



# Biennial Review of Compliance with the Drug-Free Schools and Campuses Act

2021-2023

Alcohol and Other Drug Committee

Division of Student Affairs

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# Introduction and Overview

## 1.1 PURPOSE

This report on Western Carolina University's alcohol and other drug (AOD) policies, programs and services is prepared in compliance with the US Department of Education Drug-Free Schools and Campuses Regulations, UNC (University of North Carolina) Policy on Illegal Drugs (1300.1), and Western Carolina University Policy #38: Illegal Drugs and Illegal Use or Abuse of Alcohol.

## 1.2 BACKGROUND ON DRUG-FREE SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES ACT

The Drug Free Schools and Campuses Regulations (34 CFR Part 86) of the Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act (DFSCA) require Western Carolina University (WCU) to certify it has implemented programs to prevent the abuse of alcohol and use or distribution of illicit drugs by WCU students both on its premises and as a part of any of its activities. At a minimum each institution of higher education must annually distribute the following in writing to all students:

1. Standards of conduct that clearly prohibit the unlawful possession, use or distribution of illicit drugs and alcohol by students;
2. A description of the legal sanctions under local, state, or federal law for the unlawful possession or distribution of illicit drugs and alcohol;
3. A description of any drug or alcohol counseling, treatment, or rehabilitation or reentry programs that are available to students; and
4. A clear statement that the institution will impose sanctions on students and a description of those sanctions, up to and including expulsion and referral for prosecution, for violations of the standards of conduct.

## 1.3 REQUIREMENTS OF WESTERN CAROLINA UNIVERSITY

The law further requires that the institution conduct a biennial review of its program with the following objectives:

1. Determining the effectiveness of the policy and implementing changes to the AOD programs if they are needed; and
2. Ensuring that the sanctions developed are enforced consistently.

The biennial review must also include a determination as to:

1. The number of drug- and alcohol-related violations and fatalities occurring on the campus or as part of their activities that are reported to campus officials; and
2. The number and types of sanctions WCU imposes on students as a result of such violations or fatalities.

# Biennial Review Process

## 2.1 TIME FRAME

The intention of this document is to meet the legal requirements of conducting a biennial review and also summarize the programs and activities related to AOD prevention at Western Carolina University during the 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 academic years.

## 2.2 BIENNIAL REVIEW PROCESS

The following campus departments provided information for the biennial report:

- Claire Allison, Health and Wellness Education
- Zachary Williams, Department of Student Community Ethics
- Melissa Day, Department of Student Community Ethics
- Keri Clark, Department of Student Community Ethics
- Jacob Deal, University Police Department
- Brian Boyer, Residential Living
- Trisha Ray, Human Resources
- Amber Ellington, Counseling and Psychological Services
- Bashaun Smith, Former Dean of Students
- Betsy Aspinwall, Dean of Students

Biennial Reports are kept in the Office of Student Affairs at Western Carolina University. Additionally, the most recent Biennial Report is published on the Health and Wellness Education website.

The following information was examined for the biennial review:

- Various resources available to students regarding substance use disorders
- Western Carolina University Policies
- Western Carolina University Code of Student Conduct, including violations related to any alcohol and/or drug policy.
- Local, State and Federal Mandates

## Annual Policy Notification Process

### 3.1 ANNUAL POLICY NOTIFICATION PROCESS TO STUDENTS

Western Carolina University's policies related to AOD are distributed to all enrolled students via email every Fall and Spring semester. The written policies are also published on the Western Carolina University's Policy website and referenced in the Code of Student Conduct. Additionally, all new employees receive information related to AOD policies at onboarding orientation.

### 3.2 UNIVERSITY POLICIES RELATED TO AOD

3.2.1 [University Policy 38, Illegal Drugs and Illegal Use or Abuse of Alcohol](#)

3.2.2 [University Policy 45, Smoking and Vaping Policies](#)

3.2.3 [University Policy 78, Policy and Procedures for SHRA Employees](#)

3.2.4 [University Policy 81, Alcohol Beverages](#)

3.2.5 [University Policy 103, Tailgating](#)

3.2.6 [University Policy 107, Employee Assistance Program](#)

3.2.7 [University Policy 129, Title IX Sexual Harassment](#)

## AOD Violations and Sanctions

## 4.1 SANCTIONS

Factors that affect the severity of the sanction may include the present demeanor of the student, past conduct record of the student, the nature of the incident, the severity of any damage, injury, or harm resulting from the incident, and whether the incident was motivated by bias based on actual or perceived race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, political affiliation, or veteran status.

