



**COLLEGES  
UNIVERSITY  
OF MELBOURNE**

**THE RESIDENTIAL COLLEGES & HALLS OF  
THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE**

Intercollegiate Policy on Alcohol

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Intercollegiate Office

# ALCOHOL IN UNIVERSITY COLLEGES-POLICY AND GUIDELINES

## **1. Rationale**

The prevalence of alcohol abuse in modern Australian society and its adverse effects upon both individuals and the wider community present problems demanding systemic and cultural solutions. All members of the Residential Colleges, and especially those charged with organizing and supervising events, must therefore work together to create an environment and a culture in which alcohol can be enjoyed responsibly and the various risks associated with alcohol are minimized.

## **2. Aim and Scope of Policy**

The purpose of this policy is to provide general guidelines for the successful management of alcohol at College events, whether organized by a College administration, a Students' Club or an intercollegiate organization.. The Policy is to be followed by intercollegiate bodies and should complement, rather than replace, individual College policies.

Through the development of this policy, the Heads of Colleges seek to promote a responsible attitude towards alcohol in Colleges, as part of their overall concern for College communities. The Heads are committed to minimizing alcohol related harm to individuals and property and are also concerned with mitigating legal and reputational risks to Colleges, Students' Clubs and individuals.

This policy applies to all staff, students and visitors to the Colleges. The Heads of Colleges will also be responsive to the needs of staff and students with alcohol-related problems through appropriate support and referral mechanisms.

## **3. Compliance**

All College activities involving alcohol must comply with the law. The Liquor Control Reform Act 1998 is the primary piece of legislation regulating the supply and consumption of liquor in Victoria. Additionally, the Liquor Control Reform Regulations 2009 provide for a range of specific matters in relation to licensing and the regulation of liquor. The Heads strongly affirm the need to adhere to these laws and regulations at all times.

## **4. Responsible Attitude**

Individual community members are expected to exercise good judgement, accept personal responsibility and consider community members in regard to personal alcohol consumption. An attitude of moderation and a respect for the responsible choices of others should be adopted by those who choose to drink.

## **5. Education and College Culture**

Education is vital to building awareness of the issues surrounding alcohol, especially in collegiate environments. While Heads and Residential Staff are largely expected to initiate such educational programs, their success will be dependent on the interaction of Student Clubs with these ideas, especially during key times such as Orientation and Transition.

There are a wide variety of external resources that may be of assistance. “Hello Sunday Morning”, “Alcocup” and “Responsible Service Alcohol “ (RSA) courses have all had positive results in residential colleges. Additionally, education around mental health issues often has a significant crossover with alcohol awareness; organizations such as “Beyond Blue” and “Batyr “ are good examples of this.

Alcohol plays a part in college life but college culture should foster an ethos, which requires that those organising college events will invariably place equal emphasis on the full participation of people who never drink alcohol or who choose not to do so sometimes. This is helped by the provision of high-quality non-alcoholic drinks and good food. More importantly, imagination and energy must be directed at creating events, which engage and entertain by means other than the disinhibiting effects of alcohol and are thus truly inclusive of all participants.

## **6. Responsible Provision and Consumption of Alcohol**

To comply with the laws that govern the service of alcohol, it is essential that only RSA trained servers be used where alcohol is being provided. The two clauses that are of primary importance in a collegiate environment are:

- No alcohol is to be provided to those under 18 years old.
- No alcohol is to be provided to those who are intoxicated.

When organizing an event, it is important that there are strategies to minimize possible abuse of alcohol. Below are some considerations that must be taken into account:

- Limiting the maximum amount of alcohol available so that dangerous blood alcohol concentrations (upwards of 0.05) are unlikely to occur. Refer to section 9 for more details.
- The availability of substantial food and attractive low-alcohol/non-alcoholic drink options alongside any alcohol.
- Strategies for restricting the consumption of private beverages inside organized social functions.

A frequently observed issue that contravenes all health and safety guidelines is binge drinking. Event organizers need to adhere to the following guidelines:

- No functions should be organized which have the consumption of alcohol as the main focus (e.g. pub crawls)
- A function must not include any activity that encourages the excessive consumption of alcohol (e.g. drinking contests).
- Alcohol drinking apparatuses that allow large volumes of alcohol to be consumed quickly are strictly prohibited.
- Pre-drinking is strongly discouraged.

- Alcohol should not be offered free of charge or below cost price, in order to discourage excessive drinking.

## 7. Advertising

Advertisements for functions should not over emphasise the availability of alcohol, or promote the excessive consumption of alcohol in any way. In advertising, equal reference must be made to the availability of non-alcoholic drinks. This is to ensure that attendance at any function is not induced or encouraged by the availability of alcohol. Sexist and demeaning advertising is always inappropriate.

## 8. Appropriate Behaviour

At all functions an appropriate standard of conduct must be maintained; property and the safety of persons must be protected; littering must be minimised; and noise restrictions applying to indoor/outdoor functions must be observed, according to the stipulations of the Environmental Law, and as prescribed by the guidelines of the Heads of Colleges.

