 Controlling Marketing, Promotions and Sponsorship

The college has an obligation to provide a positive educational experience for all students as well as a safe working environment for students and staff. Therefore, many universities and colleges have now decided to affirm their role in providing a supportive environment for the college community, by identifying a clear set of guidelines on alcohol promotions and sponsorship. These could include the following as appropriate to each college environment.



Sponsorship

- A proactive approach by the college should be pursued as a top priority, to help student organisations find an alternative to drinks companies sponsorship.
- Sponsorship by the drinks industry of college events is permissible provided the sponsorship is primarily in monetary form and not material form, thus allowing groups, clubs and societies to determine their own needs.
- The appointment of on-campus representatives by the drinks companies, where it arises, should be subject to the approval of the college authority.

Alcohol Promotions

- Alcohol promotions that encourage the rapid and/or excessive consumption of alcohol should be prohibited.
- Alcohol in bulk, such as kegs, cases of beer etc, should not be provided as free awards, prizes or rewards to individuals or groups.
- The college should request off-campus drinks industry suppliers (bars, clubs and drinks representatives) not to engage in alcohol promotions which result in high-risk drinking among students.

Advertising Code

- Alcohol advertising on-campus should
 - (a) not portray drinking as a solution to personal or academic problems or
 - (b) not portray drinking as necessary to social, sexual or academic success,
 - (c) avoid demeaning sexual and discriminatory portrayals of individuals,
 - (d) not associate drinking with using machinery, driving, activities in water or heights or other activities where safety could be compromised.
- Alcohol advertising posters should be confined to the college bars.
- Advertising of social and entertainment events should not use alcohol as the inducement to attend.
- Advertising posters or flyers should not encourage excessive use or high-risk drinking nor place emphasis on quantity and frequency of alcohol use.
- Posters or flyers could be stamped by Students Services and limited to designated areas to ensure compliance with advertising codes.

3.2 Limiting Harm in the drinking environment

- Training in Responsible Serving of Alcohol (RSA) should be provided for all those serving alcohol in campus bars.
- Alcohol may not be served to intoxicated persons, it is a criminal offence.
- Campus bars should promote practices to prevent drunkenness such as serving food and low cost non-alcoholic drinks.
- High-risk sale promotions should be avoided, such as 'drink until you drop', pub crawls and drinking competitions.
- Alcohol consumption should be confined to designated areas on-campus.
- Only alcohol served at a registered college event should be consumed at the event.
- Non-alcoholic drinks and food should also be available at functions and social events.
- No person should be coerced, even subtly, to drink or to abuse alcohol.

3.3 Increasing Awareness and Education

Students, faculty and staff are expected to be responsible for their actions at all times and respect the rights of all members of the campus community.

- In co-operation with the relevant college groups, the college community should promote 'low risk drinking' behaviour and increase awareness of the potential harmful or negative effects of excessive alcohol consumption.
- The student orientation and freshers' weeks at the start of the academic year provide an ideal opportunity to raise awareness of available programmes and services for all students and to promote a message of low risk drinking.
- The student body could be actively involved in the development, promotion and delivery of alcohol education as part of a health, well being and life skills course or workshops involving innovative methodology (Appendix C).

3.4 Encouraging Alternatives and Choice

- The college should support, in terms of resources, the development of attractive, alcohol-free environments on campus for those who wish to enjoy an alcohol-free evening with friends.



- The Students Union should also develop and promote alcohol-free programmes involving cultural, social and entertainment activities for students.

3.5 Providing Campus Support Services

- Student support services (health, counselling, etc) should develop ways to increase awareness of high-risk drinking among students availing of college services.
- Steps should be taken to ensure that student support services meet the recommended ratio levels, set by the Higher Education Authority or equivalent body.
- Individuals with concerns about their own use or another person's use of alcohol should be encouraged to seek confidential assistance on or off campus.
- The college should be supportive by assisting individuals or groups who wish to establish self-help groups.

Breaches of the policy are most effectively addressed using the College's Disciplinary Code.

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4. Local Support Services

Expertise and services in the local community can help play an important role in implementing the College Alcohol Policy. Such services include the Health Board with expertise in drug education, health promotion and treatment services, the Garda Síochána (especially the community liaison officers) and social welfare services.

