SHEA LAB
SUBSTANCE USE AND HEALTH
IN EMERGING ADULTHOOD

Strengthening Alcohol Policies on Atlantic Canadian Campuses

Working collaboratively to reduce alcohol-related harm among students

Campus Alcohol Policy Project
Final Report 2023



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Executive Summary

This report provides a comparative analysis of the current state of campus alcohol policies relative to best practice using data from 12 Atlantic Canadian Universities. The objective of the report is to provide comprehensive and evidence-based alcohol policy recommendations that campus decision-makers can use to strengthen their existing alcohol policies and aim to reduce heavy drinking and related harms among their students.

Background

Young adults are the heaviest consumers of alcohol, with 60% of students reporting engaging in heaving drinking in the past 30 days.(1) Student's risky drinking patterns are associated with an increased risk of unintentional injuries (e.g., traffic accidents, falls) and death, as well as a variety of social problems, such as academic difficulties and mental health concerns. Fifty-six percent of students report experiencing at least one alcohol-related harm in the past month and over 30% of students report experiencing harm from other students drinking.(1) Student alcohol use is also associated with significant institutional and community costs like property damage and additional resources for security and disciplinary services.(2) University campus environments play a significant role in shaping students' drinking behaviours and experiences.(3) Alcohol policies are one of the most effective alcohol harm countermeasures and can have a significant impact on student alcohol use and associated harms.

Methods

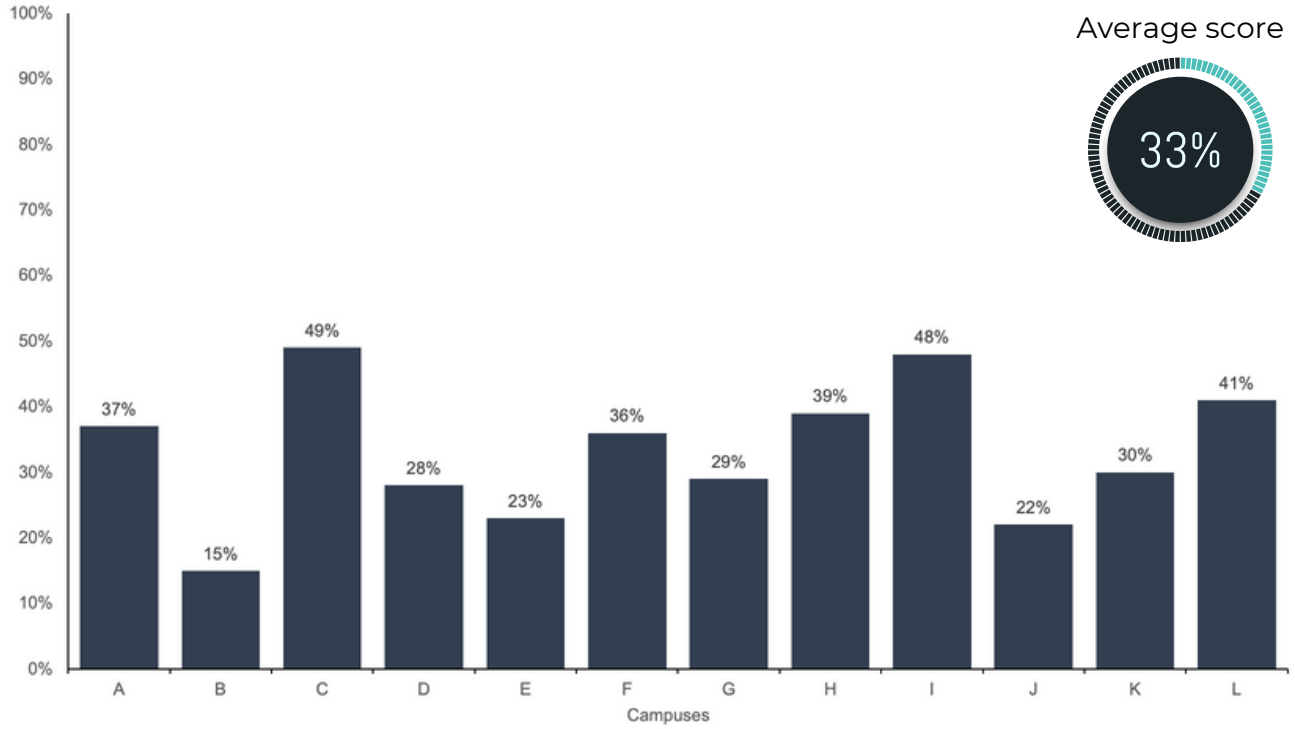
This study is modelled after the methodology used by the Canadian Alcohol Policy Evaluation Project (CAPE), which assessed provincial and territorial alcohol policies. Using the most up to date evidence, we evaluated the implementation of campus alcohol policies across 10 domains: (1) Availability and Access, (2) Advertising and Sponsorship, (3) Harm Reduction, (4) Pricing, (5) Campus Services, (6) Bar and Event Practices, (7) Community Action, (8) Leadership and Surveillance, (9) Health and Safety Messages, and (10) Enforcement. For each domain, a detailed scoring rubric was developed. Each domain was given a maximum of 10 points and was weighted based on: 1) the strength of evidence for a policy domain's potential to reduce alcohol-related harm ("Effectiveness") and 2) the proportion of the population that is expected to be affected by a particular policy if it was fully implemented ("Reach").

Data on campus alcohol policies were collected from publicly available documents and institutional websites. All data was verified by campus partners prior to data analysis. Data was scored independently by two research team members. The indicator scores were combined into overall scores for each of the 10 domains. The weighted domain scores were then summed to obtain a total weighted policy implementation score for each campus. Finally, the highest scores achieved for each domain across all campuses were compiled into one overall "best possible" policy score.

Results

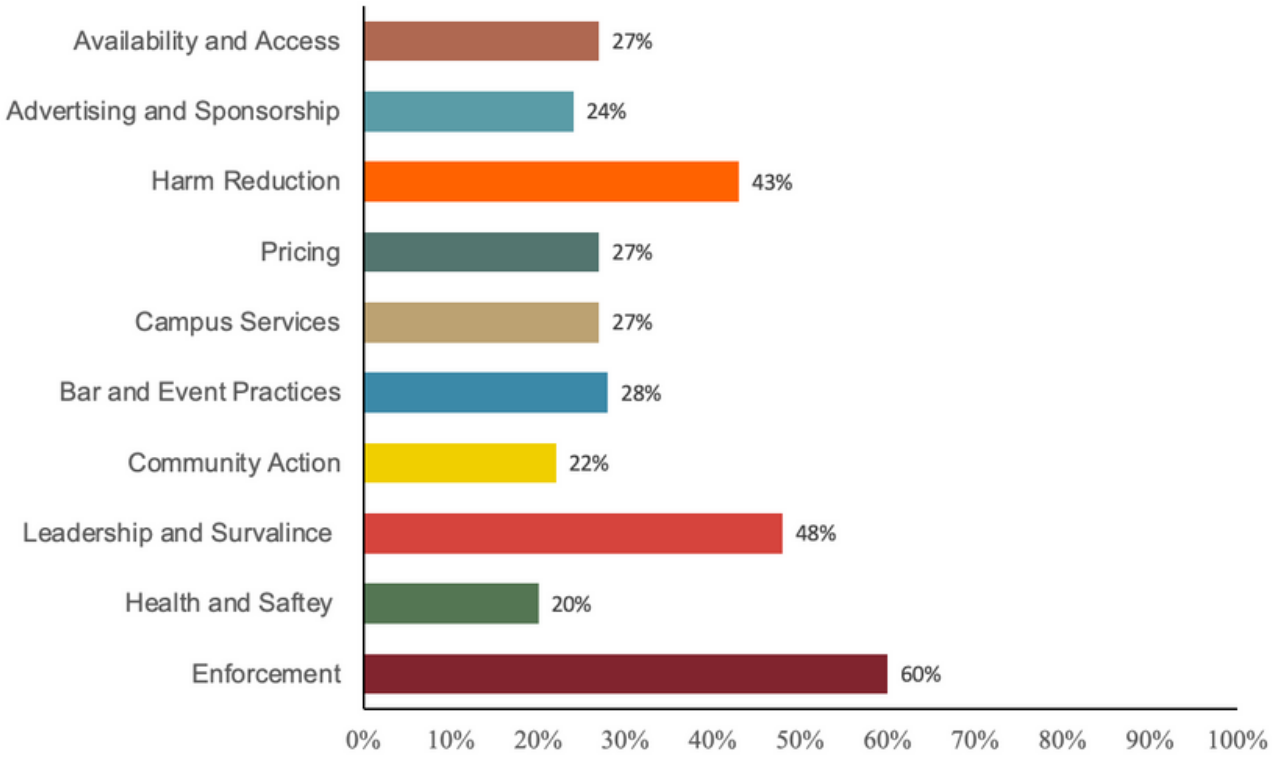
Across the 12 universities, only a third of the evidence-based alcohol policies across the ten domains assessed were being implemented. The average alcohol policy score was 33%. Figure 1 below illustrates the range of policy scores by campus. For privacy, campuses have been anonymized. The highest campus policy score was 49% and the lowest campus policy score was 15%. Only three campuses had total scores above 40%, while six had total scores of 30% or lower.

Figure 1. Average Campus Alcohol Policy Score



The average score for each of the ten policy domains across all campuses is reported in Figure 2. The only domain that scored above 50% was Enforcement (60%). This was followed by Leadership and surveillance (48%) and Harm Reduction (43%). All seven remaining domains had a score that was below 30%. The three domains in need of significant attention were Advertising and Sponsorship (24%), Community Action (22%), and Health & Safety Messages (20%).

Figure 2. Average Domain Scores



Conclusion

Postsecondary institutions play a significant role in shaping the drinking culture on campus. The goal of this project was to increase awareness of evidence-based campus alcohol policies and strengthen the capacity of postsecondary institutions to implement these policies on their campuses. The findings from the current study suggest that overall, evidence-based alcohol policies are being poorly implemented across Atlantic Canadian Campuses. All campuses scored below 50%. Campus policy scores were further undermined by the fact that policies were difficult to find, distributed piecemeal across multiple documents, and outdated. Moreover, in many instances, campuses reported their implementation of a specific policy, but this policy was undocumented. A score of zero was given to undocumented policies because practices that are not written in policy are unlikely to be adhered to or sustained over time. All campuses would see considerable improvement in their scores if their alcohol-related policies were all clearly recorded in a single, accessible document.

However, it is not all bad news. Many of the recommended evidence-based policies are already being implemented at one or more campuses. If postsecondary campuses implemented all the existing best-practice alcohol policies, their scores would improve to 74%. This report provides good examples of effective policies which campuses can look to as models for improving their own policies. We encourage campuses to work together and share these best practices to collectively build a gold standard evidence-based campus alcohol policy and reduce the substantial health and social consequences of alcohol for postsecondary students and the wider community. We also challenge campuses to explore policies that are creative and novel. We have provided examples throughout this report to help campuses "Think Bigger" when it comes to alcohol policy. Campuses are uniquely positioned to go beyond provincial and jurisdictional policies and can set a precedence for other campuses and communities to follow.



Introduction

Overconsumption of alcohol and its associated health risks represent a significant public health concern. In 2020, alcohol cost Canadians over $19 billion dollars in healthcare costs, criminal justice costs, and loss of productivity, making it the costliest substance in Canada.(4) Alcohol is also an underlying causal factor in over 200 different medical conditions and a major contributor to chronic disease, including 7 different types of cancer, diabetes, and liver disease.(5)

Young adults are the heaviest consumers of alcohol. Data from the 2019/2020 Canadian postsecondary Alcohol and Drug use Survey (CPADS) reports that in the past 30 days, 60% of students had engaged in heavy drinking (4 or more drinks for females; 5 or more drinks for males).(1) Students risky drinking patterns are associated with increased risk of unintentional injuries (e.g., traffic accidents, falls) and death, as well as a variety of social problems, such as academic difficulties and mental health concerns. According to the CPADS, 56% of students reported one alcohol-related harm in the past month.(1)

The negative effects of alcohol also extend beyond the drinker. Over 30% of students report experiencing at least one harm from other students drinking in the last month, such as taking care of another student, or having their sleep or studies interrupted.(1) Further, student drinking is associated with substantial institutional and community costs, such as property damage, and costs for additional resources, such as security, judicial, and disciplinary services.(6)

Campus environments play a key role in shaping students' drinking behaviors and experiences.(7) There is widespread concern about student drinking on postsecondary campuses, and universities dedicate a great deal of resources to developing strategies and programming to mitigate the negative impact of alcohol on their campuses. One important strategy is the development of policies geared toward reducing or managing student alcohol use behaviors on campus and minimizing alcohol-related harm.

However, there is substantial variability in alcohol policies across campuses, and policies are often fragmented or implemented without knowledge of their effectiveness.(8)

Study Design

This study conducts a comparative analysis of campus alcohol policies compared to best practices. Our study design is modelled after the methodology used by the Canadian Alcohol Policy Evaluation project (CAPE), which assessed the implementation of evidence-based alcohol policies across 10 provinces and 3 territories.(9)

Project Scope

This project was completed in partnership with 12 Atlantic Canadian Universities, including St. Francis Xavier University (StFX), Cape Breton University (CBU), Dalhousie University (DAL), St. Mary's University (SMU), Mount Saint Vincent University (MSVU), Acadia University (ACA), University of King's College (Kings), University of New Brunswick (UNB), St. Thomas University (STU), Mount Allison University (MtA), Memorial University (MUN), and University of Prince Edward Island (UPEI).

To maintain anonymity, the final report presents cross-campus comparisons for each of the policy domains and does not provide campus-specific results. This report highlights study findings and identifies areas of strength and opportunities for improvement. All campuses received confidential individualized feedback based on the study findings.

While it is beyond the scope of this project to review alcohol policies from the hundreds of postsecondary campuses across Canada, this report provides a roadmap for campuses to complete a self-assessment of their current alcohol policies and examples of best practice that can be used to stimulate policy change.



Methods

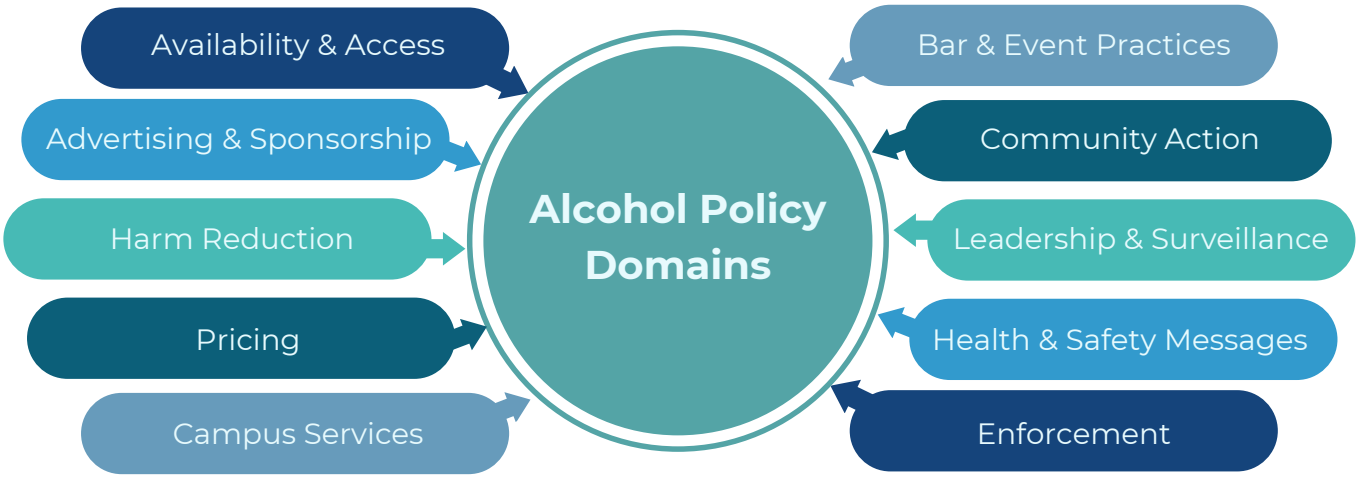
Alcohol Policy Domains

We evaluated the implementation of campus alcohol policies across 10 core policy domains. These policy domains are evidence-based and informed by systematic literature reviews and other policy analysis frameworks, including the WHO Global Strategy to Reduce the Harmful Use of Alcohol, the CAPE project, and the PEP-AH framework.(9-11)

Brief thematic literature reviews were conducted for each policy domain to identify the most up-to-date evidence. Reviews synthesized evidence from the literature, meta-analyses, recent empirical studies, and alcohol policy analysis frameworks. Two key sources were the 2019 College Aim Alcohol Intervention Matrix by NIAAA (12) and the 2020 Maryland Collaborative to Reduce College Drinking and Related Problems.(45) The search timeframe was restricted to the last 10 years (2012 – 2022) to ensure policy relevance. Where there was limited campus-specific evidence of policy effectiveness, we drew on research conducted at the population level and the expertise of the research team.

These brief thematic reviews were used to develop a set of specific policy and practice indicators for each of the 10 policy domains. Research team members and campus partners were then asked to rate the effectiveness of each indicator from 0 (ineffective) to 5 (very effective). The empirical evidence and expertise of stakeholders were used to guide the final selection of the policy and practice indicators included in the scoring rubric.

Policy indicators reflect whether a policy has been explicitly included in campus regulation (e.g., is there a policy that restricts alcohol sponsorship?). Practice indicators refer to direct outcomes expected from the implementation of a policy, such as hours of operation of on-campus bars. To score campus policies, each indicator was then operationalized (see Appendix for the detailed scoring rubric). The scoring rubric underwent an external peer-review by alcohol policy expert and CAPE methods specialist Ashley Wettlaufer.



Data collection

All publicly available alcohol policy information was collected from online searches of each university website. If alcohol policy documents could not be found, they were requested from campus partners. Policy documents were reviewed by research assistants, and data was extracted and organized according to the coding framework. After all policy information was extracted, campus partners were asked to verify all institutional policy data for accuracy and fill in any missing data.

Data Scoring and Weighting

Each of the 10 policy domains were independently scored by two members of the research team. Team members were provided with a complete and validated data file for the domains assigned to them and instructed to score in accordance with the scoring rubric. In the case of divergent scores, the raters discussed discrepancies until they reached a consensus. In instances where no data was available, it was assumed that no policy was in place, and a score of zero was applied. Each policy domain had a maximum score of 10, which was computed by summing the domain specific indicator scores.

