

ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISION STAF Division of Student Affairs and Academic Support
POLICY NUMBER STAF 3.18
POLICY TITLE Drug Policy for University Students
SCOPE OF POLICY USC Columbia
DATE OF REVISION June 17, 2025
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER Vice President for Student Affairs and Academic Support
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE Division of Student Affairs and Academic Support

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to educate the University of South Carolina – Columbia Campus on the expectations and guidelines regarding the use of illegal and controlled drugs. (For the purposes of this policy, the University of South Carolina – Columbia may also be referred to as the “university.”) This policy governs the consumption, possession, distribution, and sale of illegal and controlled drugs on the University of South Carolina – Columbia campus, in or at any university owned or controlled facility, and by members of the university community.

The University of South Carolina – Columbia is concerned with both the welfare of the university community and the academic and personal development of each student. The university strives to create a healthy environment where the illegal and/or improper use of drugs does not interfere with learning, performance or development. Abuse of drugs disrupts this environment and places at risk the lives and well-being of the members of the university community as well as the potential for students to contribute to society. It is important for all members of the university community to take responsibility for preventing the illegal and/or improper use of drugs from negatively affecting the community's learning environment and the academic, physical and emotional well-being of its students. Since there are numerous means by which the use of drugs may adversely affect both students and the university community, it is important that the university issue to all students a clear statement of policy concerning the illegal and/or improper use of drugs. This policy is intended to accomplish the following:

- A. To promote a healthy and safe learning environment;
- B. To demonstrate the commitment of the university to the provision of:
 - 1. Education and prevention services designed to help prevent illegal and/or improper use of drugs;
 - 2. Referral services related to the illegal and/or improper use of drugs;
 - 3. To encourage and facilitate the use of treatment and support services by those students who seek or are in need of assistance;
 - 4. To define expectations for student behavior with respect to the illegal and/or improper use of drugs;

5. To identify appropriate disciplinary procedures for those students who engage in illegal and/or improper drug-related behaviors.

DEFINITIONS AND ACRONYMS

For the purposes of this policy, the following these terms are defined as follows:

Campus: Buildings, grounds or other facilities that are owned, leased or controlled by the University of South Carolina Columbia.

Controlled substance: a substance meeting the definition set forth in Section 44-53-110 of the South Carolina Code of Laws.

Drug or alcohol-related overdose: an acute condition, including mania, hysteria, extreme physical illness, coma, or death resulting from the consumption or use of a controlled substance, alcohol, or another substance with which a controlled substance or alcohol was combined, that a layperson would reasonably believe to be a drug or alcohol overdose that requires medical assistance.

Faculty: All employees who hold a tenure-track or non-tenure track title as defined by university policy ACAF 1.06 Academic Titles for Faculty and Unclassified Academic Staff Positions.

Illegal Drug: any drug or controlled substance which is (1) not legally obtainable in South Carolina or (2) is legally obtainable but was not legally obtained.

Improper Use: the use of a drug for something other than for what it was prescribed and issued by a licensed medical practitioner.

Off Campus: Buildings, grounds or other facilities that are not owned, leased or controlled by the University of South Carolina Columbia.

Paraphernalia: any instrument, device, article, or contrivance used, designed for use, or intended for use in ingesting, smoking, administering, manufacturing, or preparing a controlled substance

Registered Student Organization: a student organization that is currently active on the University of South Carolina Campus, has fulfilled all responsibilities of a student organization and represents a group of students who desire to come together to support a particular view, explore common interests or accomplish identified tasks.

Seeks medical assistance: seeking medical assistance by contacting university personnel, the 911 system, a law enforcement officer, or emergency services personnel.

Staff: All employees who hold a classified State title and a State class or an unclassified academic staff title as defined by University policy ACAF 1.06 Academic Titles for Faculty and Unclassified Academic Staff Positions.

Student: A person who is currently enrolled at the university, or who is accepted for admission or readmission to the university, or who has been enrolled at the university in a prior semester or summer session and is eligible to continue enrollment in the semester or summer session that immediately follows, or who is attending an educational program sponsored by the university while that person is on campus, or who engaged in prohibited conduct at a time when the individual met the above criteria. Individuals who are not currently enrolled at the university remain subject to the disciplinary process for conduct that occurred while they were enrolled.

Student Care and Outreach Team (Care Team): A group of qualified USC professionals whose mission is to balance the individual needs of the student and those of the greater campus community, provide a structured positive method for addressing student behaviors that impact the university community and may involve mental health and/or safety issues, manage each case individually, initiate appropriate intervention without resorting to punitive measures and enhance quality of care for students.

POLICY STATEMENT

A. State Laws

The University of South Carolina – Columbia supports strict enforcement of laws concerning the possession, consumption, and distribution of illegal drugs and controlled substances as set forth in the [South Carolina Code of Laws, Title 44, Chapter 53](#). Students, as citizens, are responsible for knowing about and complying with South Carolina laws concerning illegal drugs and the use of other controlled substances. Important points covered in Chapter 53 include:

1. SECTION 44-53-370. It shall be unlawful for any person:
 - a. to manufacture, distribute, dispense, deliver, purchase, aid, abet, attempt, or conspire to manufacture, distribute, dispense, deliver, or purchase, or possess with the intent to manufacture, distribute, dispense, deliver, or purchase a controlled substance or a controlled substance analogue.
 - b. to create, distribute, dispense, deliver, or purchase, or aid, abet, attempt, or conspire to create, distribute, dispense, deliver, or purchase, or possess with intent to distribute, dispense, deliver, or purchase a counterfeit substance.
2. SECTION 44-53-391. It shall be unlawful to advertise for sale, manufacture, possess, sell or deliver, or to possess paraphernalia with intent to sell or deliver.