At the discretion of the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs, Dean of Students, or designee, the imposition of any sanction may be deferred during the duration of an appeal. Students requesting a deferment of a sanction must submit a written request which clearly outlines the rationale for the request to the Dean of Students or designee. However, at the discretion of the Dean of Students or designees, a sanction may be imposed upon written notice at any time after a formal resolution if the Respondent has been found responsible for a violation of the Code of Student Conduct.

One or more of the sanctions listed below may be imposed upon a student for violation of the Code.

### 4.1.1 Sanctions for Minor Violations

- A. Community Restitution - an Educational Outreach Assessment (EOA) imposed to provide a work-related experience for Students to help others in a positive fashion. Respondents who do not meet their community restitution deadlines will be assessed a \$75 fee as an Incomplete Sanction Assessment.
- B. Educational Outreach Assessment (EOA) - a sanction that provides a tangible learning opportunity for Respondents. Through this sanction, the Respondent becomes an active contributor to the education of self and peers. An EOA may be financial, non-financial, or become financial if a Respondent does not complete a non-financial sanction.
- C. Educational Sanctions - participating in a specific activity, course, event, or program, receiving specific instruction, completing a research/reflective assignment, etc. The Respondent is responsible for related expenses.
- D. Parental Notification – Parents and guardians are notified when students are found responsible for violations of the Code related to alcohol and/or controlled substances, as outlined in Policy 72 - Family Educational Rights and Privacy.
- E. Probation - written notice of a violation of specified regulations and a restriction by which a Respondent is permitted to remain in the University under prescribed conditions. Probation is for a designated period of time and includes the possibility of the imposition of more severe disciplinary sanctions if the student is found to be violating any Code regulations during the probationary period.
- F. Restitution - compensation for personnel resources, loss, damage, and/or injury. Restitution may take the form of appropriate monetary or material replacement and may be imposed by the Dean of Students, Director of Student Community Ethics, or designee.

- G. Restrictions - denial of specified privileges for a designated period of time including, but not limited to, attendance at events, access to facilities, participation in non- academic activities, and interpersonal contact restrictions.
- H. Residence Hall Suspension - separation of the Respondent from the residence halls for a definite period of time after which the Respondent is eligible to return. Conditions for readmission may be specified.
- I. Residence Hall Expulsion - permanent separation of the Respondent from the residence halls.

4.1.2 Sanctions for Serious Violations

- A. University Suspension - separation of the Respondent from the University for a definite period of time, after which the Respondent is eligible to apply for readmission. Conditions for readmission may be specified and a registration hold will remain on your account. The sanction of University Suspension is recorded in the University of North Carolina Suspension and Expulsion database.
- B. University Expulsion - permanent separation of the Respondent from the University and any University of North Carolina System constituent institution. Registration hold will remain on your account. The sanction of University Expulsion is recorded in the University of North Carolina Suspension and Expulsion database.

4.2 SUMMARY STATISTICS ON CODE OF STUDENT CONDUCT AOD VIOLATIONS

The Department of Student Community Ethics (DSCE) oversees the Code of Student Conduct and adjudicates alleged violations of AOD policies. Table 1 shows the reported AOD-related violations over the last 4 years.

Table 1: Responsible Findings for AOD Violations AY 2019-20 through 2022-23

	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
<b>Alcohol Related Code Violations</b>	184	88	140	139
<b>% Change from Previous Year</b>	-21.4%	-52.2%	+59.1%	-0.7%
<b>Drug Related Code Violations</b>	68	64	81	61
<b>% Change from Previous Year</b>	-37.0%	-5.9%	+26.6%	-24.7%

Variations in the reported AOD violations have several causal and correlated factors, including trends in overall student enrollment as well as changes to policies, procedures, and intervention strategies. Following AY 2020-21, which likely demonstrated a decrease in both alcohol- and drug-related violations due to the COVID-19 pandemic, there was an expected increase in violations. In 2022-23, alcohol-related violations stayed nearly the same as the previous year, while drug-related violations decreased by nearly 25%. It is possible that this improvement is related to a more caring approach to violations with an emphasis on education and support, in addition to increased programming related to substance use from Health and Wellness Education and University Police.

### 4.3 SUMMARY STATISTICS ON CODE OF STUDENT CONDUCT AOD SANCTIONS

Any student found responsible for violating the WCU Code of Student Conduct may be subject to one or more recommended sanctions. While each student’s alleged violation is processed on a case-by-case basis, recommended sanctions are maintained to ensure that students found responsible for AOD violations are treated in a consistent manner.

