



Title: Drug-Free Workplace and Campus Program
Effective Date: July 1, 2025
Issuing Authority: Provost and Senior Vice President for Administration and Finance
Policy Contact: Students: Vice President for Student Affairs/Dean of Students, 478-301-2685
Employees: Associate Vice President for Human Resources, hr@mercer.edu, 478-301-2786

Purpose

Mercer University shares the widespread national concern with the serious threat to health, safety, and welfare posed by the unlawful use of drugs and the abuse of alcohol, especially in the workplace and on college campuses. As a matter of University policy, growing out of the University's historic mission and character, and in keeping with applicable Federal and State laws,¹ the University has adopted and has implemented the following program to provide a drug-free workplace and campus/center for all its students and employees and to prevent the illicit use of drugs and abuse of alcohol.

Scope

This policy applies to all students and employees of Mercer University.

Exclusions

None

Definitions

As used in this policy, the following term(s) have the meaning specified below:

Employee: any faculty (including, but not limited to, regular, visiting, or adjunct), any individual who has an appointment at the University, and all regular and temporary staff.

Student: any person pursuing academic studies at the University, including, but not limited to, any person currently enrolled, previously enrolled, or who is reasonably anticipated to seek enrollment at a future date, or a person who has applied to or been accepted for admission.

¹ Including the Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988, the Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act Amendments of 1989, the Drug-Free Postsecondary Education Act of 1990 (Georgia), and related laws and regulations.

Policy Statement

This program sets forth the minimum standards of conduct and requirements with respect to drug and alcohol abuse for all students and employees of the University. Other policies and standards of conduct concerning drugs and alcohol are included in other student handbooks, employee handbooks, and other University documents. These remain in full force and effect. Additional policies in this area may also be developed, subject to University approval, provided they are either consistent with this program or impose higher standards of additional requirements in furtherance of the purposes of this program. In the case of faculty members, violation of the standards of conduct in this program shall be considered "adequate cause" for termination of a faculty appointment. All actions taken and sanctions imposed under this program and related drug and alcohol policies shall be reviewed periodically to ensure consistent enforcement. Nothing in this program shall be interpreted to require the University to violate its obligations under other laws, including laws prohibiting discrimination against qualified handicapped individuals.

Review of Program

In keeping with Federal law, this program shall be reviewed at least biennially to determine its effectiveness, to make changes where necessary, and to ensure that sanctions are consistently enforced.

Standard of Conduct

The unlawful possession, use, distribution, dispensing or manufacture of illicit drugs or alcohol at any time on any University property or as part of any University-sponsored activity is absolutely prohibited. Professional and graduate schools may adopt policies more in line with the profile of their student body, as long as these policies are reviewed and approved in advance by the Provost.

Convictions for Drug-Related Offenses

Any student or employee convicted of any drug-related criminal statute must notify the appropriate official, the senior student affairs officer (for students) or the Associate Vice President for Human Resources (for employees), in writing, no later than five (5) days after such conviction regardless of where the offense occurred. Under Georgia state law, any student convicted of committing certain felony offenses involving marijuana, controlled substances, or dangerous drugs, is ineligible to receive payment from any of the State of Georgia Financial Aid Programs from the date of conviction to the completion of the following school term, in accordance with the Georgia Drug-Free Postsecondary Education Act of 1990 O.C.G.A § 20-1-20, et seq.

Under the Drug-Free Workplace Act, the University must notify federal agencies of drug-related convictions in the workplace of employees involved in work under a federal grant or contract. However, a criminal conviction shall not be necessary to find that a student or employee has violated these standards of conduct, and the University need not, and ordinarily will not, defer its own actions and sanctions pending the outcome of any criminal proceeding.

University Sanctions and Procedures

As a condition of employment or enrollment at Mercer University, all employees and students must abide by these standards of conduct, and disciplinary sanctions will be imposed for violations. Among the sanctions that may be imposed are: reprimand, probation, suspension, expulsion or termination of employment, and referral for prosecution. Sanctions for drug-related violations may include suspension or termination of employment or enrollment. However, at the University's sole discretion, an employee or student may be permitted to continue in employment or enrollment if they satisfactorily complete an approved educational and/or rehabilitation program.

Nothing in this policy is intended to affect the procedural rights of students or employees (including faculty members) under existing judicial board, grievance, or review procedures. However, once the University has determined, after reasonable inquiry, that a violation of this policy has occurred, the employee or student may be subject to immediate suspension (without pay, in the case of an employee) pending the conclusion of such procedures. If no existing procedures are in place for an alleged violation by a particular student or employee, the University will adapt other review procedures to ensure the individual the opportunity for a fair review, including the right to be heard.

