

Academic Year: 2021/22 ONWARDS

Target Audience:

All Staff

Summary of Contents:

The College will provide a breadth of curriculum which reflects the strategic objectives identified by DfE for the FE sector, the needs of the local economy and the aspirations of students.

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Related Documents include:

- Student Retention, Marking and Management of E-Registers SOP
- Essential Skills SOP
- Student/Trainee Discipline and Behaviour Policy and SOP
- CEIAG SOP
- Redeployment of Displaced Staff SOP
- Assessment and Grading SOP
- Assessment and IV SOPs
- Quality Assurance SOP
- Higher Education Programmes SOP
- Complaints and Compliments SOP
- Advertising, Cancellation and Merging FT/PT Classes SOP

Superseded Documents (if applicable):
35-2010

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Version History

Version	Description of Changes	Date
1.0	Original	
1.1	Updates to include Traineeships, L3 Advanced Technicals, Tech HE and T-skills and expansion on Blended Learning. Change from QCF to RQF and update of summary table.	Nov 21
1.2		

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1 College Vision, Mission, Core goals and Values

1.1 Vision

To be recognised as a world-class provider of Further Education. This aligns to the FE Sector Vision to provide world-class skills and support to businesses that transforms lives.

1.2 Mission

Our mission is to shape our community, by promoting an inclusive learning environment, which will empower and enable individuals and businesses to fulfil their ambitions. We will contribute to the Programme for Government and associated strategies aimed at promoting social and economic wellbeing and the future prosperity of Northern Ireland.

1.3 Core Goals

1. Delivering a Priority Skills, Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Maths (STEAM) focused curriculum in line with the needs identified by the NI Skills Barometer;
2. Upskilling the existing workforce to improve business efficiency and productivity thereby enabling them to grow jobs and improve GVA;
3. Addressing social inclusion by providing opportunities for those not in work, to obtain a professional or technical qualification allowing them to gain employment and escape the benefit cycle;
4. Enhancing employment opportunities for all our students by incorporating enterprise skills development within each curriculum area; and
5. Improving effectiveness of our training provision through the quality of our approach, leading to high success rates and therefore providing a better return on investment for the Department of the Economy and other funders.

2 The College Curriculum Portfolio

The curriculum offer will provide opportunities for student progression either within the College or in conjunction with partner organisations. The range of qualifications will come from a variety of nationally recognised frameworks and awarding bodies.

2.1 Curriculum Frameworks

The College operates within the Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF) which has levels 1 – 9.

The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (FHEQ) has five levels - numbered 4 to 8, with Higher Nationals located within levels 4 & 5, Foundation Degrees within level 5, Bachelor's degrees located within level 6, Master's degrees in level 7 and Doctorates in level 8. This framework is an integral part of quality assurance in higher education. Higher education institutions such as SERC use this in planning, delivering and monitoring their study programmes and the awards that come from them, and external quality assurance procedures focus directly on how effectively institutions manage their use of the framework. The numbering of the FHEQ levels correspond with levels 4 to 9 in the RQF or the vocational qualifications system and can assist with transfer and progression between different levels and types of study. The FHEQ also aligns with the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area to assist students' and graduates' international mobility. The FHEQ is based on the concept that qualifications are awarded for the demonstrated achievement of learning outcomes and attainment, rather than the length or content of study. It provides the basis for a shared understanding, for higher education and its key stakeholders, of the link between standards and qualification levels.

2.2 Studying at Different Levels

The College offers a range of qualifications that range from Entry Level to Level 7. The levels and a brief description are outlined in Figure 1 - Qualifications by Level. Qualifications up to Level 3 are referred to as Further Education (FE) provision and courses at Level 4 and above are referred to as Higher Education (HE) provision.

LEVEL	TITLE	ENTRY REQUIREMENT	EQUIVALENT TO	DESCRIPTION
7	Certificate Diploma	Relevant senior management experience and Degree or equivalent qualification	Masters	These courses are suitable for senior professionals and managers developing a highly developed and complex levels of knowledge, enabling you to develop original responses to complicated and unpredictable problems and situations
6	Bachelor Degrees Yr 3 Graduate Certificates Graduate Diplomas	Level 5 Qualification	Degree	These courses are validated by a University partner. They are ideal for students who wish to study closer to home either part-time or full-time
5	Foundation Degree Yr 2 Degree Yr 2 BTEC Higher National Diploma Higher Level Apprenticeship (HLA)	Level 4 Qualification	Second year of a degree programme	The Higher National range of courses is a very practical workrelated qualification. It is ideal if you wish to secure employment directly after successful completion. HLA provide an opportunity to work and gain a qualification to support your job role. By completing an HLA you can gain the skills that employers need and that are relevant to the local economy, therefore improving your prospects of good earnings and sustained employment.

LEVEL	TITLE	ENTRY REQUIREMENT	EQUIVALENT TO	DESCRIPTION
4	BTEC Higher National Certificate	Level 3 Qualification	First year of a degree programme	These range of courses are ideal if you wish to secure employment directly after successful completion.
	Foundation Degree Yr 1 Degree Yr 1			HLA provide an opportunity to work and gain a qualification to support your job role. By completing an HLA you can gain the skills that employers need and that are relevant to the local economy, therefore improving your prospects of good earnings and sustained employment.
	Higher Level Apprenticeship (HLA)			

Figure 1: HE Provision: Level 4-Level 7

LEVEL	TITLE	ENTRY REQUIREMENT	EQUIVALENT TO	DESCRIPTION
3	L3 Advanced Tech	Level 2 Qualification	3 GCE A Levels 2 GCE A Levels 2 GCE A Levels 1 GCE A Level 1 GCE AS Level	Advanced Tech courses enable students to gain a main vocational based qualification while developing practical, digital and transversal skills and completing work placement for a chosen occupational area. Upon successful completion students will also gain an additional personal development qualification.
	L3 Access Courses			These courses are designed for mature students who have been out of education for a minimum of 2 years and provide access to many university courses.
	L3 BTEC Extended Diploma			These qualifications are well recognised by employers and will help you secure work or enter Higher Education.
	L3 BTEC Foundation Diploma			
	L3 BTEC Diploma			

LEVEL	TITLE	ENTRY REQUIREMENT	EQUIVALENT TO	DESCRIPTION
3	L3 BTEC Subsidiary Diploma L3 BTEC Certificate			
	L3 Apprenticeship	General L2 in Apprenticeship Area and a recognised Level 2 Maths and English Qualification		You must be employed. Your week is split between working and attending the College. You are paid by your employer.
	L3 National Vocational Qualification (NVQ)			This is a work-related qualification. It is ideal if you wish to secure employment directly after successful completion.
	GCE AS and A2			The College offers a range of GCE subjects that can also be combined with other L3 awards and certificates.