Although all 10 policy domains are considered important in reducing alcohol related harms on campuses, not all are equally effective or reach the student population to the same degree. To account for this, the research team assigned weights to each domain. Using a Delphi approach, team members were asked to independently and anonymously rate each domain on a five-point scale based on effectiveness and reach. Effectiveness (out of 5) refers to the evidence of each domain's capacity to reduce alcohol-related harm either directly or indirectly (i.e., by facilitating other alcohol policies) when fully implemented. Reach (out of 5) refers to the proportion of the population that is affected by a particular policy domain.

Discrepancies in ratings were discussed until all members of the research team came to an agreement. The total weight for each domain was calculated by multiplying the ratings for effectiveness and reach. The weighted domain scores were summed to obtain a total weighted alcohol policy score for each campus. Higher policy scores indicate a greater number of policies that exemplify high quality campus alcohol policies.

Table 1. Policy Domain Weights

Policy Domain	Effectiveness (Out of 5)	Reach (Out of 5)	Maximum Possible Score (Out of 25)
1. Availability & Access	4	4	16
2. Advertising & Sponsorship	3.5	4.5	15.75
3. Harm Reduction	3	3.5	10.5
4. Pricing	4.5	2	9
5. Campus Services	3	3	9
6. Bar & Events Practices	2.5	3.5	8.75
7. Community Action	2.5	3.5	8.75
8. Leadership & Surveillance	2.5	3.5	8.75
9. Health & Safety Messages	2	4	8
10. Enforcement	2.5	2	5
Overall Maximum Possible Score			99.5

*Maximum possible score (MPS) = Effectiveness * Reach

Availability & Access

Research widely demonstrates that when alcohol is more readily available, consumption and related harms are high, particularly among youth.(9,13)

Policies that limit the availability and access of alcohol are some of the most effective strategies for reducing consumption and harms.(8, 10, 13, 14) High alcohol outlet density, longer hours of operation, and more days of alcohol sales are all associated with greater alcohol consumption among postsecondary students. (8,10) Research finds that decreasing alcohol availability both on and near campuses is associated with decreased drinking, and fewer related health and social harms overall.(14)

In addition to restricting outlet density, hours and days of sales, there are numerous ways campuses can limit student access to alcohol.



> COVID-19 resulted in an increase in on-demand alcohol delivery services. These services expand the geographical and temporal availability of alcohol and undermine alcohol access restrictions such as age verification processes.(15-17)

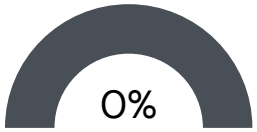
Substance-free residence living is associated with less binge drinking and fewer alcohol-related harms compared to those in unregulated housing.(12,18, 19) Research also suggests that banning or restricting alcohol consumption at events, sporting events and public places on campus helps reduce student access to alcohol.(20,21) Specifically, banning alcohol within sporting facilities has shown to be effective in reducing alcohol-related crime, arrests, violations, and assaults. (20,21)

Availability & Access Indicators

Average Score

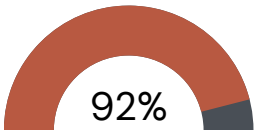
Limits to Licensed Establishments On Campus

Best Practice: Policy restricts the number of licensed establishments permitted on campus.



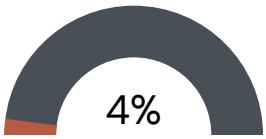
Number of On Campus Licensed Establishments

Best Practice: One licensed establishment or less per 10,000 students.



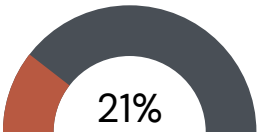
Hours of Sale

Best Practice: Hours of operation do not extend before 4pm or past 1am.



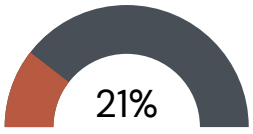
Days of Sale

Best Practice: On campus licensed establishments are not open more than 5 days per week.



Designated "Alcohol-Free Zones"

Best Practice: Campuses prohibit alcohol in public places, at sporting events, and student recruitment events, and offer substance-free residence options.



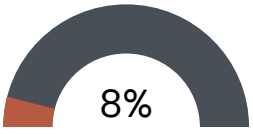
Delivery of Alcohol

Best Practice: Delivery of alcohol is prohibited on campus.



Student Card for Purchase

Best Practice: Policy states that students cannot purchase alcohol with their student card.







WHAT DID WE LEARN?

Scores in this domain indicate that alcohol is easily accessed and available for students on campuses. Scores ranged from 15% - 45%, with an average score of 27%.



All campuses had a licensed establishment except for one. Most campuses scored well on this practice indicator (91.5%) and were within the recommended density limits of 1 licensed establishment per 10,000 students. However, density limits were not clearly defined in campus policies, which may allow for additional licensed venues to be added in the future.

Campus alcohol policies also did not clearly define the hours and days of sale of their on-campus licensed establishments. In fact, data on hours of operation could only be found for 4 institutions.

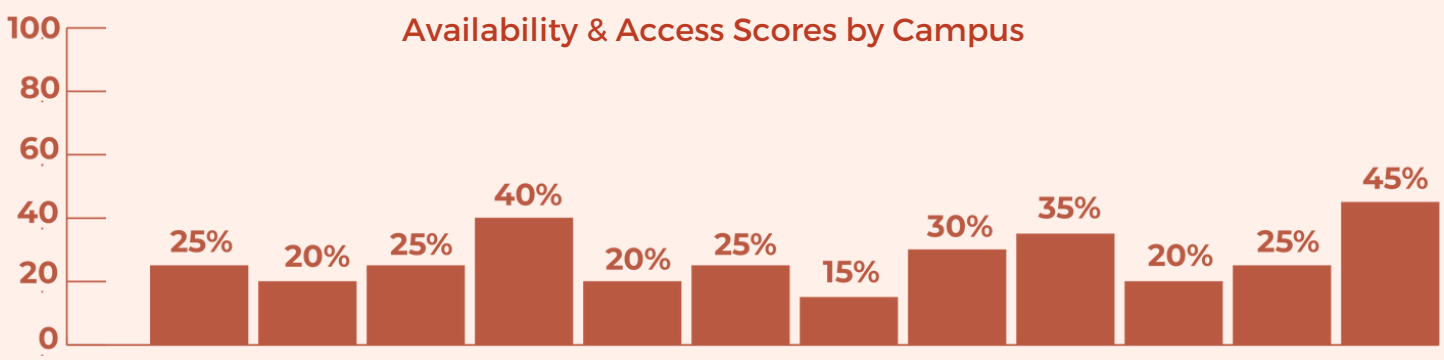
All 4 of these campuses closed their licensed establishment at least 1 day per week, but only one had hours of operation that complied with best practice recommendations.

On-demand alcohol delivery increases underage access to alcohol, however, only 1 campus has a policy that prohibits online delivery of alcohol to campus

While institutional liquor licenses generally dictate the permitted hours and days of sale, campuses can select to be more restrictive. They should clearly communicate the permitted hours and days of sale in their alcohol policy.

For students living in residence, it is common to use pre-paid student cards to purchase food on campus. These students are typically first-year students who are under the legal drinking age. While most campuses told us that it was not possible to use these cards to purchase alcohol, only one campus explicitly stated this in their alcohol policy.

Substance free zones on campus assist in limiting youth exposure to students who are drinking. Eight campuses have a policy that explicitly prohibits drinking in public places on campus. Three campuses also offer substance-free residence options to their students. However, all campuses allow alcohol at sporting events and student recruitment events.



How to Improve Your Score

If we took the highest scoring policies currently being implemented at the 12 campuses, the average score for Availability & Access would increase from 27% to 70%.

1. Licensed establishment are open a max of 7 hours per day with limited availability early in the day (before 4pm) and late at night (>1 am) to avoid opening hours coinciding with course offerings.
2. Close campus licensed establishments one to two days per week. For example, closing Sundays and Mondays may discourage students from drinking as they prepare for a new week.
3. Add a policy which explicitly prohibits the use of student cards to purchase alcohol.
4. Offer substance-free residence options to students.

Think bigger

Prohibit the sale and consumption of alcohol at sporting events.

●●●

Ban delivery of alcohol on campus.

Advertising & Sponsorship

Exposure to alcohol advertising is a leading risk factor for youth drinking. Alcohol advertising contributes to the development of an alcogenic culture that normalizes and encourages alcohol use and promotes easy access to alcoholic beverages. (22,9)

Young adults are particularly vulnerable to alcohol marketing due to the activation of the brain's reward system when viewing alcohol ads.(2) Research also suggests that when ads are affiliated with student's universities, the incentive salience of alcohol-related cues is even greater.(3)

In Canada, alcohol advertising is regulated at both the Federal and Provincial level.(23,24) At minimum, postsecondary institutions should ensure that alcohol advertising on campus complies with these Federal and Provincial regulations.



However, campuses are uniquely positioned and encouraged to develop and enforce more stringent alcohol advertising guidelines than is currently mandated, particularly in light of the fact that the federal CRTC (Canadian Radio and Television Commission) advertising guidelines have not been updated since 1996.(24)

A recent Canadian study found that popular drinking venues among university students are posting an overwhelming amount of online alcohol-related content that supports a culture of excessive drinking. (23)

> **The World Health Organization has identified restrictions on advertising as one of the most effective strategies to reduce alcohol-related harms.(14)**

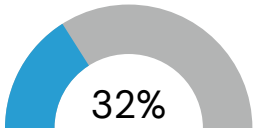
Best practice recommendations for minimizing students' exposure to alcohol ads should include prohibiting the advertisement of price specials and discounts on campus, as well as restrictions on the volume, placement, and content of ads, and prohibiting alcohol-related sponsorship.(8,10) Importantly, campus advertising policies should apply broadly to all advertising mediums and all possible vendors, including off-campus establishments and alcohol producers.

Advertising & Sponsorship
Indicators

Average Score

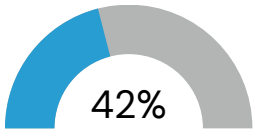
Restrictions on Advertising Mediums

Best Practice: Ban on all forms of advertising.



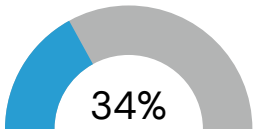
Restrictions on Advertising Vendors

Best Practice: Advertising restrictions apply to all vendors (campus bars off campus bars, student groups, alcohol manufacturer.



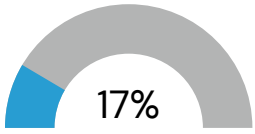
Comprehensiveness of Alcohol Marketing Policy

Best Practice: Regulations include restrictions on ad placement, advertisement of price, contests and pictures/text of alcohol.



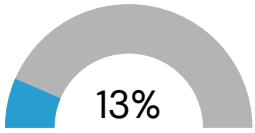
Sponsorship

Best Practice: Ban on all sponsorship from the alcohol industry.



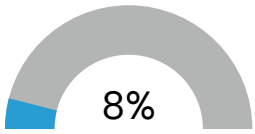
Procedures for Monitoring Compliance

Best Practice: Has a clear procedure for monitoring compliance with campus alcohol advertising regulations.



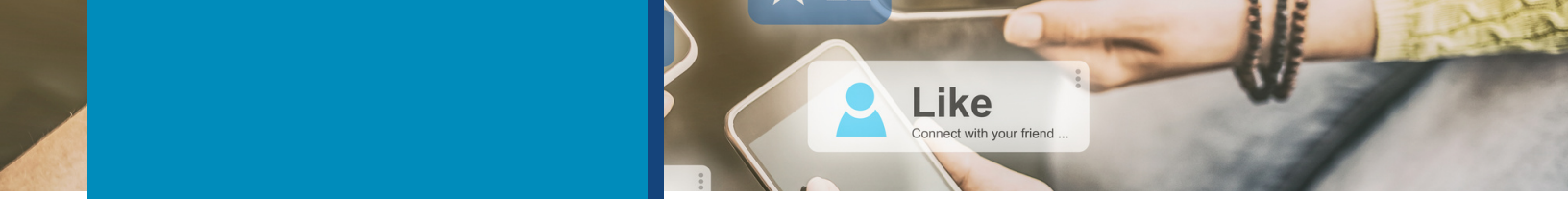
Brand Ambassadors

Best Practice: Campuses prohibit students from holding positions as brand ambassadors for alcohol producers.



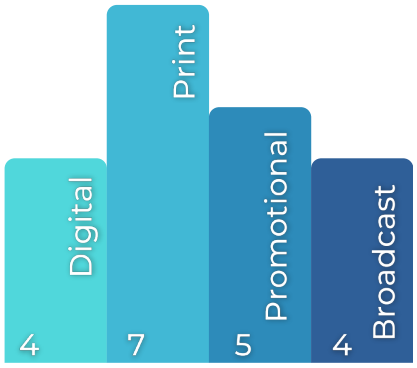






WHAT DID WE LEARN?

There was wide variation in how campuses scored on their advertising and sponsorship policies. Scores ranged from 0% - 50%, with an average score of 24%. No campus banned alcohol advertising, but three campuses had specific advertising regulations which applied to all types of advertising mediums – print, broadcast, digital media, and promotional items.



*Number of campuses who have advertising regulations that apply to these specific mediums

However, in most cases, campus advertising policies did not extend to all advertising mediums or vendors. For example, despite the prolific use of social media for alcohol advertising, only 4 campuses had regulations that apply to digital advertising.

Further, advertising policies were narrowly applied to on-campus licensed establishments, and as a result, alcohol manufacturers and off-campus licensed establishments can still advertise on most campuses.

Many campuses had additional advertising restrictions beyond the CRTC. Seven campuses restricted where ads could be placed on campus, with many only permitting ads in licensed areas. Some policies also restricted the quantity and size of print ads. Five campuses did not allow advertisement of alcohol prices – which is consistent with best practice.

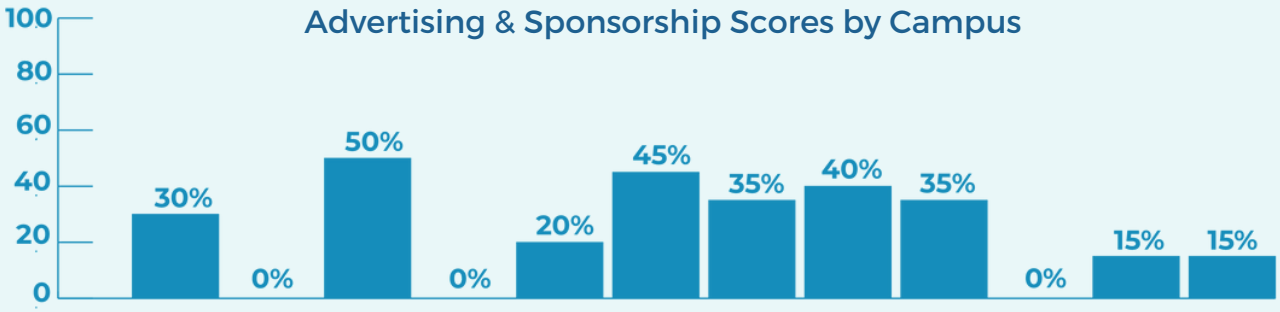


When it comes to sponsorship from the alcohol industry, most campuses failed to adequately address this issue. Only four campuses had any policy pertaining to sponsorship, and all these policies were vague and unclear. As a result, all campuses scored poorly on this indicator.

It is common for alcohol manufacturers to secure students as campus brand ambassadors who then promote the brand on campus and among student peers. Only two campuses addressed this issue in their alcohol policy and prohibited students from holding these positions without expressed permission from the institution.

Ensuring that current advertising policies are adhered to is essential for policy effectiveness. Unfortunately, when it comes to monitoring compliance with advertising policies, campuses are poorly positioned for success. Only three campuses had any evidence of a compliance program, and these were unclear and poorly operationalized.

Advertising & Sponsorship Scores by Campus



How to Improve Your Score

If we took the highest scoring policies currently being implemented at the 12 campuses, the average score for Advertising & Sponsorship would increase from 24% to 60%.

1. Ensure advertising policies apply to all mediums, particularly digital platforms.
2. Prohibit off-campus vendors, such as bars and alcohol producers, from advertising on campus.
3. Restrict the location of ad placement to licensed areas and prohibit the advertisement of price.
4. Specify the terms of alcohol sponsorship to minimize exposure to branded content, particularly in sporting venues.
5. Develop procedures for monitoring compliance with campus & provincial advertising regulations.

Think bigger

Ban all alcohol advertising and sponsorship on campus.

Harm Reduction

Harm reduction is a set of policies, programmes and practices aimed at reducing negative consequences associated with alcohol use.

Harm reduction policies fall into **two broad categories**:

1. Policies designed to reduce opportunities to consume alcohol
2. Policies designed to minimize the potential for alcohol-related harm for students who have already been drinking.

Dry Orientation Week

Alcohol-free orientation week events are a growing trend that is intended to reduce underage drinking and set the tone for responsible alcohol use on campus. While formal research on this has not yet been published, anecdotal evidence suggests that alcohol-free orientation events are proving to reduce harms and reduce the pressure students feel to have to drink.(8)

Alcohol-free Programming

Alcohol-free programming provides students with appealing social activities to divert them away from parties and bars where alcohol is being served. Providing alcohol-free programming during peak social times has been shown to lower the likelihood of binge drinking for students on the nights they attended vs. went out, and more frequent attendance of alcohol-free events was associated with fewer drinking days and consumption of fewer drinks. (25-27)

Policies to Reduce Excessive Drinking

Traditionally, there have been activities linked to or associated with excessive drinking among postsecondary students. Examples of this include the absence of Friday morning classes resulting in excessive drinking on Thursday nights and drinking games or pub crawls. Banning drinking games, pub crawls, and kegs are considered best practice environmental strategies for reducing opportunities for excessive drinking.(8, 19, 28)

> **“Best practice suggests scheduling Friday morning classes as it has been associated with a reduced probability of drinking on Thursday nights.(29-31)”**

Bystander Intervention Training

Bystander intervention training was primarily developed to reduce sexual assaults, but it can also be used to increase students’ capacity and willingness to assist other students in danger of harming themself or others due to alcohol use. For example, Morean et al. showed that participating in a bystander training workshop was followed by increased use of bystander behaviour and reductions in monthly drinking frequency and quantity, less frequent binge drinking, and fewer alcohol-related problems for student athletes.(32)

Medical amnesty / Good Samaritan (MAGS) policies

Under an amnesty policy, a campus waives disciplinary sanctions on students who may have violated an alcohol policy (e.g., underage drinking) and who seek emergency medical care for a fellow student who is in clear violation but needs medical attention. Amnesty policies are also known as Medical Amnesty or Good Samaritan (MAGS) policies.

