

Out of sight, out of mind and out of fashion: 5 steps to supporting the wellbeing of students and staff by creating a tobacco-free culture on campus.

Smoking is by far the biggest preventable cause of ill health and death – more than alcohol, suicide, road accidents and drugs combined – as well as causing significant financial hardship and being linked to mental health issues.

Almost nobody starts smoking after the age of 25, so decisions and behaviour during the 16-24 age range have a huge impact on a young person's life outcomes. The college or university experience is central to this.

Do your students arrive into a culture where smoking breaks are the norm, where doorways and entrances are visible gathering points for smoking and where smoking is an expected part of the social scene?

Or is tobacco out of sight, out of mind and out of fashion?

99%

of first cigarette
use occurs by
the age of 26

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The importance of college and university campuses

The 16-24 age range is when young people gain freedom, head out on their own to study or work, form new social groups and evolve their own lifestyles. It is mostly when they attend college or university. It is when many start to smoke.

A number of social, cultural and environmental factors contribute to the uptake of smoking. Further and higher education campuses are one example where the environment can influence the choices they make, as young people make the transition to independence and adulthood. By aspiring to be tobacco-free your institute can support young people to make positive healthy choices.

Creating a tobacco-free culture is a journey, which takes time and requires a planned approach to make practical changes across campuses. By doing so colleges and universities can make a significant contribution to Scotland's progress towards a tobacco-free generation by 2034, where adult smoking prevalence is less than 5% (as set out in the [Scottish Government's National Tobacco Strategy 2013](#)).

ASH Scotland can provide help and advice to support you to create a tobacco-free culture on campus. [Scotland's Charter for a Tobacco-free Generation](#) and Tobacco-free Campus branding can help you gain recognition for the institute, and the staff and students who champion the change.



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Step 1: Consider if your current position on tobacco and smoking is working. Does it reinforce the institute's objectives to provide the best place to work, learn and thrive?

- *Is smoking permitted anywhere, in certain places or nowhere across campus grounds?*
- *Are there designated smoking areas or smoking shelters? Do smokers use them? Do their locations impact on the institute's buildings (for example smoke drift through windows)? Are they effective in reducing the visibility of smoking on campus?*
- *How is the existing policy reinforced through campus wide communications and campaigns?*
- *Is the existing policy approach enforced and/or adhered to? Do all staff play a role in enforcing it?*
- *What provisions are in place to support students or staff wishing to quit? Are local stop smoking services promoted on campus?*
- *Is tobacco sold in shops on campus? If so, is the institute's stance on tobacco undermined? How will the institute ensure any on campus retail outlets comply with legal changes such as legislation requiring anyone under 25 to show ID before purchasing tobacco?*

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STEP 2: Address any perceived concerns regarding a tobacco-free approach. Some questions shared with ASH Scotland include:

- **Will staff and students support the institute's approach to tobacco?** Consultation and communication is key for preparing staff and students for change! Take the time to communicate the rationale for change. Survey all staff and students to find out if they support putting tobacco out of sight, out of mind and out of fashion. This will help to reinforce the aspirations students and staff have for learning and working in a safe and health promoting environment.
- **Will smokers feel alienated by restricting smoking on campus?** Emphasise that changes across campus are not about stigmatising those who choose to smoke but instead help the institute realise its vision to provide all students, staff, contractors and visitors with a safe, health promoting environment to work and learn in. This approach also reinforces the important role of staff as positive role models to students.
- **Will smokers be displaced off campus, increasing the visibility of smoking at the periphery?** Where campuses have clear boundaries and ownership over grounds, creating a tobacco-free approach may result in displacing smokers to the periphery. In some cases it may be appropriate to retain a limited number of discrete smoking areas at the periphery to reduce the visibility of smoking; limit the impact on the neighbouring community and provide bins to minimise litter. Institutes are encouraged to aspire to be tobacco-free campuses; however working towards this goal or setting a target date may mean temporary discrete areas at the periphery are a step towards phasing smoking out of campus grounds and changing culture.
- **How can a tobacco-free approach be effectively reinforced and enforced?** A written policy is important to clearly outline the aspirations and scope of the approach being taken. The policy needs to simply set out what can practically be implemented across campus, the role all staff have in complying with it, communicating it to students and enforcing it. A whole institute approach is important to addressing tobacco, in a variety of ways throughout the academic year and across policies, curriculum departments, subjects, campaigns and events.

STEP 3: Involve the right people from the outset to develop the best tobacco-free approach for the institute.

Buy-in from executive staff is essential for supporting the development of an institute's policy and procedures, its implementation plans and to agree timescales for action.

A cross department working group (including health and safety, estates, student services, student association, sports union representatives and external partners) can support the review process of the existing tobacco policy, develop a project plan and share responsibility for completing actions to bring about practical changes on campus. A launch in fresher's week helps to focus the project plan and ensure the approach being taken by the institute is clearly communicated by all staff through induction procedures. Keeping the working group engaged following the launch is important to help address issues as the new approach beds in.