LEVEL	TITLE	ENTRY REQUIREMENT	EQUIVALENT TO	DESCRIPTION
2	L2 BTEC Diploma L2 BTEC Extended Certificate L2 BTEC Certificate	Level 1 Qualification	4 GCSEs (A*-C) 2 GCSEs (A*-C) 1 GCSE (A*-C)	If you have grade Ds at GCSE the L2 Diplomas provide a more practical way of studying and a progression route to L3 courses.
	L2 Apprenticeships			You must be employed to gain entry to onto this course. Your week is split between working and attending College. You will be paid by your employer.
	L2 National Vocational Qualification (NVQ)			This is a work-related qualification. It is ideal if you wish to secure employment directly after successful completion.
	L2 Traineeship	You must hold a minimum of a Level 1 qualification, defined as four GCSEs at grades D to G including Maths and English grades D to E, or equivalent.	Equivalent to five GCSEs at grades A* to C (including English and Mathematics qualifications at level 2)	The traineeship allows you to gain a main vocational based qualification while developing practical, digital and transversal skills and completing work placement for a chosen occupational area.

LEVEL	TITLE	ENTRY REQUIREMENT	EQUIVALENT TO	DESCRIPTION
1	L1 BTEC Certificates and Awards	No Qualifications	Variable GCSE (D-G)	<p>This course addresses personal and development needs to enable you to gain the necessary skills to move onto Traineeship, Level 2 FE or employment.</p> <p>Entry level for anyone who has few or no qualifications and currently unemployed. Ideal if you want more practical rather than academic training. You are guaranteed £40 per week.</p> <p>This is a work-related qualification. It is ideal if you wish to secure employment directly after successful completion.</p>
	L1 Skills for your Life			
	L1 Skills for Work			
	L1 National Vocational Qualification (NVQ)			
Entry	Entry Level BTEC Certificates and Awards	No Qualifications		

Figure 2: FE Provision Entry Level - Level 3

Figure 1 - Qualifications by Level

2.3 Full or part-time study

Full Time (FT) students will follow a Programme of Study (POS) that may comprise of individual qualifications. In addition to this the student will have a range of other course enrichment including, tutorials, curriculum enhancement activities, careers etc. to help them complete their POS and aid individual personal development. The programme of study will have, along with the vocational qualification, other integrated components including Essential Skills, enterprise and industry led projects designed to enhance student employability.

Part Time (PT) students will normally only study an individual qualification. Since PT students are mainly adults and could be in FT employment they will normally not require the range of other services available to FT students.

2.4 Change Management Process and Curriculum Planning

Modification to the curriculum portfolio is governed by the College Curriculum Planning SOP. This will ensure that any changes maintain an adequate balance of curriculum choices by campus, level, subject area and with adequate progression opportunities. This will take place before the College Development Plan (CDP) process when the curriculum portfolio bid is submitted to the DfE.

Significant changes to provision will be referred to the Education Committee of the Governing Body.

There will always be some minor adjustments particularly of PT provision which will be directly connected to the PT enrolment trends for that year.

2.5 Change drivers

There are a range of change drivers that the College will monitor to ensure that the curriculum portfolio meets the needs of students, employers, local councils, businesses. These include DfE, Curriculum Hubs, sector skills councils, employer forums, area learning communities, membership of local council economic development forums and even individual requests from businesses. These drivers will continue to influence a dynamic learning environment.

2.6 Adequacy

If a POS is deemed to be inadequate in terms of retention, achievement, success rates, or financially unviable and there are no other mitigating reasons to retain the programme, then the College will cease delivering that programme. The staff will be redeployed as detailed in the Redeployment Arrangements for Displaced Staff SOP.

2.7 Need and Rationalisation of curriculum

The College curriculum portfolio will change over time as new curriculum areas emerge and others may be deemed to be no longer meeting the needs of the College or its stakeholders. The College will need to assess the extent to which new curriculum provision should be introduced across campuses within the financial and strategic constraints that it operates within.

If a new area of curriculum is to be introduced the relevant Head of School (HOS) must demonstrate a need for the curriculum, alongside a full costing of the new provision including teaching and support staff, accommodation and any specialist equipment. Competitor analysis, fees and income versus delivery cost must be presented to CMT. Where there is significant resource investment in terms of specialist equipment the College may decide to introduce the new curriculum in a phased manner.

2.8 Redeployment of staff

Any College staff that have reduced or no post in an existing campus as a result of rationalisation of courses will be supported by the Redeployment Arrangements for Displaced Staff SOP.

In the first instance they will be redeployed for similar work into another campus. If that cannot be achieved they may be re-trained into a different area of work in either the same or alternative campus. In the case where the previous options are not possible redundancy will be offered.

2.9 Continuous monitoring

The College will monitor its curriculum portfolio at both School and whole College level on an annual basis using the Curriculum Planning SOP.

3 Strategic and financial constraints

The College operates to help deliver the Programme for Government and the strategic plan developed by DfE. There are a range of constraints that are therefore placed upon the College within which it must operate.

3.1 Viability of classes

The College has a duty to ensure that the maximum return is made of the investment of public funds. To this end the College will make decisions on whether to run a course or POS within the constraints of the total allocation of funding and the demand for that programme. This process will occur most often at the normal entry points during the academic year, September and January. Heads of School will make recommendations to the CMT as to the viability of a course within the overall funding allocation for that school. The CMT will take the ultimate decision as to whether a programme is viable.

3.2 HE MaSN

DfE controls the number of HE FT students that each college can enrol, this is achieved through the application of a Maximum Student Number cap (MaSN). Each college now has a single MaSN cap, which can be applied across curriculum areas and campuses as deemed appropriate by the College management. The College must operate its recruitment of FT HE students within the MaSN cap allocated by the DfE. The College will consult with the DfE to ensure that this number is maximised each year.

