

ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISION	STAF Division of Student Affairs
POLICY NUMBER	STAF 3.02
POLICY TITLE	Alcohol Policy and Guidelines for the University Community
SCOPE OF POLICY	USC Columbia
DATE OF REVISION	June 17, 2025
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	Vice President for Student Affairs and Academic Support
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE	Division of Student Affairs and Academic Support

PURPOSE

This policy governs the consumption, possession, distribution and sale of alcoholic beverages (including beer, wine and distilled spirits) on the University of South Carolina Columbia campus, in or at any university-owned, -leased or -controlled building, grounds or other facility and by members of the university community.

DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this policy, these terms are defined as follows:

Alcohol Event Registration: The process through which an individual or organization must participate in order to host any function involving the consumption of alcohol in a university-owned, -leased or -controlled building, grounds or other facility.

Campus: Buildings, grounds or other facilities that are owned, leased or controlled by the University of South Carolina Columbia.

Faculty: All employees who hold a tenure-track or non-tenure track title as defined by University policy [ACAF 1.06 Academic Titles for Faculty and Unclassified Academic Staff Positions](#).

Guest: A person who is not a student, faculty or staff of the university who is attending an event or participating in an activity on campus.

Off Campus: Buildings, grounds or other facilities that are not owned, leased or controlled by the University of South Carolina Columbia.

Registered Student Organization: a student organization that is currently active on the University of South Carolina Campus, has fulfilled all responsibilities of a student organization and represents a group of students who desire to come together to support a particular view, explore common interests or accomplish identified tasks.

Staff: All employees who hold a classified State title and a State class or an unclassified academic staff title as defined by University policy [ACAF 1.06 Academic Titles for Faculty and Unclassified Academic Staff Positions](#).

Student: A person who is currently enrolled at the university, or who is accepted for admission or readmission to the university, or who has been enrolled at the university in a prior semester or summer session and is eligible to continue enrollment in the semester or summer session that immediately follows, or who is attending an educational program sponsored by the university while that person is on campus, or who engaged in prohibited conduct at a time when the individual met the above criteria. Individuals who are not currently enrolled at the university remain subject to the disciplinary process for conduct that occurred while they were enrolled.

Student Care and Outreach Team (Care Team): A group of qualified USC professionals whose mission is to balance the individual needs of the student and those of the greater campus community, provide a structured positive method for addressing student behaviors that impact the university community and may involve mental health and/or safety issues, manage each case individually, initiate appropriate intervention without resorting to punitive measures and enhance quality of care for students.

POLICY STATEMENT

As an institution in higher education and in compliance with the Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act of 1989, the University of South Carolina Columbia places significant value on the concepts of healthy and responsible decision-making for all members of the community. The university supports enforcement of South Carolina's laws in regard to consumption, possession and sale of alcoholic beverages. This policy applies to every function or event, including, but not limited to, receptions, dinners, banquets and campus-wide activities sponsored by organizations or individuals associated with the University of South Carolina Columbia.

PROCEDURES

A. General Guidelines for the University Community

1. No person under the age of 21 may purchase, possess or consume any alcoholic beverages anywhere on the University of South Carolina Columbia campus.
2. Persons of any age may not sell or give any alcoholic beverage to a person under 21 years of age.
3. Persons and their guests 21 years of age and older may possess and consume alcoholic beverages in individual campus residence hall rooms or apartments on campus but not in the common areas of a residence hall on campus (e.g., lounges, lobbies, hallways, balconies, decks, bathrooms, study areas, etc.).
4. Common source containers of alcohol (e.g, kegs or punch that is self-served) are not permitted on the University of South Carolina Columbia campus at any time.
5. All events sponsored by a university entity that involve alcoholic beverages in university-owned, -leased or -controlled buildings, grounds or other facilities must be registered through the Substance Abuse Prevention and Education Office

by submitting the [Alcohol Event Registration Form](#). All events with alcohol must include monitoring for legal age, provide food and non-alcoholic drinks, and last no longer than four hours. All events with alcohol must have a trained Event Supervisor from the sponsoring entity who has attended an [Alcohol Policy Training Workshop](#).

6. No alcohol may be served or consumed in any university-owned, -leased or -controlled building, grounds or other facility except as provided in the [Alcohol Event Registration Form](#).
7. Any container of alcohol being transported must be sealed and covered while on the University of South Carolina Columbia campus.
8. No person, organization or corporation may sell any kind of alcoholic beverage on the University of South Carolina Columbia campus, unless there is an alcohol permit to do so.
9. Events on campus must purchase and serve alcohol through the contract of a trained, qualified and properly insured caterer or bartender with an appropriate liquor license from the Department of Revenue. University faculty, staff or students are not permitted to serve alcohol unless employed by the contracted bartending service.
10. Co-sponsorship with an alcohol distributor, charitable organization or tavern (an establishment generating more than half of its annual gross sales from alcohol) where alcohol is given away, sold or otherwise provided to those present is prohibited.

