Programme for dealing with alcohol and drug problems at Uppsala University

BACKGROUND

A drugfree workplace is a precondition for a good working environment. Work/studies and drugs do not go together. It is not permissible at Uppsala University to drink alcohol or take drugs in connection with work or classes. Non-alcoholic alternatives should be made available at parties and official entertaining. The recreational use of alcohol and other drugs should not affect the safety, efficiency or the atmosphere of the workplace.

Many people at the University often participate in various national and international conferences and seminars as part of their regular work. The University assumes that the employees and students who represent the University set a good example in all aspects of their behaviour.

We must strive for greater openness regarding questions about alcohol and drugs. Our fundamental attitude should be that we care about each other. Therefore, we should talk with the person who has a problem, not about him or her.

The alcohol policy of the student nations can be found in Appendix 1.

What is stated in this document about alcohol applies to other drugs as well.

Show you care - be firm!

Everyone at the University has a responsibility to help and support a person who abuses alcohol or other drugs.

If someone is met at the department/corresponding body who is intoxicated, it is important to notify the head of the department, the director of studies or corresponding official. Keeping silent out of loyalty does not help the person who is intoxicated. Show you care - even if this can be seen as interfering in something that is not your business. This can help end the feelings of impotence and despair many people experience in connection with their abuse. Show that you know that he/she is there and needs help. Ask where your workmate or fellow student has been if he/she has been absent unusually a lot. The best way to help an addict is to show that he/she is needed. It is important that your friend does his/her part of the group's work. Help your friend improve their situation. Do not cover up or lie in an attempt to protect the person who needs help - that is a disservice which only allows the person to continue their abuse without interference.

Education will be provided about the health hazards and social consequences of drugs. The purpose of this education is also to inform people how they should relate to a friend who has an addiction.

INTOXICATED AT WORK OR WHILE STUDYING

Alcohol and other drugs do not go with work or studies in connection with regular activities. It is not permissible to come to work or class intoxicated. Nor is it permissible to drink alcohol at work in
connection with work being done. An intoxicated person constitutes a serious hazard for both him/herself and others, and should be removed from the workplace in a calm and non-offensive manner.

BEING SENT HOME

It is always the immediate supervisor, teacher or head who decides whether an employee or student is intoxicated or suffering from a hangover in a way that disrupts work or constitutes a hazard and therefore must be temporarily removed.

If necessary, see to it that a suitable person, for example a workmate, takes care of the person being sent home and goes along with him/her!

- Tell the person who is being sent home to be at work the next day!
- Absence is reported in the usual way!
- Normally, there is no pay for the lost day.
- Sending a person home is always to be followed up by a personal interview the next day.
- Inform the trade union concerned about the employee being sent home!

PERSONAL INTERVIEW

The next workday, the immediate supervisor, teacher or head should have a personal interview with the person who has been sent home. See under the heading, "The first step - an interview".

The purpose of the interview: Is this an isolated incident, or a sign that there is an alcohol problem?

WHAT YOU SHOULD DO AS A FELLOW WORKER OR STUDENT

You should talk to the person in your capacity as an ordinary fellow employee or student. Tell the person about your and your friends' concern. In a conversation like this, you have to make the person understand that his/her dependency affects not only his/her own situation but the situation of his/her fellow workers or students as well, and that they no longer accept this state of affairs, but instead demand that something be done about it. In addition, take up the question of who should be informed about the situation and participate in solving the problem.

WHAT YOU SHOULD DO AS BOSS

The Act on Working Environment states that the employer must "take all necessary measures" to prevent employees and students from being exposed to unhealthy conditions. Responsibility for alcohol and drug problems that affect the workplace also comes under this. The head of the department and persons who arrange parties are responsible for seeing to it that these take place in an orderly fashion when held in University premises.

In addition, together with employees, management has a responsibility to see to it that alcohol problems are dealt with in a good way. Even if there are support functions, it is management that has the direct responsibility to tackle the problem. If a supervisor/teacher has an alcohol problem, then it is his or her immediate boss who has this responsibility. In the following you will find suggestions for how you can deal with these matters.

Don't hesitate - act immediately!
THE FIRST STEP - AN INTERVIEW

An interview with the employee/student should always take place if an alcohol problem is suspected. The person responsible for bringing this about is the immediate supervisor/director of studies or the head of the department.