3.6 Total Curriculum Offering in Any Academic Year

The College will offer a range of FT and PT programmes in any academic year. These courses are directly dependent upon the number of students that successfully meet the criteria. Another variable is the demand for provision that will change from year to year subject to the economic climate and vocational aspirations of students. Therefore to ensure that the College meets its obligation with the DfE it will publicise a curriculum offering equivalent to 105% of its allocated enrolments in FE, HE and ES. The outcome of this is that there will be a number of courses which will be offered, fail to meet the viability criteria and then need to be cancelled. Students on those programmes will be offered alternative courses or a refund in line with the Curriculum Planning and Course Cancellation SOP.

4 Curriculum Entitlement

4.1 Pre-enrolment information and support

The College will provide prospective students with clear information on its programmes including course duration, entry requirements, assessments and progression routes and all potential students will have the opportunity to use the College Careers Information Advice and Guidance Services for impartial advice and guidance.

Individual students will be advised of the entitlement model for their vocational areas which may include the requirement to achieve qualifications in ES (Literacy, Numeracy and ICT) as part of their POS.

Prospective students who may require Learning Support will be encouraged to discuss their individual needs with the Learning Support Team as early as possible.

4.2 Entry qualifications for a POS

Each POS will have defined entry qualifications. These are aimed at ensuring that students have the necessary background to complete the POS successfully provided they comply with course and the College regulations and there are no other extenuating circumstances. A course tutor must have a clear rationale for relaxing any entry qualifications for individual students. Students may also be required successfully complete a pre-entry assessment and interview.

4.3 Duration of a course

The College has a duty of care to ensure that students can complete the second or third year of their programmes if they have completed the first year successfully. Students will be guaranteed delivery of their POS duration as published on the College web site or prospectus at the time they enrolled on the programme. Courses such as GCE Advanced Subsidiary (AS) or A2 are deemed to be separate courses each of 1 year in duration.

4.4 Progression within the College

The College will encourage students to progress through the various levels outlined earlier in line with their skills and abilities. Progression from one POS to another is not guaranteed and is subject to gaining the necessary entry qualifications, course viability and the funding constraints that the College must operate within as outlined previously.

All students will be provided with the opportunity to develop skills, qualities and competences which will aid them in their personal and professional development to achieve and contribute positively to the economy. The College will encourage all students to complete a total POS (which may include ES), which will equip them for progression to either further POS or employment.

The College has identified 10 key groups of students:

- HE FT(L4-L6)
- HE PT(L4-L7)
- FE FT (up to NQF L4) (L0-L3)
- FE PT vocational (L0-L3)
- Training For Success/Apprenticeship NI and other training programmes (L0-3) □
Essential skills
- School based students (VEP)
- PT non vocational
- Full cost recovery training

- DfE Funded Academy Students
- Special Educational Needs (SEN) students

4.5 Higher Education

HE within SERC delivers programmes which professionalise the Workforce through stand-alone qualifications linked to awarding bodies (universities and professional bodies) that are industry current and work ready through Technical HE (Tech HE).

The “Tech HE” provision at SERC are courses which are design designed to develop technical skills including the abilities, knowledge and expertise required to perform specific, job-related tasks. These can be developed through real-world projects and structured learning, enhancing the students practical and knowledge in the area, as well as developing their mindsets, metaskills and transversal skills (T-Skills), offering an alternative to the traditional academic HE route. These courses will prepare the learner for the world of work and progression.

HE is defined as that curriculum provision that is at Level 4 or above on the RQF. The bulk of the HE provision at SERC is at level 4 and 5 (i.e. Higher National Certificate (HNC), Higher National Diploma (HND), and Foundation Degree (FD). The College also offers a full honours degree in Business Management (level 6) in partnership with John Moore’s University Liverpool.

The College works with a range of partners, which validate the provision of the HE qualifications at SERC. Currently Pearson and University of Ulster are the partners that validate the largest number of programmes at SERC, namely the wide range of HND and HNCs. DfE restricts the College to working with the University of Ulster (UU), Queen’s University (QUB) and the Open University (OU) in the provision of Foundation Degrees.

HE at SERC aims to provide students with the required achieved outcomes detailed in FHEQ. Design of programmes ensures that the student learning experience provides current knowledge and skills expected by industry and meets the individual needs of the student. SERC is developing specific characteristics for its HE provision delivered through FE and they include:

- Producing a work-ready workforce skilled in advanced technical, subject specific skills and knowledge that relates to their chosen area of study e.g. engineering, construction, web-authoring, software engineering;
- Cultivating three key mindsets at HE level to improve student wellbeing, collaboration and employability. These mindsets are defined as Inclusive, Curious and Courageous
- At SERC four Meta-Skills equip our graduates with the ability to upskill, create and innovate to take their place in the world as change makers; Critical Thinking, Leadership, Emotional Intelligence and Entrepreneurship. Meta-skills are timeless, higher order skills that create adaptive, high performing learners and promote success in whatever context the future brings.
- The development of graduate transversal skills within the domains of; Citizenship, Problem Solving, Working with Others, Self Management and Work Professionalism is a fundamental element in the delivery of HE programmes.
- Widening student participation in HE and supporting those student’s development within HE; and

- A flexible practical curriculum responsive to economic need that can be delivered with academic rigour.

These characteristics are integrated within a College FT HE ethos and they include:

- Bridging courses and support for ES to enable participation and progression;
- Small group and team learning (PBL);
- Full pastoral care services which contribute to developing the whole person;
- Retention initiatives to support students to succeed;
- Opportunities to engage in work-placement and industry led projects;
- Vocational specific project activities including overseas study and work placements;
- Curriculum delivery by staff with current industrial/sectorial knowledge; and
- Opportunity for involvement in Student Companies to develop entrepreneurial skills

The capacity to enhance the HE ethos at SERC will be enhanced by the role of QAA and the introduction of Integrated Quality Enhancement Review (IQER). In this way the College believes that it will be able to provide a modern and dynamic HE provision that will be responsive to the evolving needs of the economy, in a cost effective manner. In developing the curriculum offer in this way the College will focus less on marketing traditional courses and more on providing individual learning packages that can be tailored to meet individual needs. Thus depending on the number of modules taken a student will be classified as FT or PT.

