



POLICY # ACI-Drug and Alcohol-Policy-2026
POLICY SECTION All Students and Employees
Drug and Alcohol policy
EFFECTIVE DATE 07/2026
NEW / REVISED

Austin Career Institute Drug Policy

The following Drug-Free Workplace Policy is to notify all employees and students that pursuant to the Federal Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988 (Public Law 101-690) prohibits the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensing, possession, or use of a controlled substance in the workplace, on school property, or as part of any school activity. Similarly prohibits the unlawful use, possession, and distribution of alcohol in the workplace, on school property, or as part of any school activity, as well as any other unlawful conduct involving alcohol.

The drug-free workplace consists of all locations where the Austin Career Institute does business. This includes, but is not limited to, all lecture classrooms, parking lots, all administrative offices, corridors, storage rooms, and any space added to the school or school property.

Health Risks:

The abuse of narcotics, depressants, stimulants, hallucinogens, or alcohol can cause serious detriment to a person's health. The health risks associated with the misuse of the previously mentioned drugs vary, but may include, and are not limited to: convulsions, coma, paralysis, irreversible brain damage, tremors, fatigue, paranoia, insomnia, and possible death. Drug and alcohol abuse is extremely harmful to a person's health and interferes with productivity and alertness. Working while under the influence of drugs or alcohol could be a danger to the individual under the influence, coworkers, and students. Described below are additional dangers and symptoms relative to use and/or abuse.

Marijuana

Commonly known as "pot," marijuana is a plant with the botanical name of *cannabis sativa*. Pot is almost always smoked but can be ingested. Use causes the central nervous system to become disorganized and confused. Most users experience an increase in heart rate, reddening of eyes, and dryness of the throat and mouth.

Studies have proven that marijuana's mental effects include temporary impairment of short-term memory and an altered sense of time. It also reduces the ability to perform tasks requiring concentration, swift reactions, and coordination. Feelings of euphoria, relaxation, and bouts of exaggerated laughter are also commonly reported.

Smoking "pot" may cause: brain chemical changes, an altered reality, physically damaged lungs, emphysema, chronic bronchitis, lung cancer, a weakened immune system, damage to sperm in males, irregular menstrual cycles in females, and reduced fertility and sex drive.

Regardless whether or not the state allows the use of marijuana or medical marijuana, at the federal level, marijuana remains classified as a Schedule I substance under the Controlled Substances Act, in which Schedule I substances are considered to have a high potential for dependency and no accepted medical use, making distribution or use of marijuana a federal offense. Therefore, regardless of the circumstance, marijuana cannot be brought to or used on the school's campus.

Cocaine/Crack

Cocaine is a stimulant drug, which is derived from the coca plant. Street cocaine is available in the form of a powder or a “rock” of crack and is most commonly inhaled or smoked. Cocaine increases the heart rate and blood pressure and is highly addictive.

Crack is a form of smokable cocaine named for the popping sound it makes when burned. It is a mixture of cocaine, baking soda, and water. It is 5–10 times more potent than cocaine and is extremely harmful. It has been reported that addiction can occur with as few as two “hits.” Some symptoms of cocaine/crack abuse are: personality changes; unexplained weight loss; excess sniffing and coughing; insomnia; depression; irritability; neglect of responsibility toward work, school, family, and friends; and panic attacks.

Alcohol

In small amounts, alcohol has a tranquilizing effect on most people, although it appears to stimulate others. Alcohol first acts on those parts of the brain that affect self-control and other learned behaviors; lowered self-control can lead to aggressive behavior. Alcohol use can also cause dehydration, coordination problems, and blurred vision.

In large amounts, alcohol can dull sensation and impair muscular coordination, memory, and judgment. Taken in larger amounts over a long period of time, alcohol can damage the liver, heart, and brain, and cause numerous other health and medical issues.

Hallucinogens

Hallucinogens are also known as psychedelics. The effects vary; a user’s reactions can vary by occasion. Most users are affected by changes in time and space perception, delusions, and hallucinations. The effects may be mild or overwhelming, depending on the dose and quantity or the drug.

Physical reactions range from minor changes, such as dilated pupils or an increase in temperature and heartbeat, to major changes, such as tumors. High doses can significantly alter the state of consciousness.

After taking a hallucinogenic drug, the user loses control of thought processes. Although many perceptions are benign, others may cause panic or may make the user believe he or she cannot be harmed. Such delusions can be dangerous.

Heroin

Heroin is a narcotic, which relieves pain and induces sleep. Commonly known as “junk” or “smack,” heroin is a highly addictive depressant and has been attributed as the cause of many deaths.

Symptoms include “pin-point pupils”; drowsiness, lethargy, and slurred speech; and an inability to concentrate. Related medications used to treat pain include oxycontin and oxycodone, methadone, and codeine. The abuse of painkillers ranks second only to the abuse of marijuana in the United States.

Heroin users experience a higher rate of infectious disease due to a weakened immune system and sharing contaminated needles. Children can be born addicted or can become addicted as a result of heroin in the mother’s breast milk.

