



# Student Handbook 2018-19

---

CAFRE reserves the right to add to or amend this student handbook as appropriate and will inform students of any additions/amendments as soon as is practically possible

# Contents

---

	Page
Foreword.....	i.
Introduction .....	i.
Academic Structure.....	i.
<i>To navigate to the appropriate policy or procedure click on the relevant section heading below</i>	
<b>Section 1: CAFRE General Policies .....</b>	<b>1</b>
1. Student Charter.....	2
2. Welfare and Support Services .....	4
3. Equality and Diversity Policy.....	5
4. Anti-bullying and Harassment Policy.....	6
5. CAFRE Student Health Promotion Policy.....	9
6. Drug and Alcohol Policy.....	10
7. Health and Safety Policy.....	11
8. CAFRE Internet and E-Mail Usage Policy .....	12
9. Safeguarding Policy.....	14
<b>SECTION 2: Admissions.....</b>	<b>17</b>
1. General Admissions Policy.....	18
2. Tuition Fee Regulations .....	22
3. Making Payments to the College.....	23
4. Eligibility for Refund of Higher Education Tuition Fees .....	24

	Page
5. Student Debt Policy .....	25
6. Hardship Fund .....	26
7. Student Support Policy .....	28
8. Applications for Courses from Students who have Disabilities, Medical Conditions or Learning Needs .....	30
9. College Academic Calendar 2018/19 .....	31
<b>SECTION 3: Complaints and Appeals Procedures.....</b>	<b>33</b>
1. Customer Complaints Procedure .....	34
2. Appeals Against Refusal of a Place on a CAFRE Programme .....	35
3. Academic Appeals Procedure.....	36
4. Malpractice and Maladministration Procedures.....	37
5. Whistle Blowing Procedures.....	39
<b>SECTION 4: Student Regulations and Procedures.....</b>	<b>40</b>
1. College Regulations .....	41
2. Attendance Policy .....	45
3. Examination and Submission of Coursework Regulations .....	47
4. Assignment Regulations .....	49
5. CAFRE Disciplinary Policy .....	50
6. Fitness to Study.....	58
7. Plagiarism and Misrepresentation .....	59
8. Student Representation at the College .....	60
9. Fire Emergency Procedures .....	61

	<b>Page</b>
<b>10. Smoking Regulations .....</b>	<b>62</b>
<b>11. Residential Students' Regulations.....</b>	<b>63</b>
<b>12. Use of Motor Vehicles Regulations .....</b>	<b>64</b>
<b>13. Student Bio-Security Protocol .....</b>	<b>66</b>

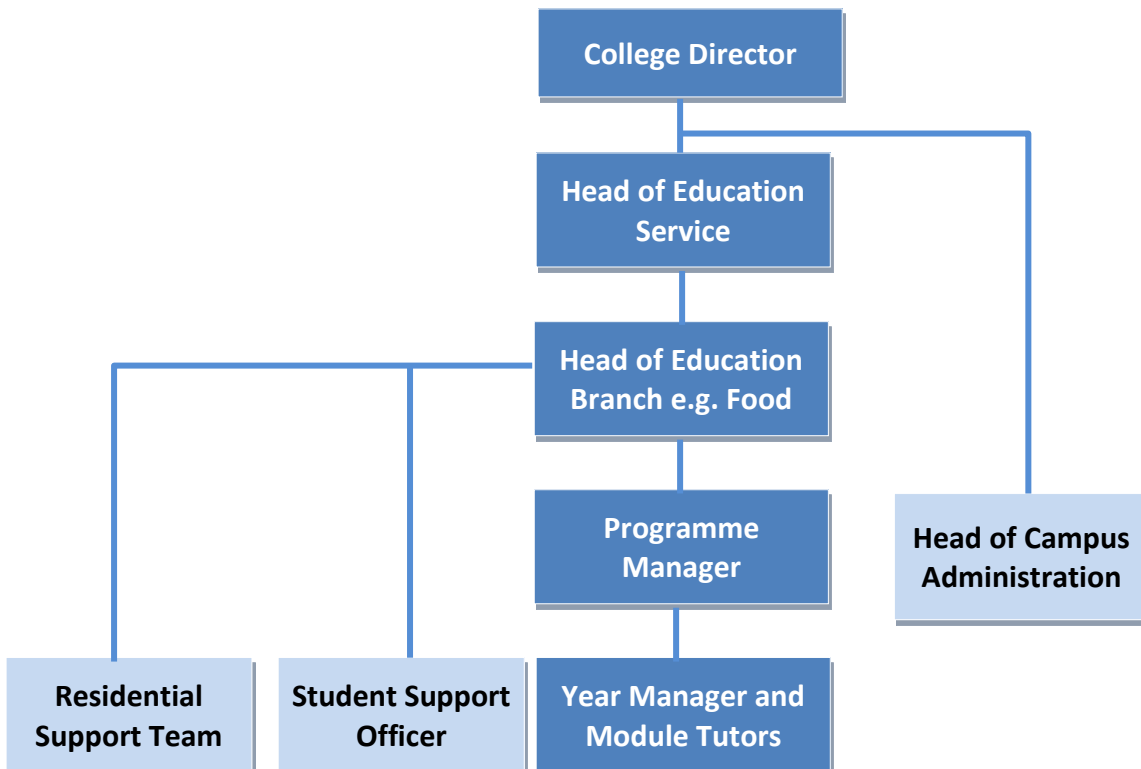
## Foreword

This is your Student Handbook and it contains information and guidance that will help you make the most of the opportunities available to you while studying at the College. It explains CAFRE's codes, regulations, policies and procedures, and provides you with relevant contact details and web links where you can find out more information. Please take time to read it. This handbook complements the course specific handbooks relevant to your course which you should also read.

## Introduction

The College of Agriculture Food and Rural Enterprise (CAFRE) is an integral part of the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA). CAFRE operates across three campuses located close to Antrim (Greenmount Campus), Cookstown (Loughry Campus) and Enniskillen (Enniskillen Campus) under one management structure. In addition to the education and training provided, CAFRE promotes technology transfer, entrepreneurship and people development through its short course programmes. CAFRE has established links with Queen's University, Belfast (QUB), Ulster University (UU), Pearson's, Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH), Institute of Packaging (IOP), City & Guilds and the Northern Ireland Open College Network (NIOCN). The breadth of courses that are delivered include a variety of short courses, and formal programmes ranging from Level 2 through to Level 8 in land-based subjects – Agriculture, Horticulture, Equine, Food and Business Development.

## Academic Structure



[Top](#)

# **SECTION 1:**

# **CAFRE GENERAL POLICIES**

# 1. Student Charter

Our policies are designed to ensure high standards of teaching and educational facilities and the Charter below sets out the responsibilities of the College and the student to achieve this outcome. The College is committed to providing an environment that supports and develops students through high quality learning and teaching, and services that underpin a positive student experience. CAFRE will act in a fair, just and legal manner in its dealings with you, provide equal opportunity and comply with appropriate legislation. The Student Charter sets out these commitments.

## **The College is committed:**

- To promoting an active learning community in which you have the opportunity to develop as an independent learner.
- To respecting the rights of all students and other members of the College and treating them with dignity; to having regulations, policies and processes in place which will work towards equality and diversity and prevent discrimination.
- To being professional in our dealings with you including setting out the standards of service you can expect; to providing you with fair and efficient complaints, appeals and disciplinary procedures within their defined remits, based on published criteria.
- To providing you with full and accurate information about CAFRE, its facilities, its courses and its regulations.
- To providing well-designed, relevant, and quality assured courses, which optimise student choice as far as is reasonably possible. Courses should be well resourced and varied in delivery, yielding both scholarly content and wide-ranging skills.
- To delivering the programme you have been accepted onto as described within the specific course handbook and informing you of any substantial changes to the programme structure in terms of content or delivery/assessment thereby giving you the opportunity to consider these changes and consequently either register for the new programme or remain on the original programme.
- To having all submitted coursework, assignments and examination scripts marked promptly, checked and moderated as appropriate, and made available with feedback to you as soon as possible (normally within three working weeks) subject to CAFRE rules concerning retention.
- To providing an appropriate learning environment with a range of study areas and access to resources and support, both on campus and online.
- To communicating with you as efficiently as possible through a variety of means, principally electronic and online.
- To providing timely and accurate information about fees you are liable to pay and relevant academic administrative processes such as registration and assessment.
- To providing a wide range of student and academic support services designed to promote your well-being and enhance your progress.
- To creating opportunities for you to express your views about your experience as a CAFRE student, and become involved in CAFRE's decision-making processes at various levels as far as is reasonably possible.

- To safeguarding information you supply in compliance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act, the Freedom of Information Act or any other statutory obligations; to explaining to you why we need to collect information.

**As a student you are expected to commit yourself:**

- To be actively engaged in the process of learning; to attend all scheduled sessions; to value the contributions of others be they your peers, staff or external 'experts'; to present the best possible work promptly and to seek help if needed.
- To respect the rights of, and to treat with dignity, all fellow students, teaching staff and other members of CAFRE; to observe regulations, policies and processes which support equality and diversity.
- To behave in a responsible manner on and off campus and ensure that your actions do not have an adverse impact on the College's reputation, its environment, your neighbours, the local community or those who work or study at CAFRE.
- To read the information in all official publications and comply with all CAFRE procedures, regulations, policies and College communications.
- To study diligently, organise your work effectively and endeavour always to produce quality assignments; to attend classes punctually, submit coursework and assignments on time, and follow College procedures following absence from class.
- To complete assessment tasks by the required dates and deadlines, observing CAFRE's requirements for originality and presentation; to pay attention to and act on all feedback given to you by your tutors in connection with assessment, and retain all assessed work completed during your programme.
- To respect other users of the learning environment.
- To read and to act on communications from the College and notify us immediately if you have problems or difficulties with attendance.
- To read and respond to communications from the College; to ensure that you are registered for a viable combination of units/modules where your course offers a choice;
- To pay fees or charges when they are due.
- To engage positively with the support services as appropriate and give us constructive views on how we can enhance those services.
- To provide feedback and comments on the quality of your learning experience and contribute to CAFRE's decision making procedures, wherever and whenever reasonably possible, for the benefit and advancement of all.
- To provide us with accurate information when we ask for it and keep it updated especially your contact, next of kin and medical details.

[Top](#)



## **2. Welfare and Support Services**

Life and study can be challenging. If you are experiencing personal, emotional, social or academic problems, you should seek support either from your college tutor or through the College counselling service.

### **Counselling Service**

CAFRE provides confidential support to all students/learners attending education and training programmes. The service is available to help you in realising your full academic and personal potential. The College Student Support Officer is available at the three campuses on a weekly basis and will be able to direct and advise you on all issues relating to student support.

[Top](#)

### 3. Equality and Diversity Policy

CAFRE is committed to providing equality of opportunity and promoting diversity. CAFRE will promote equality of opportunity:

- Between persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation;
- Between men and women generally;
- Between persons with a disability and persons without; and between persons with dependants and persons without.

CAFRE will promote good relations between persons of different religious beliefs, political opinions or racial groups. All eligible persons shall have equal opportunity for education, training and progression in CAFRE on the basis of their ability, aptitude and the course entry criteria.

All students have a right to live in a harmonious college environment and atmosphere in which they are encouraged to apply their diverse talents and in which no-one feels under threat or intimidated. This right is protected by law. CAFRE will foster a culture that encourages every student to develop their full potential and which rewards achievement.

If you feel you are being unfairly treated you should inform your Tutor, Year Manager or Programme Manager as soon as possible. If the matter cannot be resolved you have a right to make an appeal following the procedures outlined within the appeals procedure.

[Top](#)

## **4. Anti-bullying and Harassment Policy**

### **1. Policy Statement**

CAFRE is committed to providing a working and learning environment which is free from harassment including discrimination, victimisation and bullying, and one in which no student feels under threat or intimidated.

In striving towards the achievement of such an environment, allegations of harassment and/or bullying by students will be taken seriously. If substantiated, allegations of harassment and/or bullying may provide grounds for disciplinary action and may give rise to a student being suspended from their course. CAFRE recognises that incidents of harassment and/or bullying can affect a person's work, morale and health. Therefore, all complaints (informal or formal) will be dealt with promptly and treated confidentially. Information shall only be divulged on a need to know basis and with the knowledge of the complainant.

This procedure applies to all students and relates to those who are being bullied by another student, a member of staff or whilst on placement. The procedure aims to highlight the actions a student should take if they believe they are being subjected to behaviour which may be considered as harassment and/or bullying.

### **2. Frivolous or Vexatious Complaints**

Bullying and harassment are considered to be serious matters and consequently if a complaint is found to be frivolous or vexatious, this may lead to disciplinary action against the person lodging the complaint. Frivolous is defined as a complaint which has no reasonable chance of succeeding and vexatious is defined as a complaint that is brought without sufficient grounds for success and purely to cause annoyance to the alleged harasser.

