

Policy on Substance Abuse Prevention

Preamble:

Substance abuse is an enormous problem faced by colleges and universities today, which not only disrupts the learning environment but also adversely affects the fabric of university campus experience. Yenepoya (Deemed to be University) is well aware of its role in shaping young men and women to become the future leaders of our country, who will set the norms and establish behavioral patterns for the next generation. Therefore Yenepoya (Deemed to be University) has set a definite policy on Substance Abuse Prevention and related issues as an expression of commitment in providing a campus experience that allows students to rise to their full potential without any hindrance.

Guiding Principle of the Policy

The campus and surrounding community exert a profound influence on innumerable facets of student life. The social, academic, and co-curricular milieu is often shaped by the social norms and perceptions related to the use of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs on the campus. To prevent substance abuse and to create a secure, conducive atmosphere for learning among the students in the campus, Yenepoya (Deemed to be University) has formulated specific guidelines concerning the possession, use and/or distribution of substances of abuse.

Under the National Policy on Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) and UGC guidelines, Yenepoya (Deemed to be University) prohibits the unlawful possession, use, distribution, or manufacture or dispensing of substances of abuse including tobacco, alcohol or any other drugs and substances mentioned in The Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Act 1985 on premises owned or controlled by Yenepoya (Deemed to be University). The policy will apply to all members of the University including students, staff and faculty members and to all events or activities which are organized, conducted or sponsored by the University, whether they occur at the university or outside.

Objectives of the policy:

The Policy is formulated keeping in mind the following objectives

1. To ensure that the university campus is safe and healthy and fosters a learning culture
2. To create awareness about the adverse effects of Substance abuse as an enormous threat to individuals and society as a whole.
3. To take all necessary measures to prevent, limit and possibly eliminate ‘substance’ abuse in the Campus which can be a major obstacle to academic performance
4. To assist the students who seek help in handling substance abuse-related problems
5. To handle the reported cases of substance abuse objectively with compassion and caution

Substance abuse prevention activities and facilities of campus

Yenepoya (Deemed to be University) has specific programs in place that are intended to reduce the initiation of substance use, identify the users and offer help to those who need it. To spearhead the substance abuse prevention activities of the campus, Yenepoya (Deemed to be University) has established a Centre for Substance Abuse Prevention with satellite units in all constituent colleges.

1. Prevention Strategies

While the Yenepoya (Deemed to be University) takes a serious view of tobacco, alcohol and other substances of abuse on its campus, it strongly believes that the best way to maintain an appropriate campus environment concerning the same is through preventive education about the dangers of substance abuse

a.)Providing Healthy campus Environment

Campus environment including physical and social/cultural is of great importance in influencing student attitudes and actions towards substance abuse related issues. The university strives to create an environment that discourages substance use while promoting a healthier lifestyle and

offer substance-free recreational opportunities so that students can get together and have fun without the disruption and danger of tobacco, alcohol or other substances of abuse

b.)Policy and rule enforcement

Yenepoya (Deemed to be University) has set clear and consistent substance abuse prevention policies and consequences of violations. The University will adhere to the following guidelines concerning the possession, use and/or distribution of substances of abuse:

1. The possession, use and/or distribution of substances of abuse including tobacco, alcohol or any other drugs and substances mentioned in The Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Act 1985 are prohibited on premises owned or controlled by Yenepoya (Deemed to be) University.
2. Yenepoya (Deemed to be) University squads will carry out random checks on students/residential premises for substances of abuse.
3. Possession, use and/or distribution of substances of abuse will attract appropriate disciplinary action which may include expulsion.
4. Offenders will also come under the purview of Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act 1985 (NDPS Act) and will be liable for penal action as specified in the latter part of this policy document.

In furtherance of this purpose, a copy of the policy will be distributed to the newly joining students and their parents and an affidavit will be collected from students countersigned by parents. This policy will be reviewed biennially to assess the effectiveness of the university's Substance abuse prevention program.

c. Awareness programs/ Education

Educating students about the risks and harmful effects of substance abuse should be the foundation of all prevention efforts. By creating an understanding of what these substances can

do to their bodies, students can be encouraged to take an informed decision and may choose to stay away from these substances of abuse. Students who are struggling to resist peer pressure to use drugs will find strength through such awareness programs. Providing awareness programs are of particular importance to newly joined students of the University because these young adults are faced with new and exciting challenges during this transition period of their lives, along with potentially risky situations.

Accordingly, all the constituent institutions of the University should

- Have interaction with students joining the institution with their parents/ guardian to explain the University campus policy on Substance abuse related issues and consequences of violation also on University's expectations on parents in following up their ward's academic performance, attendance and money being spent.
- Include an orientation class in regular student Induction Program on adverse effects of tobacco ,alcohol, and other substances of abuse on health and behaviour
- Conduct further follow up sessions at least once a year.
- Encourage Student involvement in awareness programs by organizing programs through the student council of the institutions and encouraging student's participation in volunteer activities in helping others etc.