Additional information may be found in the Student Handbook, the Faculty Handbook, and the Non-Faculty Employee Handbook, as well as the handbooks developed by the individual schools and colleges.

State and Federal Legal Sanctions

Under Georgia and federal law, it is a crime to possess, manufacture, sell, or distribute illegal drugs. Additional possible penalties for the illegal possession of drugs are forfeiture of real or personal property used to possess or to facilitate possession of a controlled substance if the offense is punishable by more than one (1) year imprisonment; forfeiture of vehicles, boats, aircraft, or any other conveyance used, or intended for use, to transport or conceal drugs; civil fine up to \$10,000 per violation; denial of federal benefits, such as student loans, grants, contracts, and professional and commercial licenses for up to one (1) year for a first and up to five (5) years for a second or subsequent offense; successful completion of a drug treatment program; community service; and ineligibility to receive or purchase a firearm.

In addition to the Georgia drug-related laws and penalties set forth above, Georgia law prohibits the purchase or possession of alcohol by a person under the age of 21 or the furnishing of alcohol to such a person. Driving under the influence of alcohol or other drugs also is illegal. It is against Georgia law, under certain circumstances, to walk or be upon a roadway while under the influence of alcohol or other drugs. The punishment for these offenses may include imprisonment, fines, mandatory treatment and education programs, community service, and mandatory loss of one's driver's license.

Additional Resources

Counseling, Treatment, and Rehabilitation

Employees and students seeking information about counseling and treatment programs, either for personal substance abuse or for family members or others, may contact the Human Resources Office (for employees) or the appropriate Senior Student Affairs Officer (for students).

- Human Resources (All campuses): 478-301-2786
- Student Affairs Office (Macon campus): 478-301-2685
- Student Affairs Office (Atlanta campus): 678-547-6824
- Counseling and Psychological Services (Macon campus): 478-301-2862
- Counseling and Psychological Services (Atlanta campus): 678-547-6060
- Helpline Georgia for Substance Abuse: 1-800-338-6745

Appendices

Appendix A: Health Risks Associated with Drug or Alcohol Use

A. Drugs

Narcotics such as opium, morphine, and heroin can cause euphoria, drowsiness, respiratory depression, constricted pupils, and nausea. Heroin causes the body's pain reactions to be weakened and can result in coma due to the reduction in pulse rate. The symptoms of an overdose of narcotics are slow and shallow breathing, clammy skin, convulsions, coma, and possible death. A person experiencing withdrawal from addiction to narcotics can experience watery eyes, runny nose, yawning, a loss of appetite, irritability, tremors, panic, cramps, nausea, chills, and sweating.

Depressants such as barbiturates and Quaaludes can cause disorientation, slurred speech, and senseless behavior. Depressant overdose results in shallow respiration, clammy skin, dilated pupils, weak and rapid pulse, and possible coma or death. Withdrawal symptoms include anxiety, insomnia, tremors, delirium, convulsions, and possible death.

Stimulants such as cocaine and crack cocaine cause increased alertness or euphoria, and increased heart rate, blood pressure, and respiratory rate. Immediate effects of use also include dilated pupils, insomnia, and loss of appetite followed by depression. Stimulant overdose results in agitation, increase in body temperature, hallucinations, convulsions, and possible death. Withdrawal symptoms include irritability, long periods of sleep, depression, and/or disorientation.

Hallucinogens such as Lysergic acid (LSD), amphetamines, mescaline, and phencyclidine (PCP) cause delusions, hallucinations and poor perception of time and distance. Users may experience anxiety, loss of control, confusion, and panic. Flashbacks can occur even when use has stopped. Amphetamines can cause rapid, irregular heartbeat, tremors,

and collapse. Heavy users may act out irrationally. The effects of an overdose include psychosis and possible death.

Cannabis (Marijuana, Hashish) can cause euphoria, increased appetite, lowered inhibitions, and disorientation. Marijuana use can alter sense of time, reduce energy level and coordination, and impair short-term memory. The effects of an overdose include fatigue, paranoia, and possible psychosis. Withdrawal symptoms include insomnia, hyperactivity, and decreased appetite. Long-term users may have a lowered immune system and increased risk of lung cancer.

B. Alcohol

Alcohol is a central nervous system depressant. Consumption of alcohol causes a number of changes in behavior that can result in dangerous and high-risk activities. A low dose of alcohol significantly impairs judgment, mental function, and coordination, and alters decision-making skills.

