

P125 Fitness to Study Policy and Procedure

Issue	Date of Issue	Date of Next Review	Responsibility of	Date approved by CAFRE Education Management Team
1	13/6/22	June 2023	Learner Services Branch	30/5/22

	CAFRE Quality Manual Index	CAFRE Website (Tick as appropriate)
Document available	√	√

This document can also be produced in alternative formats upon request

Version History

Version	Description of Changes	Date

1. CAFRE is committed to supporting and responding to learners' needs and to seeking to ensure a positive learner experience which provides an enabling environment where learners can undertake their studies and engage the wider CAFRE community.
2. The fitness to study policy is much wider in its scope than academic fitness. The college will respond to and manage situations where a learner's fitness to study is a concern e.g. where:
 - a. A learner is clearly struggling academically and is becoming too dependent on academic and learning support;
 - b. A learner poses a risk to his/her own health, safety and/or wellbeing and/or that of others;
 - c. A learner's behaviour is or is at risk of negatively affecting the teaching, learning and/or experience of other learners;
 - d. A learner'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 learner 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 learner'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 staff and Student Support Services will ensure that they offer and encourage learners to seek appropriate support as soon as possible, for example by referring learners to the appropriate support service such as their GP, Student Counselling Service or health care professional. In addition, any learner being taken through this Procedure will be entitled to be accompanied and/or represented at Fitness to Study review meetings by a staff member, fellow learner, parent or guardian, health care professional or disability support worker, where appropriate

Where the learner is under the age of 18, or is an adult at risk of harm or adult in need of protection, their parent/guardian will be notified of any proposed concerns, and invited to accompany the student when attending a Fitness to Study review meeting.

5. When implementing this procedure, the College will work with the learner concerned in a spirit of support and co-operation and will seek to reach a mutually agreeable outcome wherever possible. Each matter will be dealt with on the basis of its individual circumstances. Any decision reached about a learner's fitness to study will be made, wherever possible, through an inclusive process involving the learner and other individuals such as CAFRE staff, health care professionals and Student Support Services as appropriate in the circumstances.

6. The circumstances that may give rise to concerns regarding a learner's fitness to study will vary. Examples may include (but are not limited to) a deterioration in a learner's physical health, substance misuse, marked changes in appearance/demeanour, development of unreasonable, uncooperative or aggressive behaviours or other behaviours which could reflect a deterioration in their mental or physical health which all generally leads to a deterioration in academic performance.
7. Any member of staff to whom a concern about a learner's fitness to study is reported, or who themselves has a concern, may wish to discuss their concerns with the Student Support Officer. In so doing, they must remain mindful of the confidential and sensitive nature of the matters being discussed. Concerns about a learner's health or well-being should be acted on promptly. Early intervention and support can minimise the risk of further deterioration in health and well-being.

Procedure for dealing with concerns over an individual's fitness to study

The process to be followed and the level of the concern are set out in the table below. However depending on the seriousness of the health problem or risk posed Level 1 or level 2 can be bypassed if this is deemed essential from a Health and Safety or personal security perspective.

This will be determined by the relevant Head of Branch (HoB).

Where possible at least two working days' notice of any planned meeting will be given.

However an HOB can waive this requirement where there are H&S or security concerns.

Where the individual is under 18 or is an adult at risk of harm or adult in need of protection, their parents/guardians will be informed and invited to attend the meeting. If the learner is over 18 years of age they may be accompanied by an appropriate person if they so request.

An appeal must be lodged within 5 working days of receipt of a written ruling outlining conditions or suspension/expulsion.

The timescale and person to whom an appeal should be made (normally an independent HOB) will be clearly set out in the notification sent to the student.

Only the following grounds for appeal will be accepted:

- i) Procedural
- ii) Further evidence is presented
- iii) Unduly harsh decision given the circumstances.

Stage	Process and purpose	Possible outcomes	Return to Study
Level 1 Initial concerns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information on the Learner is gathered by the Year Manager/ tutors from the course team and residential support teams and submitted to the Programme Manager. The Programme Manager consults about the learner with the Student Support Officer. The learner will be invited by the Programme Manager to attend an informal and supportive Fitness to Study review meeting. Interview conducted by Programme Manager, Student Support Officer (SSO) and Year Manager or personal tutor if appropriate. Purpose of meeting – to have an open conversation to get the learner's views and agree an action plan if appropriate. Written summary produced, copied to the learner and placed in the learner's file. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Request that the learner engages with support professionals. Request further information (e.g. from their GP). Put in place reasonable adjustments or additional support as required. Agree engagement with parents/other organisations. Agree an action plan and review date. Refer to the next level for further consideration if concern over progress/likely resolution. <p>NB: Failure to engage with the process including non-attendance when requested without an acceptable reason or non-compliance with the action plan will generally result in referral to Level 2.</p>	<p>Following a period of absence from for recuperation or treatment, it may be appropriate for the learner to resume studies. Prior to returning the student must produce:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence that supports a return to study. This evidence must be from a qualified medical professional who knows the learner and is in a position to comment on their ability to resume their studies with no further adverse effects. This is applicable for those learners who exited on the basis of a medical need. A CAMHS, CPN report or psychiatry letter will only be accepted for those learners who were suspended due to poor emotional wellbeing. <p>Learners must submit this information no later than 2 weeks before their anticipated date of return, this is to ensure that both academic and residential teams have sufficient time to discuss and review the evidence submitted. A joint decision will be made about the learners return and a Return to</p>
Level 2 Ongoing and/or further concerns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The learner will be invited to attend a meeting with the HOB, SSO, Programme Manager and any other representatives as deemed appropriate by HOB. Purpose of the meeting – to share concerns with the learner and the extent to which their condition can be managed by them and by the college. To put in place an action plan to deal with these concerns. 	<p>As for Level 1 plus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recommend a compulsory temporary suspension from their programme of study and accommodation. Return from a temporary suspension can be conditional on the learner engaging willingly and cooperatively in the process of discussion and resolution. This may include a requirement to engage with the Student Support Officer at regular intervals. 	

Stage	Process and purpose	Possible outcomes	Return to Study
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appeals against conditions or suspensions imposed must be lodged with education administration as per guidance set out in the letter of notification within 5 working days of receipt of the notification. This will be considered by an Education HOB not involved in the original decision. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deferral until the following academic year. More than one meeting can be held at Level 2 at the discretion of the HOB. <p>Failure to engage with the process including non-attendance without an acceptable reason or no-compliance with the action plan will generally result in referral to Level 3.</p>	<p>Study plan will be implemented. This plan will outline the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Details of any additional study support that may be required in the short term. Details of any therapeutic interventions such as Counselling/CAMHS etc. Any longer term reasonable adjustments that may need made. A risk assessment and management plan, which takes account of the experiences that led to the initial suspension of studies. <p>Any return to study will be subject to the learners' co-operation and full adherence to the conditions outlined.</p>
Level 3 Serious, persistent and/or critical concerns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This will normally be held with the Head of Education Service (HOS), HOB, SSO and other staff who have been involved in the process. Appeals must be lodged with education administration as per guidance set out in the letter of notification within 5 working days of receipt of the notification. This will be considered by a HOS not involved in the original decision. 	<p>As for Level 2 plus.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The learner may be permanently excluded or expelled from the college. A decision on whether the learner can return to the college, with or without conditions at some time in the future, will be made at a later stage. 	