Implementation of a MAGS policy has been associated with an increased number of alcohol-related calls, earlier call times, fewer requests for life support resources on a campus with emergency medical services, and fewer self-reported alcohol-related harms.(34-36)



Safe-ride / Alternative Transportation Programs

Safe-rides or alternative transportation programs provide free or low-cost transportation, such as taxis, shuttles, ridesharing services or designated drivers, from popular drinking venues to prevent drinking and driving.

In a recent review of 57 studies, Fell et al. report that alternative transportation programs can reduce the incidence of impaired driving, alcohol-related crashes and arrests for driving under the influence of alcohol.(37)

Subsequently, Fell et al. suggested that the most successful alternative transportation programs typically include high levels of public awareness, are perceived to be safe and are socially accepted in the community, include transportation to and from drinking venues, are low cost or free for users, are available year-round and include numerous funding sponsors to be sustainable.

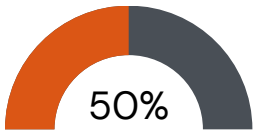


Harm Reduction Indicators

Average Score

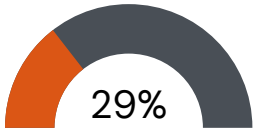
Minimizing Excessive Drinking

Best Practice: Campuses with 5-6 of these harm reduction policies; No pub crawls; no drinking games; dry orientation week; no BYO events; no kegs; Friday morning classes



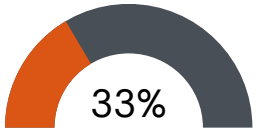
Alcohol-Free Programming and Events

Best Practice: Provide and support the implementation of alcohol-free programming and events.



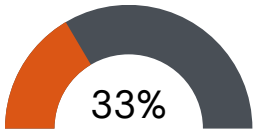
Bystander Training

Best Practice: Bystander training required and implemented widely on campus.



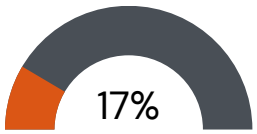
Good Samaritan Policy

Best Practice: Campuses who have a stated amnesty policy.



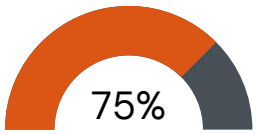
Campus Patrols

Best Practice: Explicit mandate to conduct campus patrols during high risk times.



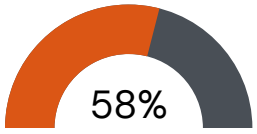
Safe Ride Program

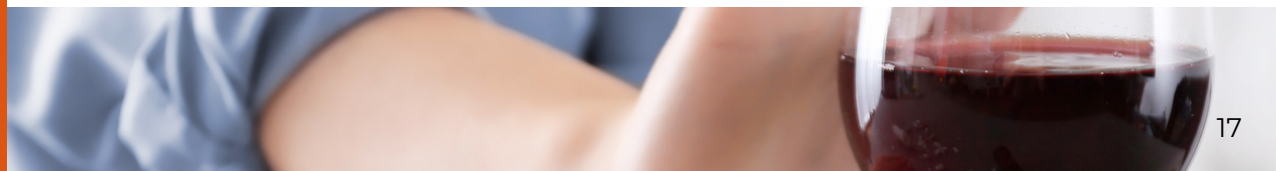
Best Practice: Campuses have a safe ride program that is readily available for students to get home safely.



Student Led Harm Reduction

Best Practice: Campuses have student led initiatives that focuses on harm reduction.







WHAT DID WE LEARN?

75%
Have a Safe Drive Program

Campuses implement a range of policies intended to minimize heavy drinking and associated harms for students.

Number of campuses with the following harm reduction policies



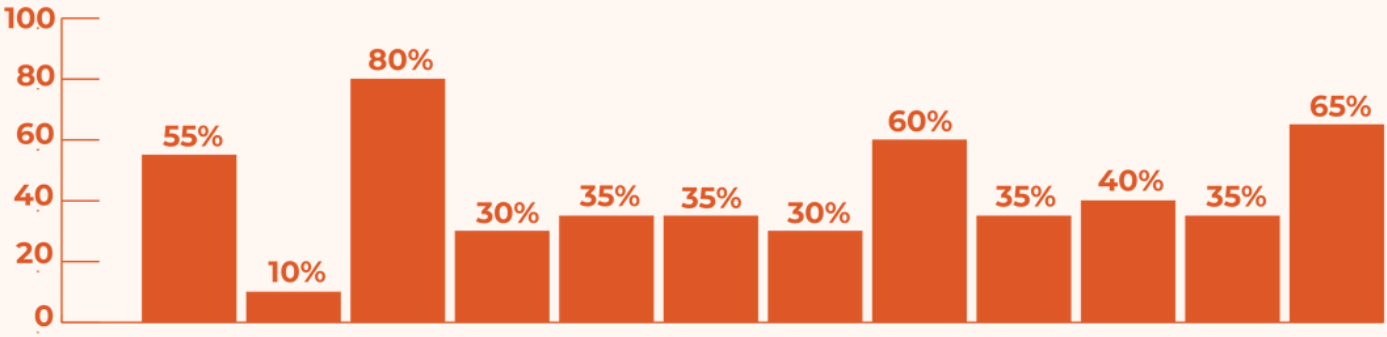
Eight campuses have bystander training programs which are available and offered to students regularly. However, the success of these programs is contingent on student uptake of this training, and it is unclear how many students receive bystander training on an annual basis.

Campuses are encouraged to report the number of trainees who participate annually and, where possible, mandate or incentivize this training for groups of students, such as residence assistants, student athletes, and student union personnel.

Only four campuses have a Good Samaritan policy in place. These policies incentivize students to reach out for assistance when peers need help. Relatedly, only two campuses conduct regular patrols on campus during high-risk times, which are important for creating safe spaces and deterring students from engaging in high-risk activities. Moreover, only three campuses offer alcohol-free programming for students.

Keep it Social is a student-led platform that aims to educate about responsible consumption. This campaign is sponsored by the liquor corporation, and according to the Keep it Social website, 11 of our campuses endorse and participate in this campaign. However, there was no mention of Keep it Social on any of the campus websites, and it is unclear whether harm reduction activities are currently being implemented on campuses. Two campuses had other more formalized student-led initiatives.

Harm Reduction Scores by Campus



How to Improve Your Score

If we took the highest scoring policies currently being implemented at the 12 campuses, the average score for Harm Reduction would increase from 43% to 95%.

1. Prohibit pub crawls
2. Introduce a Good Samaritan policy
3. Conduct regular campus patrols at high-risk times
4. Support the establishment and sustainability of a student-led harm reduction initiative on campus

Think bigger

Fund and staff a formalized program that provides fun and safe alcohol-free experiences for students.

Spotlight

Dal After Dark

Dal After Dark is a program available to Dalhousie and King's students. The goal of this program is to create alcohol-free events open to all students. This program is designed to offer fun and safe experiences without the pressure to consume alcohol. This unique program also offers grant funding for student or student groups to host alternative alcohol-free programming in addition to regularly scheduled events.

Red and Blue Crew

The Red and Blue Crew is a program where students encourage peers to have a healthy relationship with alcohol. Student members aim to take care of each other through a bystander approach, change the culture of university drinking and educate students on how to consume alcohol safely. Training opportunities occur monthly, focusing on crisis intervention and prevention and creating an attitude of helping others in need.



Pricing

Decades of research from across the globe show that increasing the price of alcohol is one of the most effective approaches for reducing consumption and alcohol-related health and social harm.(37,38)

Students, and young people in general, are particularly sensitive to price, and we know that drinking goes up as the price of alcohol goes down.(39) Many bars and restaurants have "happy hour" specials, often directly targeted to students with special themed nights or additional deals with a student ID.

Promotions that discount the price of alcohol are associated with a host of negative outcomes for students including binge drinking, drinking and driving, and having unprotected sex.(40)

Minimum unit pricing (MUP) sets the lowest price at which a standard drink of alcohol can be sold. Minimum prices are set at the provincial level and vary from province to province. Most MUP policies currently fall below the recommendation of $3.76 per standard drink.(9) Alcohol sold on campuses should, at the very least, comply with provincial MUP. However, campuses are encouraged to go beyond these MUPs and comply with the best practice of $3.76 per standard drink.(9)

Volumetric pricing is another strategy which can be used to reduce the availability of cheap alcohol. Volumetric pricing dictates the price of alcohol products according to the strength of the product. Therefore, higher-strength products cost more than lower-strength products.(38,41,42)

Volumetric pricing creates incentives for purchasing lower-strength alcohol products and may be particularly effective for students given that they favor low-priced alcohol.

Recent research has also found that greater availability of non-alcoholic beverages at low cost increases the likelihood of selecting non-alcoholic products and reduces the demand for alcohol.(39,43) In a study with Canadian postsecondary students, 80% indicated they "strongly agree" that lower-strength and non-alcoholic beverages should be available and inexpensive to purchase on campus.(44)



Currently, licensed establishments typically have limited non-alcoholic drink options, and these products often lack visibility. Increasing the availability and visibility of non-alcoholic drink options could make it easier for students to identify alternatives, as well as shift expectations and norms in relation to seeing, purchasing, and consuming non-alcoholic drinks in social settings over the longer term.(43)

Pricing Indicators

	Average Score
Minimum Standard Drink Pricing Best Practice: Average minimum pricing is $3.76 or higher per standard drink at on campus establishments.	67%
Drink Specials Best Practice: Drink specials, discounts, and price promotions are prohibited.	0%
Pricing by Alcohol Content Best Practice: Lower strength alcohol products are priced less than higher strength products.	0%
Gifting of Alcohol Best Practice: Gifting of alcohol is prohibited.	36%
Non-alcoholic Beverages Best Practice: Licensed establishments provide free non-alcoholic products	18%





WHAT DID WE LEARN?

Scores on the pricing domain varied from 0% - 60%, with an average score across campuses of 27%. We were able to gather data on the price per standard drink for eight campuses by reviewing campus bar menus. Overall, prices at campus bars exceed provincial minimum unit prices and align with best practice recommendations.

27%
Total Average Score

The price per standard drink for spirits were well above the recommendation of $3.76 at all eight campuses. Price per standard drink of spirits ranged from $5.33 – $8.29, with an average price of $6.93. This is largely because campus bars limit their mixed drinks to 1oz of alcohol per serving.

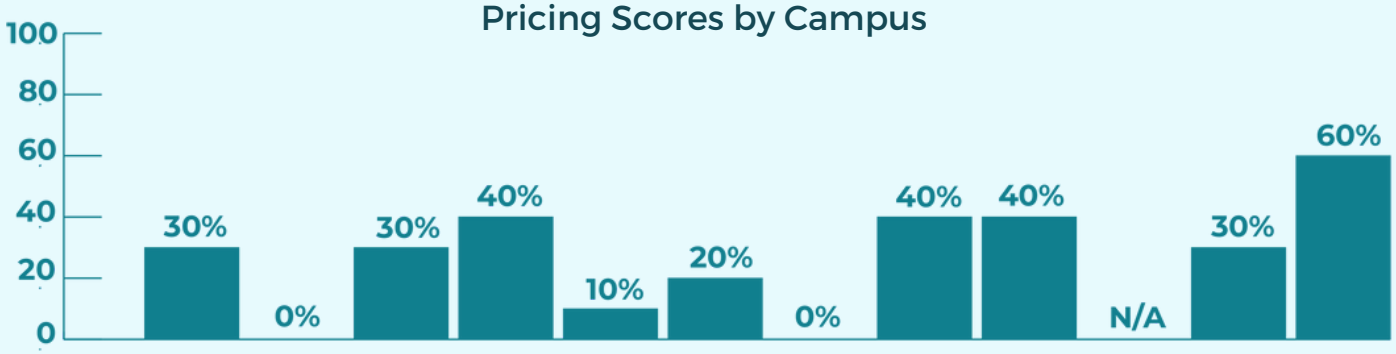
For domestic beer products, prices ranged from $3.40 to $5.50 per standard drink, with an average of $4.74. Only two campuses had a price per standard drink for beer below the recommendation.

$6.93
Average price per SD drink of spirits

Unfortunately, the effectiveness of these prices is likely to be undermined by the presence of specials, such as happy hour, which deeply discount products for a set period and encourage young people to consume large volumes of alcohol over a short duration. None of the campuses had a policy restricting drink specials (0%), and only four campuses had a policy prohibiting the gifting of free alcohol (36%).

Campuses do not currently implement volumetric pricing. This is consistent with current provincial policies in NS, NB, PEI, and NL. Only three provinces/territories set alcohol prices according to alcohol content.(9) However, campuses are uniquely positioned to implement volumetric pricing within licensed establishments on campus and could inspire provinces to do so as well. Failing to implement volumetric pricing creates financial incentives for students to purchase higher-strength products and get the “best bang for their buck.”

Pricing Scores by Campus



> By pricing low or non-alcoholic beverages cheaper, students are encouraged to select lower-strength products, in turn minimizing their risk for alcohol-related harm.

The availability and affordability of non-alcoholic beverages is a particularly important harm reduction strategy which can decrease alcohol consumption and offset the risks associated with intoxication.(43) While six campuses have non-alcoholic drinks available for patrons (see Bar and Event Practices), only two provide non-alcoholic drinks for free. Campuses should also ensure that non-alcoholic beverages are visible because awareness of these alternatives among students is necessary for their selection.

From a harm reduction approach, it is often desirable to keep students on campus longer so that they are consuming alcohol in a safer environment and alcohol emergencies can be addressed more quickly. However, making alcohol more accessible and cheaper to do so is likely to increase, rather than decrease, alcohol-related risks.

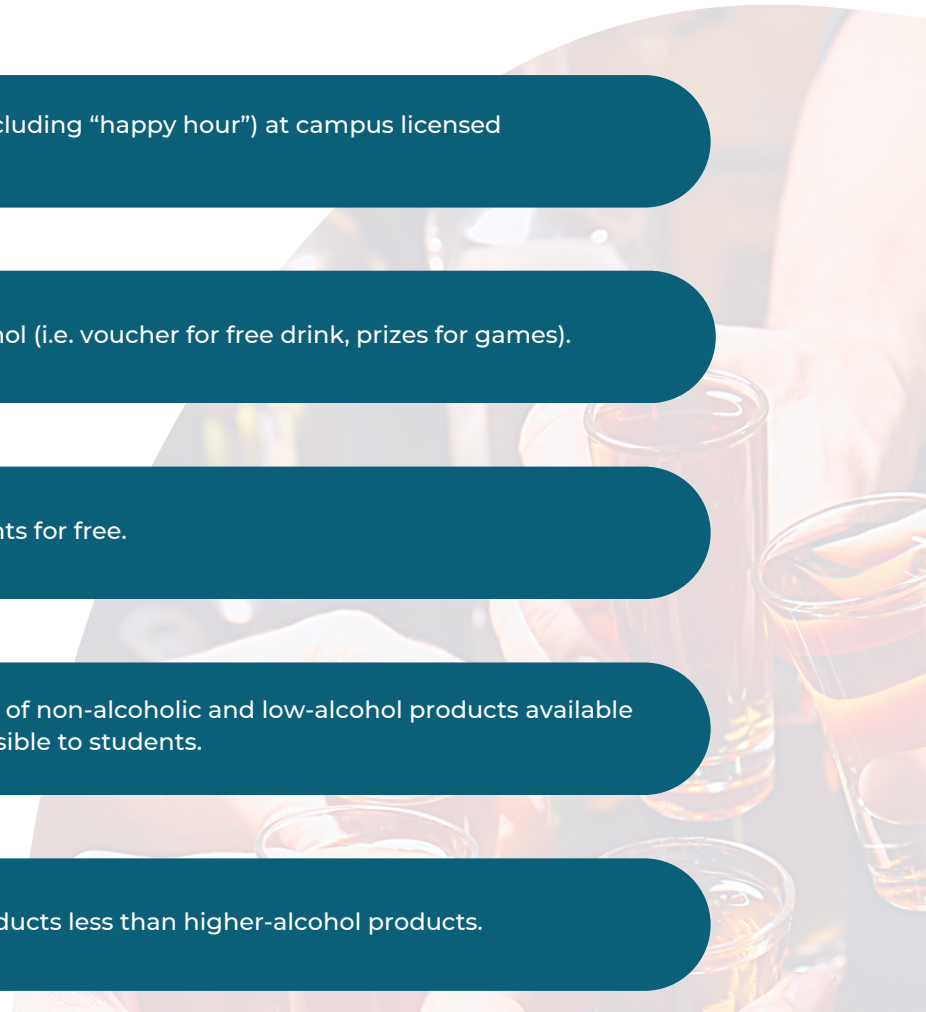


Campuses should create other incentives that encourage students to remain on campus to drink, such as hosting events, food specials, and themed nights. Campuses are also encouraged to work closely with community partners to align pricing policies and reduce student access to cheap, high-alcohol-content products both on and off campus.



How to Improve Your Score

If we took the highest scoring policies currently being implemented at the 12 campuses, the average score for Pricing would increase from 43% to 60%.



1. Ban price discounts (including “happy hour”) at campus licensed establishments.
2. Ban gifting of free alcohol (i.e. voucher for free drink, prizes for games).
3. Provide water to students for free.
4. Increase the proportion of non-alcoholic and low-alcohol products available and ensure these are visible to students.
5. Price lower-alcohol products less than higher-alcohol products.

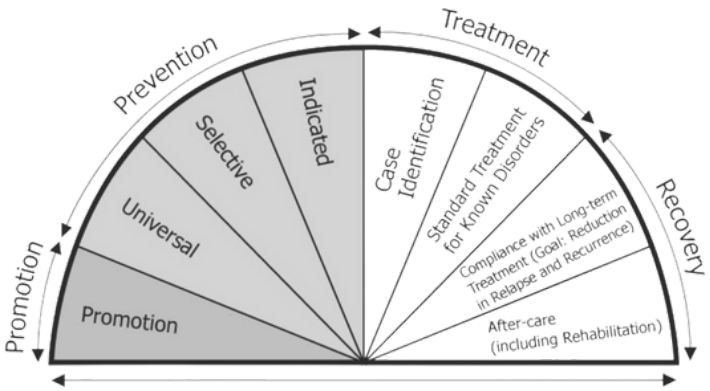
Think bigger

Offer 'happy hour' discounts for food and non-alcoholic beverages.