The number of HE FT students will be determined by the MaSN cap as outlined earlier.

4.6 Higher Education (Part-time) including HLAs

The PT HE programmes will incorporate the relevant vocational qualification and where appropriate the associated ES of Literacy, Numeracy and ICT qualifications. Students enrolling on a PT HE programme will be required to address all elements of the programme and will be monitored by Knowledge Management Reports and where applicable E-ILPs. The College will provide guidance for all PT HE students through its internal services and through the HE Student Handbook. The College PT HE programmes will allow;

- A focus on teaching and learning so that students develop higher level skills of application, analysis, evaluation and the ability for lifelong learning, including capabilities in the use of Blended Learning in addition to the specific learning outcomes associated with their chosen vocational programme.
- Suitable progression pathways for students from FE programmes within SERC and other educational institutions;
- Opportunities for progression to Honours Degree programmes at enhanced entry and /or to appropriate employment in the local economy;

- Employees engaged in the local economy the opportunity to develop their higher level technical, supervisory and self - development skills in a fashion that is compatible with their current and future skill needs and their working and family commitments; and
- The development of entrepreneurial and employability skills to address economic and community needs in the local region.

Higher Level Apprenticeships (HLAs) are another mode of part-time study that requires you to be employed in the sector and enrolled on an approved qualification. HLA provide an opportunity to work and gain a qualification to support your job role. By completing an HLA you can gain the skills that employers need and that are relevant to the local economy, therefore improving your prospects of good earnings and sustained employment. The length of the programme may vary depending upon the programme chosen. Other benefits include:

- earning while you learn
- achieving professional-level qualifications without paying higher education tuition fees
- increased opportunities for career progression
- a clear pathway to achieving ambitions in the workplace

4.7 Further Education (Full-time)

FE FT is defined as that curriculum provision that is at Level 0 to Level 3 on the Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF) normally requiring 15 hours per week over 30 weeks. The bulk of the FE provision at SERC is at level 2 and 3 (i.e. Award, Certificate, Diploma and Extended Diploma). The College will identify FE or Training post 16 programmes of study that leads to a range of qualifications for vocational areas from Level 0 to Level 3. The programmes will incorporate the relevant vocational qualification and where appropriate the associated ES qualifications. Students enrolling on a FT programme will be required to address all elements of the POS and will be monitored by Knowledge Management Reports and where applicable E-ILP's. The College will provide guidance for all FE students through its internal services and through the FE Student Handbook, all FE students will be provided with the opportunity to have industry enrichment via either industry based projects / enterprise events/ company visits and guest industry speakers.

The design of FE programmes ensures that the student learning experience provides current knowledge and skills expected by industry and meets the individual needs of the student. SERC is developing specific characteristics for the FE provision which it delivers and they include:

- Producing work-ready graduates with general subject specific skills and knowledge that relates to their chosen area of study e.g. engineering, construction, business etc;
- Students are actively encouraged to engage in their own Transversal Skills development. This includes highlighting their achievements and contribution within the college, community and workplace. The development of transversal skills is within the domains of; Citizenship, Problem Solving, Working with Others, Self Management and Work Professionalism.
- Widening student participation in FE and supporting those student's development within FE; and

- A flexible practical curriculum responsive to economic need that can be delivered with academic rigour.

These characteristics are integrated within a College FE ethos and they include:

- Support for essential skills to enable participation and progression;
- Small group and team learning;
- Full Pastoral Care services which contribute to developing the whole person;
- Retention initiatives to support students to succeed;
- Opportunities to engage in work-placement;
- Vocational specific project activities including overseas study and work placements;
- Curriculum delivery by staff with current industrial / sectoral knowledge; and
- Opportunity for involvement in Student Companies to develop entrepreneurial skills.

The capacity to enhance the FE ethos at SERC will be enhanced by the role of the Education Training Inspectorate (ETI) and the use of Improving Quality Raising Standards) IQ:RS. In this way the College believes that it will be able to provide a modern and dynamic FE provision that will be responsive to the evolving needs of the economy, in a cost effective manner.

4.8 Further Education (Part-time)

The College aspires to offer a framework of FE PT qualifications at Level 0 to Level 3. The PT FE programmes will incorporate the relevant vocational qualification and where appropriate the associated ES qualifications. Students enrolling on a Part-time FE programme will be required to address all elements of the programme and will be monitored by Knowledge Management Reports and where applicable E-ILP's. The College will provide guidance for all PT FE students through its internal services and through the FE Student Handbook.

The College PT FE programmes will allow;

- A focus on teaching and learning so that students develop skills of application, analysis, evaluation and the ability for lifelong learning, including capabilities in the use of Blended Learning in addition to the specific learning outcomes associated with their chosen vocational programme.
- Suitable progression pathways for students from pre 16 education programmes from other School educational institutions and from within SERC's School Partnership.
- Opportunities for progression to HE programmes and /or to appropriate employment in the local economy.
- Employees engaged in the local economy the opportunity to develop their technical, supervisory and self - development skills in a fashion that is compatible with their current and future skill needs and their working and family commitments.

- The development of entrepreneurial and employability skills to address economic and community needs in the local region.

4.9 Training for Success / Apprenticeship NI

Training for Success (TfS) and Apprenticeship NI (ANI) and other training programmes such as Steps To Work range from level 1 to 3. The programmes and frameworks have been designed in conjunction with the Sector Skills Council to equip the students with the learning skills and knowledge to gain employment, if not already in employment, within the skills sector. The Curriculum areas can be accessed from the College Training Organisation.

4.10 Essential Skills (ES)

The Essential Skills provision covers literacy, numeracy and ICT. In literacy and numeracy the levels will range from entry level 3 to level 2. In ICT they will range from level 1 to level 2. All students (with the exception of Access students) who, on entry, do not have a grade C in Maths/English/ICT are expected to attend ES Numeracy/Literacy/ICT classes. The aim is that all students will have achieved a L2 qualification in each of the ES areas on completion of their Level 3 vocational programme (see Essential Skills Policy and SOP).

ES students will normally present with a range of barriers to education and as such require special consideration.

ES provision may be an integral part of the student's POS. ES learning and assessment materials should be integrated and contextualised into the vocational elements of the POS for FT students.

For adult students the learning and assessment materials should be relevant and current to their circumstances.

