

Section:	Health, Safety and Environment (HS)
Subject:	Health, Safety and Environment
Legislation:	<i>Occupational Health and Safety Act (SA 2017 cO-2.1) and related legislation; Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act (RSA 2000 cE-12) and related legislation.</i>
Effective:	March 12, 2025
Revision:	

APPROVED: _____
President and CEO

POLICY

The Board of Governors is committed to protecting the health, safety and environment of all members of the SAIT community. Campus operations will be managed to minimize risks and fully comply with applicable legislation.

PROCEDURE

PHILOSOPHY

SAIT is committed to providing a safe, healthy and productive learning and working environment where members of the SAIT community are fit to work or learn. SAIT recognizes that a variety of factors, including but not limited to an individual's impairment by alcohol or drugs, misuse of and/or failure to take medications as prescribed or physical/mental conditions, may adversely affect SAIT's workplace and learning environments. All members of the SAIT community will foster an impairment-free workplace and learning environment.

DEFINITIONS

Alcohol Any beverage containing any percentage of alcohol in excess of 0.5 percent.

Cannabis A cannabis plant or bi-product of a cannabis plant used for recreational use or medicinal use. This includes but is not limited to dried cannabis, cannabis oil, edibles and cannabis plants.

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Contractor	An individual or company contracted by SAIT to perform services or work for SAIT.
Drug	Any substance, including but not limited to alcohol, cannabis, illicit drugs, medications or other mood-altering substances, the use of which may change or adversely affect the way a person thinks, feels or acts.
Drug-related paraphernalia	Any equipment, product or material intended or designed for use in manufacturing, distributing, selling, compounding, converting, concealing, processing, preparing or introducing drugs into the human body. This also refers to any product or device that may be used to attempt to mask, tamper with or adulterate an alcohol or drug testing sample.
Employee	A person employed on SAIT's payroll, whether paid by annual salary or hourly wage.
Facilities	Any building, ground or area that SAIT owns, uses or occupies and that is under the jurisdiction of SAIT's Board of Governors.
Fit to learn	A student's ability to perform the learning activities of their course and/or program safely and effectively. This includes not being impaired by alcohol or drugs, by the misuse of and/or failure to take medications as prescribed and/or by any physical or mental condition that could affect a student's ability to be fit to learn.
Fit to work	An employee's ability to perform the physical and mental demands of their job safely, effectively and competently as compared to established or generally accepted performance standards. This includes not being impaired by alcohol or drugs, by the misuse of and/or failure to take medications as prescribed and/or by any physical or mental condition that could affect an employee's ability to be fit to work.
Illicit drug	A substance, excluding a medication, that has legal restrictions or prohibitions on its use, sale, possession, purchase or transfer.

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Impairment

The inability to safely, effectively or competently perform work duties or learning activities without limitation. Impairment can be caused by a variety of physical and psychological factors, such as, for instance, substance use, fatigue and/or physical or mental health conditions. Signs of impairment are defined below.

Incident or near miss

A work-related occurrence that caused or had the potential to cause non-trivial damage to person, property, reputation, security or the environment or disruption to SAIT's business and/or academic activities.

Medication

A drug obtained legally by the person in possession of the medication, either over-the-counter or as properly prescribed by a registered and regulated health professional for treatment of an existing medical condition.

Reasonable suspicion

A situation whereby information has been provided and/or observations have been made to reasonably believe that an employee or student may be under the influence or impaired by alcohol or drugs. Circumstances giving rise to reasonable suspicion are case specific and may include but are not limited to signs of impairment, presence of alcohol, drugs or drug-related paraphernalia in the vicinity of the employee or student or the area where the employee works and tips or information from others.

SAIT campus

SAIT's main campus and all satellite campuses, including virtual/digital campuses.

SAIT community

SAIT's governors, employees, students and contractors.

Signs of impairment

Include but are not limited to personality changes or erratic behavior, the appearance of impairment (odor of alcohol or drugs, glassy or red eyes, unsteady gait, slurring or poor coordination), working in an unsafe manner or being involved in an incident or near miss, failing a drug or alcohol test or consistent lateness, absenteeism or reduced productivity or quality of work.

Student

A person currently enrolled in a SAIT program or course.

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Substance abuse expert (SAE)

A licensed physician, certified social worker, psychologist, employee assistance expert or drug and alcohol counselor. They possess specialized training, knowledge and clinical experience in diagnosing and treating substance abuse disorders, along with an understanding of the safety implications of substance use.