2. Early detection and support:

To protect the campus environment Yenepoya (Deemed to be University) gives equal importance in identifying the students who have begun substance and providing necessary assistance. Such students will be encouraged to put an end to these ruinous habits before they experience any negative consequences and before they can drag others into these habits. The members of the university community including faculty, staff, resident assistants, student representatives and others are alerted to pay attention to students who exhibit the signs of substance abuse such as behavioural disturbances, poor attendance record or a sudden decline in academic performance. If any such observations are made, the responsible personnel are to bring it to the notice of heads of the institution or the student welfare officer.

Compassionate attention will be ensured to the needs of those who are suspected to be using 'substance' / may seek help related to drug-related problems. Students will be encouraged to avail services which include referral for medical or counselling services or educational interventions or de-addiction services. Confidentiality in these circumstances will be protected in compliance with University policy

3. Disciplinary Procedures:

The university will impose disciplinary sanctions on students for violations of the Substance Abuse Prevention Policy. Sanctions will be imposed following the procedures of the disciplinary committee of the university.

The intensity of sanction will depend upon the nature/severity of the offence committed and whether the person involved is non habitual/habitual offender:

1. In case of suspicion, i.e. if the involvement of the person cannot be established, without doubt, a verbal warning will be given by the Head of the institution. The student will be reminded of existing government laws and punishment for use, possession, and distribution of 'substance' of abuse.
2. Confirmed case of violation actions taken as mentioned below

The record of a student involved in substance abuse has to be maintained by the institutional Substance Abuse Committee with all reports. If such a report is created on a student, he/she will consequentially become ineligible to receive any letters of recommendation or reference from the institution and he/she will not be considered for any accolades. Distribution or supply of 'substance' will be taken more seriously and disciplinary action will be more severe.

Consequences based on the number of times of violation of policy

Non habitual offenders/1st time Offence:

1. The Head of the institution will give a written warning to the student, mentioning a disciplinary action that will be initiated on the repetition of the offence.

CENTER FOR SUBSTANCE ABUSE PREVENTION YENEPOYA (DEEMED TO BE UNIVERSITY)

2. A notification will be sent to parent/guardian summoning him/her for a meeting with the Head of the institution, the Institutional Substance Abuse Prevention Committee and Mentor
3. The student will be referred for counseling.

Non habitual offenders/ 2nd time Offence:

1. The Head of the institution will notify the parent/guardian and call him/her for a meeting with the Institutional Substance Abuse Committee /Mentor.
2. The student will be suspended from academic activities for a minimum period of one week. During the period of suspension, the student will not be eligible for any privileges and will have no access to any facilities or services, including the use of library facility.
3. The student will attend counseling sessions along with his/her parent/ guardian or a de-addiction process as applicable during the period of suspension. The rules of attendance will be applied with respect to eligibility to appear for university examinations.
4. The student will resume regular classes on satisfactory report of the Institutional Substance Abuse Prevention Committee and any condition put forth by the institution, on him/her.

Habitual offenders/ 3rd time Offence:

1. The Head of the institution will notify the parent/guardian summoning him/her for a meeting with the Head of the institution
2. Suspension from the institution for one term/semester with academic work. During the period of suspension, the student will not be eligible for any privileges and will have no access to any facilities or services including residing in the hostel of the institution/university. The rules of attendance will be applied with respect to eligibility to appear for university examinations.
3. The student will have to go through more intense de-addiction process in a recognized de-addiction centre for counseling and rehabilitation. On the completion of the suspension period, in order to obtain permission to resume the classes, a wellness and fitness certificate of the student from authorized person should be submitted to the Substance Abuse Prevention Committee for review.

4. The student will have to attend the counseling sessions arranged by the institution, for regular follow-up.

Habitual offenders/ Subsequent Violations:

In case of any subsequent violation, the student will be dismissed from the institution. Such students will be subject to the rules of the University in the matter of fees payable by him/her.

In addition to the above disciplinary actions decided by University, as required by law, the university will also cooperate with law enforcement authorities in referring for prosecution the unlawful possession, use, or distribution of alcohol and illicit drugs by students or employees on university premises.

Conclusion:

Yenepoya (Deemed to be University) is obliged to put into practice the strategies put forward on Substance Abuse Prevention Policy document for the eradication of Substances of Abuse in the campuses. This is a genuine attempt to ensure campus safety and to tackle one of the major obstacles to academic performance. Stopping student substance abuse will also boost the quality of life of students and bring huge dividends tomorrow in terms of career advancement and personal satisfaction.