Regional Drugs Co-ordinator
Western Health Board
Merlin Park Regional Hospital
Galway
Tel: 091 751131

Health Promotion Manager
Western Health Board
Shantalla Clinic
25 Newcastle Road
Galway
Tel: 091 523122

Drugs Strategy Co-ordinator
Mid Western Health Board
Sláinte Health Advice Centre
57 O'Connell Street
Limerick
Tel: 061 318633

Health Promotion Manager
Mid Western Health Board
Parkview House
Pery Street
Limerick
Tel: 061 483218

Regional Drug Co-ordinator
Midland Health Board
The Mall
William St
Tullamore
Co Offaly
Tel: 0506 46733

Health Promotion Manager
Midland Health Board
The Mall
Tullamore
Co Offaly
Tel: 0506 46733

Co-ordinator Drugs and
Alcohol Services

Southern Health Board

St. Finbarr's Hospital

Douglas Road

Cork

Tel: 021 4966555

Health Promotion Manager

Southern Health Board

Eye, Ear & Throat Hospital

Western Road

Cork

Tel: 021 4923480

Drugs Co-ordinator

**South Eastern Health
Board**

St Patrick's Hospital

John's Hill

Waterford

Tel: 051 873321

Health Promotion Manager

**South Eastern Health
Board**

Dean Street

Kilkenny

Tel: 056 61400

Health Promotion Manager

**East Coast Area Health
Board**

Southern Cross House

Southern Cross Business Park

Boghall Road

Bray,

Co Wicklow

Tel: 01 201 4215

Drug Strategy Co-ordinator

**East Coast Area Health
Board**

Southern Cross House

Southern Cross Business Park

Boghall Road

Bray

Co Wicklow

Tel: 01 201 4200

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SUPPORT SERVICES

Director of Services (Drugs)
**South Western Area
Health Board**
St David's House
Main Street
Naas
Co Kildare
Tel: 045 887100

Drugs Strategy Co-ordinator
**Northern Area Health
Board**
15 City Gate
St. Augustine's Street
Dublin 8
Tel: 01 670 7987

Health Promotion Manager
**North Western Health
Board**
Ballyshannon
Co Donegal
Tel: 072 20462

Health Promotion Manager
**South Western Area
Health Board**
15 City Gate.
St Augustine's Street
Dublin 8
Tel: 01 670 7987

Health Promotion Manager
**Northern Area Health
Board**
15 City Gate
St. Augustine's Street
Dublin 8
Tel: 01 670 7987

Area Co-ordinator Drugs
Strategy
**North Western Health
Board**
Health Promotion Services,
Gate Lodge
Letterkenny General Hospital
Letterkenny
Co. Donegal
Tel: 074 23786

Health Promotion
Manager / Drugs Strategy
Co-ordinator

**North Eastern Health
Board**

Railway Road
Navan
Co Meath
Tel: 046 71872

An Garda Síochána

Community Relations
Harcourt Square
Dublin 2
Tel: 01 666 3805
www.garda.ie

**Union of Students in
Ireland (USI)**

Welfare Officer
Grattan St.
Dublin 2
Tel: 01 435 3400
www.usi.ie

Health Promotion Unit

Department of Health and
Children
Hawkins House,
Hawkins Street,
Dublin 2
Tel: 01 635 4096
www.healthpromotion.ie

**Department of Education &
Science**

Higher Education Section
Marlborough St.
Dublin 1
Tel: 01 889 6408

Higher Education Authority

Marian House
Dublin 2
Tel: 01 661 2748

5. COLLEGE ALCOHOL POLICIES – EXAMPLES

5.1 National University of Ireland, Galway

In 1998 the University adopted an alcohol policy, formulated and recommended by Student Services Committee. The policy aimed to address concerns about the promotion of alcohol on the campus and the damaging effects of the excessive consumption of alcoholic drink on the academic achievements and lifestyles of the students of the University. The main features of the policy are:

1. Education on responsible consumption

A health, well being and lifestyle enhancement programme piloted over two years, is being extended to engage first year students. It is a broad-based programme within the context of the Health Promoting College initiative.

2. Controls with respect to advertising, promotions & sponsorship

- (a) Alcohol advertising and promotions on campus are limited to the advertising of brand names of beer, stout, spirits or the name of the manufacturers.
- (b) Promotions and advertising of cocktails and happy hours (below normal cost selling) are not permitted.

- (c) Advertising of promotions are limited to Áras na Mac Léinn (Student Centre including college pub).
- (d) Drinks Company Representatives (so called student reps) are not permitted to operate on the campus of NUI, Galway without the approval of the University. No such approval has been sought and there are no Company Representatives operating on the campus.
- (e) The practice of material sponsorship in the form of kegs has been eliminated.
- (f) Sponsorship of Arts Week festival is supported from a source not involved in the drinks industry.
- (g) At the request of the Students Union the University has allocated significant monies to the Students Union. The purpose of this is to
- enable the Union to provide entertainment free of alcoholic drink promotions/sponsorships in the bar, common room and other social spaces on campus
 - free the Students Union from the requirement to generate revenue from the promotion of night clubs in the city.
- (h) The consumption of alcohol in public places on campus is prohibited.