B. Guidelines for Students

Students (as defined above) must adhere to policy [STAF 6.26 Student Code of Conduct](#) and the General Guidelines for the University Community (Section A of this policy), as well as all federal, state and local laws and ordinances. In addition, students must be aware of the following:

1. FERPA/Parental Notification: In the following circumstances, the university may disclose the result of a disciplinary proceeding to a parent or guardian if the student is under the age of 21 at the time of the incident, and the proceeding has resulted in a violation of university drug or alcohol policies or any federal, state or local law:
 - a. an outcome that places the student on housing or conduct probation (official notice that any additional offense may affect the student's ability to live on campus or attend the university) or that results in removal from University Housing or the university (e.g., suspension or expulsion).
 - b. the second violation of this Alcohol Policy and/or the alcohol- and drug-related misconduct behaviors in [STAF 6.26 Student Code of Conduct](#).

- c. any incident in which the use of alcohol has resulted in hospitalization. Notification will come from the Student Care and Outreach Team chair or designee.

For more information or for a [FERPA Waiver to Release Information](#), refer to the [Office of Student Conduct](#).

2. Students arrested off campus may be subject to university disciplinary action when their conduct violates university standards. Failure to report this information to the [Office of Student Conduct](#) can result in a “Failure to Comply” charge and may result in further disciplinary action.
3. Outcomes
 - a. Students and/or student organizations are responsible for abiding by university policies, including the [STAF 6.26 Student Code of Conduct](#), as well as all state and federal laws and ordinances, whether on or off campus. Failure to do so can result in criminal, civil and university proceedings and outcomes.
 - b. Students and student organizations that are in violation of the law are also violating the [STAF 6.26 Student Code of Conduct](#) and can be held accountable under both the legal system and the university.
 - c. Suspected violations of the Alcohol Policy, as well as the [STAF 6.26 Student Code of Conduct](#), will be referred to appropriate university offices.
 - d. Outcomes for the violation of university policies are based on the severity and frequency of the violation. Outcomes may include, but are not limited to:
 - completion of educational and risk reduction programs
 - probation
 - individual screenings
 - research papers
 - educational counseling groups
 - suspension of student organization status
 - suspension from use of university facilities for a designated time period
 - appropriate probation conditions in order to maintain one's student or organizational status

C. Guidelines for Student Organizations

1. Student organizations hosting an event must adhere to the General Guidelines for the University Community (Section A of this policy), as well as all federal, state and local laws and ordinances.
2. For guidelines on promoting events, please refer to Section I of this policy, located below.

3. These guidelines are minimum standards. Student organizations and groups are encouraged to adopt standards that go beyond the minimum requirements of this policy.
4. Outcomes for student organizations failing to abide by these policies are listed above in the student section and noted accordingly.

D. Guidelines for Faculty, Staff and University Guests

1. Faculty and staff must adhere to the General Guidelines for the University Community (Section A of this policy) and [HR 1.01 Drug-Free Workplace](#).
2. Guests occupying university-owned, -leased or -controlled buildings, grounds or other facilities must abide by university policies and federal, state and local laws.
3. Failure to follow established guidelines and policies will be addressed by the faculty or staff member's department or law enforcement, as appropriate.

E. Funds

1. No student activity fee or other university-collected fee will be used to purchase alcohol for use on or off campus.
2. No other funds of an officially-recognized student organization deposited or administered through the [Leadership and Service Center](#) may be used to purchase alcohol for use on or off campus.

F. Promotional Guidelines

1. Advertisements that promote or allude to alcohol use as an incentive to attract participants (e.g., bar nights, free alcohol, drink specials, etc.) are prohibited in all university publications and other media, whether print or digital.
2. Materials posted or distributed may not glorify, edify, promote or support the use, sale or consumption of alcohol and illegal drugs. These materials may not display trademarks and/or brand names of alcohol or illegal drug products.
3. The printed (or implied) advertising message for an event may not promote the consumption or frequency of consumption of alcohol, the presence of any quantity of alcohol or the price of any alcoholic beverages.
4. If a non-university outlet is utilized for the support of advertising an event, the content of the advertisement or promotion must clearly promote the student organization's or campus organization's name and function as the central message. This includes all flyers, posters, ads, banners, digital displays, social media posts, endorsements, sponsorships, etc.

RELATED UNIVERSITY, STATE AND FEDERAL POLICIES

[ACAF 1.06 Academic Titles for Faculty and Unclassified Academic Staff Positions](#)

[HR 1.01 Drug-Free Workplace](#)

[STAF 1.07 Student Attempts, Suicide Threats, or Gestures](#)

[STAF 3.10 Student Organizations](#)

[STAF 6.26 Student Code of Conduct](#)

[Alcohol Event Registration Form](#)

[Alcohol Policy Training Workshop](#)

[South Carolina Code of Laws Section 63-19-2440 and 2450](#)

HISTORY OF REVISIONS

DATE OF REVISION	REASON FOR REVISION
June 1, 1992	New policy approval
July 15, 2014	Non-substantive revision to update office names, contact information and website links.
July 31, 2019	Policy was reorganized and reworked to be clearer and student friendly.
June 17, 2025	Non-substantive revision to update office names, contact information and website links.