Campus Services

Prevention and intervention programs are important components of a comprehensive alcohol harm reduction policy.

To ensure all students are reached, alcohol prevention programs and strategies are necessary across the continuum of care from health promotion to treatment and recovery.(45)



Begun, A. (2019). Theories and Biological Basis of Substance Misuse, Part 1.

> In addition to prevention programming, screening for high-risk drinking behavior is critical for targeting intervention efforts towards at-risk students and reducing related harms.(8, 45)

Promotion and Prevention

Education and awareness programs are the most common universal prevention strategy, which aim to provide students with basic information about alcohol and its associated risks.(8, 45)

When used independently, education and awareness programs generally have only small effects on behavior change, although programs such as AlcoholEdu, Alcohol-Wise, and Alcohol 101 have been shown to enhance students' alcohol knowledge and use of safe drinking practices.(45,12)

Moreover, educational programs such as these can assist in increasing awareness of and supporting other types of strategies, such as policy changes.

There are numerous opportunities to incorporate screening including during first-year orientation, at health and wellness centres, academic assistance centres, or as part of student conduct. Individuals identified as high-risk for alcohol-related harms can then receive brief motivational interventions.

Brief motivational interventions which incorporate principals of motivation interviewing, cognitive behavioral therapy and personalized feedback are among best practice for harm reduction. What makes many these programs and interventions valuable is the chance for students to engage in conversations and discussions about alcohol.(8)

Treatment and Recovery

For students who have further developed substance use issues and need more than education, screening and early intervention, universities should provide tertiary treatment options.(45)

> At the very least, universities should have established connections with other primary health care facilities in the area and provide referrals for students struggling with marked dependence and problems.(45)

To support students in recovery from an alcohol or other drug use disorder, universities can implement a Collegiate Recovery Program (CRP). CRP's are common at postsecondary institutions in the US and have recently begun to emerge at Canadian institutions.

These peer-driven programs offer services and resources to students in recovery to ensure they can initiate or maintain their recovery and complete their degree.



BASICS PROGRAM

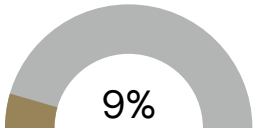
The Brief Alcohol Screening and Intervention for College Students (BASICS) program is an intervention targeted at students who drink heavily and are at risk for alcohol-related problems. BASICS takes a harm reduction approach and uses motivational interviewing techniques to help students make better decisions related to alcohol. The program is conducted over two, hour-long, sessions. To learn more about BASICS visit www.blueprintsprograms.com

Campus Services
Indicators

Average Score

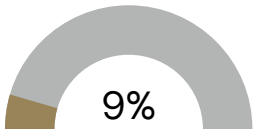
Prevention Programming - All Students

Best Practice: Campuses provide at least one evidence-based universal prevention program (AlcoholEdu; Alcohol-Wise, eCHECKUP to go; Alcohol 101)



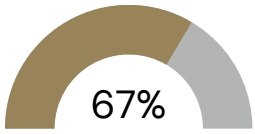
Prevention Programming - At-Risk Students

Best Practice: Campuses provide at least one evidence-based targeted prevention program (BASICS; Alcohol skills training; eCHECKUP to go; SBIR



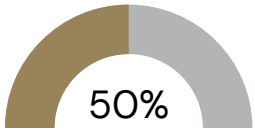
Substance Specific Treatment

Best Practice: Specialized alcohol use treatment available on campus or by referral.



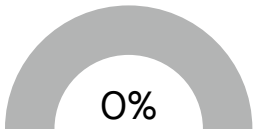
Medical Response Team

Best Practice: Campuses have a medical response team trained in first aid who attends high-risk events and/or responds to on-campus medical emergencies.

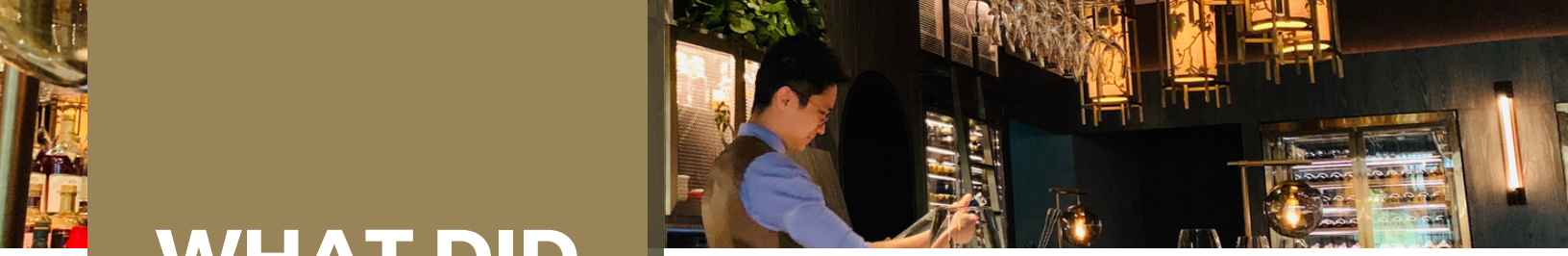


Campus Recovery Community

Best Practice: Campus Recovery Community. Defined as "an inclusive, peer-driven space supporting all pathways to recovery, building community, and reducing addiction stigma on campus."







WHAT DID WE LEARN?

Scores in this domain ranged from 0% - 80% with an average score of 27%. In general, campuses scored poorly in this policy domain, with only one campus scoring above 40%. This campus was the only one to subscribe to an evidence-based prevention and intervention program, eCHECKUP TO GO.

27%
Total Average Score

The eCHECKUP TO GO program is an online, self-administered, personalized normative feedback intervention based on motivational interviewing and social norms theory. eCHECKUP TO GO shows promise as both a universal prevention program and an indicated intervention for at-risk students.(12)

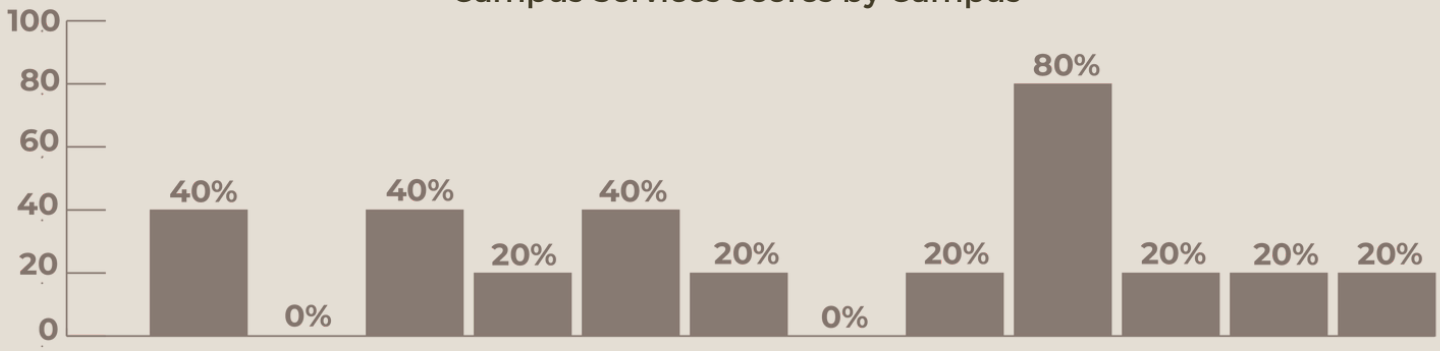
It is also cost-effective and customizable for postsecondary institutions. More information about eCHECKUP TO GO can be found here: https://www.echeckuptogo.com/

Eight campuses provide counselling or support services and/or referral options to substance-specific treatment for students who have a problem with alcohol. Six campuses had a student-led medical response team trained in mental health first aid who attend high-risk events and/or responds to on-campus medical emergencies.

No campus hasd a collegiate recovery program. However, CRP's are becoming more common at Canadian postsecondary institutions. UBC established the first student recovery community in 2019 and provides services to over 100 students.

Since 2020, others Canadian institutions have adopted similar recovery programs including University of Alberta, University of Calgary, University of Guelph, University of Windsor, Carleton University, and Algonquin College. For campuses interested in starting their own recovery programs, resources can be found at the Association of Recovery in Higher Education (ARHE) website and the Center for the Study of Addiction and Recovery (CSAR) at Texas Tech University.

Campus Services Scores by Campus



How to Improve Your Score

If we took the highest scoring policies currently being implemented at the 12 campuses, the average score for Campus Services would increase from 27% to 80%.

1. Subscribe to an evidence-based prevention program and develop a clear plan for dissemination
2. Establish a student-led medical response team
3. Create a collegiate recovery program



Spotlight

X-Patrol

The StFX X-PATROL team is a program comprised of a group of students who conduct regular campus patrols. This program was created to maintain a safe and secure environment on campus while protecting the community code and campus liquor license. X-PATROL works with StFX's Safety and Security Officers to ensure safety on campus. Their responsibilities include documenting community code violations, providing first-aid, accompanying students walking home when requested, and working with police, emergency health services and other first responders when needed.

This unique team also works in event supervision, being placed at doors (outside and inside the premise), in the licensed establishment on campus. Their tasks during event supervision include ensuring alcohol always stays within licensed areas, ensuring no outside alcohol is brought in, ensuring the age of patrons entering is 19 or older, removing intoxicated/violent patrons, protecting property, keeping track of community code violations, and documenting any alcohol policy violations. https://www.stfx.ca/safety-security/x-patrol

Bar & Events

Drinking at bars or licensed establishments is associated with greater alcohol consumption among college students.(46) These venues are also high-risk settings for assault, fighting, risky sex, drinking and driving, sexual violence and injury.(45, 47-49)

Responsible beverage service (RBS) training to staff members plays an important role in reducing alcohol-related risks.(45) RBS training programs teach owners, managers, and other servers how to serve alcohol responsibly and abide by legal codes, such as not selling to over intoxicated patrons or those under the legal drinking age. Research shows that RBS is associated with reductions in service to intoxicated and underage patrons.(9, 50) However, RBS programs differ substantially in quality and there are no established RBS standards. As a result, they have limited effectiveness if used as an isolated strategy. (45)



> Comprehensive and mandatory training programs have been shown to be associated with reduced alcohol consumption, intoxication, and violence among patrons.(51,52)

Other forms of training provided to bar staff have also been shown to have positive results on reducing alcohol-related harm. Staff training specific to sexual violence and bystander intervention has shown to significantly increase confidence and the ability to recognize, respond to, intervene, and prevent instances of sexual violence.(48,49) Moreover, non-violent crisis intervention programs train individuals to deal and diffuse conflict and possibly violent situations.(53)



Staff Training

Other interventions include a wide range of strategies that aim to alter the environment of on-campus bars and discourage violent or disruptive behaviour and minimise service practices that are associated with increased risk of harm. Such measures include limiting the number of drinks that can be purchased at once, limiting mixed drinks to 1oz, safe ride programs and prohibiting last call.

While there is limited empirical evidence that these measures are effective as standalone interventions, best practice from universities across both Canada and the US demonstrate that applying controlled alcohol service measures to campus bars are effective methods of reducing consumption and related harms.(8)

Reduces service to underage patrons

Reduces Over-Intoxication

Reduces Alcohol Related Harm

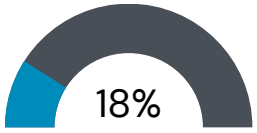


Bar & Events
Indicators

Average Score

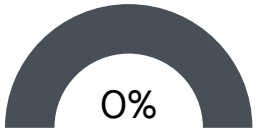
Type of Training

Best Practice: Mandatory beverage service and security training for all staff serving alcohol. Additional training strongly encouraged.



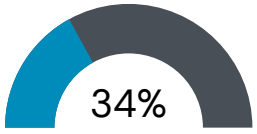
Frequency of Training

Best Practice: Training recertification required for all levels of staff including volunteers.



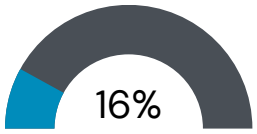
Control Measures

Best Practice: Campuses with 4 or 5 of the following policies: government ID required; no admittance after 12am; refuse/remove intoxicated patrons; special procedures for high-risk events; ensure intoxicated patrons get home safe



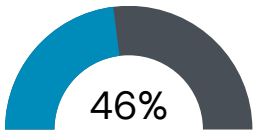
Safe Service Policies: Licensed Establishments

Best Practice: Campuses with all 9 safe service policies: limits on number of drinks; no bulk purchases; limit drink container size; food is available; no last call; no shots; 1oz mixed drinks; lower alcohol products available.



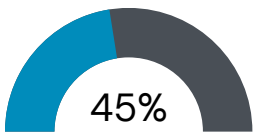
Safe Service Policies: Events

Best Practice: Safe service policies apply to events in addition to on-campus licensed establishments.



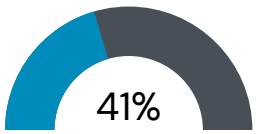
Responsibility for Oversight of Campus Bars

Best Practice: Campus bars with shared responsibility by the student union and campus administration.

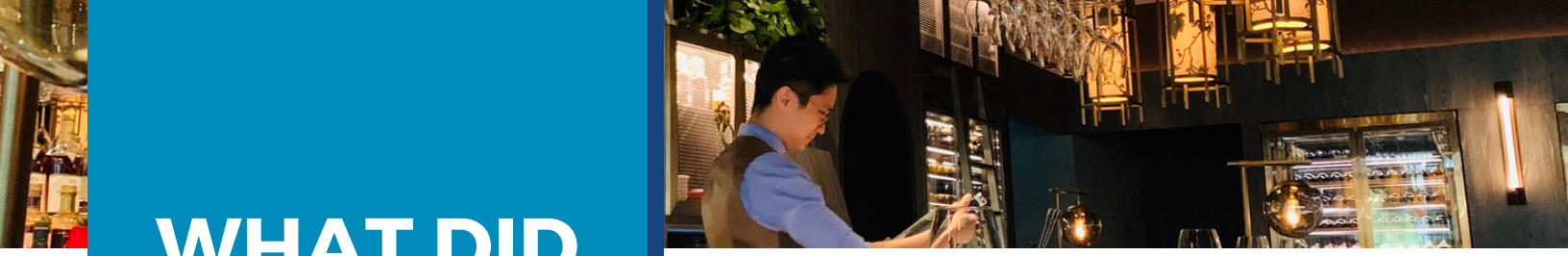


Event Procedures

Best Practice: Campuses with all of the following: clear procedures for on-campus events and off-campus events; risk assessment committee; mandatory security at events that serve alcohol







WHAT DID WE LEARN?

Scores in this domain ranged from 0% – 60%, with an average score of 28%.

48%
Average Score

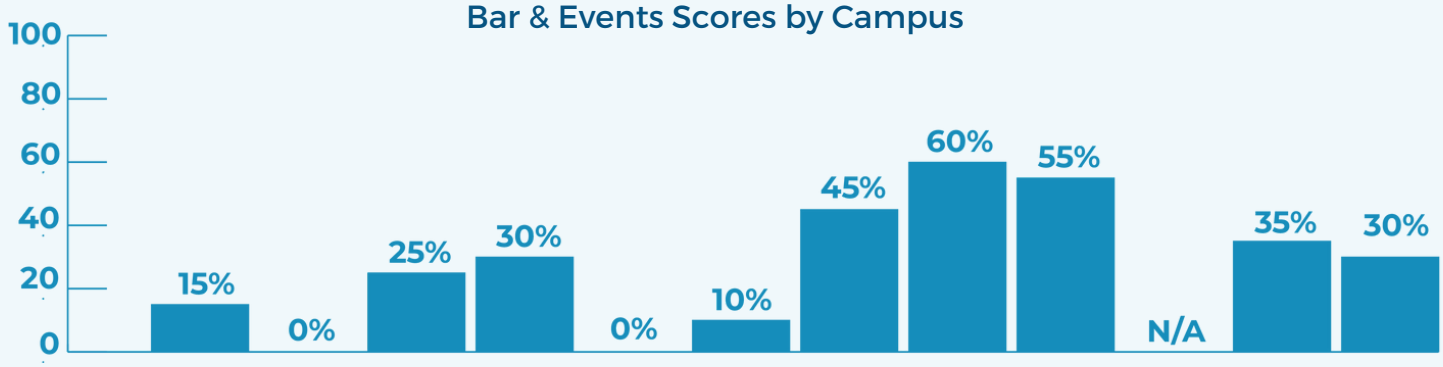
Jurisdictional responsibility for on-campus licensed establishments varied across institutions. At five institutions, the student union and campus administration had shared oversite. At six institutions, the campus bar was privately run or run by the student union only. Without shared oversite it is challenging for institutions to ensure that effective alcohol policies are implemented and enforced. In general, scores in this domain were higher for institutions with shared oversite of campus bars. Compared to privately run campus bars, institutions with shared oversite were more likely to require beverage service training and had more alcohol control measure policies and safe service policies.

Training

There were few campus policies which had specific training requirements for staff serving alcohol. As a result, service staff are ill prepared to serve and sell liquor safely.

> Responsible Beverage Service Training was required at only four institutions and no institution required serving staff to have security measure training, first aid training, non-violent crisis intervention training, or bystander intervention training.

Some campuses indicated that their staff do receive this training informally, but it was not written/documented in a policy. Moreover, training requirements did not apply to all levels of staff or require recertification.

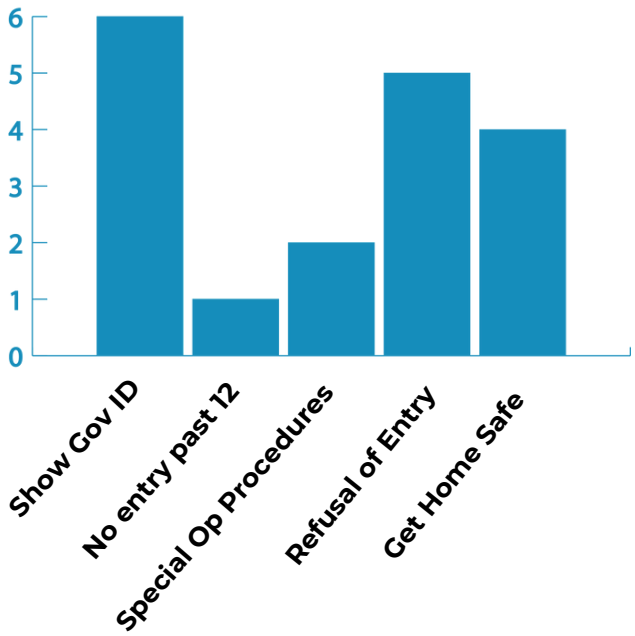


Alcohol control policies

We evaluated five alcohol control policies based on best practice. The most common control policy was requiring patrons to show government issued identification upon entry.

