Drug and Alcohol Abuse Prevention Policy

Taken from the New England College of Optometry 2019-2020 Student Handbook, pages 57-60

Introduction

As a recipient of federal monies, the New England College of Optometry maintains a Drug and Alcohol Abuse Prevention Policy, in compliance with The Drug Free Schools and Communities Act Amendment of 1989. The purpose of the policy is to prevent the unlawful possession, use, or distribution of illicit drugs and alcohol, and the abuse of alcohol, by students.

In accordance with federal regulations, the policy contains information about the use of drugs and alcohol in relation to:

- the standards of conduct expected by the College;
- disciplinary actions for violations of the standards;
- legal sanctions for violating corresponding laws;
- potential health risks;
- accessible counseling and treatment services.

This policy is to be distributed to students initially entering the College community and to all students annually. There will be a biennial review of the policy to determine its effectiveness, to implement any necessary changes, and to ensure the consistent application of sanctions for violations of the policy.

Standards of Conduct

The College strictly prohibits, on its premises and at all College sponsored functions off-campus:

- the possession, use or distribution of illicit drugs, including the inappropriate possession, use, or distribution of pharmaceutical drugs;
- the possession or consumption of alcohol by, or distribution to, persons under 21 years old.

The College reserves the right to restrict the use, distribution, or possession of alcohol on College premises or at any College sponsored functions by persons 21 years old or older. The College also reserves the right to request documentation of age before serving alcohol.

Functions planned for students by employees or students at which alcohol will be served must be pre-approved by the Dean of Academic Resources and Administration.

At all College functions, non-alcoholic beverages must be provided and located in a visible area separate from alcoholic beverages.

Food must always be available at all College functions where alcohol is served.
The College expects employees and students to create and maintain a professional and educational environment that is safe and healthy and encourages responsible conduct. Furthermore, the College holds employees and students responsible for the consequences of using or distributing illicit drugs, and serving or consuming alcohol.

**Disciplinary Action**

Reports of suspected violations of the Drug & Alcohol Abuse Prevention Policy by employees and students will be responded to by College administration.

Disciplinary action will be imposed on students who violate the Drug & Alcohol Abuse Prevention Policy and may include immediate suspension or dismissal from the College as well as affect the student’s eligibility for financial aid. Please see [www.FAFSA.gov](http://www.FAFSA.gov) for further information.

Students violating local, state, or federal laws regarding drugs and alcohol on College premises or at College functions are not exempt from the corresponding legal sanctions. Disciplinary action taken by the College for legal violations may include a referral to local authorities for prosecution, the sanctions listed above, and/or mandatory completion of an appropriate rehabilitation program as a condition of continued student status.

**Legal Sanctions for Violating Alcohol Laws**

A minor in possession of alcohol, who is not accompanied by a parent or legal guardian, may be fined not more than $50 for the first offense and not more than $150 for a second or subsequent offense. The above minor may also be arrested without a warrant by a police officer and if convicted will have their driver’s license suspended for a period of 90 days.

A person who falsifies age documentation or misrepresents their age for the purpose of possessing or consuming alcohol is subject to a fine of $300.

Anyone delivering or serving alcohol to a person under 21, or for the use by someone under 21, is subject to a fine of up to $2,000 or imprisonment for not more than one year or both.

The fine for operating a motor vehicle while drinking an alcoholic beverage may result in a fine of not less than $500 nor more than $5,000 or by imprisonment for not more than two and one-half years, or both such fine and imprisonment.

A person suspected by authorities of driving under the influence of alcohol will be stopped and given a sobriety test. Failure of the test will result in immediate arrest, and revocation of one’s driver’s license. A first conviction for driving under the influence of alcohol may result in a fine of up to $1000, imprisonment for up to two years, mandatory completion of an alcohol education or rehabilitation program and revocation of one’s license. Sanctions for driving under the influence increase in severity with each successive conviction.

A person suspected of public intoxication may be taken into protective custody for at least 5 hours.
Legal Sanctions for Violating Drug Laws

Criminal penalties for offenses vary according to the particular substance and the quantity of the substance. Generally, the penalties for manufacturing or distributing controlled substances are greater than for simple possession.

Illegal possession with the intent to manufacture or distribute is subject to the same penalties as illegal manufacture or distribution. Possessing relatively large quantities of illicit substances will be considered possession with intent to distribute.

In general, persons suspected of possessing, using, or distributing illicit drugs will be arrested and will remain in jail until bail is met. A court date for arraignment will be set within 10 days.

Convictions for some offenses include mandatory minimum terms of imprisonment. A person sentenced to a mandatory term is not eligible for parole, furlough, or work release. Penalties for repeat offenses are increasingly harsher.

A person convicted of a drug offense may be declared ineligible for any or all federal benefits for up to one year, or longer for repeat offenses. Federal benefits include grants and contracts, and professional licenses.

Health Risks

Alcohol Abuse:
- nausea & headaches
- fatigue
- malnutrition
- brain cell damage
- loss of memory
- cirrhosis
- poor concentration
- liver & stomach cancer
- increased heart rate
- blackouts
- muscle degeneration
- heart disease
- ulcers
- bone degeneration
- personality disorders
- alcoholism

Illicit drug use:
- brain, nerve & liver damage
- respiratory arrest
- convulsions
- hypertension
- lowered blood pressure
- personality disorders
- addiction
- heart failure
- pulmonary edema
- cardiac arrhythmias
- psychosis
- coma
- malnutrition
- death
Counseling and Treatment Services

The Student Counseling Service provides information and referrals, diagnostic assessment and short-term crisis treatment, and 24 hour on-call emergency service. When students require long term treatment, the Counseling Service provides individual psychotherapy on a fee for service basis and liaison services for any outside treatment agency, as well as supportive care within the College. A directory of agencies providing information on substance abuse and rehabilitation programs is also available through the Counseling Service. All inquiries and discussions are strictly confidential. The Counseling Service can be reached through the Student Services Office at 617-587-5593 during regular business hours. For emergency service, please go to your local emergency room at a hospital.

Boston Area Referral and Treatment Agencies

Listed below are randomly selected agencies providing referrals and/or rehabilitation services. The list does not represent recommendations for any particular programs. It is advisable to check with your doctor and health insurance provider for individual referrals.

Drug & Alcohol Hotline - (800) 327-5050 or https://helplinema.org/ High Point - (800) 233-4478
ADCare Recovery - (617) 227-2622

Smoke-Free Environment

NECO is a healthcare institution that maintains a smoke-free environment. Under the Massachusetts Smoke-Free Workplace Law, all enclosed workplaces must be free from smoke. Therefore, the smoking of cigarettes, pipes, cigars, vapes, and similar materials is prohibited inside all ECO facilities. In addition, smoking within 20 feet of any entrance is prohibited.