

# Helpful Information and Resources regarding Alcohol and Drug Use while at the Italian Campus

The Duquesne University Italian Campus allows for responsible drinking if you are legally allowed to drink in your host country. Illegal, irresponsible drinking and/or misbehaving while drinking are violations of the University's policy. **You can find the Italian Campus' Alcohol Policies in the "Appendix I" of this Handbook.** You are expected to know all of our alcohol policies and rules.

**\*\*The Italian Campus program has a zero tolerance approach to drug use while abroad. Students using drugs abroad will immediately be removed from the program at their own cost\*\***

If you have questions or doubts about the University's alcohol and drug policy please do not hesitate to be ask a member of the Italian Campus staff.

## When Choosing to Drink in Italy

- **You are never to be drunk/intoxicated:** Your consumption of alcohol or another drug, and/or your behavior while under the influence, might lead to a violation of local laws in addition to program and University conduct codes.
- **You should never have alcohol on campus:** The Italian Campus is a "dry campus" property. You are expected to use alcohol in a responsible and culturally sensitive way off campus.
- **Know your limits:** Certain types of alcoholic beverages may be stronger than what you are used to in the United States.
- You are expected to drink in a **culturally sensitive way**, mimicking appropriate Italian social behaviors.
- **You're an ambassador:** You are not only representing yourself but also Duquesne University, and the U.S. (or your home country). Your actions will reflect either positively or negatively on many people.

## Consequences of Drinking Too Much

There are nearly 30,000 American students in Italy each year. Beyond the incredible good provided by out programs to students, there are terrible tragedies that hit our programs each year. Many of these incidents are alcohol related and could have been prohibited.

**Accidents and Injuries:** Accidents and injuries are common among those who consume too much alcohol. Alcohol impairs judgment, coordination, perception, and concentration. Impairment of these skills can result in a range of accidents, including falling down a flight of stairs or tripping on the sidewalk. The injuries resulting from such accidents can be minor or they can be severe. Within the past few years a number of college students have died in accidents abroad while intoxicated. These accidental deaths include several students who have fallen from balconies or bedroom windows, drowned in lakes or ponds on the way home from a party, or tripped on the sidewalk.

- In 2014, a Trinity College study abroad student in Rome was killed as he was returning home intoxicated and was hit by a train. This devastated his family in the States, his friends in Rome and the administration of his study abroad program.

**Alcohol Poisoning:** Alcohol, when used to excess, can cause alcohol poisoning. The effects of alcohol poisoning can range from vomiting to falling into a coma and subsequent death. Too much alcohol can cause vital organs, such as the heart and lungs, to slow down and even stop, which results in death. Very often someone who dies from alcohol poisoning passes out and is allowed to “sleep it off.” This is a mistake. Anyone who drinks so much that they become unconscious or exhibit any of the signs below should receive immediate attention.

**Unprotected Sex and Sexual Assault:** Alcohol use can result in a number of sexual consequences, including unprotected sex and sexual assault. Most sexual assaults involve the use of alcohol on the part of the perpetrator or the victim. Alcohol misuse can result in impaired judgment, which can put you at risk for either committing a sexual assault or becoming the victim of a sexual assault.

- A 2007 Middlebury College study from the Department of Psychology came up with the shocking conclusion that females studying abroad are 5 times more likely to be raped than those that stay home. There were links in the study to “double drinking” that happens with study abroad students and females in a non-English language country were at the highest risk due to “language barriers and social differences between the woman and her unwanted partner”.

**Theft:** In Rome, petty theft is very common and as in any major metropolis of the world, there is crime and those that would do you harm. Specifically, in Italy there are people that prey on intoxicated American students as they have learned to expect this behavior from us.

- Each semester at the Italian Campus students have wallets, cameras, and jewelry stolen while they have been under the influence of alcohol. In both 2012 and 2013, Duquesne students that had had too much to drink were robbed at knife-point in both Campo de’ Fiori and the Piazza Navona areas.

# Alcohol 101

## Why should I eat before and during drinking?

Food slows down the absorption of alcohol into the bloodstream and gives your body more time to metabolize the alcohol and get it out of your system. Foods that are high in protein or high in fat are especially effective. Beverages, such as water or anything carbonated, will result in increased absorption of alcohol into your bloodstream.

## Do all drinks contain the same amount of alcohol?

Some drinks are stronger than others, but in general a 1 ounce shot, a 12 ounce domestic beer, a 12 ounce wine cooler, a properly mixed drink, or a 4 ounce glass of wine all contain about .05 ounces of alcohol. Some mixed drinks and some types of beer (imported, ice, malt liquor) contain more than .05 ounces of alcohol. **Many times what seems to be one drink in a restaurant, pub or bar can often times be two drinks or more because of the size of the drink.**

## Are a woman and a man equally affected by the alcohol they consume?

In general, women will be more affected by the alcohol they consume than a man of the same size and weight. Women typically have a higher percentage of body fat than men and will absorb more of the alcohol they consume. Women also tend to have less of an enzyme, which helps to break down alcohol in the stomach. As a result, a woman can absorb almost a third more alcohol than a man when they drink.

## How long does it take for the liver to process the alcohol contained in one drink?

It takes the liver about an hour to metabolize the amount of alcohol contained in a standard drink (.05 ounces of alcohol). Drinking coffee or taking a cold shower will not speed up the process. Only time can make a person sober.