Five institutions had a policy to refuse entry to, or remove, intoxicated patrons, four had a policy to ensure intoxicated patrons got home safely, two had policies that ensure special operational procedures are in place for high-risk events (e.g., additional staff), and one institution prohibits entry to licenced establishments after 12am. Four institutions had no alcohol control policies in place.

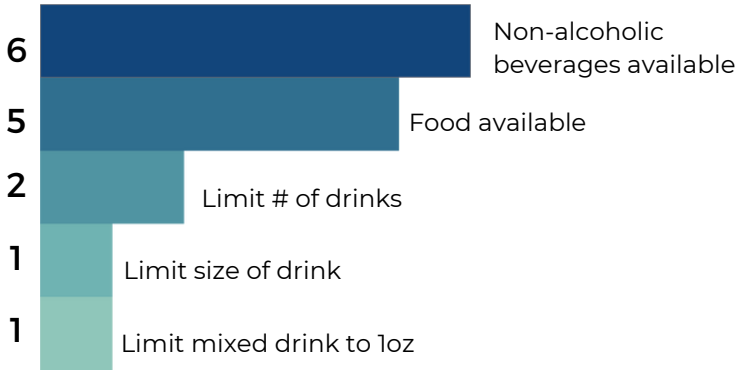
*Number of campuses with these alcohol control policies



Safe Service Policies

Safe service policies are intended to reduce over-intoxication and minimize harm. The two most common safe service policies were ensuring that food and non-alcoholic beverages were available. Two campuses had a policy limiting the number of drinks you could purchase at a time, one campus limited the size of drinks available for purchase, and one campus limited mixed drinks to 1oz of liquor. No campus had policies which prohibit last call, shots, or bulk purchases (e.g., buckets or pitchers). Three campuses had no safe service policies in place at their licensed establishment.

*Number of campuses with these safe service policies



Events

In looking at events, we see that five institutions extend their safe service policies to on-campus events which serve alcohol. In addition, eight campuses had a clear policy and procedure document for hosting on-campus events, however, only half of these had a clear document for off-campus events.

Six campuses had a designated risk assessment committee or individual responsible for event approval, and five campuses had an explicit policy that required security to be present at campus events that sell alcohol.



How to Improve Your Score

If we took the highest scoring policies currently being implemented at the 12 campuses, the average score for Bar & Event Practices would increase from 28% to 70%.

1. Create a policy to ensure all staff serving alcohol receive responsible beverage service training and security measure training.
2. Require recertification of training biennially.
3. Implement all 5 control policies to maximize operating procedures intended to reduce harm.
4. Expand safe service policies to include setting limits on number of drinks, prohibiting last call, and ensuring lower strength alcohol products are available.
5. Develop clear policies and procedures for off-campus events.
6. Ensure institutional oversight of on-campus licensed establishments.

Think bigger

Prohibit the sale of pitchers and shots.

Community Action

Communities have influence over policy, law enforcement practices, and many other key stakeholders which shape student drinking patterns.(10)

Campus alcohol policies can be undermined or strengthened by the culture of alcohol in the communities surrounding the university. Best practice highlights the importance of establishing a Campus Community Coalition (CCC).(10)

> The goal of a CCC is to promote cooperation between campus and community stakeholders to change the environment that affects students' decisions about alcohol use.

Coalitions can serve to communicate alcohol policies and expectations and enforce campus and community laws and regulations. Research from randomized community trials has shown that coalitions can significantly reduce alcohol use, alcohol-related harms, drinking and driving, and secondhand harms of alcohol for students.(54-57) Coalitions can be particularly valuable for implementing evidence-based environmental interventions, such as social norm interventions and beverage service training.

To be maximumly effective coalitions should engage strong leadership representing a wide range of campus members (e.g., campus administration and students), key community decision-makers (e.g., law enforcement, parents, bar owners), and work to plan and implement one or more prevention strategies in multiple sectors simultaneously.(10)

Beyond establishment of a coalition, it is also important to strengthen partnerships with off-campus clinical health providers and local law enforcement.



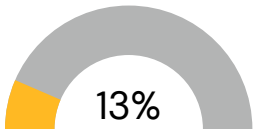
Maintaining a close relationship with local health care providers can help ensure that students receive the appropriate level of care and allow for efficient and timely access to health care. Campuses can also work with local law enforcement to increase adherence to established drinking rules, as well as build awareness of and enforce existing deterrence policies.

Community Action Indicators

Average Score

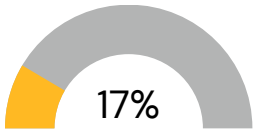
Campus and Community Coalition

Best Practice: An established campus and community coalition to address alcohol-related local issues.



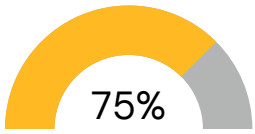
Collaboration with Law Enforcement

Best Practice: Campus security has an established relationship with local law enforcement.



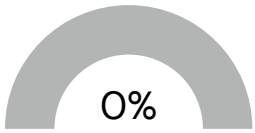
Collaboration with Alcohol-Related Organizations

Best Practice: Collaborate with alcohol-related organizations (e.g., PEP-AH) with a specific mandate to minimize or reduce alcohol related harm on campuses and share best practices and strategies to reduce alcohol related harm.



Collaboration with Local Health Services

Best Practice: Partner with local health services to enhance on campus safety and response to alcohol-related medical emergencies.







WHAT DID WE LEARN?

Most campuses are not working with communities in a way that is sustainable or effective. Scores in this domain ranged from 0% to 40% with an average of 23%. Current collaborations between campus and community stakeholders are piecemeal and largely occur in response to negative events occurring off-campus because of student drinking.



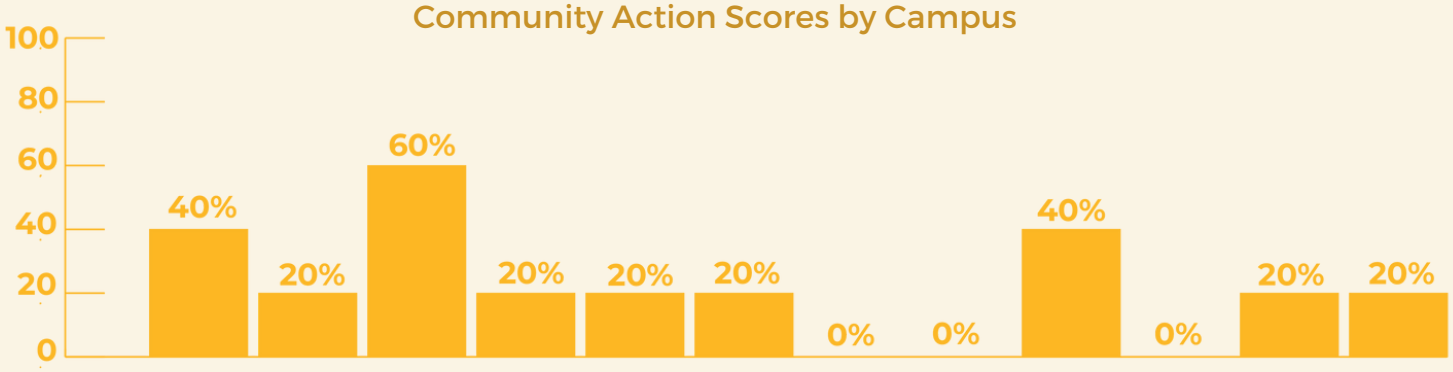
Only one campus had an established and active campus-community coalition, while another campus is currently developing one. It is important that campus-community collaborations are structured and systematic to ensure ongoing change and contribute to prevention rather than reaction.

Most campuses (75%) have signed on to be members of PEP-AH (postsecondary Education Partnership for Alcohol Harm), a national partnership of postsecondary institutions led by the Canadian Centre for Substance Use and Addiction. Although, PEP-AH has been not been active at a national level since COVID-19.



PEP-AH has an evidence-based framework and a toolkit to help guide campuses in planning, implementing, and evaluating initiatives aimed at reducing alcohol harm. However, it is unclear whether institutions have established campus PEP-AH teams or are actively using the PEP-AH framework to inform activities on-campus.

Community Action Scores by Campus



How to Improve Your Score

If we took the highest scoring policies currently being implemented at the 12 campuses, the average score for Community Action would increase from 22% to 80%.

1. Establish a campus-community coalition that involves community stakeholders such as local law enforcement and health care providers.

2. Create a PEP-AH Campus team and use the resources provided by PEP-AH to guide the implementation and evaluation of alcohol prevention activities. https://pepah.ca/guide/



Spotlight

Campus Community Coalition

In 2018 Acadia University, the Acadia Students' Union and the Town of Wolfville signed an MOU committing to collaborate in areas of communication, economic development, facilities and infrastructure, academic opportunities, strategic planning and community harmony.

In 2020, this tri-lateral group started meeting weekly from September to April to review incidents and complaints involving alcohol, identify student involvement, and to discuss and plan for upcoming events where risk of harm from alcohol exists.

Specifically, RCMP, Town compliance staff, Acadia Security, and the Acadia Student Conduct Office are all represented.

This collaborative effort led to the development of a Municipal Alcohol Policy in 2022. Furthermore, a Community Alcohol Strategy has been taking shape over the past four years; visioned by the MOU and drafted by numerous community members representing Public Health, owners and operators of licensed establishments, Acadia University, the ASU, and members of the local Good Neighbours Group.

This strategy can provide on-ramps to stakeholders across the community who wish to partner with the Town to reduce the downstream harms of alcohol misuse in our community.

Leadership & Surveillance

Alcohol policies are rules and regulations that set out behavioral expectations of students and help prioritize alcohol policy initiatives on campus.

A stand-alone alcohol policy is an essential tool for ensuring the safety and well-being of students and preventing alcohol-related harm.(36)

Alcohol policies should include specific evidence-based policies from across multiple policy domains. Moreover, alcohol policies should be developed collaboratively, especially with student unions. It is imperative that these policies are applied and enforced in order to be effective.

The Nova Scotia Department of Health and Wellness report on alcohol harms to postsecondary students stated that campus alcohol policies were essential starting points to reducing harms.(8) The report highlighted that while most Canadian universities had alcohol-related policies, only a minority had standalone alcohol policies.

Jernigan and colleagues review of college alcohol policies at 13 colleges in Maryland showed that alcohol policies were often spread across multiple webpages and generally did not use accessible language (above high school reading level).(19)

Furthermore, while half of the reviewed policies featured effective policy elements, they also featured policies and practices that are considered ineffective.(19) These shortcomings may interfere with the implementation of alcohol policies and practices and divert resources to less effective policies.

> An essential component of an alcohol harm reduction strategy includes regularly monitoring changes in alcohol use, drinking patterns and alcohol-related harms over time.(10)



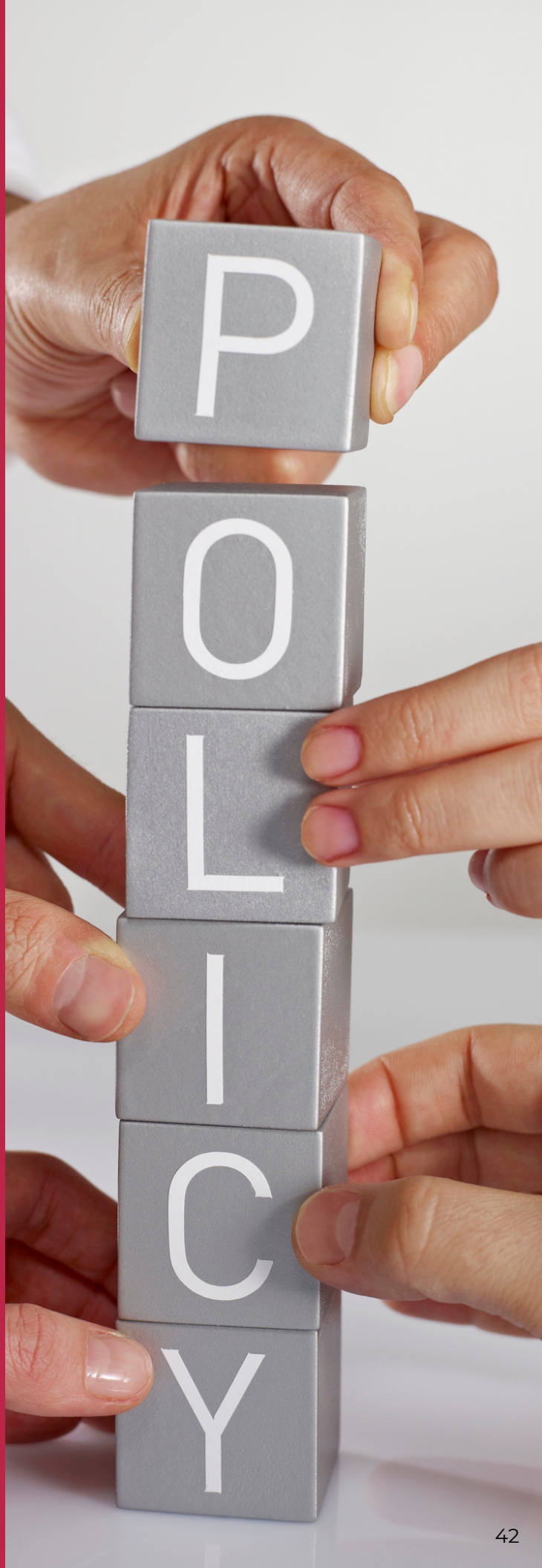
Conducting institution-specific surveys, or taking part in provincial/national surveys that assess alcohol use and harms (e.g. Canadian Postsecondary Education Alcohol and Drug Use Survey, National College Health Assessment survey) is an intuitive, logical way to monitor use and harms at postsecondary institutions.

It should also help to plan responses that reflect the situation among a specific student population. Faulkner and colleagues highlight how institutions can use survey data to improve student outcomes: “information may guide intervention prioritization, selection, implementation, and ongoing evaluation and program/health service refinement”.(58)

The Nova Scotia Department of Health and Wellness report recommended annual or bi-annual surveys on student drinking patterns, attitudes, and harms on campus to inform interventions.(8) The Postsecondary Education Partnership-Alcohol Harm (PEP-AH) framework also emphasizes regular surveys of student alcohol use, knowledge, attitudes, and consequences as a best practice.(11)

Remember:

- Include specific evidence-based policies from across multiple policy domains
- Develop alcohol polices collaboratively
- To be effective the alcohol policy must be applied and enforced
- Conduct annual or bi-annual surveys of student alcohol use



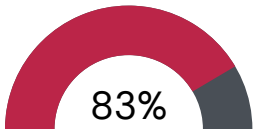
Leadership & Surveillance

Indicators

Average Score

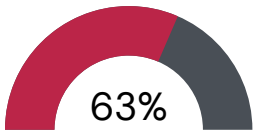
Stand Alone Alcohol Policy

Best Practice: Has a stand alone alcohol policy.



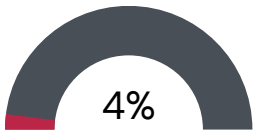
Finding the Alcohol Policy Online

Best Practice: Alcohol policy took less than 30 seconds to find online.



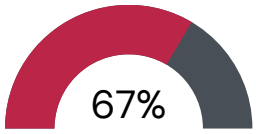
Readability of the Alcohol Policy

Best Practice: Scored 60-70 on Flesch Reading Ease test.



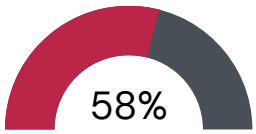
Explicit Mandate in Alcohol Policy

Best Practice: Explicit harm reduction/safe consumption mandate.



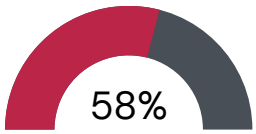
Regular Evaluation of Alcohol Policy

Best Practice: Alcohol policy is regularly updated by a committee every 3-5 years.



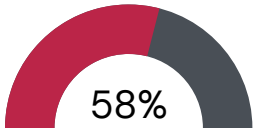
Identified Leadership

Best Practice: Has an identified leader responsible for monitoring alcohol-related harm and consumption on campus.



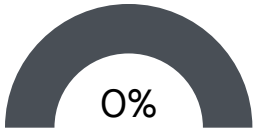
Regular Surveys for Student Use and Harms

Best Practice: Annually collect data on student alcohol use and harms.



Reporting Study Findings

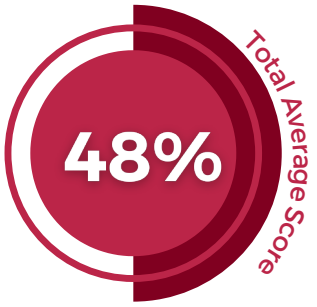
Best Practice: Report study findings on student alcohol use and harms.





WHAT DID WE LEARN?

Scores on Leadership and Surveillance ranged from 0% - 70% with an average of 48%. Most campuses in Atlantic Canada had a stand-alone alcohol policy (10 of 12), but they varied considerably in quality.



Further, six campuses regularly (every 3-5 years) update their policy by a formal committee composed of students, faculty and staff. Seven campuses also had an identifiable leader responsible for monitoring alcohol-related harm and consumption on campus.

However, there were many challenges with accessibility of the alcohol policies. Only six campus alcohol policies could be found in fewer than 30 seconds and policies were often spread across multiple internet locations and documents making information about specific alcohol policies difficult to locate.

It was common to find alcohol policies in the student code of conduct, residence handbooks, as well as multiple sections of institutional websites, such as safety services, conference and event services, student life, student union, and websites of licensed establishments on campus.

This piecemeal approach hinders transparency and may interfere with the implementation of alcohol policies and practices. Moreover, all alcohol policies failed to have accessible language, achieving a score of "very difficult to read" as assessed by the Flesch Reading Ease test.

