

# FURTHER EDUCATION

HANDBOOK

2024 - 25



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**WELCOME**

# Welcome

If you are a new student, I am delighted to welcome you to South Eastern Regional College (SERC). If you are returning, I am equally delighted to welcome you back. Along with all my colleagues on the staff of the College, I would like to wish you an enjoyable and successful year.

This Handbook is designed to provide you with key information on the College. It also answers some of the questions that you may have about services and support available to you and how to make the most of your time with us. Please do not hesitate to ask a member of staff if you have any other questions about SERC.

As you enrol on your college course, you are taking on an exciting and rewarding challenge. Our aim is to help you to settle in quickly to college life.

I wish you every success.

Tommy Martin (Interim) Principal and Chief Executive



## **Vision & Mission**

### Vision

We will be an innovative and entrepreneurial world-class education provider.

### Mission

Our mission is to shape and influence our community, by promoting and innovative and entrepreneurial society through shaping and influencing education and skills, maintaining an inclusive learning environment, which will empower and enable individuals and businesses to fulfil their ambitions. In doing so we will contribute to the Programme for Government and associated strategies which are aimed at promoting social and economic wellbeing and the future prosperity of Northern Ireland.



## **Introduction**

This online handbook is intended to be a reference point for all Further Education (FE) students. It is an overall summary of FE structure, regulations and support services at SERC. You will also receive detailed information directly related to your programme in your Programme Study Handbook. Used together they will provide the information needed through your Programme of Study (POS).

Throughout the handbook there are links to the standard operating procedures (SOPs) and policies used to manage the Student Experience. As well as using the links directly, these can be found in the [Policies and Procedures section on the SERC Website](#).

### **“What our students say...”**

“The facilities and the tutors are great and last year I had the opportunity to go to Italy on a study placement through the Turing Scheme. It took me out of my comfort zone, but it was amazing to see everyday science in another part of the world.”

**Cassie Caldwell, Level 3 Extended Diploma in Applied Sciences**

“I had no prior experience of barbering, so the Level 2 was fantastic as it gave me a great foundation to progress. I also took on a summer position between the courses and this really helped me hit the ground running for the Level 3 Barbering. The course is full-on, as you are just here for a year and there is a lot to pack in. The lecturers are great though and it is fun and enjoyable.”

**Jake McNeill, Level 3 Barbering**

The classes are small, so you get lots of help and support. I really enjoyed my time on the Level 3 course and the blend of both theory and practical work-based elements. I especially loved being able to work in the workshop and show my creativity through many projects, which is something you don't get to experience much in school. Although I was one of the only girls on my course, I felt encouraged by two of my female tutors, who inspired me with the knowledge that there is a strong presence of women in this industry.”

**Chloe Geddes, L3 National Diploma Advanced Manufacturing**

“The course is great, because you get experience as well as a qualification – I think schools focus on the qualification only, but at SERC, you get the practical aspects, too. A lot of it is project-based; I went to some university open days, and I know that we are doing modules which are equivalent to university modules. We’ve also had trips to workplaces, and some of the class got work experience in Malta last year.”