## How do I know if I've been ruffied?

Rohypnol (*benzodiazepine* - also called "ruffies" or the "date rape" drug) and GHB are two drugs that are

often implicated in sexual assaults. They are odorless and tasteless (GHB can leave a slightly salty taste in a drink) and can be easily dissolved in a drink. When either of these drugs is administered, you can suffer from disinhibition, loss of consciousness, and the inability to remember events that took place while under the influence. You may have been drugged if you:

- feel more intoxicated than usual given the amount of alcohol you consumed
- wake up hung over, feeling "fuzzy," experiencing memory lapses, and can't account for a period of time
- cannot remember what happened after consuming your last drink
- feel as though someone had sex with you but you can't remember any or all of the incident

If you think you may have been drugged, ask a friend to stay with you and take you to a hospital and contact a member of the Italian Campus staff immediately. At the hospital, request that the hospital take a urine sample to test for drugs in your system. If you believe that you were sexually assaulted, preserve as much physical evidence as possible. **Do not urinate, shower, bathe, douche, or throw away the clothing that you were wearing during the incident.**

## What do I do if my friend is injured or has an emergency?

Peers should look out for each other and keep each other safe. If a student becomes incapacitated due to alcohol overuse, or if he/she is in need of medical attention, others are strongly encouraged to contact a local emergency/authorities and the Italian Campus staff immediately in order to protect the health and well-being of the affected student. Peers are encouraged to make the responsible choice to notify the program or emergency personnel quickly. **The person (or persons) making the call will not be subjected to disciplinary action.**

## What does drinking in a *culturally sensitive way* mean?

We expect you to be **mindful** and **observing** all the time during your study abroad experience. Here are some helpful ways to understand how Italians use alcohol. **We expect you to use alcohol in the same ways:**

- **Italians generally consume alcohol while eating:** Italians have a deep cultural tie to alcohol, generally linked with the production and consumption of wine and hard liquors used as *digestivi*, a drink served in a

shot glass that is sipped over conversation after dinner to help with digestion. You probably have already participated in a traditional *aperitivo* or “happy hour”, where Italians converse over a (1) cocktail while having finger foods before heading to dinner together. Wine will almost always be present at lunch or dinner, but many times wine at lunch is “cut” by adding water to it so that nobody will become tipsy. As you have learned already, Italians will pour each other’s wine and keep track of how much their friends are drinking, as being intoxicated is **taboo** in this culture.

dangerous for study abroad students for a myriad of reasons and seen as offensive by the Italian people.

- After dinner, **if alcohol was not consumed during dinner**, some friends will head to a local pub and have a beer or two together before parting ways for the evening. You should follow these same customs, as consuming an appropriate amount of alcohol while also drinking water and consuming food will keep you from becoming intoxicated.
- **Open Container Laws in Italy:** Although open containers of alcohol are only against the law after 10:00 p.m. in most Italian cities, **culturally hard liquor** should never be consumed in the streets. Although having a normal sized beer in a bottle/can (33cl) is common to drink in a piazza or in front of a bar while socializing, wine will **NEVER** be consumed directly from the bottle. Wine should be respected when drinking it and should be drunk from glasses in the company of friends.
- **The Consumption of Alcohol is “no big deal”:** In Italy, families introduce their children to alcohol at a very early age. A sip of *prosecco* with their birthday cake when they are five years old or a splash of wine to color their water so they can feel like they are participating with their families at lunch/dinner when they are ten years old is very normal in this society. Since alcohol is accepted by all, ubiquitous, and seen as a “special commodity”, there is not a rush to abuse alcohol. **Italians are also very in touch with how food and drink affect their bodies and are extremely careful to never reach a state of being out of control.**
- **Binge Drinking:** The new generation of young Italians is starting to have the same issues as we do in the United States with binge drinking, but binge drinking or **“drinking to get drunk”**, is NEVER socially acceptable in this culture. There is a constant conversation now in Italy about how to battle this new phenomenon that is creeping into their society and generally thought to be a plague from Anglo Saxon cultures. The American stereotypes of drinking, including, **“Thirsty Thursdays”, “Tailgating”, “Southside/Bar Crawl”, “Keggers” types of drinking, are extremely prohibited while studying in our programs abroad.** This type of behavior is

## Resources for students

- ✓ **Our Italian Campus Counselor:** *Dr. Carolyn Rathjen's contact information is below. Her services are made available to you to help you during your adaptation abroad. The services are free and are confidential. If you're having issues with alcohol, peer pressure, understanding your limits, etc., she can be a great resource for you! Dr. Rathjen's email: [carolynvrathjen@gmail.com](mailto:carolynvrathjen@gmail.com)*
  
- ✓ **Article: "I'm so wasted: Reasons you shouldn't binge abroad":** *A great article about how limiting alcohol consumption abroad helps you have a more meaningful experience: <http://www.goabroad.com/blog/2013/10/01/reasons-you-shouldnt-binge-abroad/> (a copy of this article is located in Appendix V of the Student Handbook under "Interesting Articles".)*
  
- ✓ **Alcohol & Your Body:** *A great resource for students studying abroad from Brown University about what is "a drink" and how to intelligently calculate your alcohol intake in order to keep yourself safe and within the rules of campus and society!:*  
[http://www.brown.edu/Student\\_Services/Health\\_Services/Health\\_Education/alcohol\\_tobacco\\_and\\_other\\_drugs/alcohol/alcohol\\_and\\_your\\_body.php](http://www.brown.edu/Student_Services/Health_Services/Health_Education/alcohol_tobacco_and_other_drugs/alcohol/alcohol_and_your_body.php)
  
- ✓ **Article: Drinking & Studying Abroad: A Cautionary Tale:** *A Study Abroad student in Italy's recommendations about alcohol while studying in Italy and using it like the Italians do:*  
<http://www.gooverseas.com/travel-writing/drinking-and-studying-abroad-cautionary-tale> (a copy of this article is located in Appendix V of the Student Handbook under "Interesting Articles")