Alcohol consumption decreases the alertness and coordination needed to drive a car safely, increasing the likelihood of the driver causing an accident. Low to moderate doses of alcohol also increase the incidence of a variety of aggressive acts, such as spouse or child abuse. Research demonstrates that the majority of violent behaviors and incidents on college campuses, such as date rape, fights, and vandalism, involve the use of alcohol. Moderate to high doses of alcohol cause drastic impairments in higher mental functions, severely altering a person's ability to learn and remember information. Very high doses cause respiratory depression and death. If combined with other depressants of the central nervous system, much lower doses of alcohol will produce the effects just described. Long-term consumption of large quantities of alcohol can lead to permanent damage to vital organs such as the heart, liver, and brain. Studies have also linked an increased risk for various types of cancer, such as esophageal and breast cancer, to heavy, long-term alcohol use.

Repeated use of alcohol can lead to dependence. Sudden cessation of alcohol intake is likely to produce withdrawal symptoms, including severe anxiety, tremors, hallucinations, and convulsions. Alcohol withdrawal can be life threatening.

Mothers who drink alcohol during pregnancy may give birth to infants with fetal alcohol syndrome, resulting in cognitive disabilities and/or irreversible physical abnormalities.

Appendix B: Facilities Providing Inpatient and/or Outpatient Substance Abuse Services

Atlanta

Anchor Hospital
5454 Yorktowne Court
Atlanta, Georgia 30349
(678) 212-1562 or (678) 251-3226

DeKalb Crisis Center
450 Winn Way
Decatur, GA 30030
(404) 294-0499

Metro Atlanta Recovery Residences
2815 Clearview Place
Doraville, GA 30340
(678) 805-5100 or 1-800-732-5430

Northside Hospital Behavioral
Health
6105 Peachtree Dunwoody Rd,
Bldg F, Suite 155
Atlanta, GA 30328
(404) 851-8960

Peachford Hospital
2151 Peachford Road
Atlanta, Georgia 30338
(770) 455-3200

Dr. Tommie M. Richardson
(Addiction Medicine Specialist)
4015 S Cobb Dr, SE
Smyrna, GA 30080
(770) 431-2354

Ridgeview Institute
3995 South Cobb Dr., SE
Smyrna, Georgia 30080
(770) 434-4567 x3200 or (844) 350-
8800

Summit Ridge Hospital
250 Scenic Highway S
Lawrenceville, GA 30046
(678) 442-5800 or (678) 442-5858

Talbott Recovery
5355 Hunter Road
Atlanta, GA 30349
(678) 251-3189 or (844) 398-6275

Columbus

The Bradley Center
(Substance Abuse Services)
2000 16th Avenue
Columbus, GA 31901
(706) 320-3700

Piedmont Columbus Regional
Midtown Medical Clinic
710 Center Street
Columbus, GA 31901
(706) 571-1000

Macon

Piedmont Behavioral Health
340 Hospital Drive
Macon, Georgia 31217
(478) 741-1355

River Edge Behavioral Health Center
175 Emery Highway
Macon, Georgia 31217
(478) 803-7600

River Edge Recovery Center
3575 Fulton Mill Road
Macon, Georgia 31206
(478) 803-8617 or (478) 803-7600

Savannah

Manoj Dass, MD (Psychiatrist)
1121 Cornell Avenue
Savannah, GA 31406
(912) 355-4987

Center for Behavioral Medicine
Memorial University Medical Center
5002 Waters Avenue
Savannah, GA 31404
24-Hour Help Line
(912) 350-3023

Michael C. Mobley, M.D.
(Psychiatrist)
4849 Paulsen Street, Suite 201
Savannah, GA 31405
(912) 354-8108

Recovery Place
Alcohol/Substance Abuse Treatment
835 E 65th Street #102
Savannah, GA 31405
(912) 355-1440 or (800) 627-4010

Gateway Behavioral Health Services
800 E 70th Street
Savannah, GA 31404
(912) 344-9403

LifeStance Therapists & Psychiatrists
635 Stephenson Avenue
Savannah, GA 31405
(762) 895-4368

Willingway
(Inpatient Alcohol/Substance
Abuse/Detox)
311 Jones Mill Road
Statesboro, GA 30458
(912) 764-6236 or 1-800-242-9455

Warner Robins
HealthQwest Frontiers
607A Russell Parkway
Warner Robins, GA 31088
(478) 225-9860

Houston Medical Behavioral
Science/Psychiatry
1601 Watson Boulevard
Warner Robins, GA 31093
(478) 922-4281 (x7777) or (478)
542-7788

Phoenix Center Behavioral Health
Services
940 GA-96
Warner Robins, GA 31088
(478) 988-1222

History

Revised August 22, 2023

Revised July 1, 2025