At enrolment each student will complete initial assessments to identify their current level in each of the ES and an appropriate pathway will be agreed for that student.

4.11 School Based Students – Entitlement Framework

The College aims to be a key player in the delivery of pre-16 and post 16 courses in partnership with all local schools. The College is an active member of 5 Area Learning Communities that pool resources to extend the individual curriculum portfolio. The Department of Education (DE) Entitlement Framework ensures schools must deliver a wide range of courses up to GCSE level (24 areas, academic and vocational) and then a substantial range to GCE (27 areas, academic and vocational). The College provides a substantial part of this provision in areas where the expertise or specialist resources does not exist in the schools.

The students on these POS may study on the College premises or on the school premises or a combination of both.

4.12 Part-time Non Vocational

The College will deliver a range of non-vocational or leisure courses to meet the social needs of the local community. funding for this provision will be limited and hence the costs per hour will normally be higher than for vocational courses. Full cost recovery non-vocational courses are also part of this provision.

4.13 Full-cost recovery

The College will deliver a range of qualifications and courses specific to the needs of local employers on a full cost recovery basis. These courses will not claim funding and hence will

be specifically aimed at meeting the needs of the employers who will fund all elements of the provision. Courses may be delivered in a variety of modes including on the employers premises.

4.14 Special Educational Needs (SEN)

FT and PT courses in Employability, Personal Development and vocational areas will be available to SEN students. FT course will usually last two years but may be extended to three years if appropriate.

5 Curriculum Enrichment

5.1 Intercampus Competitions

The College believes that competition is an essential element in developing a student's skills and abilities. Therefore the College will organise a range of intercampus competitions to develop these skills and abilities across a range of curriculum areas. These will be led by the Competition Manager and supported by the course teams. These can also be used to select the students that will enter for regional and international competitions.

5.2 External Competitions and awards

The College aims to develop opportunities for students to progress their skills and abilities across local, national and international competitions. The Competitions Manager will identify along with course teams appropriate competitions and the process for selecting students.

5.3 Transversal Skills

Through their vocational programme all students will be actively encouraged to develop their transversal skills of Citizenship, Problem Solving, Working with Others, Self Management and Work Professionalism. Programme teams will also identify appropriate and relevant enrichment activities including work experience and Employability Skills qualifications linked to vocational aspirations of the groups of students.

5.4 Local site visits and study trips

Visits to local companies and businesses are an important part of the curriculum by giving the FT student an appreciation of a real working environment. Course coordinators will organise a number of visits appropriate to the POS. Students may be asked to make a contribution to the cost of these visits.

5.5 Guest Speakers

The College aims to enrich the student learning experience through engaging guest speakers from industries relevant to the curriculum area. Course coordinators along with their teams will organise a number of guest speakers appropriate to their POS with a view to linking it to an assessment opportunity.

5.6 International Cultural Visits and Study Trips

The College aims to provide students with the opportunity to participate in local and international study trips to broaden their experience vocationally and culturally. Course Coordinators and course teams will identify links with partners across Europe and the rest of the world and explore the opportunity to access funding to support the financial cost. All Students will have the chance to participate in these activities relevant to their area of study.

5.7 Entrepreneurship and Enterprise

The College aims to accelerate the awareness amongst students of enterprise and provide opportunities to support business ideas generation and incubation. This is supported by the Enterprise Fortnight which takes place during the first two weeks of the academic year. All FT students participate in this College initiative which builds interpersonal skills, strengthens relationships and enhances the student learning experience.

5.8 Student Companies

SERC Student Companies will offer encouragement, guidance and practical support to students who show entrepreneurial ideas and commitment, providing them with the opportunity to explore the possibility of turning these ideas into real profit making enterprises.

The College has a number of staff whose responsibility is to facilitate and monitor enterprise activity across the schools and develop and embed enterprise within existing programmes of

study as part of an existing module or as an extra curricula activity supported by the course teams.

SERC Student Companies will provide students with the chance to experience firsthand setting up and running a business.

6 Student Support and Pastoral Care

6.1 Cultural Diversity

All students are made aware of the need to recognise the importance of cultural diversity to help maintain the ethos of the College as a truly integrated educational institution that provides the same quality service to all.

6.2 Pre Enrolment - Commitment to Open Service/Quality of Public Information

The College is committed to providing high quality public information to ensure that all students are fully aware of the curriculum offer, requirements and progression opportunities. This will be done through open days, visits to external school, prospectuses, web site, social media and external careers and information events. Lecturing and pastoral care staff will participate in these events.

6.3 Student Induction

Induction is a vital part of student education to ensure they are aware of the services they are entitled to and in turn aware of their responsibilities as students. All FT students will undergo a range of induction activities including on line modules as well as face to face activities with course tutors and lecturers. New areas will always be identified and may include, student finance, ILT facilities, counselling, health and safety etc.

The College Handbook will be issued to all students via Moodle. Additional formats can be provided as required to meet student needs.

6.4 Tutorial Programme

All FT students will be allocated a personal tutor who will carry out regular reviews of progress and target setting as well as having a pastoral care role. All FT students will have a weekly timetabled tutorial which will include career education, cultural diversity, development and monitoring of the Individual Student Learner Agreement (ISLA).

6.5 Pastoral care

Pastoral care is concerned with promoting personal and social development and fostering positive attitudes. This is achieved through the quality of teaching and learning and developing healthy relationships amongst students, lecturers and adults other than lecturers. Arrangements will be made for monitoring students' overall progress, academic, personal and social, through specific pastoral structures and support systems, and through extra-curricular activities. All students have access to an independent confidential student counselling service (Carecall) for issues affecting student's emotional wellbeing.

Staff will support students through both the tutorial programme and wider course team activity to ensure a caring and positive learning environment for students

6.6 Parents' Evenings

SERC recognises the value of parental/guardian support and will each year run a series of Parents' Evenings for different student/trainee groups across the College. These evenings will provide the opportunity to inform parents/guardians of general topics and give an opportunity to raise individual issues.

6.7 Student placements

Student placements are a vital component in a number of courses such as Child Care. Placements will be an integral part of those programmes and will be organised by the Course Tutor in conjunction with a number of partner organisations. Students may have to be vetted with Access NI and may have to contribute to the costs of this check.