A person with an alcohol problem often has low self-esteem. He or she is vulnerable and easily hurt. Show respect for him or her even if you have to be firm. You should never give the impression that you doubt the ability of the person in question to run their own life. A suspicion that someone has an alcohol problem has often been proved to be well founded.

- Learn about alcohol abuse. Get in touch with the University's personnel consultants at AB Previa, the Student Health Reception (Studenthälsan) or ÖstALNA (see the list of phone numbers in Appendix 2). These people can provide help and advice before your first interview.
- Plan the interview well! Set a date! See to it that you are not interrupted!

This is what you should do and think about during the interview

- Explain the purpose of the interview!
- Speak plainly!
- Point to concrete events and situations!
- Underscore your obligation to interfere!
- Avoid moralizing!
- Discuss what might have caused the person to lower their performance at work!
- Tell the person in concrete terms about what it is he or she has done wrong!
- Don't make only negative judgements; make positive ones as well!
- Listen to what is not said as well (body language)!
- Don't draw any hasty conclusions!

Make sure the employee/student understands that the situation must be changed and set a date for the next interview. Inform the person in question about the possibility of getting help from the university health service, their trade union or the student health service.

FOLLOW-UP INTERVIEWS

The follow-up interviews need to be more aggressive than the first one if there has been no improvement. It can be a good idea to have one of the University's personnel consultants or someone from Länshälsan, the Student Health Reception or ÖstALNA present at these interviews.

- Follow up earlier interviews!
- Try to get the employee/student to realize that he or she is in need of care!
- Provide information about treatment and rehabilitation!
- Make an agreement about treatment!

Treat the employee/student as a person who can make decisions about their own actions. He or she is the only person who can change their behaviour.

AGREEMENT ABOUT TREATMENT FOR THE EMPLOYEE

When an employee has admitted his or her need for care or rehabilitation, an agreement about treatment can be made.
The employee should be informed about the possibility of getting support from their trade union.

Advice can be obtained from the head of personnel, the University's personnel consultants or Länshälsan about the most suitable form of treatment. See also the list of alcohol care providers in Appendix 2.

After a suitable form of treatment has been found, an agreement should be made between the employee and the responsible head stating that the treatment will be carried out. An agreement also has to be entered into as to whether the employer will bear part of the cost for treatment. The University's personnel consultants should be consulted in this matter. The agreement can also contain:

- altered work assignments
- transfer to another post
- certificate of illness from the first day
- appointment of a contact person

If the employee so desires, the supervisor can inform the employee's trade union about the treatment agreement. If the agreement contains measures involving labour law, the trade union should be informed.

AGREEMENT ABOUT TREATMENT FOR A STUDENT

When interviewing a student, it should be explained that attention has been drawn to the person's abuse, for example by that person being intoxicated or hung over during a lecture or seminar. It should be emphasized that the problem not only affects the person involved but his or her fellow students as well and that the department cannot accept this situation but instead demands that something should be done. The Student Health Reception can provide help and advice; an appointment should be made in consultation with the student. The disciplinary measures that sometimes have to be adopted can increase motivation for treatment. The sooner drug and alcohol abuse is noticed and steps are taken, the better the prognosis. Concerning disciplinary measures, see chapter 11 of the Higher Education Act.

MEASURES STIPULATED IN LABOUR LAW

If the help and support measures proposed in this action programme have failed, or if an employee refuses to participate in care and rehabilitation, the employer may make use of compulsory measures stipulated in labour law. These measures presuppose negotiations with the trade union concerned.

Such measures can only be implemented after first contacting the personnel department. A decision to remove an employee from employment due to so called personal circumstances is made by the personnel disciplinary board.

Removal from service

An employee who appears at work under the influence of drugs or alcohol can be temporarily "removed from service" if this is necessary in order to avoid a hazard or to maintain order at the workplace.

- The right to use this measure is not stated in constitutional law but instead is based on labour management law and general legal principles about emergency situations.
SUSPENSION

An employer can suspend an employee from work in only three instances:

- An employee with a special commission from the government may be suspended if he/she is unable to perform his/her duties in a satisfactory manner due to illness or a comparable condition.
- Other employees (most employees) can only be suspended after a decision about dismissal because of personal circumstances or
- when a decision about dismissal is to be made if the employer has a legitimate need to immediately suspend an employee from work due to the circumstances that have caused the dismissal
- However, suspension may not take place if the employee invalidates the dismissal.