### **3. Definition of Harassment/Bullying**

Bullying can be defined as behaviour which is offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting, an abuse or misuse of power through means intended to undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient and undermine their ability and confidence.

Harassment is defined in equality legislation as unwanted conduct related to religious belief, political opinion, sex, gender reassignment, race, sexual orientation, disability or age, which has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or of creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person. Harassment may also be a criminal offence and may contravene Health and Safety legislation. Complaints of this type of harassment can also be brought under the Protection from Harassment (NI) Order 1997.

### **4. The Effects of Bullying**

Persistent bullying can result in:

- Insecurity
- Loss of confidence
- Depression
- Low self-esteem
- Shyness

- Poor academic achievement
- Isolation and
- Threatened or attempted suicide.

## **5. Examples of Harassment/Bullying**

Many forms of behaviour can constitute bullying and/or harassment; this list is neither exclusive nor exhaustive and other forms of behaviour may be regarded as harassment.

- Oral or written harassment through derogatory remarks, jokes, insults, offensive language, gossip and slander. Written harassment includes, but is not limited to, letters, emails, postings on website and texts.
- Visual displays of posters, graffiti, obscene gestures, flags, bunting, pictures, emblems or any other material which may be considered to be offensive (including the use of emails or mobile devices to send or view such material).
- Physical conduct ranging from the invasion of personal space and/or inappropriate touching to serious assaults.
- Open aggression, threats and shouting.
- Unjustifiable exclusion e.g. withholding information, isolation or non-co-operation of colleagues, exclusion from classroom and social activities.
- Intrusion by pestering, spying, following and/or stalking.
- Humiliation and intimidatory actions which demean or undermine the individual.

CAFRE will respect the particular sensitivity of allegations of harassment and their consequences and the need for confidentiality. As a general principle, confidentiality will be agreed and maintained wherever possible. However, there may be situations where confidentiality cannot be maintained and this will be made clear. For example, if a student tells a member of staff in confidence something that constitutes an unacceptable risk to the student or another person, the member of staff will have to take action. The decision on whether a complaint should be progressed normally rests with the student, but action may have to be taken against the student's wishes to deal with an unacceptable risk.

## **6. Steps to take if you are a Victim of Bullying**

- The first step is to contact your Personal Tutor/Year Manager/Programme Manager immediately and discuss the problem. If necessary request a private meeting and give as much information as possible. Your complaint will be taken seriously and appropriate action will follow.
- We will arrange a follow up appointment to discuss the findings of any investigations and the action taken.
- If there is no improvement or if you feel that the incident is very severe you should make an appointment to see the Head of Branch.

**iv. Procedure for Investigating Allegations of Bullying**

- i. All reported incidents will be investigated as a priority, investigations will be conducted with discretion and an appropriate course of action will be decided on, in agreement with the victim where possible.

Parents will be kept fully informed where appropriate and counselling will be provided for both victims and perpetrators.

[Top](#)

## 5. CAFRE Student Health Promotion Policy

The College aims to promote the health and well-being of its students by supporting healthy lifestyles through balanced nutritional intake, appropriate physical activity, good stress management and positive health behaviours.

To achieve this aim it provides:

- A smoke-free environment;
- Healthy food choices at meal times;
- A range of physical activities through its clubs and societies;
- Information to students via the Student Health Fair;
- Ongoing health promotion activities whilst working with Student Representative Council at each Campus;

[Top](#)

## 6. Drug and Alcohol Policy

Substance abuse i.e. alcohol and drugs severely limit the ability of individuals to succeed academically, professionally and personally. Substance abuse is linked to health problems, accidents, decline in academic performance, vandalism, financial difficulties, sexual misconduct and legal problems and can affect the entire College community. The College considers the misuse of drugs to be a serious breach of discipline and will take appropriate action without delay. CAFRE promotes drug and alcohol awareness and endeavours to increase the awareness of the dangers of substance abuse among all students.

Consumption of alcohol on College premises is only permitted in the 'Cyber bar' (Greenmount campus) or 'Swifts bar' (Loughry campus) or in discrete residential areas reserved for students over 18 years of age. Students under 18 years of age are not permitted to consume alcohol and those over 18 years of age must comply with any conditions of the exemption.

If you suspect anyone is dealing in drugs on Campus please let College staff know at once (in total confidence). It is a disciplinary offence for anyone to supply alcohol to a minor on campus. Information and help on substance abuse is available from any member of the Accommodation Team, your Tutor, and the Student Support Officer. You will be provided with whatever information, advice and help you may require.

Students suspected of being under the influence of Drugs or Alcohol will not be permitted to participate in practical or classroom based activities.

[Top](#)

## **7. Health and Safety Policy**

The College has a duty to ensure that an assessment of the risks to the Health & Safety of students and others is carried out as appropriate and that students are instructed in all safety aspects of the work they have to perform and are supervised accordingly. Risk assessments are available from your Course Tutor for all of your practical activities.

All students have a duty to take care of their own health and safety and that of other students and people who may be affected by their actions. This also applies outside normal teaching hours. Students must comply with all legal requirements relating to health and safety of personnel on all College premises.

Students must comply with Bio-security Procedures, Farm Safety Regulations, Fire Regulations, COSHH Regulations, Food Safety Regulations and Animal Health precautions in operation at the College. Students who do not use the specified protective clothing will not be allowed to participate in practical activities.

The College accepts no responsibility for any injuries received through disregard of College Regulations, staff instructions, and safety regulations or by students' negligence. Action, which damages safety equipment including fire detection equipment, is a criminal offence and will be treated as such by the College.

If you see a danger or hazard or notice any defect in equipment provided by the College, you should report it immediately to a member of College staff.

### **ACCIDENTS OR INJURIES WHILE STUDYING AT CAFRE**

Details of all accidents must be reported to a member of staff supervising the group who will record it in an Accident Book. If you have been involved in an accident outside College, you should inform your Year Manager or a member of the Residential Support Team, if after 5.00pm.

A member of staff in charge will request the emergency services as appropriate giving the necessary directions to the site of the emergency.

[Top](#)



## 8. CAFRE Internet and E-Mail Usage Policy

The Internet provides easy and open access to world-wide information services and additional facilities and resources. However, by its nature it also presents risks such as hacking and virus infection. You will be given Internet access by the College, along with visitors and guests to the College (fixed line and Wi-Fi). However the primary use of the Internet is for educational purposes and to carry out tasks in relation to training and completion of coursework.

All Internet access is monitored and recorded and can be traced back to individual users. This also applies to users accessing the Internet through the college Wi-Fi.

### As a result:

- You must keep your internet login details confidential as you are individually responsible for all activity within your IT account.
- You must take all reasonable care when accessing websites or attempting to download material to avoid potential virus infection.
- You must NOT attempt to download material from the Internet, unless it is expressly permitted by the terms of the website
- The College reserves the right to inspect all files stored in private areas of the network or on hardware attached to its computers to ensure compliance with its policies. This includes devices such as wireless computers, USB keys, PDAs, CD or DVD disks which are connected to the College network.
- You must NOT attempt to install software from CD/DVDs, external devices or via the internet. Only hardware and software approved by the College and authorised by the CAFRE IT team can be used on the CAFRE network.
- You must NOT access, post or send any information which is illegal or offensive, or which could, in any way, embarrass or compromise the College.
- You must ensure that the downloadable content (transmitted on behalf of organisations) has been approved and that it is identifiable as either an official view or a private opinion.
- The following actions are deemed unethical and unacceptable and would therefore justify disciplinary action being taken:
  - viewing or downloading any information which could be considered illegal or offensive e.g. pornographic, racist or sectarian material;
  - using the internet or social media to write/disseminate derogatory remarks about staff, other students or the college
  - attempts to gain unauthorised access to information sources – commonly known as 'hacking', e.g. attempting to access other users' IT accounts, attempting to access secure folders on the network;

- using or knowingly allowing someone else to use your computer, computer network, computer system, program or software to defraud or to obtain money, property, services or other items of value by false pretences, promises or representations;
- interfering with the availability and/or integrity of computer-based information and/or information resources;
- using the internet for political lobbying;
- transmitting or causing to be transmitted, material that may be considered as harassment or mocking of others;
- breach of any laws relating to the unauthorised use of computing resources or networks; and
- violation of copyright, licence agreements or other contracts e.g. installing or copying software or materials without the appropriate licence and/or approval;

You should be aware that the possession of child pornography or sexting is a criminal offence. The College will fully co-operate with law enforcement authorities to identify and take action against any student accessing, possessing or disseminating such material.

You should note that you might be personally liable to prosecution, and open to claims for damages, should your actions be found to be in breach of the law.

You may be suspended by the College and/or have your IT privileges removed if you are found to be in breach of the College Regulations.

[Top](#)

## 9. Safeguarding Policy

The context of this section has been based on Child Protection Guidelines and other literature issued by the Department of Education, Northern Ireland, Child Care (NI) and the Northern Health and Social Services Board. Full details of these protection orders can be supplied on request.

The college promotes the welfare and safety of all children and vulnerable adults to ensure that they are protected from exploitation, abuse and neglect when engaged in education at CAFRE. It supports the application of the highest standards of safeguarding practice, including robust recruitment, selection and supervision procedures for all staff and volunteers engaging with children and/or vulnerable adults. This includes taking all necessary steps to prevent unsuitable people from having access to children/vulnerable adults, and where required completing an appropriate level of check through Access NI.

### POLICY STATEMENT

The College is committed to practices which protect students from harm and will endeavour to:

- ☞ Ensure that staff show respect and understanding for students' rights, safety and welfare and conduct themselves in a way that reflects these principles;
- ☞ Follow carefully the NICS procedures for recruitment and selection of staff;
- ☞ Provide awareness training and support for staff and specialist training for designated officers;
- ☞ Provide information to students, parents and staff;
- ☞ Share information about concerns with statutory child protection agencies/staff who need to know and involve parents and students as necessary;
- ☞ Regularly review the safeguarding policies and procedures.
- ☞ Ensure that all staff recruited and who have contact with students are registered with the Independent Safeguarding Authority and are subject to an Enhanced Disclosure with a Barred List check prior to employment.

### DESIGNATED PERSONS

Each Campus has a number of designated persons who have undertaken the recommended training and have specific responsibilities for child and vulnerable adults' protection matters. There is at least one designated officer for each 250 students enrolled at each Campus and a minimum of two officers per Campus with at least one of each gender.

CAFRE Designated Officers:

Greenmount	– Brian Simpson/Barry Kelly/Steven Girvan/Alison Young
Loughry	– Judith Mullan/Roisin Talbot/Cormac Doherty
Enniskillen	– Michelle McKenna/David Downey/Catherine Crowley
Cross-campus	– Alison Young

## **DEFINITION OF ABUSE**

Abuse occurs in families from all social classes and cultures and in institutions and organisations. Abusers come from all walks of life, occupations and professions. Abuse consists of anything which individuals, institutions, or processes do, or fail to do, which directly or indirectly harms children or vulnerable adults or damages their prospects of safe and healthy development.

The abuse may take a number of forms, including:

- Physical Abuse
- Emotional Abuse
- Sexual Abuse
- Neglect
- Self-Injury
- Bullying

### **Private Meetings with Staff**

- It is recognised that there will be occasions when confidential interviews must take place. As far as possible, interviews will be conducted in a room with visual access, or with the door open. Where such conditions are not possible, another adult in the vicinity will be advised that the interview is taking place.
- Staff have a professional responsibility to share relevant information about the protection of children and vulnerable adults with other professionals, e.g. Social Services, investigating agencies. Where any type of abuse is suspected, staff have a legal duty to report it to the appropriate authorities.
- If someone provides confidential information to a member of staff which gives cause for concern about possible abuse and the student requests that the information be kept secret, the member of staff will inform that person that he/she has a responsibility to refer cases of alleged abuse to the appropriate authorities (usually a designated person).
- As a general principle, there should be no unnecessary/inappropriate physical contact between staff and students. However it is recognised that this can be necessary in the course of skills instruction.
- Relationships between staff and students should be professional at all times.
- The use of inappropriate language by students will not be tolerated.
- Staff and students should not communicate with each other through social networking sites and chat rooms unless through an approved Facebook group.

- Mobile telephone texting will only be used to remind students of meetings.
- The College discourages staff from offering students lifts in their personal vehicles.

### **Risks posed by Developments in Communications Technology**

In an increasingly complex world, the opportunities for abuse are growing with increasing opportunities through the misuse of video, computer, internet, text messaging and other media.

- ***The Internet***

Care in the use of the internet needs to be exercised and consequently all internet access by students will be monitored and recorded.

