

Portfolio	People and Culture	Ref. No.	POL-5503
Department	People and Culture		
Title	Responsible Approach to Alcohol		

1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The **objectives** of this policy are to:

- define clear expectations in relation to standards of behaviour particularly the expectation that RACS people are not under the influence of alcohol when performing work for RACS;
- reflect RACS' commitment to maintaining a respectful and safe working and learning environment;
- set out RACS' commitment to the responsible management of alcohol service and consumption;
- set out RACS' commitment to provide an inclusive environment for all RACS' people who choose not to consume alcohol;
- set out expectations of RACS people with respect to the service and consumption of alcohol eliminating risks associated with the adverse effects of alcohol whether on RACS premises, performing duties for RACS or representing RACS at outside events ;
- protect RACS staff, trainees and Fellows from alcohol related harm;
- provide appropriate support to employees who identify a health problem related to the use of alcohol;
- provide line managers with the skills to identify and manage issues in the workplace related to alcohol through appropriate training, education, support, tools and resources.

2. SCOPE

In recognising that workplace health and safety issues requires a 'whole of workplace' approach, this policy applies to all RACS people including:

- employees;
- surgeons performing RACS business whether in a paid or unpaid capacity;
- contractors/consultants;
- program volunteers;
- sub-contractors involved in program delivery;
- Council and committee members; and
- Trainees, SIMGs, junior doctors, invited speakers and guests including course attendees and faculty.

Performing work means fulfilling duties such as carrying out tasks for RACS or on behalf of RACS. It may include representing RACS onsite or outside of RACS offices. Work, beyond standard employment types, may include (but are not limited to) attending committees and/or working groups, participating in training or examination events or undertaking audits, these may be performed in both a paid and/or unpaid capacity.

3. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- RACS is a strong public advocate for highlighting the harm that alcohol can cause in the community and to the health of individuals
- RACS policies reflect the leadership role we hold in the community and our mission to improve patient outcomes
- RACS recognises that events and ceremonies are an important part of celebrating special occasions, commemorations and maintaining working and social relationships. When managed safely and responsibly, alcohol can be viewed as a symbolic part of celebrations and traditions and can contribute to a successful event or occasion

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RACS acknowledges that its workforce is unique in that it is made up of paid employees and Fellows providing services on a pro bono or volunteer basis.

- we are mindful that in both work and social settings a power imbalance may exist between Fellows and employees, and Fellows and trainees/SIMGs, medical students and junior doctors
- it is the responsibility of all RACS people to uphold the highest standards of behaviour when performing any service, whether paid or unpaid, on behalf of RACS within the workplace or at events, including after work hours
- to uphold the integrity of business decisions, the end to the business meeting will be signaled before the social component of the meeting / event commences.

4. BODY OF POLICY

4.1. Employer Duty of Care

Employers have a duty of care under occupational health and safety legislation to protect all people from any known health and safety risks. This includes risks to both physical and Psychosocial health and safety and may include;

- that suitable training is provided to supervisors, representatives and employees responsible for policy implementation;
- ensuring suitable information and education is provided to all employees;
- ensuring appropriate support and assistance is available to those with alcohol dependencies/illness.

Managers and supervisors will be responsible for supporting the implementation of guidelines. This includes monitoring the effectiveness of this policy and gaining feedback as necessary, ensuring employees are aware of the requirements of the policy, the support available and the consequences of non-compliance with the policy.

4.2. Responsibilities of RACS people:

RACS requires that RACS people follow this policy and the applicable Code of Conduct at all times, and:

- take reasonable precautions for their own health and safety, and that of other staff or guests
- refrain from any conduct which could adversely affect professional performance or the safety and well-being of themselves or others, including alcohol or substance abuse or misuse
- engage in conduct that is respectful of difference and does not discriminate
- avoid behaviour that may be reasonably perceived as harassing, intimidating, overbearing, bullying or physically or emotionally threatening; and
- uphold the name and reputation of RACS, and refrain from acting in a way that would unfairly harm its reputation; including preserving appropriate confidentiality of College information.

It is critical that all RACS people comply with these requirements to ensure that RACS can meet its safety obligations.

4.3. Approach to Events

Formal College Events are defined as RACS endorsed events such as formal council dinners and ceremonial events and organised work social functions e.g. Christmas events.

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These events are sufficiently work related to fall under a range of legislation and RACS policies including, but not limited to, occupational health and safety legislation, discrimination legislation and applicable RACS Workforce Conduct Policies.

This means that inappropriate conduct at an event can lead to legal liability and prosecution, just like conduct in the workplace. RACS will take reasonable steps to ensure all RACS people are free from harassment, discrimination, injury and violence.

