

## **The University of Queensland Union College Medicinal Cannabis Policy and Procedure**

### **Purpose and scope**

We recognise that medicinal cannabis is now a legitimate treatment option in Australia and Queensland, and that some residents may be prescribed it as part of their health care. This policy explains how you may lawfully use and store medicinal cannabis while living at Union College, and how we balance your health needs with our responsibilities to other residents, staff, neighbours and regulators.

We align this policy with:

- The Australian Universities Accord's vision of a higher education system that supports student safety, wellbeing and success, including in student accommodation
- The Action Plan Addressing Gender-Based Violence in Higher Education and the forthcoming National Higher Education Code to Prevent and Respond to Gender-Based Violence, which expects providers and accommodation services to embed whole-of-organisation approaches to safety and risk management.

This policy applies to:

- All residents who are prescribed medicinal cannabis
- All staff involved in supporting residents' health, safety and conduct
- Any other person handling or storing medicinal cannabis on Union College premises.

This policy applies only to lawfully prescribed medicinal cannabis. The use and possession of illicit drugs and the misuse of prescription medications are strictly prohibited under our Drugs Other Than Alcohol Policy (RES0302). Recreational cannabis is illegal and prohibited under all circumstances. Staff and residents should refer to our Drugs Other Than Alcohol Policy for information on prohibited substances and to this policy for information on the lawful therapeutic use of prescribed medicinal cannabis.

### **Legal status and regulatory context**

We comply with all relevant Commonwealth and Queensland laws and regulations. In summary:

- Recreational cannabis (sometimes called marijuana) remains illegal in Queensland and most of Australia. Possession, use, cultivation and sale of cannabis for non-medical purposes are criminal offences. There is no legal way to access recreational cannabis in Queensland, and it is prohibited on our campus and at all college-related activities.
- Medicinal cannabis has been legal in Australia since 2016 under tightly controlled schemes, including in Queensland under similar conditions. Authorised doctors can prescribe medicinal cannabis products for specific medical conditions, subject to Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) and state health requirements.

Medicinal cannabis products:

- Must be prescribed by an authorised medical practitioner, often via the TGA Special Access or Authorised Prescriber Schemes
- Must be supplied through legal channels, such as approved pharmacies
- Are regulated pharmaceutical-grade products with known and consistent concentrations of cannabinoids, such as THC and CBD.

You must comply with both Commonwealth and state laws, as well as our policies, when you use, possess, or transport medicinal cannabis.

### **Our principles: safety, equity and respect**

We approach medicinal cannabis in line with our broader safety and wellbeing commitments under the Universities Accord and the national gender-based violence reforms.

This means we:

- Support your legitimate health needs, including access to prescribed, lawfully obtained medicinal cannabis
- Maintain a safe, inclusive living environment that protects all residents, staff and visitors from preventable harm
- Acknowledge that psychoactive medications, including some medicinal cannabis products, can affect alertness, judgement, mood and coordination, and may interact with alcohol or other drugs, potentially increasing the risk of accidents, miscommunication or vulnerability to violence, including gender-based and sexual violence.

We consider medicinal cannabis use as one factor in risk assessments and safety planning, particularly where there are concerns about wellbeing, consent capacity, or vulnerability to violence (including gender-based and sexual violence, as detailed in our Gender-Based Violence Prevention and Response Policy (RES0201) and Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Response Policy (RES0202).

### **Recreational cannabis vs medicinal cannabis**

It is important to distinguish between recreational cannabis and medicinal cannabis.

Recreational cannabis:

- Remains illegal in Queensland
- Has unknown strength and may contain contaminants
- Is commonly smoked or consumed in edibles
- Is strictly prohibited on our campus and at any event or activity associated with Union College.

Medicinal cannabis:

- Is legally available only through authorised prescribers for specific medical conditions
- Is produced under strict quality controls with known concentrations of active ingredients
- Is usually supplied as oils, capsules, sprays, tinctures or other pharmaceutical forms, and taken orally or sublingually rather than smoked
- May have psychoactive effects depending on the product and dose.

When this policy refers to medicinal cannabis, it means lawful, prescribed products used in accordance with medical directions and applicable law.

### **Prescription, disclosure and access**

If you are prescribed medicinal cannabis and wish to use it while living at Union College, you must:

- Obtain a valid prescription from a doctor authorised under the TGA Special Access Scheme or the Authorised Prescriber Scheme, or an equivalent
- Ensure the product you use is lawfully prescribed and supplied in compliance with TGA and Queensland Health requirements
- Use the product only as prescribed and do not use any other cannabis products on campus.

We strongly encourage you to:

- Inform the Resident Wellbeing Lead that you have a medicinal cannabis prescription so we can support you and ensure your use is managed safely in a communal environment. This information will be handled sensitively and in line with privacy and confidentiality principles
- Discuss any concerns about side effects, interactions with other medications, or impacts on your study with your doctor and, if relevant, with student support services.

### **Smoke-free and vape-free requirements**

Union College and the wider UQ campus are smoke-free environments.