- ***Photographs***

Following the introduction of the Data Protection Act in 1998, CAFRE will monitor the use of photographs, videos and webcams of clearly identifiable people. The following guidelines will apply:-

- Permission (verbal or written) will be obtained from all the people (students and adults) who will appear in a photograph, video or webcam image before the photograph is taken or footage recorded.
- It will be made clear why that person's image is being used, what we will be using it for, and who might want to look at the pictures.
- You should not be identified by personal details apart from name and area. Contact details such as email or postal addresses, telephone or fax numbers will not be included.
- Written consent that your photograph can be used will be obtained from parents or carers at registration if you are under 18 years old.
- Staff will not insist that a student participates in photo opportunities against their will.
- Signs will be displayed in buildings which have CCTV cameras in operation.
- CCTV generally operates throughout the campuses

- ***Mobile Telephones***

Mobile phones should not be used inappropriately. Staff will not retain images of students on personal mobile phones even after they have been recorded for use in the public domain.

- ***Social Media***

Social media forums such as Facebook/WhatsApp/Snapchat etc. should not be used to provide feedback on programmes/individuals/tutors within CAFRE and will not be used to communicate sensitive material regarding other students.

[Top](#)

# **SECTION 2:**

# **ADMISSIONS**

# 1. General Admissions Policy

## 1. OVERALL AIMS OF THE POLICY

The aims of the Student Recruitment and Admissions Policy are to ensure that:

- Selection is based on clearly specified criteria which are available in the CAFRE prospectus and on the CAFRE Internet site [www.cafre.ac.uk](http://www.cafre.ac.uk)
- No candidate is excluded from entry to a programme by reason of religious belief, political opinion, racial group, gender, age, marital status, sexual orientation, disability or responsibility for dependants;
- Opportunities are available to allow access and progress to higher levels of study.

## 2. ENTRANCE REQUIREMENTS

### Further Education programmes

The College applies minimum entrance requirements for all its Further Education programmes. These take into account the recommendations of Awarding Organisations and list the qualifications which applicants are normally expected to have obtained. However, all programmes will specify additional entrance requirements which are included in individual programme entries in CAFRE's prospectuses and on-line at: [www.cafre.ac.uk](http://www.cafre.ac.uk)

### Undergraduate programmes

The College applies the general entrance requirements of validating Universities for all its Higher Education programmes. These represent the minimum qualifications which applicants are normally expected to present for entry. However, all programmes will specify additional entrance requirements and these are published in CAFRE's prospectuses for taught programmes and Online at: [www.cafre.ac.uk](http://www.cafre.ac.uk)

### Postgraduate taught programmes

The College normally requires applicants to its taught postgraduate programmes to have a degree or equivalent qualification from a recognised institution. Any specific entry requirements for individual programmes will be published in CAFRE's prospectuses and on-line at [www.cafre.ac.uk](http://www.cafre.ac.uk)

### Enhanced entry criteria

Where courses are oversubscribed, the College reserves the right to apply enhanced entry criteria.

## **Non UK qualifications**

The College accepts a broad range of non UK qualifications. Further information may be obtained by emailing [enquiries@cafre.ac.uk](mailto:enquiries@cafre.ac.uk)

## **Accreditation of prior Accredited and Experiential Learning (APEL)**

The College recognises both certificated and experiential learning irrespective of the context in which it has been achieved. Accordingly, the College will accredit alternative forms of learning, provided these can be evidenced in writing and authenticated at the appropriate level.

## **Applicants who are not citizens of the European Economic Area**

The College is not registered with the UK Borders Agency to accept applicants who are not citizens or who do not meet residency criteria. For further details see <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/uk-visas-and-immigration>

## **DISABLED APPLICANTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS**

The College welcomes and encourages applications from persons with special needs.

### **Selection and entry criteria**

- The College recognises that standard selection measures and procedures may not always allow applicants with special needs to fully demonstrate their competence in their chosen course and so will take into account alternative evidence, such as examples of previous work, additional references or evidence gained during interview to ensure fair and equivalent consideration.
- The College will also make reasonable adjustments to those entrance requirements which are essential for a programme but not attainable for reasons related to the special needs of individuals.
- The College will work with Awarding Organisations to ensure that applicants with special needs are not discriminated against.

### **Communication during the application process**

- All applicants are encouraged to inform the College about special needs or medical conditions at an early stage in order to discuss the support which may be required.
- All information provided relating to applicants who disclose a special need will be treated sensitively and in accordance with the College's Data Protection policy.
- The College may contact you during the application process to request further information regarding your needs.
- Applicants are encouraged to contact the Student Support Officer at any time during the application process to discuss matters related to the support they need and to discuss their chosen programme of study.



## **ADMISSIONS PROCEDURES**

### **Further Education and part-time provision**

Applications to further education and part-time programmes are made Online directly to the College. Deadlines for the submission of applications will vary and will be publicised by the College.

### **UCAS Procedure**

The College will observe the procedures and deadlines for dealing with applications as set out by UCAS (Universities and Colleges Admissions Service [www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com)). All applications for admission to full-time undergraduate degree programmes will normally be made through UCAS except for applicants who are already in higher education and are transferring to a different programme. UCAS applications for the BSc Agriculture Technology are made directly to QUB.

### **Higher Education applications made directly to THE COLLEGE**

Applications to part-time HE programmes are made directly to the College. Deadlines for the submission of applications will vary and will be publicised by the College on the website ([www.cafre.ac.uk](http://www.cafre.ac.uk)). Applications for the QUB graduate and postgraduate programmes are made directly to QUB via their website and they carry out the selection process and make offers.

### **Acknowledgement of receipt of application**

Applicants will receive an acknowledgement of their application directly from the College or from UCAS.

### **Fraudulent statements/omissions**

Admission to the College is subject to applicants disclosing all facts and information relevant to their application. If, during the course of the consideration of an application, or subsequently, an applicant is discovered to have omitted any information requested in the application form, or has made any misrepresentation therein or given false information, the College reserves the right to withdraw the offer of a place and/or reject their application or in the case of a student already enrolled to terminate their place on the course.

### **Applicants seeking deferred entry**

The College will consider requests from applicants for deferred entry for a maximum of one year. Applicants should be aware that deferred entry may not always be granted. The decision whether or not to offer a place to applicants for deferred entry will be at the discretion of the Programme Manager.

### **Feedback to unsuccessful applicants**

The College will provide feedback on request to unsuccessful applicants. This will not constitute a reconsideration of an application. Feedback will only refer to the selection criteria used by the programme manager and will only be provided on receipt of a written request from the applicant.

### **CAFRE's use of applicants' data**

A declaration of consent on the UCAS form and/or the College application form gives the College permission to process personal and sensitive data (e.g. ethnic origin, disability, criminal conviction). This enables those involved with the selection and admissions process to respond to identified additional needs, follow the College policy relating to criminal convictions and maintain the College's internal student records. This information will be managed in accordance with College's Data Protection policy.

## **Procedure for applicants disclosing a criminal record**

The College has a duty to ensure the safety of its students and staff. To help minimise the risk of harm or injury to students caused by the criminal behaviour of other students, it needs to know about any relevant criminal convictions that an applicant may have. Applicants are required to disclose any relevant criminal convictions at the time of application.

Relevant criminal convictions are those convictions for offences against the person, of a violent or sexual nature, and convictions for offences involving unlawfully supplying controlled drugs or substances where the conviction concerns commercial drug dealing or trafficking. Convictions that are spent (as defined by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974) are not considered to be relevant and need not be disclosed except in the circumstances set out below.

If you are convicted of a relevant criminal offence (as listed in the previous paragraph) while at the college, you must tell your Programme Manager. The Programme Manager and the Senior College Management Team may request more details.

Where an applicant indicates a criminal record, the application will firstly be assessed against the academic and other criteria specified for the programme. If the applicant meets these criteria, the application will then be assessed to ensure that neither the applicant nor the College community will be put at risk if the applicant enrolls on a College programme. The applicant's information will only be shared with those who are involved in the consideration of the application and the applicant will be kept informed throughout the process.

## **Use of enquiry data**

The College may use contact details obtained during enquiry or application to provide enquirers or applicants with details of programmes it believes may be of interest, particularly where an offer of a place on the chosen programme may not be possible.

## **Freedom of Information requests**

The College will comply with its responsibilities to respond to requests for data under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

## **Data Protection**

The College's use, retention and storage of data fully complies with the Data Protection Act 1998.

[Top](#)

## 2. Tuition Fee Regulations

You are liable for the relevant course fee when you register and enrol formally on your programme of study. The course fee structure as outlined below relates to 2017/2018 and is expected to rise in line with inflation for 2018/2019. The appropriate fees are payable from the date of first registration to the date of the end of the academic year or completion of the course.

### Further Education programmes

No tuition charges are levied for Further Education programmes with the exception of Veterinary Nursing and the Work Based Diploma in Poultry. Please contact the relevant programme manager for the fee structure of these two programmes at [www.cafre.ac.uk](http://www.cafre.ac.uk).

### Full-time undergraduate programmes

The tuition fees for undergraduate students enrolling for the first time at CAFRE in 2018-19, will be based on 2017-18 levels, normally increased by inflation and subject to any changes in relevant legislation. For students enrolled on the Ulster University HE programmes in Agriculture, Horticulture Food and Equine, the fee is anticipated to be £1,645 for an academic year and the fee for the placement year £805.

The Tuition fee levied by QUB for the BSc Agriculture technology programmes will be based on 2017-18 levels, normally increased by inflation and subject to any changes in relevant legislation. The 2017-18 figure was £4,030 payable to QUB.

### Taught postgraduate, and part-time programmes

The arrangements for the charging and payment of tuition fees for taught postgraduate and part-time programmes of study, as well as any financial support available, are different from those applicable to full-time undergraduate programmes. The Fee for the postgraduate Business programme in 2017 – 18 was £422 for full-time study and £281 per year of part-time study. These fees are normally increased by inflation and subject to any changes in relevant legislation.

### Further Information

You may choose to defer the payment of all or part of these fees, along with costs associated with living expenses, until after they complete their programmes of study. This is possible through the availability of a range of loans and grants from the government, as well as bursaries and scholarships from the College. Full details of financial support available can be found at: [www.cafre.ac.uk](http://www.cafre.ac.uk)

If you have special needs, or find yourself in financial difficulties (which could not have been predicted), you may also have access to additional sources of funding. Further information may be found from the Student Support officer.

[Top](#)

### **3. Making Payments to the College**

The College is part of the Northern Ireland Civil Service and uses its accounting system AccountNI for the issuing invoices and the collection of payments.

You will be invoiced you as follows:

- For tuition fees (HE programmes with the exception of QUB Agriculture Technology) and accommodation charges if living in College accommodation, you will be invoiced in September/October and January/February. QUB Agriculture Technology fees will be paid directly to QUB and invoiced separately.
- For damages, resits and fines as and when they arise.

#### **Payments/issuing of reminders:**

Payments can be made directly to AccountNI or to the College. Reminders will be issued as follows:

- First Reminder after 30 days.
- Second Reminder after a further 14 days.
- Final reminder after a further 14 days.

If you are under the age of 18, reminders will be issued to your parents/guardians.

#### **Consequences of failure to pay**

- You will not be allowed to return to the College accommodation in Semester 2 if you have not paid your accommodation invoice for Semester 1.
- In the event of you not paying outstanding invoices, normal debt recovery procedures will apply, i.e. DAERA will take you to the small claims court or County Court (depending on the amount outstanding) to recover the debt.

[Top](#)

## **4. Eligibility for a Refund of Higher Education Tuition fees**

If you are considering withdrawing from your studies or taking a leave of absence you should seek advice from your Programme Manager.

Refund of tuition fees will only be made on receipt of a fully completed refund application form which can be obtained from the College Administration office.

If you leave your course after registration but before 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2019, you will be liable to pay 25% of the tuition fees.

If you leave your course on or after 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2019 but before 4<sup>th</sup> April 2019 you will be liable to pay 50% of the tuition fees.

If you leave your course after 4<sup>th</sup> April 2019, you will be charged tuition fees for the full academic year.

If you leave your course before 1<sup>st</sup> December you will not be eligible for financial support from the Student Loan Company and will be personally liable for your tuition fees.

Arrangements for Veterinary nursing – please consult the relevant Course handbook.

Refunds can only be processed if you have followed the correct procedures.

[Top](#)

## 5. Student Debt Policy

It is important that you pay your debts to the College because having a debt may affect your ability to complete your course.

### Causes of Debt

As a student you may incur debt to the College in three main ways:

- Accommodation and meals charges
- Tuition fees (largely but not exclusively relates to HE students)
- Disciplinary fines, resit fees etc.