To eliminate the risk of alcohol related harm with respect to formal College events, RACS will:

- observe all relevant regulatory requirements of the jurisdiction in which the event occurs
- conduct a risk assessment before each event and identify a senior Fellow and senior member of staff to act as 'event managers'
- permit the responsible service of alcohol in an environment that is free of inducement and social pressure to consume it
- provide a range of workplace functions and events that would not normally be associated with alcohol, e.g. breakfasts and morning teas
- clearly define the start and finish time for each event. Alcohol will only be served during these specified hours
- communicate this policy in advance to all attendees and speakers at events
- ensure that low alcohol and no alcohol beverages are available and are as equally or more accessible than alcoholic beverages
- ensure that water is provided [at no cost/at a lower cost] than alcoholic beverages;
- for ticketed events, a 'no alcohol package' option should be provided at a lower cost ensure that for ticketed events when alcohol is included in the price, there should be service breaks, especially in table service events of more than two hours duration. Glasses should not be topped up in table service but refilled when empty and requested by a guest
- ensure anyone serving alcohol at a RACS event should hold a Responsible Service of Alcohol Certificate (Aus); 'Serve Wise' certification (NZ);
- alcohol should not be served to anyone who is intoxicated or disorderly. Service of alcohol should be managed in a way that prevents over-serving to ensure RACS people do not become 'intoxicated';
- ensure for social events of more than two hours in duration, ensure that a range of substantial food options are provided. Substantial food means a minimum of hot or cold platter or buffet-style foods, and does not include nut/chip/dip/cheese options alone;
- observe that alcohol service should cease during speeches and formalities
- observe that the cost of alcohol products must be reasonable and the purchase of high cost premium items is not permissible;
- where alcohol is provided by the college for formal college events expense claims for alcohol will not be approved.

4.4. Informal College events and/or noncollege events

On occasion RACS people may be required to perform duties for RACS or represent RACS at outside events; and offsite. There may be formal or informal social events associated with these duties such as a lunch or after work drinks.

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RACS understands that alcohol may be present at these functions. RACS recommends safe and professional consumption of alcohol.

Alcohol is not essential. Where provided, consumption is a personal choice. No one should feel pressured to drink or not to drink or be made to feel uneasy or embarrassed as a result of their choice.

RACS will not tolerate situations where RACS people behave irresponsibly or are impacted by other's unsafe, unwelcome or offensive behaviour, for which consumption of alcohol is not an excuse.

RACS recognises that at times travel may be required as part of the role and the individual may want to resume personal activities outside of business hours. Where this involves the consumption of alcohol i.e. with an evening meal, purchases must be claimed through the appropriate Finance reimbursement process as per the Expense Reimbursement policy.

It is expected that alcohol will be consumed responsibly, with food, and would not be the primary component of the expenditure submitted for reimbursement.

4.5. Approach to addressing non-compliance

Managers and Supervisors are responsible for taking action when work performance or relationships suffer, or the reputation of RACS is put at risk.

Disciplinary action in accordance with the relevant disciplinary clause or policy will be undertaken where non-compliance occurs. In the case of contractors or RACS representatives, services may be terminated as per the terms of the agreement or relevant policy.

Action may be taken (including but not limited to) where:

- performance is negatively impacted by the consumption of alcohol;
- safety of the individual and others are put at risk;
- possession of alcohol is discovered when alcohol has not been sanctioned or approved by RACS;
- an employee or person engaged as a RACS representative is found to be driving under the influence of alcohol over the legal limit either during standard business hours or when representing RACS outside of standard business hours;

4.6. Help and Support

People with an alcohol related illness are encouraged to seek help and support with treatment.

Those who acknowledge they have a problem will be fully supported by RACS. Where a manager has a concern about conduct or performance, they should provide the individual with an opportunity to discuss the concerns in a supportive environment.

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Support may include:

- information about support and treatment services;
- time off and accommodations around working hours may be made to allow treatment and to attend support groups;
- additional support during a period of treatment. This may include a period of approved leave, restricted duties, temporary transfer or work, if this is feasible.

Free confidential help and support can be found through RACS' EAP provider Converge

- 1 300 687 327 (AU)
- 0800 666 367 (NZ)

Other sources of external support include:

Australia

- Alcohol and Drug Information Service 1800 250 015.
- 13YARN: 13 92 76 (24 hours a day, 7 days a week)
- Beyond Blue: 1300 224 636 (24 hours a day, 7 days a week)
- Lifeline: 13 11 14 (24 hours a day, 7 days a week).
- Lifeline Text: 0477 131 114 (6pm – 12am, 7 days a week)
- Family Drug Support Australia: 1300 368 186 (24 hours a day, 7 days a week)

New Zealand

- Alcohol Drug Helpline 0800 787 797 or text 8681 (24 hours a day, 7 days a week)
- Lifeline Aotearoa 0800Lifeline or free text 4357 (24 hours a day, 7 days a week)
- Mental Health Foundation Free call or text 1737 (24 hours a day, 7 days a week)

5. RELATED POLICIES

- Code of Conduct
- RACS Workforce Conduct Policy
- Equal Opportunity and Acceptable Workplace Behaviour Policy
- Occupational Health and Safety Policies
- RACS Disciplinary Policy and Procedures
- Restriction of College Activity Regulation
- RACS Faculty Charters
- Expense Reimbursement Policy
- Travel and Accommodation Policy

Approver Council
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