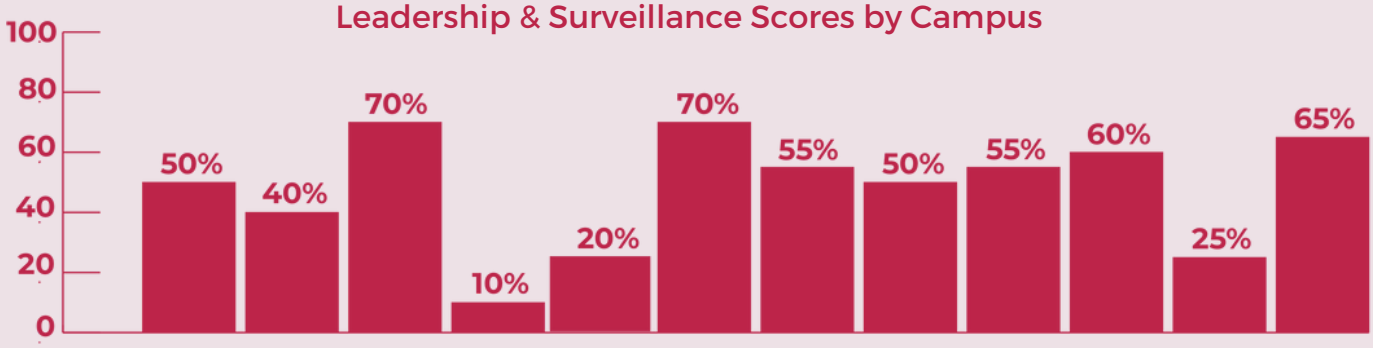
> One promising practice is that most alcohol policies had an explicit harm reduction mandate to minimize harm and promote safer substance use practices.

Almost all campuses collect some data about student substance use. Six reported collecting data annually and four collected data every 2-3 years. However, this data is under-utilized and no campus reports on the findings of this data.

Effective dissemination of results can raise awareness about rates of student alcohol use, drinking patterns, and alcohol-related harms. Moreover, reporting can help prioritize and implement policies to reduce these harms, as well as evaluate the impact of policy changes over time.

Identifying a procedure for data analysis and reporting is an important part of a comprehensive strategy for addressing alcohol use on campus.

Leadership & Surveillance Scores by Campus



How to Improve Your Score

If we took the highest scoring policies currently being implemented at the 12 campuses, the average score for Leadership & Surveillance would increase from 48% to 80%.



1. Create a single comprehensive alcohol policy and update it every 3 – 5 years.
2. Ensure the campus alcohol policy is easy to find and easy to read.
3. Regularly collect student alcohol use data by participating in the CPADS or NCHA surveys.
4. Report and utilize data about student alcohol use and harms to inform policy change.

Spotlight

Canadian Postsecondary Alcohol and Drug Survey (CPADS)

CPADS is an online survey developed by Health Canada for Canadian undergraduate students between 17 and 25 years of age. CPADS collects data about what substances student use, how much and how often students use substances, and what harms associated with alcohol and substance use they experience. It provides postsecondary institutions with timely and reliable data about student drinking that can help to better allocate resources and improve campus services that students need. https://health-infobase.canada.ca/alcohol/cpads/

National College Health Assessment Survey (NCHA)

NCHA is a national research survey organized by the American College Health Association to assist college health service providers, health educators, counsellors, and administrators in collecting data about their students' habits, behaviours, and perceptions on prevalent health topics. Questions on the NCHA survey cover the following topics: demographics/personal profile; alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use; sexual health; weight, nutrition, and exercise; mental health; personal safety and violence. https://www.acha.org/NCHA/NCHA_Home

Health & Safety Messages

Students have a variety of inaccurate perceptions and knowledge about alcohol consumption, which influence their drinking

Data from the 2019 CPADS study reports that only one in six students (16%) had heard of Canada's low-risk drinking guidelines.(1) A qualitative study, with over 100 Canadian postsecondary students, found that the majority were unaware of harmful alcohol consumption levels and the risks associated with these drinking patterns.(59) Students from this study also reported that alcohol education on campus tends to be sporadic or non-existent, and is often not engaging or memorable.

Alcohol education provides critical information which allows students to make informed choices about their alcohol consumption. It can also change knowledge, beliefs and attitudes about alcohol consumption, support other types of alcohol policies, and decrease intentions to drink. (45, 60-64)



> While alcohol education may not always result in behaviour change and reduced consumption, it remains an important contributor to developing a comprehensive alcohol policy and strategies.(45)

As educational institutions, campuses have a moral responsibility to inform students about the risks of alcohol use. Alcohol education can be disseminated in a variety of ways, such as signage in licensed areas on campus, on institutional websites, mandatory training for incoming students, and directly on alcohol containers sold on-campus.

Health information labels are a recommended strategy to help reduce harm by informing consumers on common risks associated with consumption.(13) However, implementation of health information labeling in Canada remains difficult due to industry pushback. Research on alcohol label effectiveness is still in its infancy, but initial findings indicate labels increase awareness of alcohol-related harms, change alcohol expectancies, and reduce intention to use alcohol among young adults.(63-65)

Health & Safety Messages

Indicators

	Average Score
Health Information Labels Best Practice: Alcohol containers have health information abels.	0%
Mandatory Health and Safety Messages Best Practice: Mandatory health and safety messages displayed on campus.	0%
Designated Webpage for Alcohol Education Best Practice: Designated alcohol education page on campus website.	59%
Mandatory Alcohol Education Best Practice: Alcohol education is mandatory for incoming students, residence assistants, athletics, event host and volunteers.	34%
Education Topics covered on the website Best Practice: Alcohol education covers the risks of acute intoxication, how to drink moderately, social norms, drinking and driving risks, pregnancy risks, harm to others, available health services	29%





WHAT DID WE LEARN?

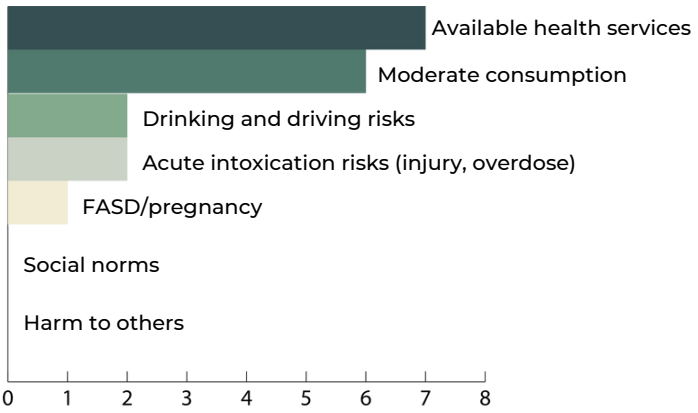
The average score for health and safety messages was 20%, with scores ranging from 10% - 40%. Seven campuses have a designated webpage for alcohol education, however, the type and quality of information provided on these webpages varied considerably across campuses.



All webpages provided a list of available resources for students seeking help for their alcohol use and six of seven also provided tips for how to drink moderately and reduce alcohol-related harm. However, only two websites discussed the risks associated with acute intoxication or drinking and driving, and only one addressed the issue of drinking during pregnancy. None of the websites includes information about social drinking norms or harm to others from alcohol.

It was rare for alcohol education to be mandatory on campuses. Four campuses require alcohol education for residence assistants, three require it for incoming students, and two require alcohol education for student athletes.

Topics covered on campus alcohol education websites



Alcohol health and safety messages are not required to be displayed anywhere on campus, including on alcohol products sold at on-campus licensed establishments. Mandatory health and safety messages on a variety of topics, such as violence, injury, and impaired driving, can help support students in making informed decisions about their alcohol consumption.

Campuses are encouraged to require the display of alcohol health and safety messages in campus licensed establishments, in residence buildings, and at campus events where alcohol is served.



Currently, there is considerable discussion about implementing alcohol warning labels in Canada to raise consumer awareness of alcohol-related health risks.

While alcohol warning labels have not yet been introduced at the federal or provincial level (except in the Yukon and Northwest Territories where alcohol warning labels are manually added to alcohol containers sold in liquor stores), campuses have an opportunity to be a leader in this area.

PEP – AH
Postsecondary
Education Partnership
Alcohol Harms

Campuses are encouraged to work with national organizations such as PEP-AH or the SHEA Lab at StFX to develop and manually adhere labels to alcohol products sold on campus that educate students about alcohol-related health risks, and provide guidance on how to reduce these risks.



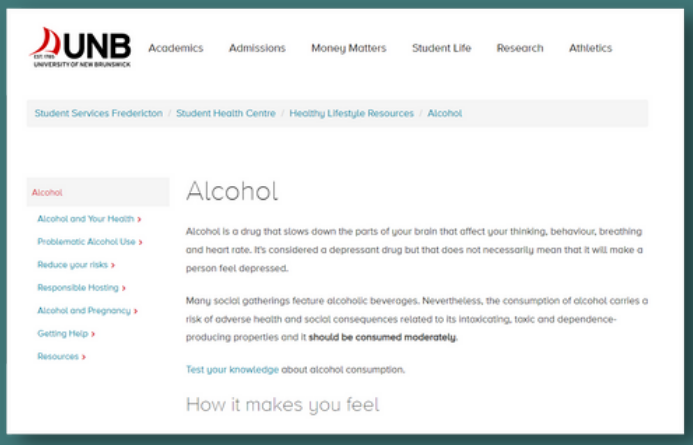
Spotlight

Alcohol Education Webpage

UNB's designated alcohol education webpage is a valuable tool created to educate students on alcohol and related harms.

The website covers a wide variety of topics such as a standard drink, problematic use, ways to reduce risk, alcohol and pregnancy, where to get help, and more.

This webpage is supported by evidence-based resources such as The Centre for Addiction and Mental Health and the Government of Canada.



The website also provides information in a variety of forms making it more accessible. Written explanations, informative tools such as figures, self-assessments, and videos can be found throughout.

How to Improve Your Score

If we took the highest scoring policies currently being implemented at the 12 campuses, the average score for Health & Safety Messages would increase from 20% to 80%.

1. Develop an alcohol education webpage that provides in-depth evidence-based information on alcohol use, it's risks, and how to minimize these risks.
2. Implement mandatory alcohol education for residence assistants, incoming students, athletes, and hosts of events serving alcohol.
3. Mandate displaying alcohol health and safety messages in on-campus licensed establishments, in residence, and at events serving alcohol.



Think bigger

Add health information labels to alcohol containers sold on campus

Enforcement

Campus alcohol policies need to be actively and regularly enforced to be maximally effective

Deterrence theory suggests that individuals are more likely to comply with a policy if they perceive there to be a high certainty of getting caught and of being penalized for noncompliance.(66)

> Consistent enforcement of policies and sanctions for students who violate alcohol policies is associated with lower rates of excessive drinking and alcohol-related problems, and a decrease in alcohol-related violations.(66-69)

Enforcement of campus alcohol policies requires having strategies in place to identify policy infractions, and appropriate sanctions. Strategies for proactive enforcement of alcohol policies include compliance checks to prevent the sale of alcohol to underage students, walk-throughs at licensed establishments or locations where drinking occurs, campus patrols, sobriety checkpoints, or fake ID investigations.(70)

It is also important that there is sufficient designated personnel to carry out enforcement efforts, such as campus police and security, or student affairs staff.



Campus alcohol policies must also clearly list the sanctions to be imposed in instances of policy violation. Sanctions deemed to be most effective in deterring policy violations include student organization probation and loss of student organization status, individual suspension and probation, alcohol evaluation and screening, and referral to an evidence-based prevention program.(19) Campuses should have a graduated array of sanctions that increase in severity with successive violations. Sanctions should also be used in tandem and be clearly tied to specific policy violations.(19)

Enforcement Indicators

	Average Score
Identifying Policy Violations Best Practice: Has a procedures or program for identifying policy infractions (i.e., compliance checks).	29%
Reporting Policy Violations Best Practice: A clear process for reporting suspected policy infractions.	42%
Handling Policy Violations Best Practice: Clear procedures for handling infractions and designated personnel to determine appropriate sanctions.	96%
Sanctions for Alcohol Policy Violations - Individuals Best Practice: Sanctions for alcohol policy violations by individual students.	92%
Sanctions for Alcohol Policy Violations - Organizations Best Practice: Sanctions for alcohol policy violations by organizations (e.g., student groups; campus bar).	42%
Severity of Sanctions Best Practice: Sanctions increase in severity with subsequent or repeat violations.	67%
Sanctions for Off Campus Violation Best Practice: Policies and sanctions extend to off-campus violations.	42%
Sanctions for Specific Violations Best Practice: Sanctions are tied to specific policies.	33%
Communication of Provincial Laws Best Practice: Clear communication of municipal and provincial alcohol policies.	75%







WHAT DID WE LEARN?

Enforcement had the highest score across policy domains. The average score was 60%, with scores ranging from 45% to 75%.

60%
Total Average Score

All campuses had procedures for handling policy infractions and designated personnel to determine appropriate sanctions. However, eight campuses did not have mechanisms or procedures in place to identify policy infractions and six campuses did not have a complaint system in place for reporting suspected policy violations. As a result, many policy infractions are likely to go unreported or disciplined, reducing the likelihood of student compliance with campus alcohol policies.

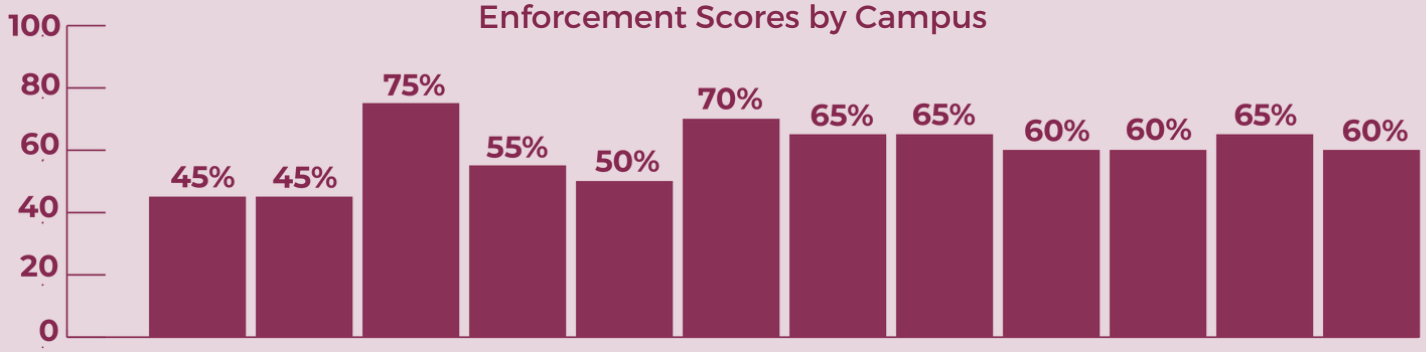
Eleven campuses had clear and specific sanctions for individual students who violate alcohol policies, such as educational sanctions, fines, behavioural agreements, suspension, and eviction from residence. However, only four institutions tied specific sanctions to specific policy violations.

> “Overall, policies related to discipline were typically located in the student code of conduct, rather than in the alcohol policy.”

At eight campuses, sanctions progressively become more severe for repeat or multiple infractions. However, sanctions rarely apply to non-academic student behaviour and conduct that occurs off-campus, unless the off-campus event or activity is sponsored or sanctioned by the University.

Only five campuses had sanctions in place for organizations that violate alcohol policies such as on-campus licensed establishments or events, as a result, policy violations in these venues often go unreprimanded.

Enforcement Scores by Campus



How to Improve Your Score

If we took the highest scoring policies currently being implemented at the 12 campuses, the average score for Enforcement would increase from 60% to 100%.

1. Create specific procedures to monitor compliance with campus alcohol policies. For example, spot checks at events and at licensed establishments by campus security.
2. Develop sanctions for organizations and event hosts who violate campus alcohol policies.
3. Create a complaint system for individuals to report suspected policy violations.



Think bigger

Hold students accountable for policy violations that occur off-campus within the community

Overall Results

Total scores

On average, the 12 Atlantic Canadian universities are implementing only a third of the evidence-based alcohol policies across the 10 domains assessed. The average campus policy score was 33%. Figure 1 presents the total weighted campus alcohol policy score achieved by each campus. The highest campus alcohol policy score was 49%, while the lowest campus policy score was just 15%.

Domain scores

Figure 2 reports the average scores for each of the ten policy domains assessed. The domain of Enforcement had the highest score (60%), and was the only domain score that exceeded 50%. This was followed by Leadership & Surveillance, scoring the second-highest average (47.5%) and Harm Reduction, scoring the third-highest average (42.5%). All other domains scored below 30%, with the three lowest-scoring domains being Advertising and Marketing (24%), Community Action (21.7%), and Health & Safety Messages (20%).

Key findings from each of the 10 domains are detailed below. Recommendations for strengthening campus alcohol policies in each domain can be found in the "Summary of Recommendations" section of this report.

Availability and access: Scores ranged from 15% - 45% (mean = 27%). Eleven campuses had an on-campus bar. No campus policies specified the hours and days of sale, and 10/11 campuses had hours of operation beyond the recommended hours (max of 7 hours per day). Almost all campuses allow for on-campus delivery of alcohol (11/12).

Advertising and sponsorship: Scores ranged from 0% to 50% (mean = 24%). At most campuses (75%), advertising policies did not extend to all advertising mediums (i.e., print, digital, broadcast, etc.) or all vendors (i.e., on-campus bars, off-campus bars, alcohol manufacturers.). Eight campuses did not have policies to regulate sponsorship.