If you are under 18 years of age, the responsibility for the debt rests with your parent or guardian. If you are over 18, you assume full responsibility for your own debts.

### What happens?

If you have not paid for your Semester 1 accommodation you will not be allowed back into accommodation in Semester 2 until the bill for Semester 1 has been paid. College management may progressively withdraw certain privileges until outstanding debts are paid. These may include access to the library, ICT facilities and accommodation on site.

In addition the financial processes as outlined previously in DAERA's Financial Accounting and Procedures guidelines will be applied. If a debt is still outstanding after this period, legal action will be initiated to recover the debt unless you have made some attempt to settle the debt.

### Financial Support and Advice

The College fully recognises the financial pressures which affect many students today and in all cases will make every attempt to help you or your parents/guardians to resolve any debt problems you might have.

If you have difficulty repaying any debt to the College you should talk initially to your Tutor, Year Manager or Programme Manager. Support is also available from the Student Support Officer who can help directly or by referral to professional debt counselling and support organisations.

A Hardship Fund is also available through the Student Support Officer. If you are suffering financial problems in relation to your studies, you are advised to contact the Student Support Officer to discuss how assistance may be provided. Training on money management is also provided through the Student Support Officer.

[Top](#)

## 6. Hardship Fund (Discretionary)

### OVERALL ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

The Hardship Fund is targeted at students in particular need. Large individual payments to a few students reduce the funding available for other students and consequently individual student payments are in the region of £650 per annum. The Hardship Fund must only be used for approved individual student applications. CAFRE will aim to process applications for the Hardship Fund within 6 weeks and information on the application process and closing dates will be available to all students during induction.

CAFRE will advise students seeking financial assistance from the Hardship Fund that payments may affect their entitlement to social security benefits.

### ELIGIBLE STUDENT CRITERIA

The Hardship Fund is open to students who are enrolled on full-time further education courses or sandwich courses at CAFRE. CAFRE may, in exceptional cases award hardship funding to students enrolled on a higher education course or a part-time course at CAFRE.

Students must normally meet residence requirements as detailed in the “Further Education Financial Support for Students in 2017/18” available at: [www.welbni.org/index.cfm/do/CAFRE](http://www.welbni.org/index.cfm/do/CAFRE)

All further education students must first apply for financial assessment to:

Student Finance NI  
Further Education Awards Section  
Western Education and Library Board  
1 Hospital Road  
Omagh  
Co Tyrone  
BT79 0AW

Tel: (028) 8225 4546  
Text phone: (028) 8241 1550

- Students on full-time higher education courses must apply to Student Finance NI for a maintenance grant, maintenance loan and tuition fees loan at: [www.studentfinanceni.co.uk](http://www.studentfinanceni.co.uk)
- Students must have exhausted all other avenues of financial assistance before applying for Hardship Funds.
- The Hardship Fund is not normally available to students who are repeating courses/modules or to students who are continually absent from their course e.g. due to sickness.
- Support is only available to students whose course is part of their educational progression (unless in exceptional circumstances, such as a requirement for new qualifications because of the current economic climate).
- Due account will be taken of the availability and extent of support available to the individual student from other sources such as Student Loans or social security benefits. CAFRE will also

consider whether the claimed deficit between income and expenditure constitutes real need and cannot be reduced to a manageable level by the student.

- If CAFRE suspects that fraudulent or misleading information has been provided by the student, payment will be suspended, pending the outcome of an investigation. If abuse of the Hardship Fund is confirmed, the student's entitlement to claim from the fund will be withdrawn permanently and CAFRE will seek to recover any monies already paid in accordance with the DARD Financial Accounting & Procedures Manual.

### **ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE**

- Fees – The Hardship Fund will not be used for the purpose of meeting the cost of tuition fees, as assistance is already available through tuition fee loans for HE students. FE students attending CAFRE are not charged tuition fees.

Additional living costs associated with learning:

- Verification of costs will be obtained by CAFRE. In most instances CAFRE will be aware of the cost of accommodation and food as the majority of students reside within the campuses of Greenmount, Loughry or Enniskillen, or in rented accommodation close to the campuses

### **APPLICATION PROCESS/TIMETABLE**

The Hardship Fund is open to all students and information will be made available from the start of the academic year on the criteria and approximate timings of assessment and decisions on Hardship applications. Where necessary and a personal interview with the student may be arranged.

The first payment will not normally be made until January, and will be conditional on confirmation that the student remains on their programme of study.

### **APPEALS PROCESS**

Students will have the right of appeal, details of which are included in Section 2.3 of this booklet.

[Top](#)



## **7. Student Support Policy**

### **Policy**

The College will follow best practice in relation to the identification and support of your needs for all programmes. It will ensure that you are clear about what you can expect from the College and the information you need to provide to the College. The College will identify and engage the services of organisations and individuals to provide specialist support which it cannot provide itself.

All applicants and enrolled students will have the opportunity to disclose any disability, medical, learning or personal problems/needs and discuss with the Student Support Officer the impact of these on their learning and social inclusion while at College.

If you fail to declare a disability, learning, medical, or personal need/problem (and the College would not be reasonably expected to know) then the College cannot be expected to make adjustments to meet your particular need.

### **Confidentiality**

The College will advise you of the extent to which a disability, learning, medical, or personal need/problem can be kept private and an explanation it cannot be kept private. The College will maintain appropriate confidentiality with respect to your age-related legal rights.

### **Disclosure Opportunities**

As a prospective student you will be given the opportunity to disclose any disability, learning, medical or personal needs/problems when applying for a place on a programme, at interview and at induction. In addition you will be provided details of how disclosures can be made during the academic year.

If you are under 18 years old, disclosure may be carried out in conjunction with a parent/guardian while ensuring that appropriate confidentiality is maintained with respect to your age-related legal rights.

### **Identification by staff of student support needs**

Where staff identify or suspect that you have an undeclared support need, you will be given the opportunity to discuss, in confidence, the perceived need and agree appropriate action(s).

### **Student Support Mechanism**

If you have a learning and/or personal need you will be supported appropriately where reasonably practicable. However you will be expected to provide independent professional evidence assessment of any condition you have declared to validate your claim and clarify the support required.

An action plan will be produced which will detail the individual support to be provided and review outcomes. Programme Managers will be responsible for the implementation of your support plan.

## **Health and Safety**

The Health and Safety of individuals will remain paramount when considering applications from people with disabilities and learning needs. Agreement will be reached between you as a prospective student and the Student Support Officer in conjunction with the Programme Manager regarding any restrictions which may be placed on your access to the full programme.

The College reserves the right to ask you to withdraw from the course if you fail to disclose a disability, learning, medical, or personal need/problem which presents an unreasonable Health and Safety risk for the College, yourself, or any other person who could be affected by this risk.

## **Review of student support**

Records of the actions taken to support you shall be retained for three years after you have completed your learning programme, after which time they shall be disposed of.

## **Dealing with students as they progress to higher level courses**

In order to prepare students for Higher Education or future employment, CAFRE will promote the use of assistive technologies to reduce the reliance of students on one-to-one support.

## **Appeals**

If you have special needs and you feel that you have been discriminated against, or that your learning or personal needs have not been addressed, you can appeal through the College Appeals procedure.

[Top](#)

## **8. Applications for courses from students who have disabilities, medical conditions or learning needs**

### **Before interview**

Where you have disclosed conditions that may impact on your ability to successfully complete a programme of study, the Programme Manager will consult with the Student Support Officer and if necessary invite you to attend an interview.

### **At interview**

The Programme Manager will assess the impact of any learning need or disability on your ability to complete the course to which you have applied. Where there is insufficient information for the Programme Manager to make a decision, you may be asked for additional information either from a doctor, Educational Psychologist or other specialist. You will receive a decision in writing within 5 working days.

If you are refused a place, or an assessment is made on your ability to achieve with which you disagree, you can apply through the College's appeals procedure.

### **Dealing with Health and Safety and assessment concerns**

The Programme Manager will discuss any areas of concern with the Campus Health and Safety representative, Student Support Officer and/or Adviser of Studies (QUB/UU) before taking appropriate actions. These may include:

- Completing a Special Needs Risk Assessment for those activities within the programme where your participation would give rise to Health and Safety concerns. Copies of signed Risk Assessments will be placed in your file;
- Identifying alternative units/modules which could be studied which would not impact on your achievement;
- Identifying alternative methods of assessment which would not impact upon your condition and would not hinder your achievement;
- Consulting with the Adviser of Studies (QUB/UU) or External Verifier/Accrediting Organisation on the feasibility of these approaches.

[Top](#)

## 9. CAFRE Academic Calendar 2018/19

The College academic calendar is shown below. Please note that the Veterinary Nursing Programme does not follow this calendar. Full details for each course will also be provided within your specific course handbook.

Week No	2018/2019	FE Agriculture, Horticulture and Equine	Greenmount HE	Loughry and Enniskillen HE	BSc Ag Tech	Postgrad QUB FT	Postgrad QUB PT	
	20-Aug-18							
0	27-Aug-18							
1	03-Sep-18	Registration/Induction						
2	10-Sep-18	1	Induction	Induction	Induction			
3	17-Sep-18	2	1	1	QUB Welcome	Induction	Induction	
4	24-Sep-18	3	2	2	1	1	1	
5	01-Oct-18	4	3	3	2	2	2	
6	08-Oct-18	5	4	4	3	3	3	
7	15-Oct-18	6	5	5	4	4	4	
8	22-Oct-18	7	6	6	5	5	5	
9	29-Oct-18	Study week/block release			6	6	6	
10	05-Nov-18	8	8	8	7	7	7	
11	12-Nov-18	9	9	9	8	8	8	
12	19-Nov-18	10	10	10	9	9	9	
13	26-Nov-18	11	11	11	10	10	10	
14	03-Dec-18	12	12	12	11	11	11	
15	10-Dec-18	13	13	13	12	12	12	
16	17-Dec-18	Christmas Break	Christmas Break		Christmas Break	Christmas Break	Christmas Break	
17	24-Dec-18							
18	31-Dec-18	Study Wk/14	14 (Study)	14 (Study)				
19	07-Jan-19	15	15 (Exam)	15 (Exam)	Study week / 13	1	13	
20	14-Jan-19	16	End Semester Break	End Semester Break	14	2	14	
21	21-Jan-19	17	1	1	15	3	15	
22	28-Jan-19	18	2	2	16	4	16	
23	04-Feb-19	19	3	3	17	5	17	
24	11-Feb-19	Study week/block release	Study week (4)	Study week (4)	18	6	18	
25	18-Feb-19	20	5	5	19	7	19	
26	25-Feb-19	21	6	6	20	8	20	
27	04-Mar-19	22	7	7	21	WBL	21	
28	11-Mar-19	23	8	8	22	WBL	22	
29	18-Mar-19	24	9	9	23	WBL	23	
30	25-Mar-19	25	10	10	24	9	24	

Week No	2018/2019	FE Agriculture, Horticulture and Equine	Greenmount HE	Loughry and Enniskillen HE	BSc Ag Tech	Postgrad QUB FT	Postgrad QUB PT	
31	01-Apr-19	26	11	11	25	10	25	
32	08-Apr-19	27	12	12	Easter	11	26	
33	15-Apr-19	Easter	Easter	Easter	Easter	Easter	Easter	
34	22-Apr-19	Easter	Easter	Easter	Easter	Easter	Easter	
35	29-Apr-19	28	13	13	26 Assessment	12	27	
36	06-May-19	29	14 (study)	14 (study)	27 Assessment	13	28	
37	13-May-19	30	15 (exam)	15 (exam)	28 Assessment	14	29	
38	20-May-19					15	30	
39	27-May-19							
40	03-Jun-19	Exam Board / Course results meetings					Exam Board	Exam Board
41	10-Jun-19	Course Review meetings and collation of course outcomes						
42	17-Jun-19	Awards days						
43	24-Jun-19							
49	05-Aug-19	Supplementary Exams			Supplementary Exam date to be set by QUB			
50	12-Aug-19	Supplementary Exams						
51	19-Aug-19							
52	26-Aug-19	Programme Reviews						

[Top](#)

**SECTION 3:**

**COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS  
PROCEDURES**

## 1. Customer Complaints Procedure

CAFRE is committed to providing its customers with a high standard of service. We welcome your comments on the quality of service you received and your suggestions on how we can improve our service.

A customer service complaint is any communication to us, which expresses dissatisfaction with the quality of our service.

### **How do I make a complaint if I am unhappy with the quality of service I have received?**

To make a complaint about the quality of service provided by CAFRE, follow the procedure as outlined in the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) website on 'How do I make a complaint':

<https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/how-do-i-make-complaint-if-i-am-unhappy-quality-service-i-received>

[Top](#)

## **2. Appeals against a Refusal of a Place on a CAFRE Programme**

Letters confirming the outcome of an interview for a place on a CAFRE programme will be issued by the Head of Campus Administration and where an applicant is refused a place on a programme, the letter of refusal will detail:

- The reason/reasons why the application was refused;
- The name of the person to whom appeals should be addressed (Head of Branch) and the deadline by which appeals should be submitted.

