USI Smoking Cessation Strategy 2016-2019

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# About USI

"The Union of Students in Ireland (USI) is the sole representative body for students in Ireland and represents 354,000 students in over thirty member colleges across Ireland, North and South. Throughout its history, USI has worked relentlessly in the pursuit of student rights in all areas of the student experience."

# Objectives of the Union of Students in Ireland 1. An education and training system open to all, irrespective of any consideration, including consideration of national origin, ethnic background, age, ability, sex, sexuality, creed, political beliefs or economic circumstances, so that each individual can realize their full potential. 2. An education and training system which truly serves the interest of the people of Ireland. 3. The right of students to a decent standard of living including the right to adequate financial support, proper housing and future prospects of employment in Ireland. 4. The defence and promotion of all democratic and human rights. 5. The provision of student services for the benefit of the membership on the principle that control of student service should lie with the membership. 6. To represent the interests of the students if Ireland at international level.

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### USI Smoking Cessation Strategy

This strategy aims to provide a framework for good practice for the support of students, the promotion of well-being and prevention and reduction of tobacco related harm, to be implemented by both the Union of Students in Ireland and affiliated Students’ Unions.

Smoking levels in Ireland, although decreasing, remain at around 23% for young adults and 7,000 people die from smoking related disease every year.

Education at second and third-level is crucial in terms of informing students about the health consequences of smoking tobacco.  
  
  
The USI Vice President for Welfare must follow the USI Smoking Cessation Strategy and assist local officers in following through with its recommendations by disseminating the strategy at the beginning of each year.

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# Collaborations and Partnerships

# *USI acknowledges the importance of collaborations and partnerships when it comes to organisations working to reduce tobacco related harm. USI recognises the need to work with others in the sector to further our aims and ambitions.* Objectives:

# To build alliances and partnerships to promote smoking cessations to 3rd level students.

# Actions:

# Seek support from external organisations to strengthen campaigns on the issue.

# Collaborate and consult with students’ unions, student groups and external organisations to support and develop new campaigns, resources, research and training.

# Support unions in establishing local links to support their work in the area of smoking cessation.

**Suggested Action For Students’ Unions:**

* To aim, where possible, to establish links with local organisations and resources and promote local supports to students in campus community.
* To support the development of local coalitions and committees that aim to promote supports, resources and preventions.
* Liaise with health promotion of health service staff on campus to provide support and resources to students interested in ceasing smoking.

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# Training and Supports - Students’ Unions *USI encourages students’ unions to run campaigns and/or distribute information to students on tobacco and associated risks to promote smoking cessation.*

# Objectives:

* To equip officers in their work on their work in promoting smoking cessation.

**Action:**

* Provide a training module for relevant officers during the summer term on smoking cessation.
* Support officers in establishing links with local, community based support services to identify referral paths for students.
* Support officers in influencing campus based policy in relation to smoking cessation.
* Support and advise Students’ Unions on smoking cessation policy implementations.
* Provide policy guidelines to support Students’ Unions in developing policy.

Training shall only be undertaken by an agency, organisation or individual accredited to deliver such and not by an individual or body funded by the tobacco industry.

**Suggested Action for Students’ Unions:**

* Where possible, attend training events promoted or organised by USI.
* Utilise appropriate resources and supports provided through USI or locally by relevant organisations and support services.
* Aim to establish local links with community based services and identify a referral path for students in need.
* Seek, where possible, representation on campus decision making boards/committees in relation to smoking cessations such as “Smoke Free Campus” initiatives.

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# Screening, Treatment and Support Services

*The availability and quality of appropriate campus and community support services is vital in the promotion of student well-being. The promotion of these services is equally important to inform students of their availability and encourage them to seek help.*

**Objectives:**

* Improve access to good quality support services for students.
* To liaise with external organisations such as ISHA and IAUCC to identify and promote appropriate initiatives to support students who aim to cease smoking.

**Action:**

* Liaise with the HSE to identify support services in campus catchment areas.
* Promote the use of online supports to assist students in smoking cessation.
* Support unions in initiating the development or review of a college-wide smoking policy where one is not already in place.

**Suggested Action for Students’ Unions:**

* Initiate the development or review of a college-wide smoking policy.
* Promote the use of online supports to assist smoking cessation.
* Promote campus supports to ensure students seek help when needed.

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# Research, Monitoring and Evaluation *It is vital for USI to review progress under the Smoking Cessation Strategy on an annual basis. By providing basic annual progress reports on the action points outlined in the strategy, progress and effect can be tracked and with the provision of annual reviews, updates or changes can be suggested if deemed necessary.* **Objectives:**

* To monitor the impact of USI campaigns to promote smoking cessation.
* To evaluate and review each campaign yearly and to update the strategy accordingly.
* To continue to collaborate and partner with organisations to collect research and data to guide USI’s work in smoking cessation.

**Actions:**

* Map progress of the strategy and produce a yearly progress update document.
* To review all campaigns and evaluate impact with support from external expert groups and consultation with VP Campaigns.
* Implement the strategy with regular monitoring and review of its effectiveness by USI National Council, Welfare Working Group, Campaign Working Group and Regional Working Groups.

**Suggested Action For Students’ Unions:**

* Where possible, review local campaigns on campus level to ensure messaging is effective, appropriate and relevant to students.

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**Previous Mandates:**

* The Vice President for Welfare to work with all relevant bodies in the promotion of smoking cessation to students across both Ireland and Northern Ireland. The Vice President should present plans of this campaign by November 2014.

**Reporting and Progress:**  
To ensure transparency, accountability and ongoing priority is placed on the health and wellness of students in Ireland clear and consistent communication on the progress of the implementation of the USI Smoking Cessation Strategy and its initiatives is vital. The strategy’s progress will be documented in USI’s annual report, along with highlighting individual campus initiatives as they are launched throughout the year.

The strategic objectives for smoking cessation in 3rd level students between now and July 2019 are set out in this strategy and reflect the ambition and intent of the Union of Students in Ireland to deliver on its mandate for its members.  
  
*In preparation, a range of significant / strategic risks facing the strategy’s implementation were identified.*

* Budgetary and insufficient or inadequate budgets to meet campaign delivery costs.
* USI having to discontinue work and downsize campaigns/Officer resources
* Failure to achieve collaborations on the action points set in the strategy. For the strategy to be effective USI will need to foster support from external organisations and establish links with institutions and external stakeholders.
* Failure to ensure that the strategic and operational policies of the USI are properly developed and implemented, and that targets are met.

**Risk Mitigation:**

The Union of Students in Ireland will, over the life of this Strategic Plan, evaluate the above risks and will ensure that all actions and initiatives undertaken manage these challenges pro-actively, with actions being identified and implemented without delay, so that our mandate can be pursued and effectively delivered for our members.