Substance use disorder

A primary, progressive and chronic disease characterized by the regular, repetitive, habitual, compulsive, obsessive use of a substance(s). Moderate to severe substance use disorder is characterized by a preoccupation with the substance, loss of control, increased tolerance to the substance, harmful consequences in one or more major life areas, denial and delusion.

Supervisor

A person who has authority over a worker or charge of a work site.

Undue hardship

A situation where accommodating a member of the SAIT community leads to unreasonable and excessive challenges for SAIT. This may include but is not limited to situations where:

- a) The accommodation significantly interferes with the rights of other members of the SAIT community;
- b) The accommodation creates health and/or safety concerns;
- c) The financial cost of the accommodation is excessive, in the context of SAIT as a whole; and/or
- d) The accommodation would result in a necessary course or program requirement not being met, in the case of a student being accommodated.

Workplace and learning environment

Any physical or electronic environment where SAIT-related activities take place or where SAIT conducts business.

GOVERNING PRINCIPLES

1. Employees are required to be fit to work at their workplace regardless of where their work takes place, including at the SAIT campus, SAIT's facilities, remote workplaces and an employee's home.
2. Students are required to be fit to learn during all learning activities of their course/program and while at their learning environment, including but not limited to online learning and activities that take place on the SAIT campus, in SAIT's facilities, as part of a field trip, Study Canada or Study Abroad initiative or as part of workplace experiential learning. Students will be held accountable for their conduct regardless of whether or not they are impaired and regardless of whether or not they choose to acknowledge or address the underlying causes of their impairment.
3. Contractors are required to adopt this procedure as their own, or to develop and enforce their own fit to work policies that meet or exceed the standards of this procedure, for themselves and their subcontractors, while they are engaged in work on SAIT's behalf or at any SAIT campus or workplace.
4. While SAIT recognizes that problems related to substance use disorders do not excuse a member of the SAIT community from the requirement to be fit to work or learn, SAIT is committed to:
 - a) Creating a working and learning environment that supports members of the SAIT community in self-disclosing emerging or existing substance use disorders and in disclosing their concerns regarding another member of the SAIT community's emerging or existing substance use disorder.
 - b) Communicating with members of the SAIT community about the risks and consequences of substance abuse, substance use disorders and impairment in the working and learning environment.
 - c) Providing education to:
 - i) Help members of the SAIT community identify impaired behaviour and/or recognize the signs of a substance use disorder in themselves or in other members of the SAIT community; and
 - ii) Help members of the SAIT community understand the appropriate responses to these situations.

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- d) Providing members of the SAIT community who have a substance use disorder with appropriate access to programs, services, benefits and/or accommodations, while respecting their dignity and privacy.
5. SAIT acknowledges that a member of the SAIT community may not be fit to work or learn due to a variety of mental and/or physical conditions not associated with substance use. SAIT's responses and interventions in the working or learning environment should focus on the behaviour itself rather than on the cause of that behaviour. SAIT is committed to helping other members of the SAIT community recognize and address the impact of a mental and/or physical condition on an individual's ability to work or learn at SAIT.
6. SAIT will respect the privacy of members of the SAIT community as much as possible. SAIT will manage the information that it requires on a confidential, need-to-know basis and will securely store documentation related to health information.
7. A member of the SAIT community may be considered to be impaired under this procedure regardless of whether the level of their impairment would constitute an offence under Canadian federal or provincial legislation.
8. Where a member of the SAIT community has been diagnosed by a substance abuse expert as having a substance use disorder, SAIT has the duty to accommodate that individual to the point of undue hardship. In the case of students, see procedure [AC.3.16.1 Accommodations for Students with Disabilities](#) for more information. In the case of employees, contact SAIT's wellness and ability management advisor, human resources, for more information.
9. All members of the SAIT community are expected to comply with procedures [HS.1.4.1 Smoking, Vaping and Cannabis](#) and [AD. 2.2.1 Alcohol Service and Consumption on Campus](#).

PROCEDURE

A. Employees

1. Employees are required to:
 - a) Report fit to work at the workplace and remain fit to work throughout the entire workday.
 - b) Refuse work requests if impaired by alcohol or drugs or otherwise not fit to work.