Appeals can be made by email, letter or by telephone but must be submitted within five working days of the issue of the letter of refusal.

A designated Head of Branch will consider the grounds for the appeal against the interview record and the entry criteria agreed with the Programme Manager and you will be notified within five working days of the outcome of the appeal.

No further right of appeal will be allowed.

[Top](#)



### **3. Academic Appeals Procedure**

The College aims to provide a clear, comprehensive system which will enable academic appeals to be raised and have them investigated.

Students undertaking a programme of study at CAFRE cannot make an appeal on an academic judgement. An academic appeal will only be investigated if it is related to a perceived failure of a 'process'. Before making an 'academic' appeal you should refer to CAFRE's malpractice and maladministration policy.

The channel for academic appeals shall be:

- Internal Verifier/Moderator
- External Verifier/Examiner
- Awarding Body

Although a student is always free to raise an issue informally with the relevant tutor all formal appeals must be made through Campus Administration who will log the appeal, and direct the appellant towards the appropriate channel.

#### **Lodging an appeal**

The formal academic appeals procedure will only be invoked when an appeal is lodged in writing. Unless there are exceptional circumstances, formal appeals must be made within 10 working days of the event/decision leading to the appeal. Where an investigation of a formal appeal involves an external organisation and there is an associated charge levied then these charges will be invoiced to the student making the appeal unless the appeal is upheld.

#### **Review of academic appeals**

Where an appeal is successful or an appeal upheld, and on the recommendation of management, is deemed to benefit a cohort of learners, the outcome of the appeal will be communicated to those learners and adjustments made if appropriate.

[Top](#)

## 4. Malpractice and Maladministration Procedure

### Introduction

This procedure sets out the steps the College and learners or other personnel must follow when reporting suspected or actual cases of malpractice/maladministration and the responsibilities in dealing with such cases. It also sets out the procedures to follow when reviewing the cases.

### Definition of malpractice

Malpractice is essentially any activity or practice which deliberately contravenes regulations and compromises the integrity of the internal or external assessment process and/or the validity of certificates.

It covers any deliberate actions, neglect, default or other practice that compromises, or could compromise:

- The assessment process;
- The integrity of a regulated qualification;
- The validity of a result or certificate;
- The reputation and credibility of CAFRE; or,
- The qualification or the wider qualifications community.

### *Examples of malpractice:*

- Collusion or permitting collusion in exams/assessments.
- Learners still working towards qualification after certification claims have been made.
- Plagiarism by learners/staff.
- Copying from other learners (including using ICT to do so).

### Definition of maladministration

Maladministration is essentially any activity or practice which results in non-compliance with administrative regulations and requirements and includes the application of persistent mistakes or poor administration.

### *Examples of maladministration:*

- Failure to maintain appropriate auditable records, e.g. certification claims and/or forgery of evidence.
- Failure to carry out internal assessment, internal moderation or internal verification in accordance with requirements.

## **Process for making an allegation of maladministration**

Anyone who identifies or is made aware of suspected or actual cases of malpractice or maladministration at any time must immediately notify in writing/email, enclosing appropriate supporting evidence, the Head of College Services Branch who will inform the Director of CAFRE as to the nature of the case.

The Head of College Services Branch will then conduct an initial investigation prior to ensuring that staff involved in the initial investigation are competent and have no personal interest in the outcome of the investigation.

In all cases of reported suspected maladministration, we will protect the identity of the 'informant' in accordance with the duty of confidentiality and/or any other legal duty.

## **Confidentiality and whistle blowing**

Sometimes a person making an allegation of maladministration may wish to remain anonymous and if you are concerned about possible adverse consequences you may request that your identity is not revealed. Further details can be found within the whistle blowing procedure.

Whilst issues which are reported anonymously will be investigated, the confirmation of the allegation by means of a separate investigation will normally take place before taking up the matter with those against whom the allegation is made.

## **Investigating timelines and summary process**

The aim is to complete the investigation within 10 working days of receipt of the allegation.

## **Investigation report**

After an investigation, a draft report will be prepared and made available to the parties concerned and to the regulatory authorities and other external agencies as required.

## **Investigation outcomes**

If the investigation confirms that maladministration has taken place, action will be taken in order to:

- Minimise the risk to the integrity of certification;
- Ensure there has been no gain or loss from compromising of standards.

In cases where certificates are deemed to be invalid, the awarding organisation concerned and the regulatory authorities will be informed. Affected learners will be communicated with, as to the action being taken. Where original certificates are deemed to be invalid learners will be asked to return these to the College.

If any of the relevant party (ies) wish to appeal against the decision to impose sanctions, they should refer to the Customer Complaints Procedure.

[Top](#)

## 5. Whistle Blowing Procedure

CAFRE has procedures in place for:

- Dealing with your academic issues through an academic appeals procedure
- Dealing with personal complaints through the complaints procedure
- Expressing your views on the course, campus etc. through staff student consultative committees, questionnaires, and directly to the teaching and residential support team.

If however you are concerned that something is happening which is wrong you can raise it either in person, or anonymously without fear of harassment or victimisation by contacting the Head of Administration, CAFRE, who will provide you with the appropriate forms to complete.

[Top](#)

# **SECTION 4:**

# **STUDENT PROCEDURES**

## 1. College Regulations

- You must at all times, both on and off CAFRE premises, conduct yourself in a manner which will maintain the good name of the College.
- You must carry your ID card with you at all times. If you lose your ID card a replacement (charged at £10), can be obtained by contacting the relevant Campus Administration Office.
- Everyone must respect the rights of others, their beliefs and their values. Students must not act or behave in any manner which is or may be perceived to be discriminatory to others on the basis of religion, gender, political opinion, marital status, dependency, age, disability, ethnic origin or sexual orientation.
- Assault of any form, bullying or harassment will be regarded as a serious breach of College Regulations.
- Health, safety and security instructions must be followed.
- You must not interfere with any fire prevention or control equipment including door restrictors, fire bells, fire extinguishers or fire alarms. Interference with fire equipment is a CRIMINAL offence and will be regarded as a serious breach of College Regulations. (See Fire Emergency Procedures).
- You must not bring firearms, ammunition and knives (other than small pocket/pruning knives approved by an instructor and only carried during practical activities) or anything else which may be used as a weapon onto the Campus estate. Fireworks are prohibited from the Campus.
- Gambling in any form is banned.
- Students are responsible for any damage they cause to Campus property and such damage must be reported to the Accommodation Manager/Programme Manager. If you damage Campus property deliberately you will be charged the cost of repairing such damage.
- You must report all instances of accidents, injury or illness without delay to the Accommodation Manager/Programme Manager or any other member of staff.
- You must be clean and appropriately dressed when attending meals and lectures. Protective clothing, working clothes and boots must not be kept in bedrooms or worn in the restaurants/cafes. You should keep your working clothes in the locker rooms and your work boots in the designated changing areas provided. You are not permitted to enter the campus restaurants in your sock soles.
- All items purchased in the Campuses' dining rooms or cafes can be paid for via two methods. Residential students are issued with a cater card and non-residential students pay cash. To avoid being refused service residential students who have been issued a cater card should ensure that they present the card at the till every time they purchase food/drink. Residential students should note that Cater Cards cannot be given to other students to use as you are the holder and only you are entitled to use it.

- The College will take no responsibility for any loss or damage to student property. It is your responsibility to ensure that your property is insured against damage or loss. It is your responsibility to remove all your possessions from the College at the end of the academic year.
- You are not allowed to keep dogs or other animals/pets on the College estate except in special circumstances (e.g. guide dogs) and with the prior permission of the Head of Branch.
- You are responsible for any visitors you bring onto the College grounds. Visitors must be signed in and out and introduced at the Accommodation Office to the staff on duty. Visitors may not stay overnight except with the prior permission of the Accommodation Manager. All visitors must be off the College premises by 11.00pm.
- The supply, possession and use of drugs on College property, other than those prescribed by a doctor for personal use, is a CRIMINAL OFFENCE. The College will treat such breaches very seriously and will inform the PSNI in all instances.
- There is a NO smoking policy which prohibits smoking in College buildings or grounds. Smoking is only permitted in the designated smoking areas, mainly in the main car parks.
- You must not enter any locked, restricted or 'out of bounds' areas. This includes roofs, stores and maintenance plant rooms. For security, bio-security and health and safety reasons students are not allowed access to College work areas, including farm and stable yards, horticultural centres, or nature trail areas between the hours of 18.00 and 08.00 without permission. If you need access to these areas during this time you must obtain permission from a member of teaching staff or be on official rostered duty.
- You must show respect for all staff. Improper behaviour including disrespectful language will not be tolerated and dealt with in line with the student disciplinary policy.
- You are expected to respect the Campus grounds and walk on the surfaced paths provided. Litter should be deposited only in bins..
- Theft of any kind will be considered a serious breach of these regulations and the PSNI will be informed of all instances.
- You must not enter staff offices unless under staff supervision. If you wish to speak to a member of staff you should go to the Campus reception or arrange an appointment in class with the member of staff concerned.
- Residential Students - There are additional rules for residential students in this Student Handbook.
- You must have the permission of the Accommodation Manager before you organise any function which could be considered to be associated with the College either within, or outside the College grounds.
- You are responsible for ensuring that the College has an up-to-date address, e-mail address and contact telephone number where you can be contacted throughout your entire course (including during holidays and work placement). Changes of address and relevant contact

details must be notified to the relevant Administration office using a change of circumstances form.

- Unless mobile technology is being used as part of learning sessions, mobile phones and other devices must be switched off during lectures, practicals or skills activities. You are not under any circumstances permitted to use your phone in class to record images of staff or other students without the permission of the member of staff in charge of the class.

Staff have the authority to require you to put your phone away or failing that to require you to leave the classroom until such time as you are prepared to comply with this request. If you are waiting for an urgent call you should inform the member of staff before class commences.

- GREENKEEPING GOLF ACADEMY (Greenmount Campus only)

The Greenkeeping Golf Academy building, driving range and golf facilities beyond the sports pitches are strictly out of bounds to students from 5.00pm to 9.00am.

Anyone found to be in possession of golf balls from the driving range will be deemed to be in possession of stolen property and will be dealt with appropriately under the student disciplinary policy.

Students wishing to use the golf facilities must contact the Greenmount Resource Centre Reception Office for permission.

### Practicals and Lectures

- These are all scheduled activities and attendance is compulsory.
- Protective clothing is essential during practical – if you are not properly equipped you may not be permitted to take part.
- The College’s bio-security policy requires that you must not wear Agriculture/Equine personal protective clothing at home or on other farms/yards.
- There are additional risks associated with working in the land-based sector. All practical skills classes start with a risk assessment to make students aware of the hazards associated with the particular activities they will be undertaking. Anyone who is late and misses this risk assessment will not be permitted to participate in the practical activity.

### Classroom Disciplinary Procedures

- Minor or first violations of the College regulations will normally be dealt with in the first instance by Tutors who will issue a verbal reprimand.
- Repeated or major violations will result in the Tutor submitting a ‘misconduct report form’ describing the incident to the Year Manager. This form will be written in your presence and signed by your Tutor. A copy will be placed on your file.
- Three reported violations will result in you being formally interviewed by the Year Manager along with the staff member who submitted a misconduct report form. This will constitute a verbal warning and will be recorded.



- If further violations occur, you will be interviewed by a Disciplinary Committee consisting of the Programme Manager and Year Manager. At this stage parents may also be consulted or informed. A record of the interview will be written up and will constitute a written warning.
- If you commit further violations you will be referred to a Senior Disciplinary Committee with a recommendation from the Programme Team. This committee will consist of the Head of Branch, Programme Manager and Year Manager. You will be interviewed and disciplinary action taken which may result in permanent suspension. A record of the interview and subsequent decision will be produced. This will normally incorporate a final written warning.

**NB:** Behaviour will be looked at holistically when considering sanctions, with violations in student accommodation being taken into account when considering classroom behavioural issues.

- Students are entitled to the right of appeal in respect of any disciplinary decision.
- Withdrawing from your Course

If you decide to leave your course before completion for any reason you should speak to your Tutor. All keys, access card and library books should be returned on departure and any refunds due will be forwarded in due course. You must hand in a letter of resignation if you leave your course giving your reasons for leaving. Higher Education students in receipt of funding must also complete a Change of Circumstances form, which is available from your Programme Manager.

