# Risky drinking among undergraduate university students: A social norms-based approach

## Researcher

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## Summary

This report provides an overview of the findings of a baseline survey undertaken as part of the project *Risky drinking among undergraduate university students: a social norms-based approach*. The overview combines the results of surveys undertaken at both the Australian National University and the University of Canberra in the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) during August and September 2017.

This three year project funded by an ACT Health grant aims to reduce risky drinking among undergraduate university students in the ACT, and involves the development of a campaign that addresses misperceptions of social norms around drinking. The Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education (FARE) is collaborating with the Australian National University and the University of Canberra to plan and implement the project.

## Findings

Results from the survey align with previous evidence that university students tend to over-estimate the drinking behaviour of others. On analysis, significant differences were found in the following three areas:

* Respondents’ perceptions of their own drinking differed significantly from their perception of the frequency of alcohol consumption by close friends and students in their year.
* Respondents’ perceptions of their own propensity to drink to get drunk was significantly different from their perception of this in other students in their year.
* Respondents’ individually held beliefs that it is okay to get drunk, differed significantly from perceptions of this belief in other students in their year.

## Conclusions

Analysis of selected data indicates that there is some degree of misperception about alcohol use and attitudes among survey respondents, supporting the social norms approach of the project. However, because the sample size was small and not representative of the entire first year student population, generalisations cannot be made about the results.

FARE will use these results and collaborate with university and student representatives to design a health promotion campaign for implementation at ANU and UC during the first semester of 2018.

[view the report](https://fare.org.au/wp-content/uploads/Risky-drinking-baseline-data-snapshot.pdf)