**Baraa Salaho, Level 3 Diploma in Construction and the Built Environment**



# KEY INFORMATION

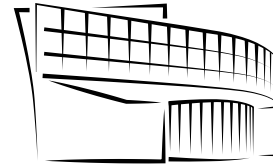


# Key Information

## Campus Contact Information

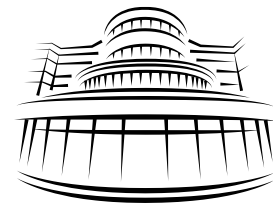
### Space Bangor Campus

Castle Park Road, Bangor,  
Co. Down, Northern Ireland, BT20 4TD



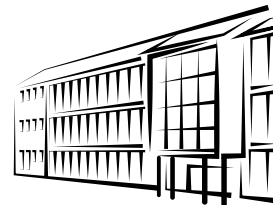
### Bangor Campus

Castle Park Road, Bangor,  
Co. Down, Northern Ireland, BT20 4TD



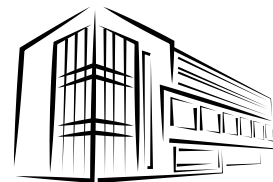
### Newtownards Campus

Victoria Avenue, Newtownards,  
Co. Down, Northern Ireland, BT23 7EH



### Downpatrick Campus

Market Street, Downpatrick,  
Co. Down, Northern Ireland, BT30 6LZ



### Lisburn Campus

Castle Street, Lisburn,  
Co. Antrim, Northern Ireland, BT27 4SU



### Newcastle Campus

Castlewellan Road, Newcastle,  
Co. Down, Northern Ireland, BT33 0UR



General Enquiries: [info@serc.ac.uk](mailto:info@serc.ac.uk) Call us: 0345 600 7555

## FE Calendar 2024-25

### Term 1

**<sup>1</sup>Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2024 to Friday 20<sup>th</sup> December 2024 inclusive**

**Please note:** New and Returning students need to check their emails for specific start date and time during week commencing 2<sup>nd</sup> September – this information will be forwarded in late August.

- **Halloween Break:** Monday 28th October 2024 to Friday 1st November 2024
- **Christmas Break:** Monday 23rd December 2024 to Friday 3rd January 2025

### Term 2

**Monday 6th January 2025 to Friday 11th April 2025 inclusive**

- **Virtual/Inter Semester Week:** Mon 20<sup>th</sup> January 2025 to Fri 24<sup>th</sup> January 2025
- **Mid-Term:** Monday 10<sup>th</sup> February 2025 to Friday 14<sup>th</sup> February 2025
- **Public Holiday (St Patrick's):** Monday 17<sup>th</sup> March 2025
- **Easter Break:** Monday 14<sup>th</sup> April 2025 to Friday 25<sup>th</sup> April 2025

### Term 3

**Monday 28<sup>th</sup> April 2025 to Friday 6<sup>th</sup> June 2025 inclusive**

- **Public Holiday:** Monday 5<sup>th</sup> May 2025
- **Public Holiday:** Monday 26th May 2025

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<sup>1</sup> Induction will take place the first week of term – FE – w/c 2<sup>nd</sup> September

## Terms and Conditions

The Terms and Conditions given to you when you applied and confirmed by your acceptance and enrolment on this course are available on the SERC Website and can be accessed by this link [Terms and Conditions 2024-25](#).

## Health and Safety

No Smoking Policy and Substance Abuse

The College has a [Smoking Policy](#) which includes e-cigarettes. Smoking is not permitted on any part of SERC campuses except in designated external smoking areas. You will be advised of these designated areas during the induction period of your programme. E-cigarettes may not be used within any of the SERC campuses. The College has a no tolerance policy for substance abuse and will act in accordance with the [Substance Misuse SOP](#).

Fire/Emergency Evacuation Procedure

South Eastern Regional College has a Fire/Emergency Evacuation procedure for each campus. This will be fully explained at induction and is accessible on the SERC Website under Public Information Policies and Procedures section within the General Health & Safety SOP. You must comply fully with this policy as failure to do so may potentially endanger life. Failure to comply with such procedures will be dealt with through the Student / Trainee Performance, Behaviour and Disciplinary Procedures.

Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEP's)

Any student who has a disability that may affect how they can be evacuated from the College buildings must have a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) completed. This plan will detail how such a student can be evacuated quickly and safely from the building should an emergency arise.

“A PEEP or Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan is the responsibility of the learner, and this will be created alongside their course Tutor and with support (if required) from Learning Support and the Lead Designated Safeguarding Officer. Any learner who requires a PEEP must follow it in the event of a Fire or other Emergency Evacuation.”

Individual Risk Assessments

Should a student experience a health-related condition that brings particular risks to themselves or other students or staff then they should disclose details of this to a member of the Learning Support Staff, or to their lecturer, ideally at the time of application. In such

circumstances a Risk Assessment will be completed, and a Management Plan prepared to address these risks. In every case the College will take all reasonable steps to ensure the safety of the student, their classmates and SERC staff.