[Top](#)

## 2. Attendance Policy

When you sign your student contract at the beginning of your programme, you are undertaking to attend all scheduled activities including lectures, practicals, tutorials and visits associated with your programme.

Full attendance is required to ensure that you gain full benefit from the programme and achieve your qualification. Poor attendance is strongly linked to poor academic success and attendance is compulsory for all scheduled activities.

1. Electronic attendance registers will be kept for all scheduled activities.
2. Attendance will be reviewed on a weekly basis by Year Managers or more frequently if deemed necessary.
3. You should contact your Year Manager within one day of any unauthorised absence to explain the reason for your absence and give an expected date of return. If you do not contact the College (i.e. your Programme Manager) you will be contacted by telephone or by letter asking you to attend a meeting on your return to college. Where students are under 18, contact may be made with parents/guardians.
4. If you accumulate absences of more than three days or the equivalent of three days, or three consecutive classes of the same unit/module you will be interviewed by your Programme Manager and Year Manager and the reasons for your absence will be considered. A written outcome of this interview will be maintained and filed. It may also be issued to your parents/guardian if you are under 18 years of age. If you cannot provide an acceptable reason for your absences, the written outcome of the interview will constitute a formal warning to you.
5. If you are absent without approval cumulatively for five days or the equivalent of five days in individual classes, you will be interviewed by a Progress Committee chaired by the Programme Manager. They will decide if you should continue on the programme and may impose further conditions/penalties. The Committee will also decide if your funding authority should be informed. This may mean a reduction in any grant or loan you may be receiving
6. If you are absent without approval for more than 10 days you will be interviewed by the Progress Committee Chaired by the Head of Branch. If you cannot provide satisfactory reasons for your absence CAFRE will consider that you have withdrawn from your programme.
7. The following are considered to be reasonable explanations for authorised absence from College:
  - To attend medical, dental or ophthalmic appointments;
  - To attend interviews for employment or further education;
  - To take written exams or assessments related to your general area of study including driving exams but excluding driving lessons;
  - Attendance at a court of law;

- Domestic emergencies including close family bereavements and care duties;
- To attend annual training courses or camps for Auxiliary or Reserve Forces.

In all other circumstances the decision of the Progress Committee will be final.

### **What you must do**

If you are aware that you will be absent from a scheduled class due to a medical appointment or any other reason you should:

- Notify your Year Manager or Tutor in advance, explaining the reason for your absence and the expected date of return;
  - If you are absent for longer than expected, you should contact your Year Manager or Programme Manager;
8. For absences of more than five consecutive working days due to illness, you must provide the Programme Manager with a medical certificate on your return to the College.

The only exception to this policy occurs where the College delivers educational programmes on behalf of another institution. In such cases the attendance policy of that institution may take precedence.

[Top](#)

### 3. Examinations and the Submission of Coursework Regulations

All examinations at the College follow the guidelines of the Joint College for Qualifications and full details can be found on their website at [www.jcq.org.uk/exams.office](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams.office)

Most programmes at CAFRE are assessed through a variety of methods such as: formal examinations, assignment, practicals, on-line tests etc. Details of the assessments for your course will be included in the course specific handbook which will be given to you during induction. Any changes to the assessment structure will be communicated to you as soon as possible, so that relevant adjustments can be made. Each programme will have its own criteria for achievement. If you have a specific need alternative assessment arrangements must be agreed and approved by the Student Support Officer.

All coursework and assessments must be completed at the times stipulated within your course handbook. If for any reason you cannot submit them on time, you must submit an extenuating circumstances form which is available on your VLE or from Administration Office, fully detailing the nature of the reasons for your late submission. A number of mitigating circumstances (see table overleaf) will be taken into account with respect to late submissions/missed assessments.

Applications for extenuating circumstances must be submitted:

- For examinations: as soon as possible after the examination and not later than 5 working days following the examination
- For coursework: before the date the coursework is due to be submitted

Applications must explain the impact of the extenuating circumstances and be supported by documentary evidence where appropriate. The Programme Manager will consider your application for consideration of special circumstances and where an extension to the deadline for submitting coursework has been granted, you will normally be given 10 working days to submit the work from receipt of the approval, without penalty.

Where extenuating circumstances were deemed to have affected your work for an examination or assessment you will be required to undertake an additional appropriate assignment or test without the imposition of a resit financial penalty.

If you wish to appeal the decision of the Programme Manager please refer to the Appeals Section within this booklet.

If you are not performing well academically or are in breach of certain regulations e.g. attendance, as identified by the Course Team or Examiners' Committee you will be asked to appear for interview by the Progress Committee. The Progress Committee is normally chaired by a member of the CAFRE Management Team (e.g. Head of Branch) and will include your Programme Managers. It will also include other staff who may have information on the issues being discussed. The Students' Progress Committee meets approximately once per semester to deal with any issues arising but may be convened at any time as necessary. It has the authority to suspend students or recommend expulsion in addition to other sanctions.

## (EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES)

EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES	NOTES
<p><b>Normally acceptable</b></p> <p>1. Death of a close relative</p>	<p>'Close' means parents and guardians, partner or spouse, children and siblings. It may include grandparents or other relatives if the relationship was close.</p>
<p>2. Serious illness of student</p>	<p>It should be an incapacitating illness or an ongoing illness or medical condition. It also includes breaks and serious sprains to the normal writing hand/arm. Medical certification must be obtained; self-certification is not acceptable.</p>
<p>3. Serious illness of a close relative</p>	<p>See notes above for the definition of 'close'.</p>
<p>4. Financial problems</p>	<p>Stress brought on my financial concerns (supported by a medical note). Note: It is the student's responsibility to maintain a proper balance between work and study.</p>
<p>5. Civil unrest</p>	<p>Terrorist activity; widespread public disorder; bomb attacks; bomb scares; withdrawal of and delays to rail/road public transport services. There must be widely publicised media/news coverage to support such grounds.</p>
<p>6. Serious personal disruption</p>	<p>Divorce; fire; burglary; serious assault; jury service. Corroborating evidence must be produced.</p>
<p><b>Possibly Acceptable</b></p> <p>1. Pregnancy</p>	<p>This depends on the stage of the pregnancy, the imminence of childbirth, and any medical reports suggesting that an extension might be appropriate. It also includes the stages following childbirth. Pregnancy of a wife/partner would be acceptable in certain circumstances.</p>
<p><b>Not normally acceptable</b></p>	
<p>1. Social activities</p>	<p>Hectic social life; parties; visits to/from friends.</p>
<p>2. Temporary self-induced medical conditions</p>	<p>Hangover; drug taking (excluding prescribed medication)</p>
<p>3. Non-serious personal and domestic disruptions which could have been anticipated or planned</p>	<p>Moving house; weddings; holidays; failed transport arrangements.</p>
<p>4. Minor ailments</p>	<p>Coughs; colds; sprains (other than in the writing hand/arm)</p>
<p>5. IT related</p>	<p>Computer crashes, loss of data, formatting issues, access to Wi-Fi, corruption of data storage devices</p>

Top

## **4. Assignment Regulations**

### **Higher Education**

For Higher Education programmes, the Tutor will select a representative sample of the written assignments (normally 10% or four assignments whichever is the greater) and pass these to a colleague with occupational competence to co-mark the assignment. When both have marked the assignments, they will compare marks and agree the standards to be adopted when marking the remaining assignments.

If agreement cannot be reached over differences in marking, the matter will be referred to an Internal Moderator by the member of staff who set the assignment.

Once agreement has been reached, all remaining assignments will be marked using the agreed approach within three weeks of the deadline for submission of the assignment.

### **Further Education**

All marked assignments are internally verified before feedback and marks are returned to you. This process should be completed within three weeks of the submission date.

[Top](#)

## 5. CAFRE Disciplinary Policy

This policy applies to all individuals studying at the College, including those on placement, those undertaking short courses and those attending other training events or College activities.

The CAFRE Disciplinary Policy relates to all matters of misconduct, except those relating to academic misconduct. Where the alleged misconduct relates to academic misconduct, it will be dealt with under the relevant policy.

In pursuance of our Student Charter principles of ensuring that the dignity and rights of all students and staff are protected, and being mindful of our duties towards the safety and wellbeing of all within the College, this policy sets out how the College will address any inappropriate action or behaviour of students, their family members and third parties associated with students.

Records of disciplinary matters will be retained in line with our record disposal schedule, following the conclusion of the student's course.

### Application of the policy

It is a CAFRE requirement that CAFRE students behave in a manner that does not impact on the proper working of the College in its broadest sense. This policy explains what constitutes misconduct, the procedures that will be followed when dealing with misconduct and the sanctions that will be applied.

While the relationship is primarily between the College and the student, at times, other parties such as family or friends may come into the College, and/or interact with students/staff. These parties need to understand that all such interactions must be entirely appropriate, as they have a direct bearing on the student. The student has a responsibility to the College to ensure that no inappropriate behaviour takes place by their family, friends or third parties.

This policy defines misconduct as either 'Serious Acts of Misconduct' or 'Other Acts of Misconduct' depending upon the seriousness of the misconduct, and the procedures for dealing with each are explained.

The College will administer this policy fairly, reasonably and in accordance with the principles of natural justice. The Head of Education Service has overall responsibility for the maintenance of student discipline with implementation largely delegated to Heads of Branches, for the exclusion, suspension or expulsion of students on disciplinary grounds.

Where mental health, illness or disability has impacted upon student behaviour or conduct, the matter may be considered under an alternative appropriate policy such as the Fitness to Study Policy. The College will remain mindful, when implementing this policy, of its obligations under equality law, including its duty to make reasonable adjustments in respect of students with disabilities.

It should also be noted that if any alleged misconduct involves issues that fall under other policies, such as Health and Safety, the College shall consider its response to such matters, in light of the latter, in addition to any disciplinary sanctions that may be applied.

## Definition of Misconduct

Under this policy misconduct is defined as improper interference, in the broadest sense, with the proper functioning or activities of the College or those who work or study at the College or action which otherwise damages, or is calculated to damage CAFRE or its reputation. Acts constituting misconduct are detailed below. This list is neither prescriptive nor exhaustive.

1. Disruption of, or improper interference with, the academic, administrative, sporting, social or other activities of the College, whether on College premises or elsewhere;
2. Obstruction of, or improper interference with, the functions, duties or activities of any student, member of staff or other employee or any authorised visitor to the College;
3. Violent, indecent, disorderly, threatening or offensive behaviour or unacceptable communication<sup>1</sup> (verbal or nonverbal) whilst on College premises or engaged in any College related activity or when communicating with other students staff and members of the College community;
4. Inappropriate<sup>2</sup> use of photographs, the internet and social media;
5. Action likely to cause injury or impair safety on College premises including the irresponsible use of motor vehicles;
6. Discrimination against or harassment or bullying of any student, member of staff or other employee or of the College or any authorised visitor to the College.
7. Damage to, or defacement of College property or the property of staff, students or visitors caused intentionally or recklessly, and misappropriation of such property;
8. Misuse or unauthorised use of College premises or items of property, including computer misuse;
9. Conduct which constitutes a criminal offence where that conduct:
  - a) Took place on College premises or
  - b) Affected or concerned other members of the College community or
  - c) Damages, or may damage, the good name of the College;
10. Behaviour which brings the good name of the College into disrepute;
11. Failure to disclose name and other relevant details to staff in circumstances when it is reasonable to require that such information be given;
12. Failure to comply with the disciplinary process without reasonable excuse or with a previously imposed penalty under the policy.

---

<sup>1</sup> Relates to communication which is abusive, offensive or defamatory, aggressive, threatening or intimidating; unreasonably persistent or demanding and inappropriate use of social media

<sup>2</sup> As defined in section 1.8 of the CAFRE student handbook



## **Serious Acts of Misconduct – Definition**

Any of the above actions may be deemed to be serious acts of misconduct depending on their nature and circumstances. Serious misconduct will automatically result in formal disciplinary proceedings. Serious acts of misconduct are detailed below. This list is neither prescriptive nor exhaustive.

1. Possession of controlled or controlled prescribed drugs, without a valid prescription or psycho-active substances with or without the intention to supply;
2. Violent behaviour towards a fellow student, members of staff, visitor or other member of the College community;
3. Possession of fire arms or other weapons likely to cause injury;
4. Serious or persistent acts of bullying, harassment or intimidation;
5. Serious breaches of College Health and Safety rules and regulations;
6. Deliberate falsification of records / giving false information;
7. Theft, fraud, deceit, deception or dishonesty;
8. Causing deliberate and serious damage to property.

In all other cases of misconduct (not specified above), the Heads of Branches will decide if an offence constitutes a serious act of misconduct.