6.8 Insurance

The College provided public liability insurance for student on approved placements or educational visits or trips. Risk assessment must have been carried out by the appropriate member of staff (lecturer or Deputy Head of School (DHOS) in some cases). A student EV proforma must be completed and signed by the appropriate College authority before the visit takes places.

6.9 Student discipline

The College will make every effort to ensure that students/trainees are aware of their entitlements and obligations and will give advice and guidance to ensure that students/trainees fully understand their responsibilities and rights within the disciplinary Policy.

Staff must implement the provisions of the disciplinary policy in a fair and timely manner with all instances of disciplinary action documented and reported in the appropriate manner (see Student and Trainee Disciplinary and Behaviour Policy and SOP).

6.10 Careers and Guidance

The College Careers Service provides information and guidance on careers and learning and is available to prospective and current students. Careers Officers aim to provide a service that is accessible, impartial, confidential and focused on the needs of students.

Lecturing Staff will work closely with the Careers Service in providing relevant vocational and occupational information to students in their specific areas (see Careers, Education, Information Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) Policy and SOP).

6.11 Student Finance

FT students have difficulty managing the financial demands required to sustain their FT study mode. The College provided a range of financial support mechanisms and ensures that students are made aware of these through its induction programmes and handbooks. Students who get into financial difficulty may also apply to the College for specialist financial support.

6.12 Students Union

An active Students Union is an important part of the College experience and can help improve the student participation in a range of activities. The College is fully committed to supporting the activities of the Students Union and provides student union support officers to help facilitate this. All students can become members of the Student Union which is the student representative body in the College. They may also become members of the NUS through the Student Union at SERC.

A schedule of activities and events will be implemented each year by the SU including the Fresher's Fair and Refreshers Fair. They will also organise a series of charity events to involve students in cultural diversity to promote social responsibility and inclusivity.

6.13 Student Governor

A Student Governor will be appointed and will represent the Student Voice on the Governing Body and will be involved in other forums.

6.14 Student Engagement

SERC is committed to support and work with students as partners in the assurance and enhancement of their educational experience. A series of deliberate steps have been devised to engage students in influencing the educational journey. The process for HE students is

outlined in the Student Engagement section of the Higher Education Programmes standard operating procedure. All students have the opportunity to volunteer as class representatives and consult with the Students Union.

7 Teaching and Learning

The College will encourage the use of innovative teaching and learning strategies, including the significant use of ILT and PBL, to provide a quality learning experience which will foster a 'cooperative learning relationship' between staff and students and which will encourage independent learning and development.

7.1 Schemes of work and lesson plans

It is important that lecturers prepare for the classes they teach. Schemes of Work (SOW) will be developed (using the approved College template) for all teaching sessions, uploaded onto the team sites/MOODLE and distributed to students by the 3rd teaching week. The SOW will assist students to have knowledge of the running order of lessons and thus prepare in advance for these.

Each lecturer is responsible for creating their lesson plans (using the approved College template) and will make these available when requested.

7.2 Project based learning

FT programmes will be encouraged to source real projects to enable students to have real life learning experiences with either external partners or even within the College. These projects will be activity based with defined and agreed outcomes, specific milestones and resources and may meet the requirements of awarding body assessment criteria.

7.3 Pedagogical toolkit

The pedagogical toolkit is the range of teaching tools that lecturers should incorporate into their lesson planning. Proper use of the toolkit will ensure that students receive a variety of stimuli and active learning techniques e.g. fishbowl techniques, practical sessions, and group activities. There will be a varied pattern in the planning and lesson structure of all classes. These methods should help address the range of learning styles that will exist within a class cohort.

7.4 Blended Learning

All POS should develop a blended learning approach. This will mean that the range of modules within a POS will use an appropriate variety of learning methods including theory, practical workshop/laboratories, as well as a range of on line learning and assessment materials. These methods should help address the range of learning styles that students may have within a class cohort and also help students develop independent learning skills.

The blended learning design will incorporate a broad range of digital technologies to support learning both synchronously and asynchronously. The technologies utilised can include but not be limited to; Microsoft Teams, Microsoft Onenote / Class Notebook, e-Portfolio systems, remote access to specialist software as well as other subject specific solutions. Where a range of technologies are utilised by a POS, students will be made fully aware during the induction period with further support provided for learners via tutorial sessions. Additionally students can obtain technical support via the College [IT Support Hub](#).

7.5 MOODLE

The College's Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) is MOODLE and will be used for the storage and organisation of course information. This will include course regulations, learning and assessment materials. All FT and significant PT programmes will have a presence on MOODLE. Course and programme handbooks should be issued on MOODLE with alternative formats used as required to meet individual student needs.

7.6 Internet

The Colleges Internet site is www.serc.ac.uk. This contains up to date information on the College.

7.7 Intranet

The College's student intranet site is <https://student.serc.ac.uk/student>. This contains up to date information on the College and its courses. Announcements to students will also be posted on this site. Students will be encouraged to visit it regularly.

7.8 E-Library

SERC has an E Library facility which is available to all students. Library materials cover a wide range of subjects in a variety of media - print, electronic and audio-visual. The library catalogue lists the resources on all College campuses and can be searched online in the library or via the Intranet. The College electronic resources include collections of full text periodicals, newspapers, subject databases and reference books. A number of these databases can be accessed from outside the College. Details of this service are available from the library enquiry desks.

7.9 Independent learning and personal development

When student's progress from entry level through to HE courses they should increasingly develop independent learning techniques to enhance their personal development. Therefore independent learning will be encouraged for all students, appropriate to their skills and experience, through the use of ILT technology, project based activity, presentation, placement experience and team work activities as well as the range of enrichment activities organised within their POS.

7.10 Lead Lecturers for Module Development

The College runs a range of similar POS on each of its major campuses. These will have a variety of lecturers involved in the local delivery of similar modules. Where a module is taught in a number of campuses, there will be standardisation of the delivery and course material. A lecturer will be nominated as lead module coordinator responsible for delegating work to other team members, collating the SOW, assignment briefs, organising cross-marking, and ensuring that the on-line team site and MOODLE are populated with the appropriate documents. This will improve a quality learning experience for the students and reduce the preparation and marking burden for lecturing staff.

