

Disposal of Controlled Drugs

Background

This Note gives guidance on disposal and destruction of substances classed as Controlled Drugs that are used in teaching, research and veterinary clinical applications within the University. It should be noted that different requirements **may** be applicable to drugs that are used in a human clinical situation outwith the University where certain human healthcare practitioners are involved.

Schedule 1 – 5 Controlled Drugs

The holding, use and disposal of certain substances is controlled under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 and associated Regulations. The legislation splits these substances into 5 groups; each group is listed in a Schedule that is reviewed periodically. Drugs listed in each Schedule share common restrictions and requirements in relation to supply, record keeping destruction etc. with Schedule 1 drugs being subject to the most stringent restrictions and requirements and Schedule 5 being least stringently controlled.

Examples of drugs that fall within the various Schedules are:

Schedule	Drug
1	Ecstasy, raw opium
2	Cocaine, pethidine, morphine, etorphine, fentanyl, amphetamine, diamorphine (heroin)
3	Temazepam, meprobamate, barbitone
4 Part I	Diazepam, <i>N</i> -Ethylamphetamine, ketamine
5	Preparations containing low concentrations of morphine, cocaine, and other specifically named Schedule 2 drugs

A full list can be accessed at <http://www.drugs.homeoffice.gov.uk/drugs-laws/licensing/domestic-licences>

Permission to work with Controlled Drugs

Drugs listed in Schedule 1

The purchase, storage and use of Schedule 1 drugs require a specific licence from the Home Office. This licence is not a generic licence for the University and a separate licence must be obtained by each management unit that wishes to undertake the work.

Licences cover the whole management unit named on the licence and are not time limited.

Drugs listed in Schedules 2-5

Universities are permitted to purchase, store and use the Controlled Drugs listed in Schedules 2-5 in their research activities without the need to apply for a licence. However, production of any controlled drug requires a licence.

Disposal/ Destruction of Controlled Drugs

Drugs listed in Schedule 1

Destruction of Schedule 1 drugs must be carried out within the University as the licences issued for their use do not permit them to be handed over to another person or organisation. Destruction must be witnessed by a person who has been specifically authorised by the Home Office, or by a Police Officer. A licence to purchase, store and use these drugs does not confer authorisation to witness destruction. The person witnessing the destruction must have no involvement in the day-to-day use or record keeping of the drugs and the process must be carried out according to a written procedure.

Drugs listed in Schedule 2

Destruction of Schedule 2 drugs can be effected in two ways:

- a) Destruction via a Waste Contractor. The University is permitted to transfer Schedule 2 drugs to other parties. It is, therefore, permissible to engage a suitable waste contractor to remove these materials for destruction off-site. It is essential that the contractor used to transport and destroy the material is licensed to carry out these activities. They must hold the appropriate Home Office licences to possess the drugs with the authority to witness their destruction. In addition they must be registered waste carriers and must carry out the destruction at a facility that holds a relevant waste management licence or permit. The University has an approved supplier for this service. For further information contact Safety & Environmental Protection Services.
- b) Destruction within the University. Destruction of Schedule 2 drugs obtained and used for research within the University can only be carried out if witnessed by a Police Officer. Since the University does not hold a licence to use these drugs (it does not require to hold a licence) it is not possible for the Home Office to authorise a person within the University to witness the destruction process.

It should be noted that, whilst certain professionals within the NHS/healthcare community can be designated as authorised witnesses for disposal of drugs in those environments the mechanism does not extend to the authorisation of veterinary surgeons. As a result, veterinary surgeons are not **generally** permitted to witness the destruction of Schedule 2 drugs unless **specifically authorised** to do so.

Schedule 3 and 4 drugs

Unless the Schedule 3 or 4 drug has been **produced** in-house it is permissible for these materials to be destroyed in-house without the need for special witnessing. These substances can also be disposed *via* a contractor that is a University approved supplier, as described for Schedule 2 drugs above.

Schedule 5 drugs

These can be destroyed in-house without the need for special witnessing or can be disposed *via* a contractor that is a University approved supplier as described for Schedule 2 drugs above.

Summary of disposal routes

Type of Drug	Disposal			
	Licensed waste contractor	In-house with Home Office authorised witness	In-house with Police Officer witness	In-house, no authorised witness required
Schedule 1	×	✓	✓	×
Schedule 2	✓	×	✓	×
Schedule 3 & 4 (unless <i>produced</i> in-house)	✓	✓	✓	✓
Schedule 5	✓	✓	✓	✓

Further information

For further information, including details of the appropriate University approved supplier for disposal of drugs, contact Safety & Environmental Protection Services.