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- c) Advise their supervisors if they reasonably believe that another member of the SAIT community is or has not been fit to work or to learn, is displaying signs of impairment or has a substance use disorder. An employee's duty to report is governed by the following guidelines:
 - i) In cases where there is an immediate threat or danger, employees are required to immediately report the situation to Campus Security.
 - ii) The responsibility to report to a supervisor may include reporting to a higher-level manager if the employee has concerns or feels uncomfortable reporting to their direct supervisor.
 - iii) If the direct supervisor is unavailable, employees should report the issue to another supervisor or senior manager to ensure an immediate response.
- d) Advise their supervisors of any violations or potential violations of this procedure, a reasonable suspicion of alcohol or drug use or incidents or near misses.
- e) Use medications responsibly and only as directed and/or as prescribed, be aware of potential side effects, follow all dosage requirements and medication instructions and ensure their ability to perform work safely, effectively and/or competently is not impaired by that medication use.
- f) Advise SAIT's wellness and ability management advisor and/or SAIT's disability management provider, on a confidential basis, as soon as possible, if they know or believe that they have a medical condition, emerging or existing substance use disorder and/or if their use of medications may adversely affect their fitness to work, although they are not required to disclose the name of their medication or the nature of their medical condition.
- g) Assume ownership of their substance use disorders. This means that employees with substance use disorders are expected to:
 - i) Use the counseling and treatment services available to them through SAIT's Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP), SAIT's disability management provider and/or the community.
 - ii) Undergo a substance abuse expert assessment and follow recommendations in the assessment, including but not limited to treatment, rehabilitation, follow-up testing, return-to-work conditions and work accommodations. Refusal to undergo an assessment and/or failure to comply with any of the recommendations made in the assessment may result in disciplinary

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proceedings under procedure [HR.4.4.1 Corrective Action](#), up to and including dismissal from employment at SAIT.

h) Participate in any investigation carried out under this procedure.

2. Employees shall not:

a) Report to work or perform work, whether on or off the SAIT campus, including working from remote locations, while they are not fit to work.

b) Use, possess, distribute, offer or sell illicit drugs or drug-related paraphernalia on the SAIT campus. Note that employees on the SAIT campus may possess and use over-the-counter medications and medications prescribed by a registered and regulated health professional but may not distribute, offer or sell prescribed medications on the SAIT campus.

c) Consume, sell and/or distribute alcohol while conducting business for SAIT, except as per procedure [AD. 2.2.1 Alcohol Service and Consumption on Campus](#). Employees will, when attending an event/seminar or appearing at an event as a SAIT representative or ambassador, use alcohol responsibly and ensure they are at all times fit to work.

d) Use or consume illicit drugs at any time during their workday, including during paid or unpaid breaks in their workday, regardless of where their work occurs.

e) Operate motor vehicles and/or machinery while they are not fit for work.

3. Employees with a substance use disorder:

a) Will not be disciplined for requesting assistance in addressing the disorder or because they are involved in a rehabilitation effort, subject to the provisions of paragraph A.4.b).

b) May be encouraged to seek their own substance abuse expert assessment and/or treatment programs.

4. If an employee breaches this procedure, is involved in an incident or near miss or if SAIT has a reasonable suspicion that an employee is not fit for work, SAIT will identify and address the situation. Actions that SAIT may take include but are not limited to:

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- a) Removing the employee from duty for up to 24 hours and ensuring the employee has safe transportation home (e.g., by way of a taxi or other means), so that the employee does not operate a motor vehicle.
 - b) Requiring an assessment by a substance abuse expert, suspending the employee indefinitely with pay pending receipt of the assessment and entering into a return-to-work agreement that would include the recommendations contained in the assessment.
 - c) Invoking the disciplinary provisions of procedure [HR.4.1.1 Corrective Action](#), up to and including dismissal from employment at SAIT, in situations where the employee breached this procedure, which includes not previously disclosing conditions that may be contributing to the employee being unfit to work. A variety of factors will be considered when deciding the nature of the disciplinary action in each particular situation, including the nature of the employee's job duties, previous instances of the employee being unfit to work and whether an error or incident or near miss occurred as a result of that state. Discipline cannot be avoided by a request at that time for rehabilitation or by the employee's disclosure that the individual is already involved in treatment.
 - d) Documenting actions taken and monitoring any follow up and/or return-to-work plan with the employee upon their return to work.
5. If SAIT reasonably believes that an employee possesses illicit drugs on the SAIT campus, SAIT may search SAIT property to determine if this is the case.
 6. SAIT is responsible for the early and regular identification and management of employees' performance issues related to substance use and/or substance use disorders. Supervisors are responsible for taking remedial action if an employee's work performance deteriorates to an unacceptable level or jeopardizes the health and/or safety of the employee or of other members of the SAIT community. Remedial actions include but are not limited to documenting performance issues, documenting details of events that appear to be related to the employee's substance use or substance use disorder, conducting an investigation and/or referring the employee for assessment to SAIT's disability management provider.
 7. Human Resources is responsible for:
 - a) Facilitating communication on substance use disorders, including providing information on where members of the SAIT community can access counseling and support.