#### Health and Safety Regulations

You are required to abide by the College's Health and Safety Regulations at all times. The regulations which govern you state that: 'All students shall be advised that they:

- Have a duty for the safety of themselves, their fellow students and others in relation to their actions.
- Are required, when safety is involved, to wear appropriate clothing, PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) when required and observe proper standards of behaviour;
- Are required to observe safety rules and procedures.
- Must not interfere with or misuse anything provided within the College for health and safety; and
- Are expected to report to staff any instruments, machinery or other college equipment or facilities which constitute a hazard.'

Further details regarding the specific Health and Safety requirements as they relate to your programme of study will be provided by your lecturers during the induction period of your programme. A complete copy of the SERC Health and Safety Policy and Procedures can be found on the SERC Website under [Public Information Policies and Procedures section](#).





**ENROLMENT**

# Enrolment

## Enrolment Information

When you enrol as a student at SERC you are agreeing to the rules and regulations of SERC as set out in the College's Terms and Conditions. At enrolment, you need to:

- Upload original examination results – these will be held on your account
- Upload appropriate identification on your on-line account. We accept the following:
  - > A birth certificate issued in the United Kingdom or Ireland
  - > An adoption certificate issued in the United Kingdom or Ireland
  - > A passport
  - > A driving licence
  - > A National Identity Card
  - > A Biometric Residence Permit
- Complete an online enrolment form confirming you agree to the College's Terms and Conditions of study.

## Induction

During the first couple of weeks of the year you will complete an induction to both the College and your course. This will involve a whole range of activities and will enable you to:

- Meet and get to know your tutors.
- Meet and get to know your classmates.
- Learn more about your course and get to know your campus.
- Learn how to use the college IT systems including Teams and Moodle.
- Participate in a college wide Project Based Learning competition.
- Get to know and understand how to get help and support while attending SERC.
- Meet the Students Union representatives.
- Learn about the college's Health and Safety rules.
- Enjoy being at college.

## **Student Records**

Student records are held in the College's central database. It is important that you tell Customer Services of any changes to your personal details in order that these can be kept up to date.

## **Privacy Notice**

SERC looks after your private data carefully and in line with all data protection legislation. The Privacy notice below explains this in more detail.

<https://privacy.serc.ac.uk/privacynotice>

## **Criminal Convictions**

SERC is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all students, trainees and staff as they attend the College, while at the same time ensuring that there is an equality of opportunity for all applicants including those with criminal convictions.

The College requests all applicants who hold, or have held any convictions at the time of their application to declare these in line with the Criminal Conviction Disclosure Procedure (which is included within the [Safeguarding, Care and Welfare SOP](#)) so that, if necessary, an appropriate risk assessment and management plan can be prepared.

If a student receives a conviction whilst at SERC, they must disclose it through the Criminal Conviction Disclosure Procedure so that, if necessary, an appropriate risk assessment and management plan can be prepared. Any disclosure will be seen in the context of the occupational area you follow, the nature of the offence and the responsibility the College has to care for all students, staff and others who attend the College. However, should we become aware of an offence that has not been disclosed, the College will review the risk and decide if the student must withdraw from the course until the Criminal Conviction Disclosure Procedure can be applied.

## **Course Duration**

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 programme of study duration as published on the College web site or prospectus at the time they enrolled on the programme. In exceptional cases, for operational reasons, the campus where the course is delivered may change during the programme of study. Should a change be necessary you will be consulted at the earliest opportunity.

## **Artificial Intelligence – Use in Research and in Assessments**

Artificial Intelligence (AI) refers to the use of tools to obtain information and content which might be useful for students who are researching a particular topic. While the use of AI artificial intelligence for research purposes is permissible, you should be aware that the misuse of AI tools in relation to assessments constitutes malpractice. You need to be clear that all work submitted for qualification assessments must be your work own. Breaches of assessment regulations will be dealt with through the relevant assessment and disciplinary policies and procedures.

You must only use AI tools when you are permitted to do so by the assessor within the Awarding Organisation regulations. Where you are permitted to use AI tools you must be able to demonstrate that the final submission is your own independent work and independent thinking.

