




**Should you have employees in your area of responsibility that do not have access to university e-mail, please print the attached PDF for posting or distribution to those individuals. Thank you.**

**To:** University of Rhode Island Students, Faculty and Staff

**From:** Anne Marie Coleman   
Assistant Vice President for Human Resources

**Date:** September 26, 2018

**Re:** **The Drug-Free Workplace Act and the Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act**

#### **The Drug-Free Workplace Act and the Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act**

Congress enacted the Drug-Free Workplace Act in 1988, which requires all colleges to certify to the U.S. Department of Education that they will maintain a drug-free workplace by taking certain required actions. Congress also amended the Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act in 1989, which requires an institution of higher education to notify all students and employees of certain information regarding drugs and alcohol.

To help prevent the unlawful possession, use, or distribution of illicit drugs and alcohol by students and employees in accordance with the Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act and to provide and maintain a drug-free work environment in accordance with the Drug-Free Workplace Act, below is information regarding The University of Rhode Island's (URI) policies and disciplinary sanctions and related laws applied in connection with the use of illicit drugs and alcoholic beverages by students and employees.

#### **Standards of Conduct**

In accordance with the Federal Drug-Free Workplace Act and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act, URI prohibits the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession or use of narcotics, drugs, other controlled substances, or alcohol at the workplace and in the educational setting.

Possession or use of alcoholic beverages anywhere on university property is prohibited, except for lawful use at events, operations, or programs sanctioned by university officials. Unlawful for these purposes means in violation of federal, state, or local statutes, regulations, or ordinances. Workplace is defined as either university premises or any place where university business is conducted away from university premises. Educational setting includes both university premises and approved educational sites off campus. Off-campus conduct can be adjudicated on campus if the violation is an infraction of a community standard of behavior or if the action violates the Student Conduct system. Detailed information regarding Off-Campus Jurisdiction is located in Section 12 of the Student Handbook. The University of Rhode Island Student Handbook can be found online here: <http://web.uri.edu/studentconduct/>

Possession or use of illegal drugs, narcotics or drug paraphernalia is absolutely forbidden. The University of Rhode Island is not, and cannot be considered, a protector or sanctuary from the existing laws of the city, state and federal governments.

#### **University Disciplinary Sanctions**

**Students:** Students who violate the policy detailed above will be governed by the Student Handbook and subject to disciplinary action, including but not limited to reprimand, revocation of privileges, required campus service, referral to alcohol and/or drug educational programs, fine or restitution for loss, deferred suspension, suspension from the university or university housing, dismissal from the university, and referral to local authorities. The university will notify the parents of students under the age of 21 for alcohol or drug violations. Students receiving federal aid "who engage in the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, or use of any controlled substance" may lose their federal financial aid and/or be prosecuted for fraud.

**Employees:** As a condition of employment with the university, all employees are subject to the standards of conduct regarding drugs and alcohol noted above. All employees must abide by this policy and notify the university within five days of any criminal drug statute conviction for a violation occurring on or off university premises while conducting university business or activities. Employees who violate this policy will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment and possible referral to local authorities consistent with applicable law.

#### **State and Federal Penalties for Drug and Alcohol Offenses**

Under federal, state, and local law, it is unlawful for any person to manufacture, dispense, sell, distribute, possess or to possess with intent to manufacture, dispense, sell or distribute a controlled substance or drug paraphernalia. It is unlawful for anyone under the age of 21 to possess or purchase alcoholic beverages, for anyone to purchase alcohol for or furnish alcohol to anyone under the age of 21, and for anyone to misrepresent one's age, such as by falsifying an identification card. It is also unlawful to operate a motor vehicle under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

University sanctions will be consistent with local, state and federal laws. Students and employees are reminded that these laws provide for a variety of legal sanctions and penalties which include, but are not limited to, public service, incarceration, suspension of one's driver's license, and monetary fines.

Federal Law: Federal criminal penalties for drug possession and trafficking offenses vary depending on the type of controlled substance, the amount of the controlled substance, and the number of offenses and include imprisonment up to a life sentence and fines up to \$8,000,000. More detailed information on federal drug possession and trafficking penalties is available on the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration website at [www.justice.gov/dea/agency/penalties.htm](http://www.justice.gov/dea/agency/penalties.htm)

In addition, a student will become ineligible to receive Title IV Federal financial aid for a period following conviction for an offense under any Federal or State law involving the possession or sale of illegal drugs for conduct occurring during a period of enrollment during which the student received Title IV Federal financial aid.

State Law: State penalties for drug and alcohol criminal violations include the following:

- Mandatory drug and/or alcohol counseling or treatment;
- Driver retraining;
- Suspension or loss of driver's license;
- Community service;
- Fines of various amounts; and
- Imprisonment for various periods of time.

*Rhode Island:* Rhode Island criminal offenses and penalties related to drugs and alcohol are detailed in the Rhode Island General Laws Title 21, Chapter 21-28 (Uniform Controlled Substances Act) and throughout Title 3 (Alcoholic Beverages), which provisions may be accessed online at [www.rilin.state.ri.us/Statutes/](http://www.rilin.state.ri.us/Statutes/).

### **Health Risks of Drug Use and Alcohol Abuse**

Some health risks of drug use include the following:

- Drug dependence or addiction;
- Death by overdose or withdrawal;
- Withdrawal symptoms, such as abdominal pain, nausea or vomiting, drenching sweats, nervousness and shaking and seizures;
- Heart, liver, and brain damage;
- Psychological dysfunction; and
- Pregnancy complications resulting from drug use by pregnant women.

Some health risks of alcohol abuse include the following:

- Impaired judgment and coordination;
- Aggressive or violent acts;
- Decrease of one's ability to learn or absorb information;
- Dependence or addiction;
- Withdrawal symptoms, such as trembling, delusions, hallucinations and sweating;
- High blood pressure, stomach problems, sexual problems, osteoporosis and cancer;
- Permanent damage to vital organs such as the heart, brain and liver; and
- Fetal alcohol syndrome in children of women who drink alcohol during their pregnancy.

## **Drug and Alcohol Assistance Programs**

Students: URI is committed to providing proactive drug and alcohol abuse prevention programs, confidential counseling, intervention, and referral for its students. Programming is available to help students examine their own behavior related to alcohol and other drugs. The Office of Substance Abuse Prevention Services provides an assessment of alcohol and other drug usage for students who seek counseling. For further information, please call our office at 401-874-2098 or visit our website at [www.uri.edu/substance\\_abuse/](http://www.uri.edu/substance_abuse/).

Employees: An Employee Assistance Program is available for university employees and their household family members. This important benefit allows eligible non-student employees and each of their household family members the opportunity to access professional and confidential counseling services for help in dealing with personal issues, including alcohol and drug problems. This benefit is administered by Care24 Services; for more information, please call 1-866-869-6358 or visit <http://www.uri.edu/hr/benefits/eap>.

For more information, please review the resources and data available at: <http://www.samhsa.gov>. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) is the agency within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services that leads public health efforts to advance the behavioral health of the nation. SAMHSA's mission is to reduce the impact of substance abuse and mental illness on America's communities.