## 9. Amount of Alcohol Provided

As noted above in section 6, the amount of alcohol available at a function should be controlled so that the anticipated allowance per person will be below the level likely to result in a blood alcohol concentration of 0.05. This is the upper limit for an environment that can be considered reasonably free of unacceptable risk to health and safety (but see section 10 below).

The maximum amounts of alcohol to be served according to the above criteria are to be calculated on the basis of the amounts per person set out in the following two tables (20% of very light or non-drinkers will be assumed).

### (a) Where male/female attendance is known:

Type of Liquor	First one and a half hours		Each extra hour	
	Alcohol (grams)	Liquor (litres)	Alcohol (grams)	Liquor (litres)
<b>For Males</b>				
Light strength beer or	30	1.5	10	0.5
Full strength Beer or	30	0.75	10	0.3
Light strength alcopops or	30	0.75	10	0.3
High strength alcopops or	30	0.6	10	0.2
Wine or	30	0.4	10	0.15
Spirits	30	0.1	10	0.04
<b>For Females</b>				
Light strength beer or	20	1.0	7	0.03
Full strength Beer or	20	0.5	7	0.2
Light strength alcopops or	20	0.5	7	0.2
High strength alcopops or	20	0.4	7	0.15
Wine or	20	0.25	7	0.1
Spirits	20	0.06	7	0.02

(b) Where male/female attendance is unknown (assuming 50:50 ratio):

Type of Liquor	First one and a half hours		Each extra hour	
	Alcohol (grams)	Liquor (litres)	Alcohol (grams)	Liquor (litres)
Light strength beer or	25	1.25	8.5	0.4
Full strength Beer	25	0.6	8.5	0.2
Light strength alcopops or	25	0.6	8.5	0.2
High strength alcopops or	25	0.5	8.5	0.17
Wine or	25	0.3	8.5	0.1
Spirits	25	0.08	8.5	0.03

See Appendix 1 for an additional table that provides guidelines for calculating amounts of alcohol when catering for an event, at a level that may still be considered low risk.

### 10. Low Risk Drinking

Although the above amounts are recommended for creating an environment that can be considered reasonably free of unacceptable risk to health and safety, the Heads of Colleges also wish to draw attention to the position taken by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) of Australia on low-risk drinking. The Council defines low-risk drinking as:

**Two standard drinks or less in any one day for men and women.**

Importantly, this guideline does not represent a 'safe' or 'no-risk' drinking level; neither is it a prescribed intake level. Rather, it represents a drinking level that, for healthy adults, will:

- keep the risk of accidents and injuries, or of developing alcohol related diseases, at tolerably low levels (compared with not drinking);
- reduce the lifetime risk of death from an alcohol-related injury or disease to less than 1 in 100 people who drink at that level.

The guideline drinking level is based on an average bodyweight. People with lower bodyweights (below 60 kg for men and 50 kg for women), should consider drinking less than the guideline level.

The NHMRC also warns that young adults up to the age of 25 are at particular risk of harm from alcohol consumption, in particular:

- Young adults continue to be greater risk takers than older adults, but still have poorly developed decision-making skills — factors that are reflected in the high levels of injuries sustained by this age group.

- Alcohol affects brain development in young people; thus, drinking, particularly binge drinking, at any time before brain development is complete (which is not until 25 years of age) may adversely affect later brain function.

**It is strongly recommended that Colleges take every opportunity to emphasize the dangers associated with excessive consumption of alcohol, stressing the potential danger to health and the heightened risk of injury and accidents. The aim must be to make this message as clear and widely known as the parallel messages emphasizing the dangers of smoking and drugs.**

## Appendix 1

Otherwise risk levels for the following patterns of drinking are as follows\*:

For risk of harm in the short-term:				For risk of harm in the long-term:			
	Low risk (standard drinks)	Risky (standard drinks)	High risk (standard drinks)		Low risk (standard drinks)	Risky (standard drinks)	High risk (standard drinks)
<b>Males</b> on any one day	Up to 6 No more than 3 days per week	7 to 10	11 or more	<b>Males</b> on an average day	Up to 4 per day	5 to 6 per day	7 or more per day
				Overall weekly level	Up to 28 per week	29 to 42 per week	43 or more per week
<b>Females</b> on any one day	Up to 4 No more than 3 days per week	5 to 6	7 or more	<b>Females</b> on an average day	Up to 2 per day	3 to 4 per day	5 or more per day
				Overall weekly level	up to 14 per week	15 to 18 per week	29 or more per week

**\*Note:**

- It is assumed that the drinks are consumed at a moderate rate to minimise intoxication, eg for men no more than 2 drinks in the first hour and 1 per hour thereafter, and for women, no more than 1 drink per hour.
- These guidelines apply to **persons of average or larger size**, ie above about 60 kg for men and 50kg for women. Persons of smaller than average body size should drink within lower levels.

(Table based on International Guide for Monitoring Alcohol Consumption and Related Harm, WHO, Geneva, 2000)

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