Examples of AI misuse include: copying or paraphrasing sections of AI-generated content so that the work is no longer your own; copying or paraphrasing whole responses of AI-generated content; using AI to complete parts of the assessment so that the work does not reflect your own work, analysis, evaluation or calculations; failing to acknowledge use of AI tools as a source of information; submitting work with intentionally incomplete or misleading references or bibliographies.



## **Progression within the College**

The College will encourage you to progress through the various levels in line with your skills and abilities. Progression from one programme 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.

You will be given the opportunity to develop skills, qualities and competencies which will aid you in your personal and professional development to achieve and contribute positively to the economy. We will encourage you to complete your full programme of study, which may include Essential Skills, in order to equip you to progress to the next level or to employment.

Remember that some universities will require you to have GCSE Maths and/or English to progress to a new qualification with them. You should check this requirement early with the university and if necessary, enrol yourself in the appropriate class in college to achieve GCSE Maths and/or English if required. You can ask your tutor and the careers staff for advice. You will be responsible for the course fees for your GCSEs.



**WHAT IS EXPECTED  
OF ME?**

# What is Expected of Me?

## Student Code of Conduct

This Code sets out the standard of conduct that SERC expects of all students so that everyone enjoys a safe, healthy and inclusive learning environment. Good conduct means acting with honesty, being considerate and showing respect for yourself and others. It means treating everyone you meet with courtesy, and avoiding any actions which may cause offence or harm to others.

Good conduct **in class** means...

- Attending every class, being punctual, and notifying staff of any absence
- Submitting coursework on time and making sure the work is all your own - do not copy from others, textbooks or the internet
- Complying with Awarding Body and Examination regulations relating to submitting coursework, plagiarism and exam arrangements.
- Behaving appropriately in the classroom
- Adhering to guidance from tutors on mobile phones/devices, breaks and consumption of food/drink in the classroom
- Showing respect for other students e.g. allowing others to speak, not causing disruption and not swearing
- Complying with guidance on appropriate use of the College IT systems

Good conduct **in and around SERC** means...

- Showing respect for property and facilities by disposing of litter properly and not damaging any tools, equipment or other resources
- Driving and parking appropriately on campus grounds and with consideration for others
- Not behaving in a way that damages the reputation of the College
- Not bringing offensive weapons or items which could harm others into College
- Adhering to the College's No Smoking Policy which includes e-cigarettes

- Conforming with all Health and Safety rules and instructions such as fire evacuation, safe use of machinery and the wearing of Personal Protective Equipment or the correct uniform
- Not consuming, possessing or distributing alcohol or drugs while engaged in SERC related activity.

Good conduct **Towards Others** means...

- Recognising the diversity of our College community by treating everyone with respect and not discriminating against anyone who is different from you.
- Respecting the rights and freedoms of other students, staff, college contractors, local residents and business owners
- Actively discouraging bullying and harassment and reporting any incidents that you see. Speak out against racism, sexism, homophobia and other forms of prejudice
- Not making inappropriate comments about the College, its staff or other students on Social Media, and not displaying clothing or tattoos with emblems that would cause offence to others.

During the induction phase of your course you will be provided with further specific conduct requirements that relate to your particular programme of study. Breaches of the Code of Conduct will be addressed using the SERC [Student/Trainee Performance, Behaviour and Disciplinary Management Procedures](#).

Taken together, compliance with these requirements will enable all of our students to learn in an environment which maximises effective learning while at the same time minimises stress on both students and staff.

### **Programme Regulations**

This section details the main regulations that cover most Further Education programmes. Some programmes may have special regulations and you will be advised of these at the start of your study by the course team. It is important that you read and understand all regulations that pertain to your course. If you have any questions regarding them, you should ask for guidance from your programme coordinator.

#### Attendance Requirements

You should aspire to achieve 100% attendance at all timetabled classes and other activities including all Essential Skills classes. You are required to attend a minimum of 80% of all learning activities in each module of your course. Failure to do so may mean that you will be asked to leave the course on grounds of Academic Standing (see below).

If you expect to be absent from your course for more than five days, you must advise the programme coordinator in advance. Prolonged absence from your course, without good reason, is viewed as a serious breach of regulations. If your absence is for medical reasons or other personal circumstances, you must provide your programme coordinator with a medical certificate or evidence of your extenuating circumstances on your return. Your programme coordinator will advise you of any additional documentation to be completed.

