

SMOKING AND VAPING PROCEDURE

Policy Name – Smoking and Vaping Procedure	
Version number: 1	
Policy Owner	Policy Author/Reviewer
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Approving body	Date of approval
Vice Chancellor/SLT	14 th October 2024
	Equality Screened
	In progress
	Next Review date
	October 2026
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This document can be made available on request, in alternative formats and in minority languages to meet the needs of those who are not fluent in English.	



HEALTH AND SAFETY Smoking and Vaping - Procedure

Originally Issued	June 2015 (UUHSW33)	Contact	HSW
Latest Issue	October 2024	Status	Current
Approved by	Vice Chancellor/SLT	Next review date	October 2026

The current version is available on the Health & Safety website at:
[Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policies and Procedures - Ulster University](#)

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1 PURPOSE

The purpose of this Policy is to protect all members of the University from the harmful effects of second-hand smoke, to encourage quitting smoking and/or vaping, reduce the uptake of smoking and/or vaping and to ensure compliance with legislation and that everyone is aware of their rights and responsibilities.

2 SCOPE & COMMENCEMENT

This policy applies to all University staff, students, visitors and contractors and it covers all University buildings and vehicles with effect from October 2024.

3 BACKGROUND

Smoking causes many diseases and health problems, some fatal, among both smokers and non-smokers. In Northern Ireland, around 2,300 people die from smoking related illnesses each year.

The University acknowledges public health advice that vaping is significantly less harmful than tobacco smoking and may be used as a tool to help quit smoking. Staff and students using vapes to stop smoking should seek advice from the support / assistance services listed below (section 7).

As Public Health Agency (Northern Ireland) states, 'If you don't smoke or vape, keep it that way – don't start'.

4 DEFINITIONS

Smoking

- a) Refers to smoking tobacco or anything which contains tobacco, or smoking any other substance.
- b) Smoking includes being in possession of lit tobacco or of anything lit which contains tobacco, or being in possession of any other lit substance in a form in which it could be smoked.

Vaping / Electronic Cigarettes

- a) The act of using an e-cigarette is often referred to as 'vaping'. Electronic cigarettes work by heating a solution of water, flavouring, propylene glycol (or vegetable glycerine) and, typically, but not restricted to, nicotine, to create a vapour that the user inhales.

Exclusion Areas are the outside of buildings, where smoking is not permitted. These areas are set up to prevent second-hand smoke from entering buildings or affecting others.

5 KEY LEGAL REQUIREMENT

Smoking is prohibited:

- i) Within University buildings and substantially enclosed spaces;

- ii) Within the exclusion zones defined at the entrances to University buildings (i.e. normally within 10m of an entrance/exit);
- iii) Within vehicles owned and operated by the University;
- iv) Within vehicles used during University business to transport more than one University employee or student, and
- v) At any other place where tobacco smoke can enter into any University building or vehicle.

In order to ensure the effective application of this policy, the use of vapes / e-cigarettes is also prohibited in these areas.

Smoking Zones

Locations

UUJ – Yellow frame shelter adjacent to the commercial block

UUC – Ground floor entrance to J Block

UUM – Opposite the main entrance to Block MD

Under the legislation a person smoking in a smoke-free place may be subject to a fixed-penalty fine of £50 or to a maximum fine on summary conviction of £1,000. Additionally, if the University fails to prevent smoking within smoke-free premises, it may be subject to a maximum fine on summary conviction of £2,500.

<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/smoking-and-vaping-regulations-northern-ireland#toc-6>

In order to meet the requirements of the legislation and to protect the University from prosecution, in addition to any statutory sanction that may be enforced, breaches of this Policy (including the use of vapes in prohibited areas) may be subject to the disciplinary process for both staff and students. Visitors and contractors who breach the policy may be excluded from University premises. People smoking tobacco products or using vapes in prohibited areas are required to give a courteous response when asked to extinguish them.

Should anyone notice non-compliance with this policy they may, in the first instance, raise the issue with the individual(s). They may also wish, at this stage, to draw the matter to the attention of the Estates Patrol Team. If the issue remains unresolved, they should contact a member of UU Management and/or the Estates Patrol Team.

6 RESPONSIBILITIES

Please refer to the main Health, Safety and Wellbeing policy on the University's website for further details on roles and the associated levels of responsibility, using the link below.

https://www.ulster.ac.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0007/125647/Health-Safety-and-Wellbeing-Policy.pdf

7 ASSISTANCE

Assistance will be given to staff and students who wish to stop smoking and/or vaping by such means as:

- GP/local pharmacist services
- Local smoking cessation support services
- University health promotion initiatives
- Further Information and Guidance can be found at the below links:
 - <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/quit-smoking/nhs-stop-smoking-services-help-you-quit/>
 - <https://www.stopsmokingni.info/ways-quit/local-help-and-support>
 - <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/smoking>
 - <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stop-smoking-treatments/>
 - <https://www.nhs.uk/better-health/quit-smoking/benefits-of-quitting-smoking/>
 - <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/quit-smoking/stopping-smoking-mental-health-benefits/>
 - <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/quit-smoking/using-e-cigarettes-to-stop-smoking/>
 - <https://www.nhs.uk/better-health/quit-smoking/vaping-to-quit-smoking>

8 REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

1. The Health and Safety at Work (Northern Ireland) Order (1978)
2. The Smoking (Northern Ireland) Order 2006
3. The Smoke-Free (Signs) Regulations (NI) 2007