It is important to ensure that local partners are involved from the outset. This may include the local authority for supporting any approaches which moves smoking to the periphery of campuses, helping to raise awareness on litter and providing patrols; local stop smoking services will be a key partner to develop support pathway for those wishing to quit on campus or accessing local services.

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STEP 4: Set goals to bring about practical changes for the start of the new academic year.

Key goals may include:

- *improving communication on the institute's approach to addressing tobacco, how it should be enforced and developing a consistent approach across all campus grounds;*
- *removing smoking from entrances, exits, walkways and reducing visibility of smoking across campus grounds; providing outdoor grounds free from tobacco smoke, including outdoor sports events;*
- *providing students and staff with health promoting messages on tobacco through the curriculum, campaigns, events and information available to students and staff;*
- *creating a supportive environment and pathways for anyone trying to quit;*
- *developing an approach on e-cigarettes, distinct from the approach taken to address tobacco; (see appendix 1)*
- *reducing cigarette related litter across campus grounds;*
- *ending all sales of tobacco in campus shops.*

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STEP 5: Gain recognition for taking action, demonstrating the institute's commitment.

Scottish colleges and universities are encouraged to sign up to the NUS Scotland & Scottish Student Sports Healthy Body Healthy Mind Award. To gain a Healthy Body Healthy Mind award students' associations, sports unions, colleges and universities work together on projects that aim to bring about practical changes across the whole institution. These changes include improved sport and recreational programmes as a way to promote mental wellbeing, better signposting to student services and external organisations that can provide support for mental health and smoking cessation, while developing creative approaches to discourage people from taking up smoking. Working towards a tobacco-free culture on campus will help your institute reach the most stars awarded. To find out more about the 2016/2017 award contact Kira Weir, NUS Scotland: Kira.Weir@nus-scotland.org.uk or phone 0131 556 6598.



Scottish colleges and universities who take action on tobacco can be recognised for taking positive steps to change the culture around tobacco on campus by becoming a supporter of Scotland's Charter for a Tobacco-free Generation. Supporting the Charter shows your institute's support for a tobacco-free generation by 2034. The process to register your support is straightforward and the Charter is flexible to the needs of your institute, building on activities you already deliver. You'll be able to access free resources, display the Charter logo on your materials and you could even win a Charter Award. To find out more contact Connie Bennett, ASH Scotland: CBennett@ashscotland.org.uk or phone 0131 220 9486.

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How can ASH Scotland support your institute?

ASH Scotland is committed to supporting colleges and universities across Scotland to make practical changes on campus to create a tobacco-free culture.



We can help you:

- to review your existing policy in line with legislation, current evidence and up to date information on tobacco;
- to develop a campus wide communication strategy to ensure the vision for developing a tobacco-free culture is known;
- to plan practical changes across campus and implement tobacco prevention activities throughout the academic year.

For more information on how we can help please contact Emma Papakyriakou: EPapakyriakou@ashscotland.org.uk or phone 0131 2209484.

Find out more about ASH Scotland at www.ashscotland.org.uk

Contact our free information service enquiries@ashscotland.org.uk or access information about tobacco and health on our website.

Follow us on Twitter [@ashscotland](https://twitter.com/ashscotland)

Action on Smoking & Health (Scotland) (ASH Scotland) is a registered Scottish charity (SC010412) and a company limited guarantee (Scottish company no 141711)

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Appendix 1: Responding to electronic cigarettes

The evidence suggests that while electronic cigarettes carry some health risks they are much less harmful than tobacco cigarettes. Electronic cigarettes have the potential to help smokers to quit using tobacco, and the harm caused by tobacco is so great that we should realise this opportunity. We would like to see electronic cigarettes helping people to stop smoking - but not to recruit new audiences into nicotine use – and we expect to see an increasing number of these devices officially registered as medicines.

We therefore believe that the use of electronic cigarettes should be regulated, but regulated less strictly than tobacco. They are different products, each raising separate issues, and should not simply be treated in the same way as tobacco.

Creating a tobacco-free culture on campus grounds will be best served by achieving a balance between:

- allowing for these devices to present a less harmful alternative to smoking tobacco; and
- discouraging non-smokers from experimenting with the devices.

In creating a tobacco-free culture we would ask you to consider electronic cigarettes with this balance in mind.

You could simply treat electronic cigarettes in the same way as tobacco, but you may wish to enhance their appeal as an alternative to smoking by allowing their use in outdoor designated areas which are separate to, and less restricted than, areas where smoking is allowed.

With regard to selling electronic cigarettes in campus shops you should consider your institute's position between enabling smokers to have access to a stop smoking product and the risk of promoting products to a new audience.

Further information on electronic cigarettes can be found at

<http://www.ashscotland.org.uk/what-we-do/campaign/e-cigarettes/>

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