

Substance Use Policy FAQ

When will the consumption of cannabis and alcohol be permitted on Augustana Campus?

The full policy will go into effect in Fall 2019. Interim changes are:

- Allow the possession of unopened, sealed alcohol in residence as an interim measure to address safe consumption practices happening off campus
- Allow for Residence Services, supported by professional staff, to host a series of cafe nights in the Dish as an introduction to its use as a bookable space for alcohol service
- Create an amnesty program with language that re-assures students that they will not be subject to discipline for self-disclosure of substance use/abuse

Where can cannabis and alcohol be consumed?

Beginning in Fall 2019, there are several designated spots on campus where tobacco, cannabis and alcohol can be consumed.

Designated tobacco consumption areas:

- South of the Facilities & Operations building
- East of the cafeteria staff entrance by picnic tables
- Specified areas outside the Jeanne & Peter Lougheed Performing Arts Centre
- Parking lots
- Plaza (behind library)
- Gazebo

Designated cannabis consumption areas:

- Plaza (behind library)
- Gazebo

Further restrictions apply to tobacco and cannabis, as their consumption will not be allowed in front of the First Year Residence, in the Quad, on the soccer field, or within 10 meters of any door, window or air intake.

Designated alcohol consumption areas:

- In personal and private spaces in residences
- At events in designated common spaces where special permission has been granted

Why are you permitting smoking and vaping cannabis and alcohol consumption on university property?

There are several reasons:

- We believe we should align with the laws and values of the surrounding community.
- Hundreds of people live on our campus in university residences. Without a place to use cannabis and alcohol, there would be no legal location for them to use this legal substance without leaving university property.
- Many members of the community have a medical need for cannabis and we believe they should have places to use it.
- We support a harm reduction strategy based on education about risks rather than prohibition.

What did you reference when making this decision?

An advisory committee made up of current UAlberta Augustana students, staff and faculty gave their recommendations for the policy update based on consultation with the wider campus community, North Campus policy and Camrose bylaw.

Is this policy permanent?

This is an interim policy created in response to the legalization of cannabis. It will be reviewed in 6 - 12 months to evaluate ways we can improve the policy.

How are you enforcing this?

Restorative justice options, instead of automatic fines, will be utilized to educate individuals and give them an opportunity to reconcile with those within our campus and residence community. Additionally, our peace officers have the authority to enforce laws and university policy and will do so when needed.

Does the university have the authority to prohibit cannabis consumption on its property, even if the local municipality permits public consumption?

Yes, the university is private property. We are permitted to make policies that are more restrictive than the surrounding community bylaws.

Are the university's rules surrounding cannabis the same as the bylaw in Camrose?

No. We are more restrictive by limiting the physical locations for cannabis smoking and vaping to a small, defined number.

How did you select the locations for consumption?

The locations for cannabis and alcohol need to be safe and accessible and as far away from non-users as possible. Special emphasis was placed on safe places for students living in residence, who would otherwise have to leave the property.

Why is it a problem for students in residence to leave the property to smoke cannabis and consume alcohol?

We know that some students in residence will use cannabis and alcohol whether they are allowed to do so on the property or not. Providing a safe space to do so means they don't have to walk to a sidewalk on a busy street, enter an adjacent neighbourhood or even drive to a more distant location, which becomes a greater concern as the temperatures drop in winter.

Will staff receive training with this change?

Yes. Residence Assistants will receive additional training before the policy goes into effect in the fall. Additionally, our peace officers are already trained to handle any situations that may arise.

Can students and staff possess cannabis and alcohol on campus?

Yes, as long as they are at least 18, as the law states.

Can students store cannabis and alcohol in residences?

Yes, if they are at least 18 they can store up to 30 mg of cannabis as the law states. For alcohol, if a student is over 18 they can store alcohol in personal and private spaces. However, alcohol in glass bottle less than 750 ml will not be permitted.

Does this send the message the university supports smoking pot and drinking alcohol?

No. We are recognizing that cannabis and alcohol are legal substances. While we will permit their use, we will also remind people there are risks.

Why prohibit sales, advertising and branding of cannabis and alcohol products on our campus?

We don't see a role for our university in promoting cannabis and alcohol. It's not consistent with a harm reduction and public health approach.

Why wouldn't students be able to grow, smoke or cook with cannabis in residence?

There are several reasons:

- Smoking is a fire hazard and creates unwanted odours
- Vaping affects non-users with odour and second-hand vapour
- Cooking also has odour issues
- Growing has fire risk from the lights used and mould risk from water