

# higher education & training

Department:  
Higher Education and Training  
**REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

## POLICY ON ALCOHOL AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE

Policy Number	DHET-0015
Version	01
Revision	00
Author	Human Resource Management
Date Approved	
Effective Date	
Reference Number	

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

South Africa is experiencing an unacceptable increase in substance abuse and its associated problems.

Within the Department of Higher Education and Training context a healthy and productive work force is essential for the execution of the mandate of the department and it is therefore important to ensure the readiness of each member of the department.

The Department of Higher Education and Training has a responsibility to ensure that its staff members are not under the influence of alcohol or intoxicating substances during working hours.

## 2. DEFINITIONS

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**Abuse:** The persistent or sporadic excessive drug use inconsistent with or unrelated to acceptable medical practice.

**Alcohol:** Is the liquid which is intoxicating part of wine, beer, spirit to infuse drunkenness.

**Intoxicating substance:** Is any substance (alcohol drink or drug) that causes someone to lose control of their mental or physical power.

**Security officer:** Means a security of the department or company contracted by the department or member of the SAPS or Metro Police or any recognized security agency.

**Substance abuse:** Means unsuitable use of or addiction to alcohol, drugs and intoxicating chemical substances.

**Under the influence:** Means affected by or showing the symptoms of the consumption of alcohol or an intoxicating substance and the use of the substances to the extent that the person is unable to perform his/her duties in a safe, productive manner, or is in a physical or mental condition that poses a risk to the safety/security and well-being of the individual co-worker, public or the department property or has a level of such substances in his /her body which corresponds with or exceeds accepted medical/legal standards.

**Rehabilitation:** restore to normal life by training after dependency.

**Dependence:** unable to do without (in this instance alcohol/drugs).

**Workplace:** means any premises or places where a person/official performs work in the course of his/her employment.

### **3. OBJECTIVES**

- 3.1 To bring about elimination in substance abuse and its related harmful consequences in the Department
- 3.2 To decrease the abuse of substances, this implies prevention, treatment and rehabilitation.
- 3.3. To prevent and manage substance abuse.
- 3.4. To provide guidelines in handling an employee whose work performance has been impaired by substance abuse.
- 3.5. To discourage employees of the Department from misusing substances and to enable those who do so, to stop.
- 3.6. To protect the employees of the Department from health risks and other damage associated premature death.
- 3.7. To educate all employees about the harmful effect of substance abuse and give advice, guidance and support through the Employee Health and Wellness Programme (EHWP)
- 3.8. To ensure that employees do not create a poor image of the department by smelling alcohol on his/her breath.
- 3.9. To prevent staff from consuming alcohol or drugs during working/lunch hours.
- 3.10. All employees are encouraged to seek help and support through the EHW programme.
- 3.11. The department will publish on its website a directory of alcoholism/substance addiction services; HR office numbers (EWH Unit) and officials to contact.

### **4. SCOPE OF APPLICATION**

The policy is applicable to all employees of the Department of Higher Education and Training who have been appointed in terms of the Public service Act, 1994, as amended and Employment of Educators Act 1998.

### **5. MANDATES**

- 5.1 Public Service Act 1994 (as amended)
- 5.2. Public Service Regulations, 2001 (as amended)
- 5.3. Public Service Co-ordinating Bargaining Council Resolution No.1 of 2003
- 5.4. Chapter 7 of Senior Management Service (2003 edition) Handbook
- 5.5. Policy and Procedure on incapacity Leave and Ill-health Retirement (2005)
- 5.6. Determination on Leave of Absence in the public service (2005)
- 5.7. Employee Health and Wellness programme policy
- 5.8. Item 10 & 11 of Schedule 8 of the Labour Relations Act of 1995 as amended)

## **6. IDENTIFYING SUBSTANCE ABUSE**

- 6.1. Reasonable suspicion must be based on specific, clear, objective and present observations concerning the appearance, behaviour, speech or body odour of the employee.
- 6.2. Applicable short term indicators or symptoms of being under the influence of an intoxicating substance are:
  - 6.2.1. Poor physical co- ordination
  - 6.2.2. Dilated or constricted or slurred pupils
  - 6.2.3. Slow reactions or slurred speech
  - 6.2.4. Disorientation
  - 6.2.5. Unusual restlessness
  - 6.2.6. Combative behaviour, loud arguing or fighting
  - 6.2.7. Alcohol odour on breath
  - 6.2.8. Unsteady manner of walking
  - 6.2.9. Glazed stare –redness of eyes.
  - 6.2.10. Constant sniffing

## **7. TESTING**

- 7.1. If an employee is suspected to be under the influence of alcohol or any intoxicating substance, a security officer and or/supervisor of the employee and one neutral employee must subject the employee to the test of walking in a straight line and the ability to maintain balance and record observations.
- 7.2. If the employee refuses to take the aforesaid test, he/she will be deemed to be under the influence of alcohol or an intoxicating substance.
- 7.3. If at least two (2) of the elements listed in clause 6 above are present or if the employee then is deemed to be under the influence of alcohol or an intoxicating substance, the supervisor can request for medical testing by a registered medical practitioner.
- 7.4. Before an employee is tested, an explanation shall be given as to why the testing needs to be done and also the consequences of a positive test shall be explained.

## **8 EMPLOYEE HEALTH AND WELLNESS PROGRAMME (EHWP)**

The department recognizes substance abuse, involving alcohol and or drugs as treatable conditions.

- 8.1. The EHW shall offer counseling and referral for employees who have substance abuse problems.
- 8.2. The EHW shall assist by identifying rehabilitation procedures and standards.
- 8.3. Workplace confidentiality will play a key role in this process.
- 8.4. All medical information and rehabilitation processes will be protected and treated as confidential.

8.5. Release of information shall be in accordance with the signed authorization by the employee.


## 9. DISCIPLINARY ACTION

9.1. Where the provisions of schedule 8 of the Labour Relations Act (Code of Good Practice) were invoked and it is found that Employee Health and Wellness Programme does not yield any results because the dependency on alcohol or an intoxicating substances still exists; or

9.2. When an employee discontinues with the EHWP or refuses to take part in it, then disciplinary action in terms of Public Services Co – coordinating Bargaining Council Resolution No.1 of 2003 or Chapter 7 SMS Handbook must be invoked.

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Signed at PRETORIA on this 18<sup>th</sup> day of FEBRUARY 2012



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**Mr GF QONDE**  
**DIRECTOR-GENERAL: HIGHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

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