## **Criminal Investigations**

Students and those making allegations should be aware that any information or allegation or evidence of serious misconduct considered to constitute a criminal offence will be referred to the police. Where a matter is under investigation by the police, the College reserves the right to delay considering the matter under its own disciplinary procedures until the outcome of the police investigation is known. Equally the College is not precluded from progressing its own disciplinary action where police involvement is taking place.

As detailed above, in cases where an alleged offence may pose a risk to staff and/or students, the College reserves the right to temporarily suspend or exclude the student from all or parts of the College estate.

Circumstances of criminal investigations may also dictate that the student(s) who is (are) the subject of a police investigation should be suspended or excluded until the investigation or criminal proceedings, arising from the investigation, if any, have been completed. In these instances the decision to suspend or exclude will rest with the relevant Head of Education Branch. In making such decisions where a student is the alleged victim and the alleged perpetrator of an alleged criminal act is also a student, and the police have not determined that exclusion from the campus is required, the College will make reasonable endeavours to balance the interests of all parties involved when making decisions around suspension and/or access to the campus. It will also use its best endeavours to offer support to both parties should they wish to access such support.

Whilst criminal investigations are underway, the student is obliged to keep the College informed of any progress made or change in their position/status. Where a student is convicted of a criminal offence, the College will take the decision of the Court as conclusive evidence that the offence occurred. Where a student is acquitted of a criminal offence in Court or where proceedings are not pursued to a criminal trial, the College reserves the right to pursue matters of concern to the College in accordance with this disciplinary policy.

Where criminal proceedings result in a student being taken into custody or being absent from study for a period of more than 12 months, the student may be deemed to have withdrawn from the College. In such circumstances the decision to withdraw the student will rest with the relevant Head of Education Branch.

### **Procedures for dealing with misconduct**

All acts of misconduct regarding a student should be reported to the Year Manager or Student Services Manager. The member of staff receiving a report of misconduct or witnessing such behaviour should notify the appropriate person, preferably in writing.

In all cases, the Programme Manager or Student Services Manager should be informed and will initiate an investigation. The Programme Manager or Student Services Manager will either deal with the misconduct directly or refer it to a Senior Student Disciplinary Committee.

### **Senior Student Disciplinary Committee**

Where the charge is Serious Misconduct, a Senior Student Disciplinary Committee will be convened. The Senior Student Disciplinary Committee is a formal committee normally comprising the relevant Head of Branch, Programme Manager and Student Services Manager. A note taker will also be present to formally record minutes of the meeting. The student will be formally invited to the Senior Student Disciplinary Committee. Students should note that if they do not attend a Senior Student Disciplinary Committee meeting without reasonable excuse, the Chair may decide to proceed in the absence of the student.

Students 18 years of age and over can be accompanied by either a member of the student community or their parent/guardian if the student so requests. The name of the person accompanying the student must be notified in advance of the Senior Student Disciplinary Committee. In the case of under 18 year old students, parents/guardians will automatically be invited.

Refer to Flow Charts in Appendices 1 and 2.

## Sanctions for Misconduct

There are a range of penalties which can be imposed depending on the seriousness of the misconduct. Authorised members of staff and the Senior Student Disciplinary Committee may impose penalties for non-serious acts of misconduct apart from suspension or expulsion, which may only be imposed by the Head of Branch. The list below is neither prescriptive nor exhaustive.

A student found guilty of misconduct or serious misconduct may receive:

- Formal warning (no penalty is imposed but a record of the offence is kept and could be referred to in subsequent disciplinary action)
- Formal warning with conditions (e.g. no penalty is imposed providing stipulated conditions are met regarding behaviour over a specified period)
- Financial penalties. Full payments towards damages caused. Fines for specific offences e.g. intentional setting off fire alarms.
- Suspension. This involves total or partial prohibition for a specified length of time from attendance at, or access to the College and of any participation in College or Student Union sponsored activities. It may be subject to provisions such as the entitlement to attend examinations.
- Expulsion means that the student's registration with the College is cancelled and that the student is withdrawn from their course.

In cases of serious misconduct where there may be a risk to staff and/or students and/or property, or to the College's reputation, or the College's ability to manage students, the College reserves the right to immediately suspend or exclude the student(s) from some or all or parts of the College facilities pending the outcome of investigations.

Where an urgent decision to suspend or exclude is made, the student will be given the opportunity to make representations as soon as is reasonably practicable. The decision to suspend or exclude may be communicated verbally in the first instance but will be confirmed in writing to the student as soon as practical and ideally within 5 working days. The written confirmation will include details of the reasons for the decision and on the right to appeal.

## Appeals

The grounds of appeal against any decision or penalty imposed under this policy are as follows:

- a) Procedural irregularity
- b) New evidence becoming available which was unavailable at the time that the decision or penalty was being considered
- c) Disproportionality of penalty applied.

Where there are no valid grounds for appeal the student will be notified of this fact within 10 working days of the receipt of notification of his/her appeal. Appeal decisions may confirm, rescind, amend, alter or change the disciplinary decision under consideration.

There is one right of appeal, to an independent Head of Branch, and Head of Education Service against a sanction imposed by the Senior Student Discipline Committee. An appeal must be received within 5 working days of the written notification of the decision to the student. Such appeals will only be considered on paper and will not normally require a re-hearing of the issues.

Appeal decisions and reasons for the same will be notified in writing to the student within 10 working days.

There is also one right of appeal against the sanction applied or decision made by the Head of Branch under the provisions for the conduct of formal disciplinary proceedings and the Senior Student Disciplinary Committee. Appeals must be received within 5 working days of the date of the written notification of the decision to the student. Appeals will be considered on paper and will not normally require a re-hearing of the issues. Appeal decisions and reasons for the same will be notified in writing to the student within 10 working days.

Once the College's appeals procedure has been exhausted there is no further right of appeal.

### **Reporting and Monitoring**

Written warnings, confirmation of sanctions and records relating to acts of misconduct will be retained on file for the period of the student's course and will be shared with the student's immediate tutors and programme manager and will be retained in line with our record disposal schedule, following the conclusion of the student's course.

### **Unacceptable behaviour communicating with the College and its staff**

The College expects students, family members, friends and third party associates to use established procedures and normal channels of communication when contacting staff members.

The College will not tolerate verbal or written communication that is considered to be unacceptable and will take action to protect its staff from such behaviour or communication, irrespective of the source. Communication is deemed unacceptable if it is:

1. Abusive, offensive, defamatory;
2. Aggressive, threatening, coercive, intimidating;
3. Unreasonably persistent, demanding;
4. Involves inappropriate use of social media and photographs (please refer to section 1.8 of the CAFRE student handbook).

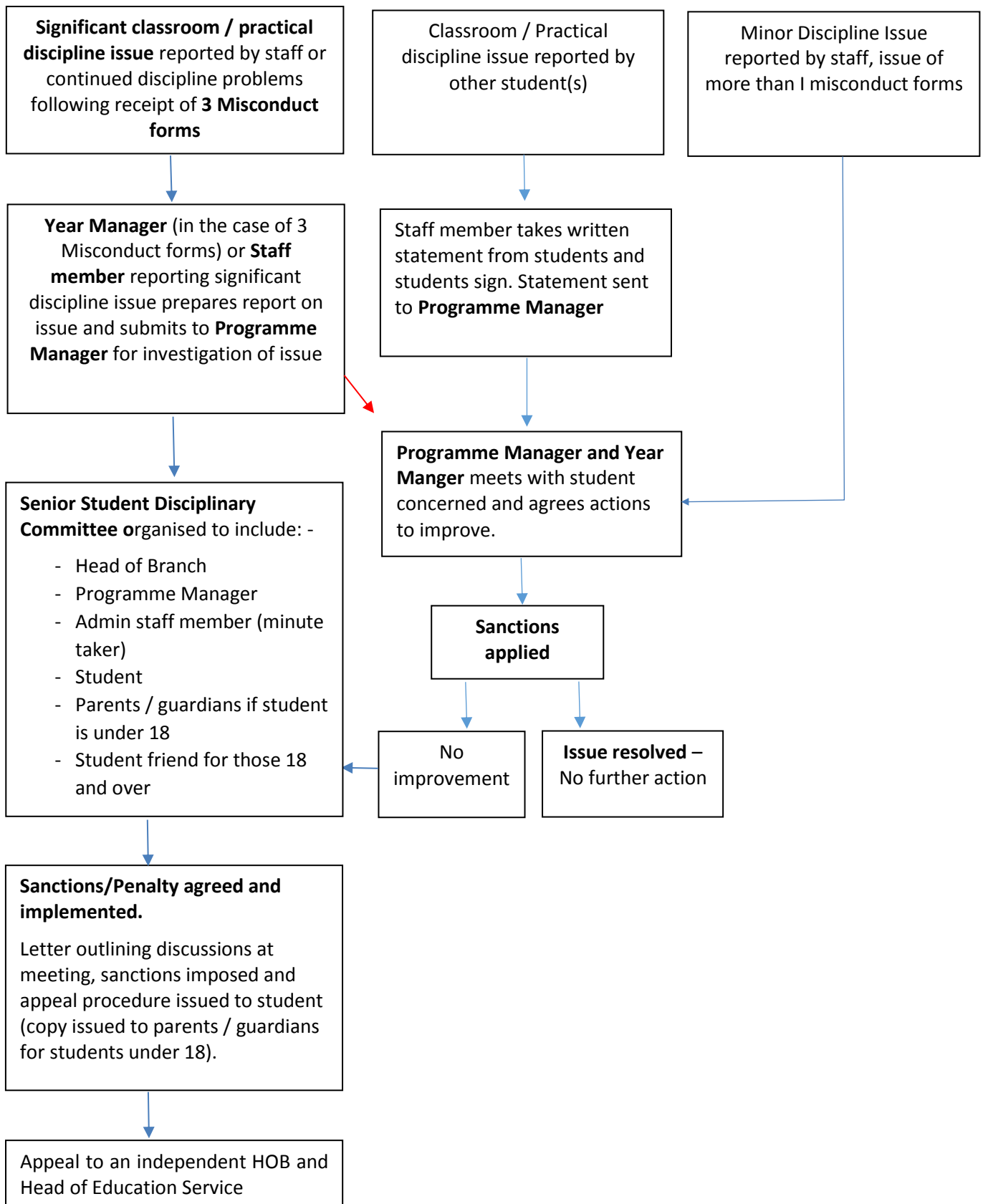
If communication is deemed to be unacceptable by anyone who attends the College or interacts with staff at the College, we will ask the individual to modify their behaviour.

If the unacceptable behaviour/communication continues, we will take action to prevent the communication reaching the staff member(s) and refuse to engage in any further communication.

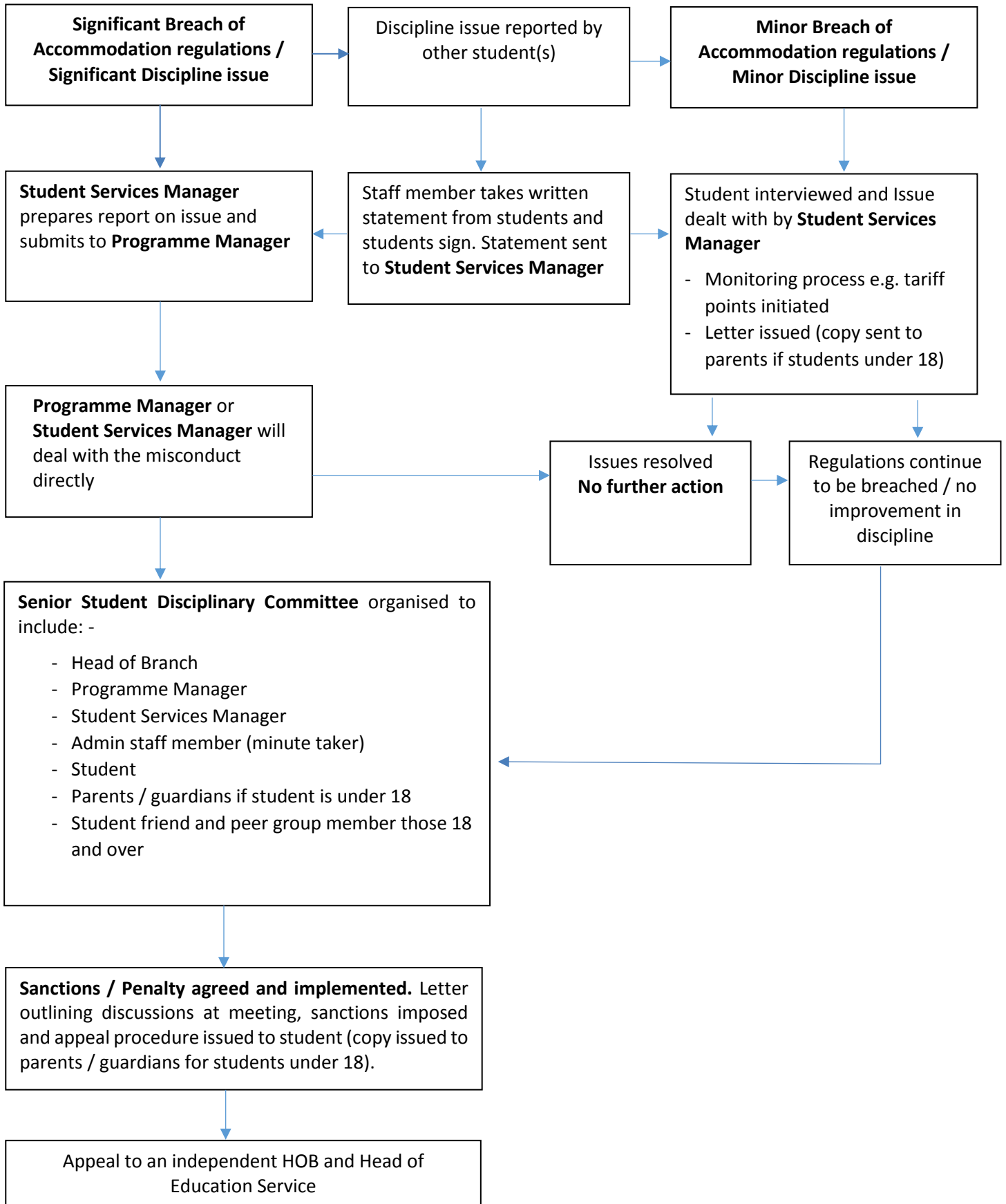
If the communication or behaviour is deemed to be threatening or defamatory, the College may refer the matter to the appropriate authorities e.g. PSNI and/or take legal action.