- (i) Students Union has agreed not to sell alcohol during Rag Week before 2.00pm daily.

3. Development of alternative social and recreational opportunities

- (a) Lunchtime musical entertainment by student artists, organised by the Students Union, is provided as an attractive alternative to pub-based, lunch-time recreation.
- (b) Re-furbishment of the Common Room as an attractive alcohol-free social space has taken place.

4. Actions to reduce excessive stress experienced by students

- (a) 'Student Connect', a mentoring programme has been set up in the university.
- (b) A study-skills programme has also been introduced, mainly for first year students.

5.2 University College Cork

Student Representatives

- 1. The practice by drinks companies of appointing Student Representatives to assist them on campus and deal with

Clubs and Societies is subject to formal reviews / consultations (Two per term).

On-campus Clubs

2. Happy Hours to be limited to maximum two per week, maximum of two hours duration.
3. No 'Beat The Clock' promotions.
4. No spirits promotions.
5. Maximum two free drinks per person for any promotion.
6. That clubs ensure that their staff receive training in dealing with clients seeking too much alcohol.

Rag Week

7. No alcohol to be allowed at Gig-Rig.
8. No alcohol (cans etc.) to be given out as prizes. Vouchers tenable at on-campus clubs only may be issued (with a limit of two free drinks).

Orientation

9. Talks during orientation programme to include advice on the dangers of excessive use of alcohol.

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EXAMPLES

Health Week

10. That the Health and Welfare Week (Nov/Dec) be availed of to further education on alcohol.

5.3 Dublin City University

1. Students drinking alcohol on-campus are expected to use alcohol in a responsible manner. Being drunk on-campus will be deemed to be an offence in the context of the University's Code of Discipline, and being under the influence of alcohol will not be accepted as an extenuating circumstance in the case of any other offences such as engaging in violent or destructive behaviour.
2. The licensed premises within the Hub includes two bars and the entertainment hall. Students are not permitted to bring their own drink into the licensed premises or to take any drink out of them.
3. The Hub bar staff will not serve any member who in their opinion is showing signs of intoxication, nor will they allow such members to consume alcohol on the licensed premises.
4. The licence under which the club is allowed to sell alcohol is a Club Licence. Under legislation, the club is absolutely forbidden to admit to membership, or to allow to be on the licensed premises, anyone who has not reached his or her eighteenth birthday. All visitors must be signed in by means of a visitors' book, and nobody eligible for membership of

the club (e.g. a student or staff member of DCU) can be signed in as a visitor.

5. Clubs, societies or other student groups who wish to organise receptions or functions involving alcohol may do so only in the following ways:
 - in the Hub licensed premises, with the permission of the Bar Manager and under the conditions laid down by the Hub Management Committee; or
 - by arrangement with the campus caterers, with the food and drink being supplied by the caterers.
6. If free alcoholic drinks are provided at any function, free soft drinks must also be provided. In the case of functions sponsored by drinks companies, the amount of free alcoholic drink per person must be strictly limited to two pints of beer or the equivalent, using a closely-monitored voucher system.
7. The club, which runs the licensed premises, has agreed rules for members. These are reproduced in the Student Handbook. Any changes will be posted on the club notice board in the main lounge.
8. Please note the following extract from the DCU regulation on notices:

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EXAMPLES

The following types of notices are not permitted:

- (a) notices which contain offensive language;
- (b) notices advertising events which have an undue emphasis on the availability of alcohol;
- (c) notices bearing advertisements for alcohol or tobacco products (except when an event or function is sponsored by a drinks or tobacco company, in which case such notices may be posted only on the notice board of the club or society hosting the event).



References

Canavan, J. (1999). *Student Life at NUI Galway: Report of Findings from a survey of students*. National University of Ireland, Galway.

Healy, M., Carpenter A & Lynch, K. (1999). *Non-compliance in Higher Education: A study of first year students in three Institutions of Technology*. I.T. Carlow, I.T. Dundalk, I.T. Tralee.

O'Malley, S & Doran, M. (2001). *Preliminary findings from a study of reasons for non-progression among full time students*. National University of Ireland, Galway.

SLÁN (1999). *Survey of Lifestyle, Attitudes and Nutrition*. Commissioned by the Health Promotion Unit, Department of Health and Children and undertaken by Centre for Health Promotion Studies, National University of Ireland, Galway.

