



Athlone Institute of Technology

Tobacco free Campus Policy

1. BACKGROUND

Cigarette smoking is the leading preventable cause of illness and premature death with Ireland ranking 2nd highest for smoking related causes of death in the EU² Research indicates that non-smokers who are regularly exposed to second-hand tobacco smoke are also at increased risk of illness¹. Second-hand smoke is classified as a “known human carcinogen” (cancer-causing agent) by the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the US National Toxicology Program, and the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC – a branch of the World Health Organization)⁸. The Irish Heart Foundation has reported that smoking is the cause of up to 2,500 strokes and 500 stroke-related deaths a year³. Ireland continues to have a high prevalence of smoking. The burden of tobacco use is carried by individuals, their families, the health system and broader society. SECOND-HAND SMOKE (SHS) causes 600,000 premature deaths globally per annum. SHS consists of over 7,000 chemicals, including over 60 known carcinogens⁸. Medical and scientific evidence shows that exposure to second-hand smoke increases the risk of serious medical conditions, such as lung cancer, cardiovascular disease, respiratory disease and sudden infant death syndrome⁵. Moreover, cigarette litter is harmful to our environment and wildlife. As part of our intention to provide a safe and healthy environment for staff, students and visitors, AIT has committed to making its workplaces and campus areas smoke-free in 2015.

2. Rationale

Tobacco use in any form, active and passive, is a significant health hazard and there is no risk-free level of exposure to environmental tobacco smoke³. In addition to causing direct health hazards, tobacco use contributes to institutional costs in other ways, including fire damage, cleaning and maintenance costs, and costs associated with employee absenteeism, health care, and medical insurance.

3. Purpose

This policy is intended to provide physical protection from second-hand tobacco smoke and protection from social exposure to tobacco products.

4. Definition

“Tobacco product” means any product containing tobacco in any form, including, but not limited to, cigarettes, cigars and cigarillos and oral tobacco. “Unapproved nicotine delivery product” means any product containing or delivering nicotine intended or expected for human consumption that has not been approved by the World Health Organisation (WHO).

5. Scope

This policy applies to staff, students and visitors on or within AIT managed property.

6. Policy

To protect the health and safety of students, staff, and visitors, and the environment:

- a) Smoking and the use of smokeless tobacco or unregulated nicotine products (such as electronic cigarettes) are prohibited on and within AIT managed property.
- b) The sale or distribution of smoking, tobacco, and unregulated nicotine products on or within AIT managed property is prohibited.
- c) Advertising smoking, tobacco, and unregulated nicotine products in college publications and within AIT managed property is prohibited.

7. Responsibilities

Compliance with this policy is the shared responsibility of all AIT staff, Students and visitors to AIT. Managing compliance with this policy is the responsibility of all AIT management as set out below: -

Head of Function/Line Managers/Heads of Department

Have responsibility for ensuring that all staff, students and visitors who come under their management control comply with this policy.

Healthy Campus and Student Health Services

Have responsibility for providing all support training programmes to ensure compliance with the policy, and includes providing smoking cessation & education programmes.

Estates Office

Have responsibility for ensuring the agreed signage is posted throughout the campus to communicate AIT's no smoking policy to staff, students and visitors.

Communications and Marketing Department

Have responsibility for managing the preparation and implementation of all methods of communications to support the smooth implementation and maintenance of the Tobacco Free Campus Policy.

Staff/Students

All AIT staff and students are individually responsible for complying with the policy.

8. Communication of Policy

Information in relation to the prohibition of smoking in AIT will be included in the student and staff handbooks. New employees and students will be informed about the policy at induction and orientation programmes. The policy will also be communicated on the college website, and any other relevant campus documents.

AIT will ensure that appropriate signage and other physical indicators of this policy are provided.

References

1. American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO). Second-hand Smoke and Cancer. Accessed at www.cancer.net/all-about-cancer/risk-factors-and-prevention/tobacco/secondhand-smoke-and-cancer on December 19, 2014.
2. Department of Health (2013). Healthy Ireland – A Framework for Improved Health and Wellbeing 2013-2015: Dublin: Department of Health.
3. Department of Health (2013). Tobacco free Ireland: Report of the tobacco policy review group, Dublin: Dept. of Health.
4. Department of Health and Children (2000). Towards a Tobacco Free Society, Report of the Tobacco Free Policy Review Group. Dublin: Department of Health and Children. <http://data.euro.who.int/tobacco/>
5. Howell F R Shelley E (2011). Mortality attributable to tobacco use in Ireland. The Faculty of Public Health Medicine RCPI Winter meeting; Dublin.
6. Shah, Reena S, and John W Cole. "Smoking and Stroke: The More You Smoke the More You Stroke." *Expert review of cardiovascular therapy* 8.7 (2010): 917–932. *PMC*. Web. 14 July 2015.
7. WHO Report on the Global Tobacco Epidemic, 2009: Implementing smoke free environments. Geneva, World Health Organisation, 2009
8. World Health Organization International Agency for Research on Cancer. *Evaluating the Effectiveness of Smoke-free Policies, IARC Handbook of Cancer Prevention*, Volume 13. 2009. "Chapter 2: Health effects of exposure to second-hand smoke (SHS)," pgs. 9-58. Accessed at www.iarc.fr/en/publications/pdfs-online/prev/handbook13/handbook13-2.pdf on December 19, 2014.