Attendance will be reviewed periodically as per the College's Authorisation of Absences SOP. Disciplinary action may be taken where poor attendance is identified. Please refer to the [Authorisation of Absences for Full-Time Students SOP](#) for details.

#### Good Academic Standing

The College is required to advise grant-awarding bodies that an individual student is 'in good academic standing'. This statement will not be made in respect of any student whose attendance is unsatisfactory or whose behaviour on the course is otherwise unsatisfactory. Any student absent without agreed leave of absence for four weeks will be assumed to have withdrawn from their course and their sponsor body will be notified accordingly.

#### Mobile Phones and Electronic Devices

Mobile telephones must be on silent in the Library, Resource Centre and during all class activities. If you are required to take an important call during class please inform your lecturer in advance. Mobile phones and smart watches should not be brought into Examinations.

## Student Discipline

SERC has a responsibility for creating a peaceful and positive learning environment so that all learners can focus on their learning without disruption. At the same time, SERC must ensure that staff have the opportunity to work with learners in safety, in compliance with legal requirements and without unnecessary distraction. To ensure that this is achieved student behaviour and performance is monitored and managed. From time to time appropriate disciplinary action may need to be taken when student behaviour fails to meet an acceptable standard.

The process for managing student performance, behaviour and discipline will take account of the needs of the student and will be applied in a manner that will support the development of appropriate, positive, respectful behaviours and successful learning.

This section, “Code of Conduct”, provides details of the conduct that is expected of students while attending SERC and failure to comply with these requirements will be addressed using the SERC Student/Trainee Performance, Behaviour and Disciplinary Management Procedures.

## **Use of College IT Systems**

You are bound by the terms and conditions of the College’s [Acceptable ICT Use Policy](#). The College uses web filtering software to block access to prohibited sites and material. In the event that you inadvertently access any offensive or sexually explicit material, for example from a link in an email, you should leave that site immediately and inform both your course tutor and the IT and Services Department giving details of the URL visited.

As stated in the College’s [Acceptable ICT Use Policy](#), SERC retains the right to monitor the transmission or storage of material through its computing services if it is suspected that acceptable use has been violated.

## **Social Media**

The following guidance is to help you understand the implications of using both college and/or personal social media. Social media is defined as any type of interactive online media

that allows parties to communicate instantly with each other or to share data in a public or internal forum. This constantly changing area includes (but is not limited to):

- Online social forums such as Twitter, Facebook & LinkedIn.
- Blogs, videos and image-sharing websites such as YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok.
- Messaging technologies such as Microsoft Teams, Zoom, Skype, WhatsApp, iMessage and Snapchat.
- Dating apps.
- Personal web space.

Although SERC permits personal use of social media, you are reminded that access to these facilities is a privilege and that social media use shouldn't interfere with your responsibilities and commitments during class time. Access to social media is currently permitted by default, however, the principle of privilege and responsibility applies all students and access may be removed if you fail meet your responsibilities and commitments.

It is your responsibility to read and act in accordance with the rules and guidelines set out by individual social media sites. However, in addition to these rules, SERC require that you:

- Should not use social media websites to criticise the College, or any staff members, students or third parties.
- Should not use social media websites to abuse, harass staff members, students or any other third parties.
- Must remember not to post any comment, or image that would bring the College into disrepute, or give cause for a third party to consider taking legal action.
- Must not place information pertaining to, or upload image(s) of college staff or other students to any web site without the prior consent being obtained from the staff and student member(s) in question.

You are reminded that the line between Academic, Professional and Personal use of social media is not always clear and personal use can have an impact in the College and on the studies of others. It is therefore important that you bear the following advice in mind when using social media.

When using personal social media, remember that although you are not acting on behalf of SERC, you can impact on the College's reputation if you are identified as being a SERC student. Your online profile may reference SERC's name as your place of study, so make sure that any of your comments/posts are inoffensive and thought-through.

