



Healthy Campus Case Study



HEA

An tÚdarás um Ard-Oideachas
The Higher Education Authority

Sober Sessions

Institution/ Organisation
University of Limerick
Who leads/ led the project?
Equally shared by Healthy UL, UL Student Life (Students Union - ULSL) and Irish World Academy of Music and Dance (WAMD)
Date and timeframe
AY 25/26 and ongoing
Project Rationale
This initiative commenced in September 2025 to celebrate International Recovery Day on September 30th
Three persons at UL are trained in SMART Recovery facilitation. In addition to substance use harm reduction messaging and signposting to internal and external services, we wished to raise awareness about this alternative for people that are 'sober curious', wish to reduce their use, are in 'active' recovery and needing support, and/or looking for information and support as an affected family member/significant other/concerned peer.

Project Overview/ Summary
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project planning commenced in June 2025, with a three-member task-based working group (WG) (Healthy UL, ULSL, WAMD) setting out aims and objectives for the Academic Year. The WG met on ten occasions during June '25 – March '26. We are now planning for AY 26/27 and will explore forming a SMART Recovery group on campus. Three members of the UL campus community are trained as SMART recovery facilitators. The project comprised two events during the Academic Year, one at lunchtime (September 30th, 2025) in celebration of International Recovery Day, one at evening time (March 26th, 2026). The events were held in the foyer of the new ULSL Student Centre. Free lunch (September) & mocktails (March) for participants. Social media campaigns preceding, during and following the events. Informal awareness raising - harm reduction information and signposting to campus-based and regional services including SMART recovery. Rolling PowerPoint presentation on big screen. Healthy UL, ULSL, MWRDAF & SMART recovery pull-ups with QR codes for sign posting. ULSL, Healthy UL and MWRDAF staff mingled informally to chat with students throughout the event. Live music provided by the UL student community. In total, 220 students actively engaged with us during the event - 60 in September and 160 in March.

Key Learning Points
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaboration and partnership are key to successful Healthy Campus initiatives. In this initiative, the partners included Healthy UL, UL Student Life, and the WAMD, with support from the MWRDAF. The evening event attracted better engagement from students. Incentives work for engagement. Informal engagement (walking the room) works better than passive tables with information. Combine fun with low key exposure to substance use harm reduction and signposting awareness in a pro-social environment. Wrap-around social media messaging around an event. Plan initiatives based on local/regional/national policies & frameworks and on best practice evidence in the substance use intervention field.

SOBER SESSION

THU MARCH 26TH
5-8 PM
UL STUDENT CENTRE

Enjoy live music, free refreshing mocktails, and learn about services!

Limerick Framework for Action	Whole Campus Approach	Type of Evaluation
Culture	Campus Environment (Facilities & Services) (Pillar 2)	Formative Evaluation
Partnership	Campus Culture & Communications (Pillar 3)	Process Evaluation
Celebrate	Health Focused Area (Pillar 5)	