Figure 1. Average Campus Alcohol Policy Score

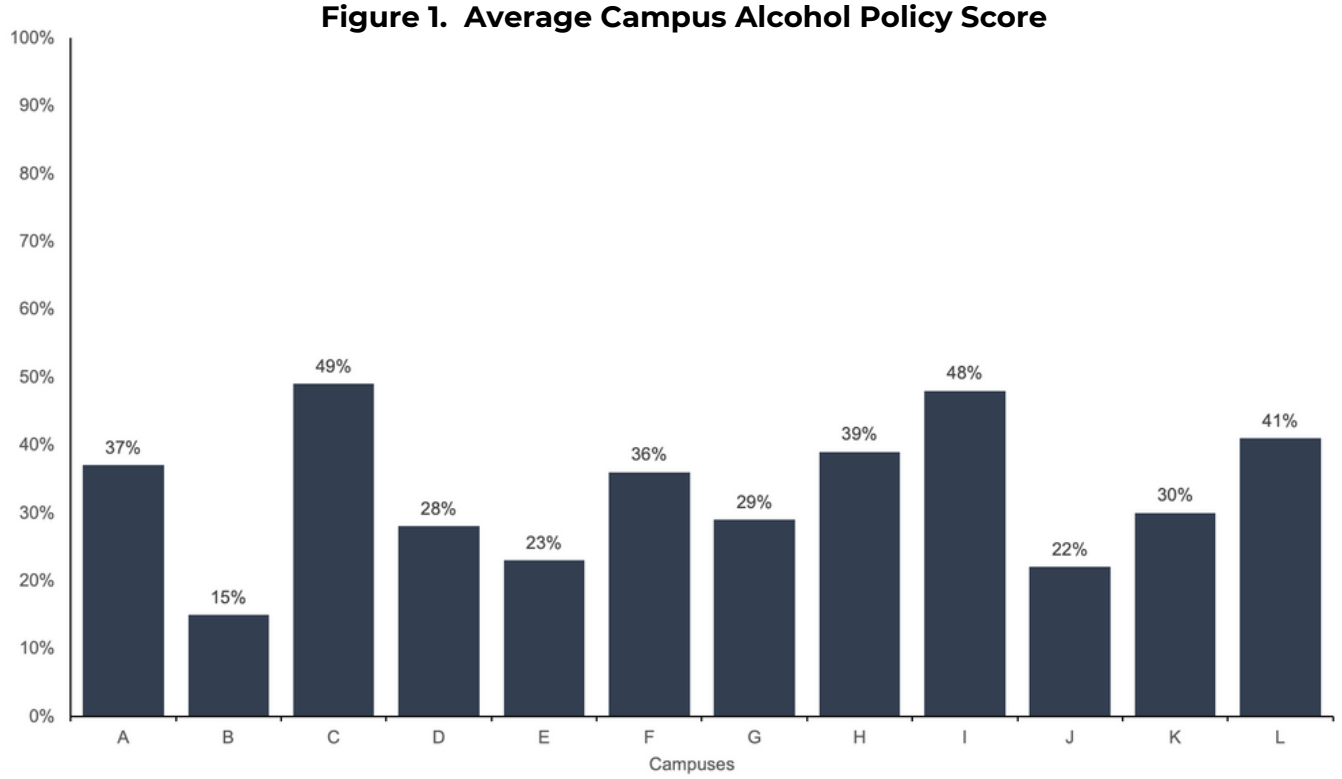
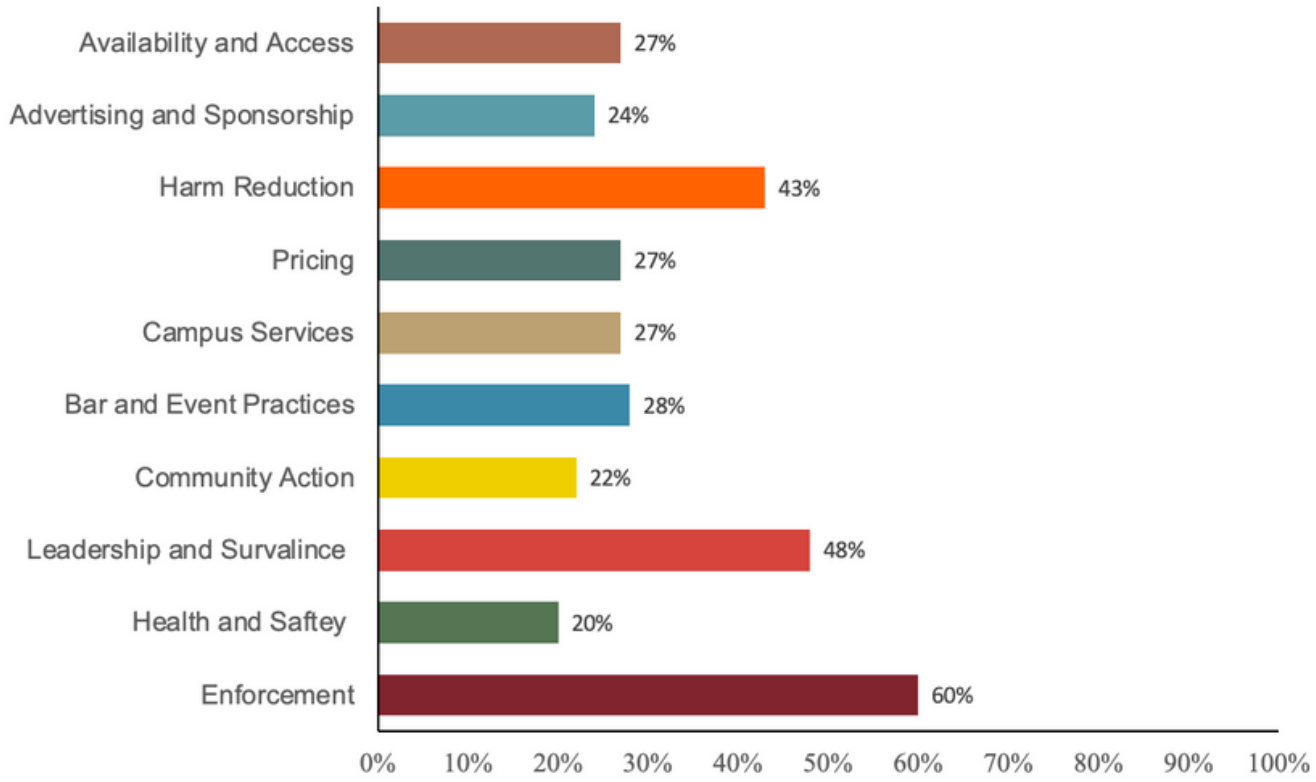


Figure 2. Average Domain Scores



Harm Reduction: Scores varied from 10% to 80% (mean = 42.5%). Ten campuses do not allow drinking games, six host dry orientation week, and six prohibit kegs. Nine campuses (75%) had a safe-ride program and eight had bystander training offered and available for students. Only three campuses had alcohol-free programming.

Pricing: Scores ranged from 0% to 60% (mean = 27%). For spirits, all eight campuses with price data had a price per standard drink above the recommendation of $3.76 ($5.33 – $8.29; mean = $6.93). For domestic beer products, 6/8 campuses had a price per standard drink above the recommendation ($3.40 to $5.50, mean = $4.74). All campuses permitted happy hour discounts.

Campus Services: Scores ranged from 0% to 80% (mean = 27%), Only one campus subscribed to an evidence-based prevention and intervention program (eCHECKUP to go). Eight campuses provide counselling services and/or referral options for substance use treatment. Six campuses had a student-led medical response team trained in first aid. No campus had a Campus Recovery Community.

Bar and Event Practices: Scores ranged from 0% to 60% (mean = 28%). Only four of the 11 campuses with bars required responsible beverage training. Of the five alcohol control policies examined, the most common was requiring patrons to show government issued identification (6/11). Of the safe service policies examined, ensuring non-alcoholic beverages and food are available were the most common (6/12). For events, eight campuses had clear policies and procedures for on-campus events, but only half of these had procedures for off-campus events. Six campuses had a designated risk assessment committee or individual responsible for event approval.

Community Action: Scores ranged from 0% to 60% (mean = 21.7%). One of 12 campuses had an established campus/community coalition. Three campuses collaborate with local law enforcement, while no campuses partner with emergency services.

Leadership and Surveillance: Scores ranged from 0% to 70% (mean = 48%). Ten campuses had a stand-alone alcohol policy (83.33%), and eight had an explicit harm reduction mandate. Six campuses regularly update their policy by a formal committee of students, staff, and faculty every 3-5 years. All campus policies received a “very difficult to read” score on the Flesch Reading Ease test.

Health and Safety Messages: Scores ranged from 10% to 40% (mean = 20%). Seven campuses had a designated webpage for alcohol education with resources for students seeking help with alcohol and tips to minimize harm. Four campuses had mandatory alcohol education for residence assistants and three had mandatory alcohol education for incoming students. No campus required health and safety messages to be displayed at on-campus bars.

Enforcement: Scores ranged from 45% to 75% (mean = 60%). All campuses had procedures for handling policy infractions and designated personnel to determine sanctions, and 11/12 campuses had clear and specific sanctions for policy violation. In most cases, sanctions became more severe for repeat or multiple infractions (8/12). However, most campuses did not have procedures for identifying policy infractions (8/12).

Best possible score

The best possible score was also calculated by combining the highest scores achieved in each of the 10 policy domains. This represents the highest possible score if all of the current best practice policies were being implemented at a single university. The overall best practice score was 74%.

Table 2. Current best practice scores by domain

Policy domain	Max domain score
Availability & Access	7/10
Advertising & Sponsorship	6/10
Harm Reduction	9.5/10
Pricing	6/10
Campus Services	8/10
Bar & Event Practices	7/10
Community Action	8/10
Leadership & Surveillance	8/10
Health & Safety Messages	4/10
Enforcement	10/10
Best current practice score	74%



Summary of Recommendations

Below we recap the specific recommendations for each policy domain. To achieve the best results campuses should take-action in each of the 10 domains. It is important to note that campuses are uniquely positioned to implement policies that go beyond current provincial and territorial alcohol policies. We challenge campuses to think outside of the box when it comes shaping a culture of alcohol on campus. Throughout this report we highlight opportunities for campuses to "think bigger" when it comes to alcohol policy. These are indicated below by a star ★

Please note, the recommended policies below are those that very few (or no) campus is currently implementing. For a comprehensive list of best practice campus alcohol policies please refer to the scoring rubric in the appendix.

Policy Domains	Top recommendations
Availability and Access	• Close campus bars one to two days per week. • Offer substance-free residence options • Prohibit the use of student cards to purchase alcohol. • Open campus bars a maximum of 7 hours per day with limited availability early in the day (before 4pm) and late at night (>1 am) to avoid opening hours coinciding with course offerings. ★ Prohibit the sale and consumption of alcohol at sporting events. ★ Ban delivery of alcohol on campus.
Advertising and Sponsorship	• Ensure advertising policies apply to all mediums, including digital platforms and promotional items. • Prohibit off-campus vendors from advertising on campus. • Develop clear procedures for monitoring compliance with campus & provincial advertising regulations (i.e., pre-approval process compliance checks). • Restrict the location of ad placement to licensed areas and prohibit the advertisement of price. • Clearly specify the terms of alcohol sponsorship to minimize youth exposure to branded content, particularly in sporting venues. ★ Ban all alcohol advertising and sponsorship on campus
Harm Reduction	• Prohibit pub crawls. • Introduce a Good Samaritan policy. • Conduct regular campus patrols at high-risk times. • Establish and support a student-led harm reduction initiative on campus. ★ Fund and staff a formalized program that provides fun and safe alcohol-free experiences for students.
Pricing	• Alcoholic products are priced at the recommended minimum unit price of $3.76 per standard drink. • Ban gifting of free alcohol • Price lower-alcohol products less than higher-alcohol products. • Ban price discounts (e.g., "happy hour") at campus bars and events. ★ Offer 'happy hour' discounts for food and non-alcoholic beverages instead
Campus Services	• Subscribe to an evidence-based prevention program and develop a clear plan for dissemination. • Establish a student-led medical response team. • Create a collegiate recovery program.

continued on the next page

Policy Domains	Best practice recommendations
Bar and Event Practices	• Create a policy to ensure all staff serving alcohol receive responsible beverage service training and security measure training. • Require recertification of training biennially. • Implement the follow control policies: Patrons required to show government issued ID; No “admittance after 12am”, special operating procedures for high-risk events; refuse entry of intoxicated patrons; ensure intoxicated patrons get home safe. • Expand safe service policies to include setting limits on number of drinks, prohibiting last call, and ensuring lower strength alcohol products are available. • Develop clear policies and procedures for off-campus events. • Ensure institutional oversite of on-campus licensed establishments. ★ Prohibit the sale of pitchers and shots.
Community Action	• Establish a campus-community coalition that involves community stakeholders such a local law enforcement and health care providers.
Leadership and Surveillance	• Create a single comprehensive alcohol policy • Update your campus alcohol policy every 3 – 5 years. • Ensure the campus alcohol policy is easy to find on the institutional website and easy to read. • Regularly collect student alcohol use data by participating in the CPADS or NCHA surveys. • Report and utilize data about student alcohol use and harms to inform policy change.
Health and Safety Messages	• Implement mandatory alcohol education for residence assistants, incoming students, athletes, and hosts of events serving alcohol. • Mandate displaying alcohol health and safety messages in on-campus licensed establishments, in residence, and at events serving alcohol. • Develop a webpage dedicated to alcohol education that provides in-depth evidence-based information on alcohol use and associated risks, as well as how to minimize these risks. ★ Add health information labels to alcohol containers sold on campus
Enforcement	• Create specific procedures to monitor compliance with campus alcohol policies. For example, spot checks at events by campus security. • Create a complaint system for individuals to report suspected policy violations. • Develop sanctions for organizations and event hosts who violate campus alcohol policies. ★ Hold students accountable for policy violations that occur off-campus within the community.



Discussion

This study is the first comprehensive assessment of campus alcohol policies in Canada. We evaluated the policies of 12 Atlantic Canadian Universities against best practice with the goal of supporting postsecondary institutions in implementing evidence-based alcohol policies that support student wellbeing.

Postsecondary students are among the heaviest users of alcohol, with 60% of students reporting engaged in heavy drinking in the past 30 days (1). Students risky drinking patterns are associated with increased risk of unintentional injuries, as well as a variety of social problems, such as academic difficulties and mental health concerns. Campus alcohol policies are the first and most important method for reducing student alcohol use and related harms.

This assessment identifies a need for a comprehensive response to current campus alcohol policies. Atlantic Canadian Universities are collectively achieving less than half their potential to reduce alcohol-related harm, with scores ranging from 15% to 49%. Policy scores were further undermined by the fact that policies were difficult to find, distributed piecemeal across multiple documents, and outdated. The inaccessibility of campus alcohol policies made it difficult for researchers to gather information and, more importantly, likely impedes students' ability to stay informed.

Of the 10 domains examined, only enforcement achieved an average score above 50%, followed closely by leadership and surveillance at 48%. Unfortunately, these highest scoring domains were also the lowest weighted in terms of effectiveness and reach. The two heaviest-weighted domains, availability and access and advertising and sponsorship, had average scores below 30% (27% and 24%, respectively). Campus decision makers should work to prioritize the implementation of policies within the most effect domains.

A more promising result is that the majority of the alcohol policies assessed across the 10 domains were being successfully implemented on one or more campuses. If postsecondary campuses implemented the highest scoring policies from each domain, they could achieve a score of 74%. These best practice scores highlight that policies evaluated as part of this project are feasible and present an achievable goal for campuses. Campuses are encouraged to look to each other as models for improving their own policies.

Limitations

This study has several limitations. All data included in this study were verified by campus stakeholders in May 2022. However, policies may have changed since this time. Further, there were instances where campuses indicated a policy existed, but documentation could not be found. In these instances, indicators were scored as zero as undocumented policies are unlikely to be adhered to or sustained over time.

It is important to acknowledge that this project assessed the absence or presence of evidence-based alcohol policy components. As such, the scores do not reflect the degree to which a policy is implemented in practice or enforced. For example, a campus may ban alcohol advertising on campus, but this does not mean that the policy is complied with. Lastly, some policy measures may or may not be contextually appropriate depending on the campus. For example, some universities don't have an on-campus licensed establishment; hence certain policy measures will not pertain to those institutions.

Conclusion

Postsecondary institutions play a significant role in shaping the drinking culture on campus. This report highlights examples of best practice alcohol policy and identifies opportunities where policies can be enhanced or modified. We hope the documentation of best practices in campus alcohol policy implementation will assist postsecondary institutions in revising their policies to make them more comprehensive and effective.

The fact that much of what is being recommended has already been implemented on, at least, one campus underscores the feasibility of these changes. Moving forward, campuses are encouraged to conduct regular assessments of their campus alcohol policies and carefully document policy changes to evaluate their impact student drinking.



Call to Action

We call on campuses to consider the following principles as they work to strengthen their campus alcohol policy and shift the culture of alcohol on campus.

1. Given the high rates of drinking and related harm among students, campuses must prioritize implementing effective alcohol policies.
2. Alcohol policies should be clearly detailed in a single, accessible, and easy to find document on campus websites.
3. Comprehensive alcohol policies should include indicators from all 10 domains to optimize their effectiveness and reach.
4. Practices employed on campuses to reduce student alcohol use need to be documented as policies to ensure adherence and sustainability over time.
5. Campuses should look to each other for examples of how to successfully implement effective alcohol policies.
6. To reduce an alcohol-positive campus culture and to create a supportive climate for alcohol policies, more education on the risks of alcohol is needed.
7. Careful documentation of policy changes and regular monitoring and evaluation of student alcohol use and harms are needed to inform future policy development.