B. Programs and Services

C. Enforcement, Student Conduct Process and Consequences

1. Students are responsible for abiding by the Student Code of Conduct and state/federal laws whether on or off campus. Failure to do so can result in criminal, civil, and university proceedings and outcomes. Students and student organizations that are in violation of the law are also violating the Student Code of Conduct and can be held accountable under both separate systems. Violations of this campus Drug Policy as well as other published regulations will be referred to appropriate university offices. In addition, students should be aware of the following:

- a. Off-Campus Accountability

Students arrested off campus may be subject to university disciplinary action when their conduct violates university standards. Failure to report this information to the Office of Student Conduct can result in a “Failure to Comply” charge and may result in further disciplinary action.

- b. FERPA/Parental Notification

The university may disclose the result of a disciplinary proceeding to a parent or guardian so long as the student is under the age of 21 at the time of the incident and the proceeding has resulted in a violation of university drug or alcohol policies, or any federal, state, or local law or under any of the following conditions:

- i. following an outcome that places the student on housing or conduct probation (official notice that any additional offense may affect the student's ability to live on campus or attend the university), or that results in removal from University Housing or the institution (e.g. housing removal/relocation, suspension, or expulsion).
- ii. following the second violation of university policy regarding drug use.
- iii. following any incident in which the use of illegal drugs and/or the improper use of controlled substances has resulted in hospitalization. Notification will come from the Student Care and Outreach Team Chair or designee.

For more information or for a Consent to Release Information waiver, refer to the [Office of Student Conduct](#).

2. The university considers any violation of the drug policy to be a serious offense. The university will respond to all reported violations of this policy in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. The outcomes imposed by the university include, but are not

limited to drug screens (at student's expense), psychoeducational group counseling, probation, removal from University Housing, suspension, and expulsion.

D. Guidelines for Types of Drug Violations

All drug policy cases will have outcomes determined on case by case basis. However, in certain types of cases, additional guidelines may apply:

1. Possession or Use of Illegal Drugs: In the adjudication of all cases involving the possession or use of illegal drugs, the university's presumptive response will be suspension (as defined within this section). Residents of University Housing suspected to be in violation of any drug related policy will also be subject to immediate removal in keeping with Student Code of Conduct .
2. Trafficking in Illegal Drugs
 - a. Prior to hearing: Because the distribution of illegal drugs is a threat and danger to the health and safety of the community, when available facts indicate that the student represents an immediate threat to the safety, health, or welfare of themselves, other persons, or property, the university will immediately suspend alleged offenders prior to a hearing. Students who are immediately suspended may have restricted access to campus including University Housing while suspended. The continued enrollment of students not immediately suspended may be subject to conditions and restrictions.
 - b. Following the hearing: Students found responsible for the illegal distribution of drugs or controlled substances will likely be suspended or expelled.
 - c. For information on the hearing process, please contact the [Office of Student Conduct](#) at 803-777-4333

E. Financial Aid Eligibility

Students found in violation of the drug policy jeopardize their ability to receive federal financial aid for which they might otherwise be eligible.

F. Drug-Free Workplace

Faculty, staff, and administrators must adhere to policy [HR 1.01 Drug-Free Workplace](#).

G. Resources

Members of the university community who are concerned about the use or abuse of alcohol or other drugs (by themselves, colleagues or their friends) may receive assistance from the following contacts:

1. Lexington/Richland Alcohol & Drug Abuse Council (LRADAC): (803) 726-9300
2. USC Thomson Student Health Center for Health and Well-Being: (803) 777-3175
3. USC Counseling and Psychiatric Services Psychiatry: (803) 777-5223
4. USC Department of Student Life: (803) 777-6688 4172
5. USC Division of Law Enforcement and Safety: (803) 777-4215
6. USC Office of Student Conduct: (803) 777-4333
7. USC Office of Substance Abuse Prevention and Education: (803) 777-7716 3933
8. USC Student Care and Outreach Team: (803)-777-4193

RELATED UNIVERSITY, STATE, AND FEDERAL POLICIES

[ACAF 1.06 Academic Titles for Faculty and Unclassified Academic Staff Positions](#)

[HR 1.01 Drug-Free Workplace](#)

[STAF 3.02 Alcohol Policy and Guidelines for the University Community](#)

[STAF 3.10 Student Organizations](#)

[STAF 6.26 Student Code of Conduct](#)

[South Carolina Code of Laws, Chapter 53, Title 44](#)

HISTORY OF REVISIONS

DATE OF REVISION	REASON FOR REVISION
December 9, 2010	New Policy Approval
October 18, 2016	Policy organization, content, and accuracy reviewed. Non-substantive changes include updating office names.
June 17, 2025	Non-substantive changes to update language and organization