Appendix A

National Working Group on Alcohol Consumption in Higher Education

Name of Institution

Nominees

Athlone Institute of Technology

Ms. Patricia McTiernan,
Student Services Manager

Cork Institute of Technology

Mr. Noel Collins, Lecturer,
Dept of Social & General
Studies

Dublin Institute of Technology

Mr. Seán Byrne, Department of
Economics

Dundalk Institute of Technology

Ms. Brid Rust, Nurse

Dun Laoghaire Institute of Art, Design and
Technology

Ms. Angela Daly, Acting
Manager, Student Services

Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology

Mr. Bernard O'Hara, Registrar

Letterkenny Institute of Technology

Ms. Irene Heavey,
Administration Office

Limerick Institute of Technology

Fr. Noel Kirwan, Chaplain

Institute of Technology, Blanchardstown

Ms. Niamh Lynch,
Administration Office

Institute of Technology, Carlow

Mr. Chris Chapman, Head of
Student Services

Institute of Technology, Tallaght

Dr. Mike Ahern, Head,
Department of Science

Institute of Technology, Tralee

Fr. Pat O'Donnell

Waterford Institute of Technology

Mr. Eugene McKenna

Dublin City University

Mr. Ruan Kennedy, Student
Counsellor

National University of Ireland, Galway

Mr. Matt Doran,
Student Services Officer

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National University of Ireland, Maynooth	Mr. Brian Gormley, Student Services Officer
Trinity College Dublin	Mr. Shane Butler, Department of Social Studies
University College Cork	Mr. Donnachadh Ó hAodha, Administrative Officer, Students Union
University College Dublin	Mr. Moore McDowell, Department of Economics
University of Limerick	Ms. Fionnuala Sheehan, Deputy Registrar Mr. Ciaran O hIarnain, Student Development Officer
Department of Health and Children	Dr. Ann Hope, National Alcohol Policy Advisor
Union Students of Ireland	Mr. John Paul Swaine, Welfare Officer

Appendix B

Low Risk Drinking Behaviour

- Consideration as to whether you will drink, what you will drink and how much you will drink before drinking.
- Eating a full meal before drinking.
- Selecting a safe way to get home (public transport, walking with a friend, designated driver) before drinking.
- Always knowing what you are drinking, where your drink came from and keeping it in sight at all times.
- Avoid mixing alcohol drinks or drinking double shots.
- Knowing the signs of intoxication and avoid becoming intoxicated.
- Pacing your drinking - about one drink per hour.
- Sipping your drink, enjoying the taste.
- Alternating with non-alcoholic drinks throughout the evening.
- Not allowing other people to talk you into drinking more than you had planned or to intoxication.

High Risk Drinking Behaviour

- Assuming that everyone drinks and that being drunk is socially acceptable.
- Drinking to relieve stress, anxiety or deal with uncomfortable feelings.
- Drinking to get drunk.
- Participating in drinking games.
- Drinking from an unknown source (punch bowl, mug someone just hands you).
- Not knowing what you are drinking or leaving your drink unattended.
- Attending parties, clubs or other venues (bushing) which encourages high-volume or rapid drinking (too fast and too much) or where people are getting drunk.
- Drinking on an empty stomach.
- Mixing drinks with medications or illegal drugs.
- Driving after drinking or travelling with someone who has been drinking.

Appendix C

**Lifeskills Module
University of Limerick**

The creation of the Lifeskills module was to provide students with the skills required of a graduate that are not included in any other aspect of their academic programme. These skills are also necessary to enable students to succeed in their course of study.

The aims of the module are

- to promote the education of the whole person,
- to build confidence in students in a range of different contexts,
- to teach practical coping skills and transferable skills as part of the lifelong learning process.

The delivery of the module is based primarily on the experiential learning model. The module is delivered by health education facilitators. The content of Lifeskills can be grouped under five main headings;

- (1) self awareness and personal development,
- (2) college adjustment and orientation,
- (3) health promotion including substance abuse and sexuality,

- (4) learning to learn and
- (5) coping skills including stress, interviews, presentations and assertiveness.

It was delivered to one hundred and fifty three first year students across the six colleges in the academic calendar year 1999/2000.

Evaluation of the Lifeskills programme was carried out at the end of the module. The evaluation incorporated both quantitative and qualitative methods such as a Likert type opinion scale and focus groups. Both student and facilitator perceptions were evaluated through focus groups.

The evaluation highlighted significant improvement in the lives of the participants in relation to communication skills, working in groups and presentation skills. The significant changes that were indicated are anchored in core interpersonal skills. Student levels of satisfaction with the Lifeskills programme were extremely high (99%). This was closely related to relevance of content, methodology of delivery and skill of tutors. The module has been offered to first year students on an ongoing basis.

The module is co-ordinated by

Patricia Mannix McNamara,
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University of Limerick

**Framework for
Developing a
College Alcohol Policy**

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