The recommended sanctions are reviewed annually and serve as guidelines for hearing officers. Since Spring 2021, no significant changes were made to the minimum sanctions related to AOD policy violations. A typical first offense sanction for an AOD policy violation includes an assignment to complete an educational program (i.e., AlcoholEDU for Sanctions/Marijuana 101), a charge to pay for the educational program, and parental notification. Table 2 shows the AOD educational assignment sanctions from the last 4 years.

The percentage of students completing the sanctioned alcohol education course reflects improvements in completion since AY 2020-21. Over the course of this Biennial Review, improvements were also demonstrated in completion of the marijuana education course. If students do not complete sanctions by the assigned due date, the Division of Student Affairs can charge a fee to the student’s account.

*Table 2: AOD Assignment Sanctions for AY 2019-20 through 2022-23*

	<b>2019-20</b>	<b>2020-21</b>	<b>2021-22</b>	<b>2022-23</b>
<b>Enrolled in Sanctioned Alcohol Education Course</b>	27	69	121	113
<b>Completed Sanctioned Alcohol Education Course</b>	24	40	77	77
<b>% Completion</b>	88.9%	58.0%	63.6%	68.1%
<b>Enrolled in Marijuana Education Course</b>	16	42	70	45
<b>Completed Marijuana Education Course</b>	13	32	41	31
<b>% Completion</b>	81.3%	76.2%	58.6%	68.9%

### 4.4 SUMMARY STATISTICS ON AOD-RELATED CRIMES

In response to AOD-related calls involving students, University Police Officers can issue a University Judicial Citation (UJC) and refer students to DSCE, or issue a state citation with or without a physical arrest. The course of action is determined at the discretion of the responding Officer on a case-by-case basis. UPD will refer any student with a conduct violation to DSCE regardless of whether a state citation was issued.

Table 3 shows the approximate number of UJCs and state citations that involved alcohol and/or other drugs during AY 2021-22 and AY 2022-23. The increase in incidents may be related to improved methods

for capturing this information and communication between University Police, DSCE, and the Division of Student Affairs. It is also likely that the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic led to fewer referrals and arrests in AY 2021-22.

*Table 3: AOD-related crimes for AY 2021-22 through 2022-23*

	<b>2021-22</b>	<b>2022-23</b>
<b>Alcohol-Related UJCs</b>	54	125
<b>Alcohol-Related State Citations</b>	7	11
<b>Drug-Related UJCs</b>	52	68
<b>Drug-Related State Citations</b>	29	28

## AOD POLICY AND ENFORCEMENT

### 5.1 UNIVERSITY POLICY OVERSIGHT AND ENFORCEMENT

Policies issued by the UNC Board of Governors and WCU regulate the conduct of University activity to serve the interests of the University and its faculty, staff, and students in carrying out its mission.

Compliance with University policies is a condition of enrollment for University students and of employment for faculty and staff. Violations of University policy can lead to disciplinary action including, in appropriate cases, expulsion for students or discharge from employment for faculty and staff. It is therefore important that all members of the faculty and staff, and all members of the student body, are aware of the requirements of applicable University policies.

University Policy #1 governs the development and approval of University policies.

## AOD COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAMS

The AOD education efforts at Western Carolina University are designed to benefit the entire academic community through comprehensive programming. Programming is developed and implemented in order to educate students proactively and reactively on a population, high-risk group, and individual level.

The Assistant Director for Health and Wellness Education is a full-time professional staff member in the Division of Student Affairs who provides guidance and leadership on AOD programming. The Assistant Director chairs the AOD Committee. This committee meets regularly and reviews campus wide AOD initiatives and programming, as well as contributes to



the statistics and information for the Drug and Alcohol Prevention (DAAPP) and Biennial Reports. The AOD Committee's membership includes representation from the following departments: Department of Student Community Ethics, Counseling and Psychological Services, Human Resources, Health Services, Intercultural Affairs, Campus Recreation and Wellness, Greek Student Engagement and Development, Residential Living, University Police, Department of Campus Activities, and Athletics.

## 6.1 INDIVIDUAL INTERVENTIONS AND RESOURCES

**BASICS:** BASICS (Brief Alcohol Screening and Intervention for College Students) is a preventative and evidence-based intervention designed to help students make better alcohol-use decisions. Students have the opportunity to explore their substance use in a non-judgmental setting and learn harm-reduction techniques. BASICS is utilized as a sanction for Code of Student Conduct violations. In 2022, WCU implemented a voluntary option of BASICS. From Fall 2021-Spring 2023, 12 students completed the BASICS program, one of which was voluntary. 20 students were assigned BASICS as a sanction and 11 fulfilled the requirement. Students who do not complete BASICS as sanctioned are charged a fee.