7.11 Role of Work-based learning within higher education programmes

The QAA UK Quality Code Part B: Assuring and enhancing academic quality Chapter B3 Learning and teaching (September 2012) notes that the definition of work-based and placement learning will depend on the context of the qualification and the institution. Within SERC the following definitions apply:

Work Placement is paid or unpaid mandatory assessed work based learning which contributes towards a summative assessment;

Work Experience is work shadowing of two weeks or less for a student to observe a member of staff in an organisation prior to pursuing a career;

Programme teams working with awarding bodies can decide the extent of the work-based, placement and project learning to meet intended learning outcomes and contribute to a coherent assessment strategy. The expectation is that all higher education will use this type of assessment to meet the specific characteristics of SERC's HE provision defined at 5.1.5

The roles and responsibilities of all parties involved will be outlined in programme handbook and unit guidance. The detailed policies and procedures which should be followed can be found on the SERC Work Placement and Work Experience team site. The recording of engagement with employers by staff and students will use [BEST software](#) (Business Engagement Software Tracking).

8 Assessment and grading

8.1 Assessment schedules

The assessment schedule is aimed at streamlining the assessments across all of the modules within a POS and to ensure that there is a variety of assessment methods used. All FT courses will create an assessment schedule for each year of the POS. The assessment schedule should be distributed to all students within the cohort to ensure that they are aware of what is expected of them and start to take responsibility for their own learning and progression within the first 2 weeks of a module starting.

8.2 Assessment methods

Lecturers will devise a range of assessment methods such as written, practical, peer and e-assessment. Students will be encouraged to submit written assignments electronically. These will be marked and returned electronically through MOODLE, MS Teams, Class notebook and other electronic and online learning systems and eportfolios within 3 weeks of submission. Lecturers will store all assignment feedback and returns for quality purposes. All students will be expected to keep electronic or hard copies of their submitted work.

8.3 Plagiarism

SERC will aim to assure academic rigour and authenticity in all submitted work. Academic Misconduct will include the terms: 'Plagiarism, cheating, collusion and attempting to obtain an unfair academic advantage'. Plagiarism is "The failure to acknowledge sources properly and/or the submission of another person's work as if it were the candidate's own (Joint Council for Qualifications, 2004)'. HE students will be expected to submit written assessments through plagiarism detection software (turnitin.com). Incidences of plagiarism will be dealt with through the Student and Trainee Disciplinary and Behaviour Policy and SOP.

8.4 Feedback to students on progress

The College views feedback as an important learning tool for students. Students will receive written feedback (using College template) 3 weeks after submission to the module tutor (this will include 1 week for cross marking purposes). Feedback should be constructive which will identify areas of good practice evident in the submitted work and indicate how a student could improve their work or future work. The grade will reflect the adjectives used in the feedback.

8.5 Late submission of assessment

Lecturers will refer all students to course submission and grading guidelines during the induction process and throughout their course. However the College recognises there may be circumstances that prevent assessment being handed in on time. A 'late submission' is defined as an assignment submitted after the agreed submission time and date but before the seventh day after the submission date. For all late submissions, students should ask for an extension which will be considered by module tutor. Unauthorised late submissions will be marked according to the College Student handbook (see Assessment and Grading SOP).

9 Quality Assurance (QA)

Quality will be at the core of all College activity and is central to achieving excellence in the provision of education and training opportunities for individuals, employers and the community. Within a culture of self-improvement the College is committed to achieving excellence.

The College's QA system will focus on the following dimensions of the curriculum:

- i) the quality of the teaching, learning and assessment; and
- ii) the quality of the student experience including the level of learning support and student service.

The College will implement a rigorous system of monitoring, review and evaluation to ensure that all programmes are designed and delivered to the highest standard (see Quality Assurance SOP). These will be planned and coordinated through the College QA year planner or schedule.

9.1 Course management

Effective course management and administration is important to ensure that students are enrolled onto the correct POS and are supported and monitored as they progress through their studies. Therefore all FT POS and substantive PT POS will have a coordinator appointed who will be responsible for the management and administration of the student learning experience. They will organise and manage a range of activities to ensure that students are tracked and managed effectively and efficiently.

9.2 Staff Student Consultative Committees, Focus Groups, Online Surveys

The College is very dependent on the feedback from students as it gives a very real indicator of the quality of the learning experience for students and will help determine any corrective action that may be necessary if quality standards are poor. Each POS will have two staff students' consultative groups per academic year (one per semester). Minutes of these will be posted on the team site. The quality team will post a number of online surveys per academic year that students will be asked to complete. The quality unit will conduct a number of independent focus groups with student representatives. The information gathered from these will be used in the SER and where appropriate update the current QIP. This is an important element of the continuous improvement process.

9.3 Staff Appraisal

In accordance with the Further Education Lecturers Appraisal Scheme, the aim of which is to contribute to the individual performance of staff, thereby enhancing the College effectiveness and efficiency, each staff member will be given the opportunity to be appraised annually or at least every two years. Selection of staff will reflect areas for improvement identified in course SERs. Each school will identify appraisees and appraisers for the following academic year in the QIP.

Progress of appraisal will be monitored by monthly performance management meetings with SMT. The appraisal process will identify any staff development needs of the lecturer and will have a major influence on the College staff development priorities.

9.4 Staff Development

The CMT will identify key areas for staff development for both corporate and lecturing staff each year. Staff development needs may also be identified by staff, via course SER and collated and prioritised in the school/unit QIP. HOS/unit will forward Staff Development requests to HR.

Staff development needs identified during the appraisal process will be forwarded to HR, by HOS as they arise.

Staff development activities may be organised in both College wide staff development days and also in bespoke school, unit or teaching team cohorts. The staff development priorities and scheduling will be organised within the constraints of the staff development annual budget and calendar.

9.5 Internal Inspection

Internal inspections enable the College to determine the quality of provision in a curriculum area and provide useful feedback to lecturers and managers on any quality issues that may need addressed. A major part of this process is classroom observation. The Quality unit will hold internal inspections, as designated by SMT. The breadth and scope of these will include programme management, teaching and learning.

9.6 Internal Verification (IV)

IV procedures will ensure quality of assessment, standards and standardisation across programmes and campuses. The Quality Unit will ensure adherence to the IV SOP. Each POS will have a designated Lead IV. The Lead IV in conjunction with the co-ordinators will identify a lead module IV, who will be responsible for ensuring IV of assignment brief and assessment decisions. It will be the responsibility of the Lead IV to meet the requirements of individual awarding bodies. The Lead IV will have the responsibility of signing off the programme, once all IV decisions have been monitored, tracked and recorded, as detailed in the SERC Assessment and IV SOPs.