TRANSFER TO ANOTHER POST

Transferring an employee to another post, or finding other duties or working hours can be a way of coming to terms with an employee's alcohol or drug abuse. The employer has the right to transfer a person against his or her will in order to mitigate the effects of that person's abuse.

DISMISSAL

Grounds for dismissal can be personal circumstances such as unlawful absence, refusal to obey orders, negligence or similar circumstances. This can be the case if the behaviour is repeated despite the employer having reacted by issuing a warning or in some other way having given the employee the opportunity to improve.

Neglect of work due to abuse should be treated as any other kind of negligence and can result in dismissal. Coming to work intoxicated or hung over is counted as gross negligence, not the least for security reasons. Before a person can be given notice, the employer, however, must have done everything reasonably possible to prevent the employee from being excluded from working life, such as attempts to transfer a person and various rehabilitation measures.

If a person's abuse is judged to be an illness, the employer does not have the same right to dismiss the person. As a rule, illness and actions that are caused by illness can not be cited as grounds for dismissal if the employee can do work of some importance.

Only when the abuse causes such repeated serious difficulties at the workplace that the employer's interest in putting an end to these is stronger than the employee's interest in keeping his employment can there be grounds for dismissal. A doctor determines whether the abuse is to be considered an illness. It is therefore important to get the person with the abuse to see a doctor.

Drug abuse, or having anything to do with drugs at work or outside work, has been judged much more severely than alcohol abuse when the few cases involving this have been heard by the Swedish Labour Court. In other words, it is easier to dismiss a person due to drug abuse than alcohol. Narcotics are regarded in a completely different light; not only the transfer of drugs but also possession is illegal.

APPENDIX 1

The Alcohol Policy of the Student Nations at Uppsala University adopted by the Curators Convention on May 20, 1997.

General Principles
1. Support for those who choose not to drink alcohol

The nations should support those who do not drink alcohol, for example by providing non-alcoholic alternatives.

2. Check overconsumption

No one should be encouraged to drink more than he wants, and persons with alcohol problems should be supported so that they do not drink more than they ought to.

3. Work and alcohol do not go together

Those who work at a nation event are not allowed to drink. If an employee neglects his work due to alcohol, immediate steps should be taken. One should remember that the line between work and leisure at a nation is difficult to draw.

Action Plan

Each nation should have two to three key persons who are to handle these kinds of questions. These key persons are to be responsible if any type of problem arises. They are also responsible for informing employees on a continual basis about rules and principles currently in force. Collaboration with the Student Health Reception is necessary since these kinds of questions require expertise and skill.

Marketing

Information about the University's alcohol policy and the hazards of alcohol should be provided on a continual basis in connection with courses about the serving and sale of wine, spirits and beer, and similar meetings. The Student Health Reception should aid in this matter.

APPENDIX 2

Questions dealing with drug addiction and abuse

You can turn to the following to seek help

1. For advice, support and/or treatment

   - The occupational health service, Länshälsan, 018 - 67 76 00
   - Consultant Lilian Fahlén, Uppsala University, 018 - 471 17 35
   - Consultant Karin Roth, Uppsala University, 018 - 471 17 21
   - Consultant Kerstin Högberg, Uppsala University, 018 - 471 18 88
   - The Advice and Treatment Committee for Questions of Dependency and Abuse, 018 - 27 14 70
   - The Student Health Reception, 018 - 15 50 50
   - ALNA-Öst, a collaborative agency dealing with alcohol and drug questions at public and private sector workplaces in Uppsala, 018 - 12 17 16

2. Help with Detoxification

   - The Psychiatric Emergency Reception, Uppsala University Hospital, Ulleråker. 24 hours a day, 018 - 611 25 00

3. Client organizations
- Alcoholics Anonymous - AA, Österplan 1, 018 - 15 88 88'
- Narcotics Anonymous - NA, St Perskyrkan, 0771-138 00
- AL-Anon - For relatives, St Johannesgatan 4 018 - 12 12 90
- Länkens kamratförening, St. Göransgatan 30, 018 - 71 28 06
- Fria Sällskapet Länkarna, Timmermansgatan 22, 018 - 22 08 50