**ComPsych GuidanceResources®:** ComPsych is a university-sponsored program that provides employees and their dependents with 24/7 confidential support, resources, and information for personal and work-life issues. These services are provided at no charge or at a discounted rate. Emotional support is provided for concerns such as marital, relationship and family problems; stress, anxiety, and depression; grief and loss, job pressures and substance use. The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) also provides work-life solutions, legal guidance, financial resources, and online support for on-demand trainings and videos.

**eCHECKUP TO GO:** In 2023, WCU added eCHECKUP TO GO to the available resources for alcohol education. eCHECKUP TO GO is a free online survey tool that allows students, faculty, and staff to learn more about their personal alcohol use. Participants receive instant, personalized feedback including a custom BAC (blood alcohol content) chart, how much money they spend on drinks each month, and other valuable information. Since its implementation, 16 people have completed eCHECKUP TO GO.

**Ginger:** Ginger is a University-sponsored employee resource for mental health support. Ginger offers 24/7 in-app text-based coaching, self-care resources, as well as video-based therapy and psychiatry. Resources and support are available for a variety of concerns, including mindfulness, relationships, alcohol use, anxiety, and stress management.

## 6.2 GROUP PROGRAMMING

**Alcohol Awareness Week:** Held at the end of October each year. This week-long event hosts 4-5 programs. In 2022, five programs focused on alcohol awareness and education. More than 270 students participated in events throughout the week in 2022. Campus partners participating in Alcohol Awareness Week included members of the AOD Committee, specifically the Department of Student Community Ethics, Campus Recreation and Wellness, Residential Living, Counseling & Psychological Services, and University Police.

**Alcohol Risk Awareness Program:** This program reviews the dangers of alcohol consumption and abuse. WCU University Police Officers provide discussion about the criminal process and legal ramifications for an individual both on and off campus. The use of beer and marijuana goggles are available for this program. In Fall 2021 and Spring 2022, there were six alcohol risk awareness programs. In the 2022-2023 academic year, there were 11 alcohol risk awareness programs.

**College Panhellenic Council Alcohol Education:** This program is offered to members of College Panhellenic Council and including alcohol education related to harm-reduction techniques, standard drinks, blood alcohol content, alcohol overdose, and on-campus resources, including BASICS, eCHECKUP TO GO, Health Services, and Counseling and Psychological Services.

**Drug and Alcohol Risk Awareness Program:** This program identifies commonly abused drugs and the risk factors involved. Western Carolina University Police Officers provide dialogue about the criminal process and legal ramifications for an individual both on and off campus. Confiscated drug paraphernalia is available for attendees to view. In Fall 2022 and Spring 2023, there were two drug and alcohol risk awareness programs. Additionally, there were seven crime prevention and services programs, which include drug and alcohol risk awareness, in various residence halls and classroom buildings across campus.

**Fact or Cap:** Fact or Cap is a social media marketing campaign intended to address misconceptions related to alcohol and provide information and harm-reduction techniques. This series focuses on binge drinking trends, including BORGs (blackout rage gallons) and blood alcohol content. 139 students engaged with this series on Instagram.

**Safe Spring Break:** Held the week before Spring Break each year. More than 120 students participated in Safe Spring Break programming in 2023. Two of the programs held during this week focused solely on alcohol education and harm-reduction. Some activities included cornhole with alcohol trivia and can bowling. Students were also asked to pour a standard drink without measuring to demonstrate the importance of understanding standard drinks and their impact on blood alcohol content.

### 6.3 UNIVERSAL INTERVENTIONS AND RESOURCES

**AlcoholEDU/Alcohol and Other Drugs:** All incoming students, whether entering in the Fall or Spring semester, are highly encouraged to participate in the AlcoholEDU online course. In Fall 2021, 2,271 undergraduate students completed AlcoholEDU, and in Spring 2022, 259 undergraduate students completed the course.

**Vector:** In the 2022-2023 academic year, Western Carolina University adopted a new alcohol education program from Vector Solutions called Alcohol and Other Drugs. In Fall 2022, 2,190 students completed the course, while 179 completed the course in Spring 2023. Completion in Fall 2022 (90.5%) decreased from 98.0% the previous year. Prior to Fall 2022, participation in AlcoholEDU was mandatory. Students who did not complete the course had a hold placed on their account preventing registration. In Fall 2022, WCU adopted Vector and the alcohol education course was no longer mandatory, but encouraged, which likely contributed to the

decrease in completion rate. Additional courses are available through Vector, including Alcohol Awareness for Students, Alcohol and Other Drugs, Alcohol and Other Drugs (Refresher), and Hazing Awareness and Prevention.