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Appendix: Scoring Rubric

Availability and Access	Indicator details	Indicator point value (/10)	Indicator scoring
1. Limit number of licensed establishments on campus	Campuses were scored on whether they had mandated limits on the number of licensed establishments on campus.	1	0 = No restrictions on the number of licensed establishments, 1 = Restrictions on the number licensed of establishments.
2. Number of on campus licensed establishments	Campuses were scored according to the number of outlets per campus per 10,000 students.	2	0 = More than two outlets per 10,000 students, 1 = Two outlets per 10,000 students, 2 = One outlet or fewer per 10,000 students.
3. Restrict days/hours of sales at campus licensed establishments	3a. Campuses were scored based on the maximum hours of operation their policies allowed. Hours of operation were scored against an ideal of no more than 7 hours per day with limited availability early in the day and late at night. 4pm to 1 am was used as an achievable policy benchmark. 3b. Campuses were scored based on the number of days per week their licensed establishments were open. For maximum points, campuses must not allow for exceptions to policies restricting hours and days of sale) e.g. extending the hours of operation for a special event.	3	3a. Hours of sale: 0 = Business hours extend before 4 pm or past 1 am, 1 = Hours of operation do not extend before 4 pm and past 1 am, but there are exceptions for special occasions, 2 = Hours of operation do not extend before 4 pm and past 1 am, no exceptions. 3b. Days of sale 0.0 = Open 7 days a week, 0.5 = Closed at least one day a week, 1.0 = Open no more than 5 days per week.
4. Designated "alcohol-free zones"	4a. Campuses were assessed on whether they provided the following alcohol-free zones: i. Substance-free residence options, ii. No alcohol sales/use at campus sporting facilities, iii. No alcohol use in public places on campus, iv. No alcohol use at campus student recruitment events.	2	4a. Comprehensiveness of alcohol-free zones (0-2) 0.0 = Campus does not have any designated alcohol-free zones, 0.5 = Campus has a policy restricting alcohol use in one location, 1.0 = Campus has a policy restricting alcohol use in 2-3 locations, 2.0 = Campus has a policy restricting alcohol use in all 4 locations.
5. Prohibit delivery of alcohol	Campuses were scored on whether they had a policy that prohibits the delivery of alcohol to students anywhere on campus.	1	0 = No policy that prohibits delivery, 1 = Has a policy that prohibits delivery to students.
6. Restrict use of student card for purchase of alcohol	Campuses were scored on whether they had a policy that prohibits the use of student card to purchase alcohol on campus.	1	0 = Use of student card is not restricted, 1 = Student card cannot be used to purchase alcohol.
TOTAL		**10**	

Advertising and Sponsorship	Indicator details	Indicator point value (/10)	Indicator scoring
1. Alcohol marketing policy	1a. Campuses were scored on whether their alcohol marketing and advertising regulations pertain to alcohol marketing across the following media types: i. Print media (i.e. flyers, posters, billboards), ii. Digital media, iii. Broadcast media, iv. Promotional items. 1b. Campuses were scored on whether their alcohol marketing and advertising regulations applied to the following potential alcohol advertisers: i. On-campus licensed establishments, ii. Off-campus licensed establishments, iii. Student groups, iv. Alcohol manufacturers.	3	1a. Coverage of alcohol marketing policy (0-2) 0 = No restrictions, 1 = Policies apply to some but not all forms of media, 1.5 = Restrictions apply to all forms of media. 2 = Total ban on alcohol advertising of all forms. 1b. 0.0 = No restrictions, 0.5 = Policy applies some but not all vendors, 1.0 = Policy applies to all vendors.
2. Comprehensiveness of alcohol marketing policy (Rated as SE)	2a. Content restrictions go beyond the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) regulations, including restrictions specific to: i. Pictures or text that display/mention alcohol, ii. Advertisement of price, iii. Contests or giveaways, iv. Restriction on placement of ads.	2	2a. 0 = No restrictions beyond CRTC regulations, 1 = Restrictions on 1-2 additional criteria, 2 = Restrictions on 3-4 additional criteria.
3. Sponsorship	Campuses were scored on whether they had a policy that regulates sponsorship activity (i.e. scholarships, contests, fundraisers).	2	0 = No limits on sponsorship, 1 = Some limits on sponsorship, 2 = Ban on all sponsorship from the alcohol industry.
4. Monitoring compliance	4a. Campuses were scored on whether they had a specific procedure for monitoring compliance with advertising regulations.	2	4a. 0 = No procedure for monitoring compliance, 1 = Indication of program but not well operationalized, 2 = Has a procedure for monitoring compliance.
5. Brand ambassadors or social media influencers	Campuses were scored on whether they had a specific policy that prohibits students from becoming brand ambassadors for alcohol producers.	1	0 = No policy that prohibits students from being brand ambassadors or media influencers, 0.5 = A policy that requires students seek approval prior to becoming a brand ambassador, 1 = Students are prohibited from being brand ambassadors or media influencers for alcohol producers.
TOTAL		**10**	

Harm Reduction	Indicator details	Indicator point value (/10)	Indicator scoring
1. Minimize excessive drinking	Campuses were scored on whether they had policies targeted at reducing excessive drinking and over intoxication among students, including: i. No Pub crawls, ii. No drinking games, iii. No drinking during orientation week, iv. No B.Y.O events, v. No kegs, vi. Friday morning classes.	3	0 = Campuses with 0 harm reduction policies, 1 = Campuses with 1-2 harm reduction policies, 2 = Campuses with 3-4 harm reduction policies, 3 = Campuses with 5-6 harm reduction policies.
2. Alcohol-free events	Campuses were scored on whether they provide and support the implementation of alcohol-free programming and events.	2	0 = No university supported alcohol free events, 1 = Occasional and informal alcohol-free events, 2 = Formalized alcohol-free event programming.
3. Bystander training	Campuses were scored on whether they provide and promote bystander training on campus.	1	0 = No bystander training program, 0.5 = Bystander training available and voluntary, 1 = Bystander training required and implemented widely on campus.
4. Good Samaritan Policy	Campuses were scored on whether they had an amnesty policy which states that individuals who seek help for another student will not face sanctions.	1	0 = Do not have a stated amnesty policy, 1 = Have a stated amnesty policy.
5. Campus patrols	Campuses were scored on whether they conduct regular patrols on campus during high-risk times to monitor student safety.	1	0 = No explicit mandate to conduct campus patrols, 1 = Explicit mandate to conduct campus patrols.
6. Safe ride program	Campuses were scored on whether they had a safe ride program that students could readily access to get home safely.	1	0 = No safe ride program, 1 = Safe ride program.
7. Student led harm reduction	Campuses were scored on whether they had any student led initiative(s) that focused on alcohol harm reduction.	1	0 = No student led initiatives that focuses on harm reduction, 0.5 = Mention of student led initiatives outside campus policy and website, 1 = Student led initiatives that focuses on harm reduction.
TOTAL		**10**	

Pricing	Indicator details	Indicator point value (/10)	Indicator scoring
1. Minimum pricing	Campuses were scored on whether they have a minimum price of $3.76 per standard drink for on premise sales. Using bar menus for on-campus licenced establishments, the average price per standard drink was calculated for a 12oz domestic beer and a 1.5oz spirit-based beverage.	3	0 = Average minimum prices are < $2.85 per standard drink, 1 = Average minimum prices are $2.85 to $3.75 per standard drink, 2 = At least one average minimum price per standard drink is $3.76 or higher. 3 = Average minimum prices are both $3.76 or higher per standard drink.
2. Drink specials	Campuses were scored on whether they had a policy that restricts drink specials, discounts, and price promotions (i.e., happy hour).	2	0 = No restrictions on drink specials, 1 = Some restrictions on drink specials, 2 = Prohibit drink specials.
3. Pricing by alcohol content	Campuses were scored on whether lower strength products were priced less than higher strength products in order to support lower-risk drinking.	2	0 = Prices do not take into consideration alcohol content, 1 = Some products were priced less but not all, 2 = All lower strength products are cheaper than higher strength products.
4. Gifting of alcohol	Campuses were scored on whether they had a policy that prohibits the gifting of free alcohol (i.e., prizes, drink tickets).	1	0 = Gifting of alcohol is not prohibited, 1 = Gifting of alcohol is prohibited.
5. Non-alcoholic beverages	Campuses were scored on whether non-alcoholic products were provided for free or at a discounted price.	2	0 = No discounts for non-alcoholic products, 1 = Discounted non-alcoholic products, 2 = Free non-alcoholic products (i.e. bottled water or soda).
TOTAL		**10**	

Campus services	Indicator details	Indicator point value (10)	Indicator scoring
1. Prevention programming	1a. Campuses were scored on whether they provide any of the following evidence-based prevention programming at the primary level, targeted at all students following evidence-based prevention and treatment options for alcohol on campus: i. AlcoholEdu, ii. Alcohol-Wise, iii. Echeckup to go, iv. Alcohol 101, v. Parent-based alcohol communication training. 1b. Campuses were scored on whether they provide any of the following evidence-based prevention programming for "at-risk" students: i. BASICS or other Brief Motivational Intervention, ii. Alcohol Skills Training Program, iii. Echeckup to go, iv. Screening and brief intervention.	4	1a. 0 = No evidence-based universal prevention program, 2 = At least one evidence-based universal prevention program. 1b. 0 = No specialized programming for students at-risk for problematic substance use, 2 = At least 1 specialized program targeted to at-risk students.
2. Treatment	Campuses were scored on whether they provide or have counselling or support services or referral options to substance-specific treatment for students who have a problem with alcohol.	2	0 = On-campus counselling center but no specialized alcohol use services or referral options, 2 = Specialized alcohol use treatment available on campus or by referral.
3. Medical response team	Campuses were scored on whether they had a medical response team trained in first aid who attends high-risk events and/or responds to on-campus medical emergencies.	2	0 = Does not have a medical response team, 2 = Has medical response team.
4. Campus Recovery Community	Campuses were scored on whether the University has a Campus Recovery Community. Defined as "an inclusive, peer-driven space supporting all pathways to recovery, building community, and reducing addiction stigma on campus."	2	0 = No Campus Recovery Community, 2 = Has a Campus Recovery Community.
TOTAL		**10**	

Bar and Event Practices	Indicator details	Indicator point value (/10)	Indicator scoring
1. Training	1a. Type of training: Campuses were scored on whether they required training of staff serving alcohol at on-campus licensed establishments and campus events. At minimum, beverage service training and security measure training is expected. Other training opportunities include: i. Beverage Service Training, ii. Security Measure Training, iii. First aid, iv. Non-violent crisis intervention/conflict resolution, v. Bystander intervention. 1b. Frequency of training: To be maximally effective, training should require recertification and must apply to all levels of staff (including volunteers).	2	1a. 0.0 = Training not required, 0.5 = Beverage service and/or security required, but no other training, 1.0 = Beverage service and security required, plus other training. 1b. 0.0 = No recertification required and does not apply to all staff, 0.5 = Recertification required OR applies to all staff, 1.0 = Recertification required and applies to all staff.
2. Control Measures	2. Campuses were scored on the number of policies that outline operating procedures intended to reduce harm. i. All patrons are required to show government issued ID, ii. No "admittance after 12am" policy, iii. Special operating procedures for high-risk events (i.e., Halloween, St. Patrick's Day, big tournaments/games), iv. Refuse entry or removal of intoxicated patrons, v. Clear policies to ensure intoxicated patrons get home safe (accompaniment, taxi chit, shuttle service, etc.).	2	2. 0.0 = No control measures, 0.5 = Campuses with 1 control measure, 1.0 = Campuses with 2 control measures, 1.5 = Campuses with 3 control measures, 2.0 = Campuses with 4 or 5 control measures.

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3. Safe Service	3a. Campuses were scored on the number of policies that outline how alcohol is served in licensed establishments. i. Limit the number of alcoholic drinks that can be purchased by any person at one time, ii. No bulk alcohol purchases (i.e., no pitchers or buckets), iii. Limit size of drink containers to reflect standard drink sizes, iv. Food is available and visible, v. Non-alcoholic beverages available and visible, vi. No last call announcement, vii. No shots, viii. Limit mixed drinks to 1oz, ix. Lower-strength alcohol products are available. 3b. Campuses were scored on whether their safe service policies apply to events in addition to on-campus licensed establishments.	3	3a. 0.0 = No safe service policies, 0.5 = Campuses with 1-2 safe service policies, 1.0 = Campuses with 3-4 safe service policies, 1.5 = Campuses with 5-6 safe service policies, 2.0 = Campuses with 7-8 safe service policies, 2.5 = Campuses with all 9 safe service policies. 3b. 0.0 = Safe service policies do not apply to events, 0.5 = Safe service policies apply to events too.
4. Jurisdictional responsibility for oversight of campus bars under student union	Campuses were scored based on who was responsible for the oversight of campus bars. Bars that had shared oversight by the student union and campus administration received full points.	1	0 = Privately run or student union only, 1 = Shared oversite.
5. Event procedures	5a. Campuses were scored on whether they had the following policies intended to minimize the risk of alcohol-related harm at campus events: i. A clear policy and procedure document for events on-campus events (also including forms which are reviewed), ii. A clear policy and procedure document for events off-campus events (also including forms which are reviewed), iii. Risk assessment committee or officer to oversee event application approval, iv. Mandatory security at campus events that involve the sale/consumption of alcohol.	2	5a. 0 = Campuses with 0 or 1 event procedures, 1 = Campuses with 2-3 event procedures, 2 = Campuses with all 4 event procedures.
TOTAL		**10**	

Community Action	Indicator details	Indicator point value (/10)	Indicator scoring
1. Campus and Community coalition	Campuses were scored on whether they had an established campus and community coalition to address alcohol-related local issues.	4	0 = No campus/community coalition, 1 = Effort made to establish relationships with community leaders, 2 = Coalition under development or in its infancy, 4 = Coalition is established and active.
2. Collaborate with local law enforcement	Campuses were scored on whether campus security has a relationship with local law enforcement, such as bylaw officers, RCMP, or municipal policing departments.	2	0 = Campus security and local law enforcement do not have a relationship with local law enforcement, 2 = Campus security has an established relationship with local law enforcement.
3. Collaborate with local or national alcohol-related organizations	Campuses were scored on whether they collaborate with alcohol-related organizations (e.g., PEP-AH) with a specific mandate to minimize or reduce alcohol related harm on campuses and share best practices and strategies to reduce alcohol related harm.	2	0 = Does not collaborate with local or national organizations, 2 = Does collaborate with local or national organizations.
4. Collaborate with local health services	Campuses were scored on whether they partner with local health services to enhance on campus safety and response to alcohol-related medical emergencies.	2	0 = No collaboration with local health services, 2 = Collaboration with local health services.
Total		10	

Leadership and Surveillance	Indicator details	Indicator point value (/10)	Indicator scoring
1. Alcohol policy	1a. Campuses were scored on whether they had a stand-alone alcohol (and drug) policy. 1b. Campuses were scored on how easily the policy can be found on the website. 1c. Campuses were scored on the readability of their alcohol policy using the Flesch Reading Ease test. 1d. Campuses were scored on whether their policy has an explicit mandate to minimize harm and promote safer substance use practices. 1e. Campuses were scored on whether their policy is regularly evaluated and updated by a formal committee composed by of students, faculty and staff (every 3-5 years).	7	1a. 0 = No stand-alone alcohol policy, 1 = Stand-alone alcohol policy. 1b. 0 = Policy could not be found, 1 = Took longer than 30 seconds to find, 2 = Took less than 30 seconds to find. 1c. Flesch Reading Ease 0 = Scored below 30 (very difficult), 1 = Scored 30-50 (difficult), 2 = Scored 60-70 (standard or plain English). 1d. 0 = No harm reduction/safe consumption mandate, 1 = Explicit harm reduction/safe consumption mandate. 1e. 0.0 = Policy has not been updated in the last 10 years, 0.5 = Updated sporadically or not by committee, 1.0 = Regularly updated by a committee.
2. Leadership	Campuses were scored on whether they had an identifiable leader responsible for monitoring alcohol-related harm and consumption on campus.	1	0 = No identified leader, 1 = Identified leader.
3. Surveillance	3a. Campuses were scored on whether they conduct or participate in regular surveys to track student alcohol use and harms (i.e., NCHA; CPADS). 3b. Campuses were scored on whether they reported study findings.	2	3a. 0.0 = Do not collect data or rarely collect data, 0.5 = Collect data every 2-3 years, 1.0 = Annually collect data on student substance use. 3b. 0 = Do not report, 1 = Report.
TOTAL		**10**	

Health and Safety Messages	Indicator details	Indicator point value (/10)	Indicator scoring
1. Warning labels	Campuses were scored on whether warning labels/health messages are on liquor containers sold in on-premise licenced establishments.	2	0 = No warning labels, 2 = Warning labels.
2. Health messages	Campuses were scored on whether they had mandatory health and safety messages displayed on-campus (including licenced establishments, residence and special events). *All messaging should be evidence based and developed free from industry influence.	2	0 = Health and safety messages voluntary, 2 = Health and safety messages required.
3. Alcohol education	3a. Campuses were scored on whether they had a designated webpage for alcohol education. 3b. Campuses were scored on whether their website on alcohol education covered the following topics: i. Acute intoxication risks (injury, overdose), i. Moderate consumption, iii. Social norms, iv. Drinking and driving risks, v. Available health services, vi. FASD/pregnancy, vii. Harm to others 3c. Campuses were scored on whether alcohol education is mandatory for the following groups: i. Residence Assistants, ii. Athletics, iii. Incoming students, iv. Event hosts and volunteers.	6	3a. 0 = No alcohol education provided on the website, 1 = Some education on campus website 2 = Designated alcohol education page on campus website. 3b. 0 = Alcohol education does not cover any of these topics, 1 = Alcohol education covers some of these topics, 2 = Alcohol education covers all of these topics. 3c. 0 = Alcohol education is not mandatory for anyone 1 = Alcohol education is mandatory for some groups, 2 = Alcohol education is mandatory for all groups.
TOTAL		**10**	

Enforcement	Indicator details	Indicator point value (/10)	Indicator scoring
1. Identification and handling of policy infractions	1a. Campuses were scored on whether they had procedures or programs for identifying policy infractions (i.e., compliance checks). 1b. Campuses were scored on whether they had a clear process for reporting suspected policy infractions. 1c. Campuses were scored on whether they had clear procedures for handling infractions and designated personnel to determine policy infractions and appropriate sanctions.	3	1a. 0.0 = Does not have a procedure for assessing compliance, 0.5 = At least one procedure/program for identifying policy infractions, 1.0 = Comprehensive procedures/programs for identifying policy infractions. 1b. 0.0 = No formal structure for reporting suspected policy violations, 0.5 = Policy mentions process for reporting at least one policy infraction, 1.0 = A clear and easy way to report multiple suspected policy violations. 1c. 0.0 = No procedure for handling policy infractions 0.5 = Procedure is unclear and/or informal for handling policy infractions, 1.0 = A clear procedure for handling policy infractions.
2. Comprehensiveness of policy sanctions	2a. Campuses were scored on whether they have sanctions for alcohol policy violations by individual students. 2b. Campuses were scored on whether they had sanctions for alcohol policy violations by organizations. 2c. Campuses were scored on whether sanctions become progressively more severe for repeat or multiple infractions. 2d. Campuses were scored on whether their policies and sanctions extend to off-campus violations. 2e. Campuses were scored on whether the sanctions are tied to specific policy violations.	5	2a. 0 = Do not have sanctions, 1 = Have sanctions. 2b. 0 = Do not have sanctions, 1 = Have sanctions. 2c. 0 = Sanctions do not vary in severity, 1 = Sanctions increase in severity with subsequent or repeat violations. 2d. 0.0 = Policies and sanctions do not apply to off-campus violations, 0.5 = Policies and sanctions apply to some off-campus violations, 1.0 = Policies and sanctions extend to off-campus violations. 2e. 0 = Sanctions are not tied to specific policies, 1 = Sanctions are tied to specific policies.
3. Adherence to provincial laws	Campuses were scored on whether their policy clearly communicates municipal and provincial drinking laws.	2	0 = No communication of local/provincial alcohol policies, 1 = Communication of local/provincial alcohol policies but not specific, 2 = Clear communication of local/provincial alcohol policies.
TOTAL		**10**	

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