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- b) Referring an employee with an existing or emerging substance use disorder to SAIT's disability management provider, in order to determine what support the employee requires and facilitating that employee's use of support programs.
- c) Facilitating and supporting an employee's safe, healthy and productive return to work following recommendations in an assessment conducted by a substance abuse expert.

B. Students

1. Students are required to:
 - a) Be fit to learn during all learning activities in their course/program and while at their learning environment, regardless of where those learning activities take place.
 - b) Advise their instructors if they are not fit to learn for a particular learning activity, regardless of the cause of that condition. This is particularly important where a student's participation in a learning activity while the student is not fit to do so has the potential to cause harm to the student, to other members of the SAIT community and/or to members of the public.
2. Students may not use, possess, distribute, offer or sell illicit drugs or drug-related paraphernalia on the SAIT campus. Note that students on the SAIT campus may possess and use over-the-counter medications and medications prescribed by a registered and regulated health professional but may not distribute, offer or sell prescribed medications on the SAIT campus.
3. If SAIT has a reasonable suspicion or otherwise reasonably believes that a student is not fit to learn, SAIT will identify and address the situation. Actions that instructors, academic managers and/or other employees may take include but are not limited to:
 - a) Encouraging the student to access resources available to them at SAIT through Student Development and Counselling, Accessibility Services and/or through external organizations.
 - b) Removing the student from the learning environment for up to 24 hours in situations where the student is creating a significant disruption or poses a potential immediate threat to the safety and/or property of others, as per the processes set out in section C, procedure [AC.3.4.4 Student Non-Academic Conduct](#).

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- c) Removing the student from a work-integrated learning placement, either temporarily until SAIT has determined that the student is now fit to learn or permanently. In the case of a recommended permanent withdrawal, the academic manager will report the situation to the Behavioural Intervention Team, which will review the situation and decide whether the school can proceed with its internal processes (including an appeal process) or whether the permanent withdrawal should be managed as per section D, [AC.3.4.5 Student Behaviours of Concern](#).
 - d) Ensuring the student has safe transportation home (e.g., by way of a taxi or other means), so that the student does not operate a motor vehicle.
 - e) Invoking the disciplinary provisions of procedure [AC.3.4.4 Student Non-Academic Conduct](#) in situations where, for instance, a student attends learning activities while impaired. Note that students with a substance use disorder will not be disciplined simply for requesting assistance in addressing the disorder or because they are involved in a rehabilitation effort.
 - f) Referring the situation to the Behavioural Intervention Team (BIT), as per the processes set out in procedure [AC.3.4.5 Student Behaviours of Concern](#).
 - g) Requiring a student who is returning to SAIT from a medical leave or from a temporary removal from a learning environment as per paragraph B.3.b) or c) to provide satisfactory medical documentation to Accessibility Services, indicating that the student is medically cleared and is fit to learn at SAIT. A student who is unable to provide satisfactory medical documentation may, at the registrar's discretion, be unable to return to SAIT until the student can provide that documentation. The registrar, in consultation with the student's dean or director, has the authority to place conditions on the student's return to SAIT. Note that if there are specific safety concerns about a student's return to the learning environment, the Environmental Health, Safety and Wellness department can assist with risk assessment.
- 4. If SAIT reasonably believes that a student possesses illicit drugs on the SAIT campus, SAIT may search SAIT property to determine if this is the case. This includes the ability to search a student's locker: see procedure [AD.2.8.1 Student Locker Use](#).
 - 5. Students enrolled in programs that are governed by regulatory or accreditation bodies and whose behaviour could pose a safety risk to themselves, or others, may be subject to potential disciplinary or other action as required by the code of ethics, standards of practice and/or legislation governing those bodies.

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POLICY/PROCEDURE REFERENCE

HS.1.1	Health, Safety and Environment policy
HS.1.1.1	Health, Safety and Environmental System procedure
HS.1.1.4	Health, Safety and Environment Councils and Committees

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