#### 6.4 CAMPUS RESOURCES

**Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS):** Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) offers goal-directed counseling services for students at no cost, including services for students who face challenges related to substance use. Additionally, CAPS offers consultations to parents, staff and faculty who are concerned about a student.

CAPS can assist students in locating additional substance use treatment if they need longer term or more intensive treatment.

Students are eligible for services while they are enrolled in the semester that they want to receive counseling services. A student is eligible for services throughout the summer if he/she/they have continuous enrollment from Spring to Fall.

CAPS is accredited by The International Accreditation of Counseling Services (IACS).

For the 2021-2022 academic year, WCU students engaged in services at CAPS self-reported an average score of 1.53 on a scale from 0 (no distress) to 4 (elevated distress) for alcohol concerns at initial session, as compared to 0.66 at end of treatment. This is an average score reduction of 0.87. The national average reported by students utilizing university counseling centers during this same period showed an average score of 1.54 at initial session and 0.96 at end of treatment, a score reduction of 0.58.

For the 2022-2023 academic year, WCU students engaged in services at CAPS self-reported an average score of 1.43 on a scale from 0 (no distress) to 4 (elevated distress) for alcohol concerns at initial session, as compared to 0.62 at end of treatment. This is an average score reduction of 0.81. The national average reported by students utilizing university counseling centers during this same period showed an average score of 1.54 at initial session and 0.96 at end of treatment, a score reduction of 0.58.

These scores show a higher reduction of alcohol use concerns after engaging in services offered through CAPS when compared to the national average reported at university counseling centers for both AY 2021-22 and AY 2022-23.

**Department of Student Community Ethics (DSCE):** DSCE administers the student conduct process for Western Carolina and works to support an honest and responsible community. Under the process, students are held accountable for adhering to established community standards as laid out in the Student Handbook, Community Creed, and Western Carolina University's Code of Student Conduct.

DSCE also provides the university community with educational programming on AOD issues and supervises educational sanctioning for students found responsible of violating WCU's Student Code of Conduct.

**Health and Wellness Education:** Health and Wellness Education manages AOD education at Western Carolina University. The mission for AOD education is to promote healthy choices with an emphasis on the importance of reducing high-risk behavior, illegal AOD use, harmful substance use and related issues in order to empower and retain successful, healthy and involved students.

Catamount Wellness Ambassadors are peer health educators who serve as liaisons between Health and Wellness Education and the WCU student body to promote health and wellbeing on campus. Wellness Ambassadors deepen their understanding of health and wellness topics while gaining important leadership skills, including public speaking and program planning, implementation, and evaluation.

**Human Resources Employee Relations:** WCU's Human Resources Department includes an Employee Relations unit which helps employees by providing advice and consultation in matters relating to personnel policies and procedures. Employee Relations staff also assist employees with personal issues by providing employee assistance benefits.

**Office of the Dean of Students:** The Dean of Students Office promotes a campus community that creates opportunities, educates students on the value of living in a diverse, dynamic global community and encourages the personal and professional development of each student. They support maintaining an inclusive, safe, student-focused environment. Students receive proactive education on developing positive, healthy relationships and appropriate communication and conflict management skills as well as making informed decisions pertaining to AOD use.

**Student Concern Response Team (SCRT):** SCRT utilizes a case-management based approach to actively seek out students having difficulties and/or demonstrating concerning behaviors. They are charged with ensuring, to the extent possible, coordinated efforts to provide services of University Departments are made available to the involved student(s). In AY 2021-2022, 3 SCRT reports were submitted related to alcohol and/or substance use. In AY 2022-2023, 8 SCRT reports were submitted related to alcohol and/or substance use. This increase in reports could be related to increased awareness and utilization of the SCRT system.

## Recommendations for Next Biennium

1. Attain formal charge for the Alcohol and Other Drug Committee.
2. Promote the utilization of the BASICS (Brief Alcohol Screening and Intervention for College Students) program and eCHECKUP TO GO self-assessment.
3. Increase number of programs offered related to alcohol and other drug education and awareness.

4. Utilize data from Vector courses to inform AOD programming and initiatives.
5. Evaluate effectiveness of AOD programming through program evaluations.