9.7 Self Evaluation Reports (SER)

Self-evaluation is an important element of the continuous improvement process. It allows the lecturer team involved in the delivery of learning to reflect on the effectiveness of the programme and to look at ways in which it can be improved. Self-evaluation reports will be created for each FT Course and for large cohort of PT students such as A Levels or essential skills.

SERs will also be created at School and College level which will focus upon the key strengths and areas for improvement within the School or College.

9.8 Quality Improvement Plans (QIP)

The QIP is important document driving forward the continuous improvement process. It will allow each school to formulate a series of smart targets, (set within context), to address area's for improvement identified within the course SER. The QIP will be a dynamic document that will be updated on a monthly basis by each HOS. The process of the QIP will be monitored and reviewed by CMT via the monthly performance management meetings.

9.9 Awarding bodies

The College works with over 40 awarding bodies. The College will ensure that it complies with QA regulations of the awarding bodies. The Quality Unit will liaise with awarding bodies to ensure all curriculum developments are disseminated to appropriate teams.

9.10 ETI

The College will fully co-operate with ETI in facilitating inspections and surveys which are an important part of the QA process. The Quality Unit will liaise with ETI and disseminate information to appropriate teams for inspections, surveys. They will collate all data required

by ETI and ensure that course teams have this data available in an appropriate format for ETI. The Quality unit will report to SMT on progress.

9.11 QAA

The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education's (QAA) mission is to safeguard the public interest in sound standards of HE qualifications and to encourage continuous improvement in the management of the quality of HE. QAA does this by working with HE providers to define academic standards, quality, and enhancement, and by carrying out reviews of HE programmes against these standards.

The College Quality Unit will liaise with QAA and disseminate information to appropriate teams for inspections, surveys. They will collate all data required by QAA and ensure that course teams have this data available in an appropriate format for QAA. The Quality Unit will report to SMT on progress.

9.11a Consumer Protection Obligations

The College's Marketing and Communications Standard Operating Procedure provides clear guidance for producing accurate, accessible and reliable information across print and digital media. The College intranet and website are the main sources of information. The website's dedicated higher education pages feature all key course information, associated policies and support. Following the release of Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) guidance, the College has updated website resources to ensure compliance.

9.12 Sectoral Partnerships

Heads of School responsible for curriculum areas will participate in Sectoral Partnerships organised by DfE to ensure the College curriculum provision/ training and development remains current and fulfils sector needs.

9.13 Complaints

A complaint to the College could be an indicator that there is a potential problem in the service it provides. Therefore the College will record, track and investigate any complaints and provide feedback to the complainant in accordance with the Customer Feedback SOP.

9.14 External Companies and Partnerships

The College Business Services Unit has a co-ordinating function to help manage the many partnerships that exist with a host of external companies. HOS, DHOS and Co-ordinators will also liaise with external companies and partnerships re: curriculum development to meet both student and local needs.

9.15 Employer Forums

Team management should seek employer contribution to student's assessment, curriculum development, and project based learning, where appropriate. Each school will arrange an annual employer's forum as a platform for discussion and action points. Outcomes will be minuted and recorded on the team site.

10 Role of Knowledge Management Systems

The College has a range of bespoke IT tools and systems that enables it to manage the students and staff. These range from induction, learning and assessment material to policies, protocols and reports that enable managers to monitor and improve the learning environment. These are known as Knowledge Management Systems (KMS).

10.1 School Team Sites

Each School will organise and manage its own team site. The team site will contain information that managers and lecturers will reference on a regular basis and will enable them to collaborate and share this information in a more productive way. A number of areas will be organised in a common format to ensure consistency and to enable senior managers to locate information efficiently. These will include SERs, QIPs, finance, curriculum (staff documents, Schemes of work, lesson plans, EV reports etc.), school year plan, HOS presentations. Minutes of all meetings should be stored on the team site. The team site will be maintained by the school support officer.

10.2 Internal Communications

The HOS and DHOS will have a series of mandatory scheduled events where they are able to brief staff on any current priorities such as progress on the QIP and respond directly to any questions or feedback. This is an extremely important listening tool as it enables staff to raise concerns directly with their line manager.

10.3 Support Unit Teams Sites

Other College support units will maintain team sites that provide help or guidance on a range of issues. These may include Human resources, finance, estates etc.

10.4 Applications and Enrolments

The suite of reports developed for the management of applications and enrolments are a key indicator of the likely curriculum provision at the start of the academic year. School managers and programme coordinators will use these reports to track early retention rates and hence performance of programmes in the early phase of the QA cycle.

10.5 E-Individual Learning Plan (E-ILP)

The E-ILP is used to track the progress of FT students within their POS. It also tracks their completion of a range of induction modules as well as learning support and other key records. Programme co-ordinators are obliged to ensure that all FT students complete the E-ILP within the first 3 weeks of the programme starting.

10.6 E-Registers

E-Registers are an important element in monitoring student attendance and identifying any quality issues within a programme. Lecturers are contractually obliged to complete E-registers in a timely fashion in accordance with the Student Retention, Marking and Management of E-Registers SOP. The completion of e-registers will be monitored by the appropriate DHOS.

10.7 FELS and ETI Retention, Achievement and Success

The College has developed a suite of reports that enable courses, and schools to trend their performance and benchmark with similar provision within the College. For example a L3 programme in engineering can benchmark its performance with other similar L3 provision within the College. These reports are a key element in the SER and QA processes and will be a major determinant of the grade of a course or school.

10.8 Unique Student Number (ULN)

The ULN is an identifier that is generated by an independent organisation on behalf of the FE sector. The ULN is used as the primary identifier for students and will enable them to access their student record with MIAP. All students must grant the College permission to access their student record. The College will register those students who have not yet received a ULN with MIAP to generate a ULN for them.

11 Accreditation and examinations

As far as possible all curriculum provision will have accredited outcomes – either listed on the Qualification and Credit Framework (QCF) or professional/industry standards qualifications. The College will ensure that students are registered with the appropriate awarding body in time to fulfil all accreditation and quality requirements.