Students should take notice that the actions and behaviour of their family, friends and third party associates on College grounds or facilities, or their interactions with the College could have an impact on them and their right to remain at the College.

## Appendix 1. Classroom / Practical discipline issue



## Appendix 2. Accommodation discipline issue



Top

## 6. Fitness to Study Policy

1. CAFRE is committed to supporting and responding to student needs and to seeking to ensure a positive student experience which provides an enabling environment where students can engage with their studies and the wider CAFRE community.
2. The College may respond to and manage situations where a student's fitness to study is a concern e.g. where:
  - a. a student poses a risk to his/her own health, safety and/or wellbeing and/or that of others;
  - b. the student's behaviour is or is at risk of negatively affecting the teaching, learning and/or experience of other students;
  - c. the student's behaviour is or is at risk of negatively affecting the day-to-day activities of the College and/or a placement provider.

Where it is determined that a student is unfit to study, his/her participation on his/her programme of study may be suspended or terminated. This applies to all CAFRE provision, regardless of the mode or place of study.

3. In responding to and managing situations where a student's fitness to study is a concern, CAFRE will remain mindful of its duty of care and of its obligations under the Equality Act 2010 including its duty to make reasonable adjustments.
4. In implementing this policy CAFRE will ensure that it offers and encourages students to seek appropriate support from the outset, for example by referring students to sources of support such as their GP, Counselling Service or health care professional. In addition, any student being taken through this Procedure will be entitled to be accompanied and/or represented at any stage by a staff member, friend, relative, health care professional or disability support worker.

Where the student is under the age of 18, or is a vulnerable adult, their parent/guardian will be notified of any proposed concerns, and may accompany the student when interviewed.

[Top](#)

## 7. Plagiarism and Misrepresentation

This covers both plagiarism and misrepresentation. Plagiarism is copying the work or ideas of others, and passing them off as your own. Plagiarism can occur as a result of:

- Downloading and using material, including pictures straight from the Internet,
- Copying paragraphs or sentences from articles or books or
- Copying the work of colleagues, with or without their knowledge.

Deliberate plagiarism is cheating and will be dealt with as such.

Accidental plagiarism can be avoided by including references to the original source of the material.

Penalties for plagiarism are as follows:

Type of Plagiarism	Penalty
<b>First Offence (minor)</b>	You will be interviewed by the Tutor responsible for the unit/module. You will be given an informal warning. The plagiarised work will not be marked and your marks reduced accordingly.
<b>First Offence (major)</b>	You will be interviewed by the Tutor responsible for the unit/module. You will be given an informal warning and your mark for the assignment containing plagiarism will be reduced to zero.
<b>Second Offence</b>	You will be interviewed by your Programme Manager and given a formal written warning which will be placed on your file. You will be given a mark of zero for the plagiarised assignment.
<b>Third Offence</b>	You will be interviewed by the Student Progress Committee and either <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Suspended for 1 semester or 1 year</li><li>• Asked to leave the college</li></ul> You will be given a mark of zero for the unit/module and this will be recorded on your student file.

If plagiarism is detected after graduation, the College reserves the right to revoke any qualifications awarded. Students enrolled on a QUB programme should in addition refer to the University's rules and regulations found on the website [www.qub.ac.uk](http://www.qub.ac.uk)

Misrepresentation is producing a false or forged document or impersonating someone else. This is a serious offence and anybody found to have carried out this will be reported to the relevant authorities including the Police Service of Northern Ireland.

[Top](#)



## 8. Student Representation at the College

There are a number of opportunities for you to be represented on College committees to provide feedback on the programme you are studying. In addition you will also have the opportunity to discuss and evaluate your experience either directly with a Course Tutor or anonymously using programme related surveys.

- **Programme and Module Evaluations**

Depending upon the structure of the programme you are undertaking you will be asked to complete module and programme evaluations anonymously. This evaluation is a web-based survey launched in February each year, and the results from it are used in the preparation of key statistics which are published on the CAFRE website.

You will also be asked to complete module evaluations for QUB/UU courses taught at the College.

- **Tutor Meetings**

You will have the opportunity to discuss your progress and academic and non-academic issues with your Tutor/Year Manager at least once per semester. These discussions are in total confidence and offer you the opportunity to highlight any concerns you have with your course.

- **Staff Student Representative Committee (SSRC)**

At least two class representatives will be elected to represent your class on the SSRC which provides you with the opportunity to raise concerns related to your academic work.

BAFRE and Agricultural Technology students also have representatives who can attend the QUB SSRC to discuss similar matters.

- **Student Representative Council (SRC)**

Your class group will have the opportunity to elect a representative to sit on the SRC which advises on and supports non-academic and pastoral activities at each campus.

- **Library Users Group (LUG)**

Once per semester a student from your class is invited to attend the LUG which provides feedback on the library provision and how it relates to your studies.

- **Education Management Team (EMT)**

If you are in your final year, one member of your class will be invited to attend the EMT meetings once per semester or year. This meeting is attended by the Heads of Education Branches across the College and addresses educational policies which impinge upon your studies.

- **College Management Team and College Advisory Group**

Students also have an opportunity to have a representative who will attend once per year on both of these senior management and advisory groups whose remit is to determine the strategic direction of the College's education and development policies.

[Top](#)

## 9. Fire Emergency Procedures

Briefing instructions explaining the action to be taken in the event of a fire are located throughout the campuses. In residential accommodation instructions are on the back of each bedroom door. It is essential that you read these instructions when you first take up residence.

The key aspects of the fire instructions are as follows:

1. Sound the alarm from the nearest break glass alarm if you discover a fire.
2. A ringing fire alarm means that you must evacuate the building immediately using the nearest safest exit.
3. The fire alarm is a continuous two-tone siren and you should familiarise yourself with this alarm.
4. Failure to evacuate the building when the alarm has sounded is a disciplinary matter.

### POINTS TO REMEMBER

1. On finding anything suspicious you must notify a member of staff immediately.
2. On hearing the Campus Fire Alarm, you must leave the building immediately using the nearest safest available exit. Do not return to the building for personal belongings. Failure to evacuate during a fire alarm may result in disciplinary proceedings.
3. Stay at your assembly point until you receive instructions from a member of staff such as your Tutor or Programme Manager.
4. Fire equipment/alarms **MUST NOT** be tampered with in any way.

Misuse of the fire alarms, appliances and smoke detectors is a criminal offence and if you cause a false alarm or damage to appliances you may be liable to a fine and/or imprisonment in accordance with the prevailing law applicable in Northern Ireland.

Fire equipment may save your life and the lives of your friends. Tampering with fire equipment in any areas of residential accommodation is a serious offence.

5. You **MUST** not use fire doors except during an emergency evacuation. For Fire Doors to be effective, the automatic closures on them must function properly and you must not interfere with these doors such as blocking them open.
6. Smoke detection systems are fitted in each bedroom and all communal areas. As these are very sensitive, care should be taken when using deodorants and hair sprays as this might activate them.

[Top](#)

## **10. Smoking Regulations**

The Colleges operates a non-smoking policy throughout all its buildings at all of its campuses in accordance with Health & Safety regulations. This applies to both tobacco based products and E- cigarettes. Specific areas have been designated for smoking at each campus and the location of these will be clearly identified to you during your induction.

Smoking is strictly prohibited during routine practicals, industry visits and while being transported in College vehicles. You are not allowed to smoke directly outside entrances to any buildings. If you must smoke, you must use the ash trays and bins provided.

### **Recharging E-Cigarette devices**

Some e-cigarettes have been associated with fires when being recharged. Any e-cigarette left unattended when being recharged will be removed, and may be retrieved by request via your Programme Manager.

[Top](#)

## **11. Residential Students' Regulations**

If you are considering applying to stay at the college as a residential student please consult the Residential Students Handbook which fully details the appropriate rules and regulations. As a non-resident student you must also comply with these regulations if you wish to visit classmates/friends in their accommodation. There are specific rules for under and over eighteen year olds studying and/or in residence at the College.

[Top](#)

## 12. Use of Motor Vehicles Regulations

The following regulations apply to the use of motorcars and motorcycles by students while enrolled at the College.

1. If you wish to bring a vehicle onto the College you must register it with the relevant Administration/Accommodation Manager by the end of the first week of the first semester. You must provide them with the colour, make, model and registration number of your vehicle. Any changes of details must be notified within one week. You are expected to have the proper legal documentation to use the registered vehicle on the public road and to present it to the Accommodation Manager if requested. No other motorised vehicles apart from what are permitted on Campus without the permission of the Accommodation Manager.
2. All registered vehicle users will be issued with a College sticker, which must be displayed on the car windscreen at all times.
3. The use of the vehicle will be the sole responsibility of you or your parents/guardians but the College reserves the right to restrict vehicle access or refuse entry onto the College grounds.
4. You must only use the Main College entrance.
5. You are only permitted to drive your vehicle on the College estate between the Main Entrance and the designated car parks for students.
6. At Greenmount Campus, you are not permitted to enter the campus via the farmyard entrance. You are not permitted to drive your vehicles around the campus estate (including driving to access the Walled Garden, Manor House and/or Machinery Building Centre) unless granted permission by the Accommodation staff.
7. You must drive carefully on the college grounds, within the speed limit of 20mph and use proper care and attention at all times. Incidents/accidents occurring on the College estate must be reported to the Accommodation Manager immediately.
8. The College will not accept responsibility for the theft of or from the vehicle or damage to it while on its estate.
9. Some College campuses operate barrier systems and where necessary control cards will be issued. If you lose your card you will be charged for a replacement. You **MUST NOT** misuse this card by lending it to others or by permitting unauthorised access.
10. If you are staying at the College at the weekends you may need to ask the Accommodation Manager for a key to the main gates. If you lose this key you will be charged £50 as both the gate lock and suite of keys will have to be replaced. Gates must be locked behind you if you leave the College.
11. You must park in designated student parking areas only. Parking in staff areas is prohibited.

12. No parking is permitted outside the main College entrance areas for Health & Safety reasons.
13. When driving on College estate you must observe general road safety legislation including observation of STOP and GIVE WAY instructions, pedestrian crossing areas, the use of seat belts and the wearing of safety helmets for motor cyclists. The Accommodation Manager may inform the PSNI of any breaches of general road safety legislation.
14. If you do not comply with the College's rules in relation to motor vehicles you may be asked to remove your vehicle from College grounds.

[Top](#)

### **13. Student Bio-Security Protocol**

Bio-security is the term used to describe processes and procedures which protect farm animals and crops from disease and minimise the risk of disease spread from farm to farm. It is essential that all students adhere to the bio-security procedures in place at each Campus and follow all instructions given to them by staff to stop the possible spread of animal diseases.

There are three farms at Greenmount Campus known as Development Centres. These include the Dairy Development Centre (DDC), Beef and Sheep Development Centre (BSDC), which includes the Abbey Farm and the Hill Farm Development Centre (HFDC). These are separate livestock holdings and should be thought of as three separate farms. Different bio-security procedures are in place at each Centre. Details of these procedures will be covered during induction and are outlined in your specific course handbook.

[Top](#)