Crystal Methamphetamine

Crystal methamphetamine is a colorless, odorless, powerful, and highly addictive synthetic (man-made) stimulant. Crystal methamphetamine typically resembles small fragments of glass or shiny blue-white “rocks” of various sizes. Like powdered methamphetamine, crystal methamphetamine produces long-lasting euphoric effects. Crystal methamphetamine, however, typically has a higher purity level and may produce even longer-lasting and more intense physiological effects than the powdered form of the drug.

Crystal methamphetamine use is associated with numerous serious physical problems. The drug can cause rapid heart rate, increased blood pressure, and damage to the small blood vessels in the brain, which can lead to stroke. Chronic use of the drug can result in inflammation of the heart lining. Overdoses can cause hyperthermia (elevated body temperature), convulsions, and death. Crystal methamphetamine users may experience episodes of violent behavior, paranoia, anxiety,

confusion, and insomnia. The drug can produce psychotic symptoms that persist for months or years after an individual has stopped using the drug.

Crystal methamphetamine users who inject the drug expose themselves to additional risks, including contracting HIV (human immunodeficiency virus). Methamphetamine users also risk scarred or collapsed veins, infections of the heart lining and valves, abscesses, pneumonia, tuberculosis, and liver or kidney disease.

Depressants

Depressants are highly addictive; they are usually known as “downers.” A user may be drowsy and lethargic, suffer from memory loss, and have slurred speech. Many lawful drugs that have characteristics of depressants are from the family of drugs called barbiturates. More serious effects of the abuse of downers are liver damage, paradoxical anxiety and excited rage, coma, and death.

Ecstasy (MDMA)

Also known as XTC, X, and E, Ecstasy is a mind-altering drug with hallucinogenic and speed-like side effects.

Often used at raves, it is taken to promote loss of inhibition, excitability, euphoria, energy, and sexual stimulation. Ecstasy increases the amounts of serotonin in the user’s brain, which causes increased energy and euphoria; it also contains anti-coagulative properties, which can cause the user to bleed to death if injured. Ecstasy can also cause serious brain damage in a short time. Side effects of ecstasy include: depression, increased heart rate and blood pressure, muscle tension, nausea, blurred vision, faintness, chills, brain damage, organ damage, and death. Similar “designer drugs” include MDEA and MDA (also known as “Adam” and “Eve”).

Ritalin

Methylphenidate (Ritalin) is a medication prescribed for individuals (usually children) who have an abnormally high level of activity or attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). It contains amphetamines and can be abused as a stimulant by those for whom it is not prescribed. When abused, the tablets are either taken orally or crushed and snorted. Some abusers dissolve the tablets in water and inject the mixture — complications can arise from injection as insoluble fillers in the tablets can block small blood vessels.

GHB

Gamma-hydroxybutyrate is an intoxicating chemical with medical, recreational, and potentially dangerous uses. Its use is illegal for any purpose in the United States. Nicknamed the “date rape drug,” it is a clear liquid often mixed in drinks to promote relaxation or increased sociability. When taken, side effects can include: drowsiness, dizziness, vomiting, amnesia, decreased motor skills, slurring of speech, unrouteable sleep (coma), and death. GHB was used as a dietary supplement until banned by the FDA. GHB is now illegal in the United States. Common slang names for GHB are: G, Liquid X, GBH, Gamma-oh, Blue Verve, Grievous Bodily Harm, Goop, and EZLay.

Drug Conviction Notification and Imposed Sanctions:

- Any employee or student must notify school director of any criminal drug statute conviction for a violation occurring in the workplace no later than five days after such a conviction.
- Within 30 days after receiving notice of an employee or student conviction, Austin Career Institute will impose corrective measures on the employee or student convicted of drug abuse violations in the workplace by:

*Taking appropriate action against the employee or student up to and including expulsion or termination of employment and referral for prosecution.

*Requiring such employee or student to participate satisfactorily in a drug abuse assistance or rehabilitation program approved for such purposes by a federal, state, or local health, law enforcement, or other appropriate agency.

Drug Abuse and Addiction Information and Treatment Centers

- National Institute on Drug Abuse 301-443-1124

- Alcoholics Anonymous World Services 212-870-3400
- National Institute of Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism 301-443-2857
- AL-NON (Family and Friends of Alcoholics) 877-875-2666
- The Center for Substance Abuse Treatment and Referral Hotline: 888-674-3578

Policy Distribution Procedures:

Drug-Free Workplace Policy will be distributed to all employees and students on an annual basis using the following procedure:

- Students will receive a copy of the Drug-Free Workplace Policy at the time of initial enrollment. The enrollment agreement signed by every student will acknowledge receipt of the Drug-Free Workplace Policy.
- Staff employees will receive a copy of the Drug-Free Workplace Policy with the initial employment agreement. It will be read, and the signature page will be returned with the employment agreement. Annually, the human resources department will be responsible for distributing the policy to current staff employees.

Biennial Review

The school conducts a biennial review of its Drug-Free Workplace Policy to determine the program's effectiveness, any needed changes, the number of drug- and alcohol-related violations and fatalities, and the number and type of sanctions imposed. Contact the School Director to request a copy of the biennial review.

By signing this document, the employee or student agrees to abide by 's Drug-Free Workplace Policy and understands the sanctions associated with violating such policy.