This means:

- You must not smoke cannabis, including medicinal cannabis, on Union College grounds or on the UQ campus
- You must not use devices that burn or combust cannabis or cannabis-containing products in any form.

If your prescribed product is administered by non-smoked routes (for example, oils or capsules taken orally), you may take it in your room as directed by your doctor, provided you comply with this policy and other relevant college rules.

We also expect you to comply with Queensland laws and public health orders on vaping and the use of vaporisers for medicinal cannabis, including restrictions in smoke-free and enclosed public places and health facilities. We may treat certain vapour-producing devices as equivalent to smoking devices where they pose risks or cause nuisance to other residents.

### **Storage, security and non-sharing**

To protect your privacy and safety, and to prevent diversion or misuse, you must:

- Store your medicinal cannabis securely in your room, ideally in a locked drawer, box or safe, in line with any directions from your prescriber or pharmacist
- Keep your medication out of sight and out of reach of visitors and other residents
- Never share, lend, sell or give your medicinal cannabis to anyone else under any circumstances, even if they claim to have similar symptoms
- Notify Queensland Police Service and the Deputy Head of College/Deputy CEO immediately if your medicinal cannabis is lost or stolen.

Sharing or supplying medicinal cannabis to others may breach criminal law and will be treated as serious misconduct under our Resident Code of Conduct and related policies.

### **Travel and transport**

If you travel with medicinal cannabis within Australia or return from travel with medicinal cannabis, you are responsible for:

- Checking and complying with all legal requirements, including any traveller exemptions and the documentation required to carry medicinal cannabis across state or territory borders or through airports
- Carrying documentation (such as a copy of your prescription and a letter from your doctor) to show that the product is prescribed for you.

We recommend that you seek advice from your prescriber and Queensland Health before travelling with medicinal cannabis.

### **Safety, conduct and intersections with other policies**

We may take action under this policy and related policies if:

- Your use of medicinal cannabis appears inconsistent with your prescription or legal requirements
- There are safety concerns, such as impaired behaviour that puts you or others at risk
- There are complaints about smoke, vapour, odour or other impacts on other residents
- There are concerns about diversion, sharing or supply of your medication.

Depending on the situation, our response may include:

- Checking in with you and encouraging you to seek medical advice
- Adjusting living arrangements or implementing safety plans where there are risk factors linked to mental health, consent, or gender-based violence
- Managing any behavioural concerns through the Addressing Concerns and Complaints Policy (RES0102) and the Resident Code of Conduct (RES0101)
- Involving police or other authorities where required by law or where serious risks exist.

We will handle concerns in a trauma-informed, procedurally fair manner, consistent with the expectations of the National Higher Education Code to Prevent and Respond to Gender-Based Violence, particularly where medicinal cannabis use intersects with allegations of harm, exploitation or violence.

Where medicinal cannabis use intersects with:

- Allegations of gender-based violence, sexual misconduct, or other serious harm, we will apply our Gender-Based Violence (RES0201) and Sexual Misconduct (RES0202) policies in addition to this policy
- Breaches of the Resident Code of Conduct (RES0101), we will manage the matter through our Addressing Concerns and Complaints Policy (RES0102)
- Concerns about sharing or diversion of medication, we will treat this as a potential breach of this policy and the Resident Code of Conduct (RES0101).

### **Support, information and education**

We are committed to supporting your health needs while maintaining a safe, compliant living environment.

You can:

- Seek advice from your prescribing doctor or specialist about appropriate use, side effects and interactions with other substances
- Contact Queensland Health or the TGA for current regulatory information about medicinal cannabis
- Speak with the Resident Wellbeing Lead or Deputy Head of College for guidance on how this policy applies to you and for help linking to university counselling or other support services.

We will:

- Provide clear information about this policy during orientation and in the Resident Handbook
- Include medicinal cannabis in our broader education about drugs, health, safety and respectful relationships, in line with the Universities Accord's focus on student wellbeing and success.

### Review and continuous improvement

We will review this policy regularly, and earlier if:

- There are significant changes to Commonwealth or Queensland legislation or regulations relating to medicinal cannabis
- New expectations arise from the Universities Accord, the National Higher Education Code to Prevent and Respond to Gender-Based Violence or related regulatory frameworks
- We identify issues through practice, feedback or incidents that indicate the policy should be updated.

Updates will be approved through our governance processes and communicated to residents, staff, parents, key stakeholders and regulators as appropriate.

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Topic: Medical Cannabis use

Approval Authority: Head of College

Last Review Date January 2026

Next Review Date: December 2026

Audience: UC workers, Board, current and future residents, parents/carers, key stakeholders and regulators

*DISCLAIMER: Union College's policies and procedures for the prevention of and response to gender-based violence, including sexual misconduct, are designed to be consistent with and aligned with The University of Queensland's Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Response Policy and associated procedures, as well as UQ's broader frameworks and commitments relating to gender equality, respect, and safe, inclusive campus communities.*