Some online communities can be volatile, tempting users to behave in ways they otherwise wouldn't. Don't forget that anything posted online can be seen by anybody, and that it might not be possible to remove it. Deletion in the online world is neither instant nor permanent and may have an effect later in life.

Online social media material can be retrieved by legal bodies in some cases years after posting. Bodies providing internet access have legal requirements to store material for lengthy periods of time. Think before you post! Remember that prospective employers or universities may trawl social media sites as part of their selection process and the social media posts you make could undermine your future prospects.

Should you encounter or witness any inappropriate behaviour such as bullying or illegal activity on social media, you can talk to your course tutor, or seek guidance from the PSNI. or access free, impartial online safety advice on communication and social networking on the [Get Safe Online](#) website.





# ABOUT MY COURSE

## About My Course

### My Programme of Study - FE Full Time

**Your programme of study will incorporate a number of elements including:**

- The relevant vocational qualification.
- Appropriate Essential Skills (i.e. if you do not hold a grade C in GCSE English or Maths or their equivalent).
- Appropriate employability units.
- Enterprise programme of activities.
- Work placement, work experience or industry led project.
- Guest speakers from industry or company visits.

These are all designed to help increase your chances of getting a job when you leave. You will develop the knowledge and skills which are expected by industry.

**SERC is developing specific characteristics for the FE provision which it delivers, and they include:**

- Producing a work-ready workforce with general subject specific skills and knowledge that relates to their chosen area of study e.g., engineering, construction, business etc.
- Personal development skills including the capability for learning and reflection, problem solving, e-learning and life-long learning.
- Employability skills such as being able to work as part of a team to find solutions to problems with people from different backgrounds.
- Widening student participation in FE and supporting those students' development.
- 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.

Throughout your studies you will develop employability skills and will participate in opportunities tailored to your vocational area.

In this way the College will be deliver a modern and dynamic FE provision which is responsive to the evolving needs of the economy, in a cost-effective manner.

### **My Programme of Study – FE Part Time**

We aspire to offer a portfolio of FE part-time (PT) qualifications at Level 1 to Level 3. Part-time FE programmes will incorporate the relevant vocational qualification and where appropriate the associated Essential Skills qualifications. If you are on a PT FE programme you will be required to participate in all elements of the programme and will be monitored by tutors. We will provide you with guidance and support.

### **Our FE PT provision will:**

- Skills to address economic and community needs in the local region 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 Virtual Learning Environments (VLEs) in addition to the specific learning outcomes associated with their chosen vocational programme.
- Provide suitable progression pathways for students from pre-16 education programmes from other educational institutions and from within SERC's School Partnerships.
- Provide opportunities for progression to HE programmes and/or to appropriate employment in the local economy.
- Allow 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.
- Develop entrepreneurial and employability.

## **Who's Who?**

### Explanation of Roles

A number of people are involved in managing your course. A programme coordinator looks after each programme of study and is supported by the course team and unit tutors. While the programme coordinator and course team are responsible for the day-to-day operation of your course, it is the Principal Lecturer and Head of School who are responsible for the overall management of all courses within their School

Most of your day-to-day dealings will be with the course tutors and if you have any queries the best starting point is usually to raise this with the unit tutor in question or your programme coordinator. You will be allocated a personal tutor each year. Your tutor is someone who can get to know you and support you throughout the course by helping when needed.

It is very important that you keep in touch with your course tutors especially if you are facing problems or issues. They will advise you how to access additional help or they may discuss the issues with you. If your tutors do not know about issues that may affect your potential to achieve, they cannot help you. So, keep them informed of any changes in your personal circumstances.

### College E-mail and Microsoft Teams

The main form of communication with students is via the College e-mail system. You will be given a SERC email account, which you should check regularly as many staff use this to relay information directly to you.

You will also have access to Microsoft Teams which you can use to communicate with both staff and students within the College.

When you need to contact a member of staff you should, in the first instance use the staff e-mail system. As with all communications, please be courteous and polite in sending messages. For further information see the Use of College IT systems and Social Media sections.

## **Course Structure and Content**

### Student Induction

Induction is a vital part of your education to ensure you are aware of the services you are entitled to and your responsibilities as a student. All FT students will undergo a range of induction activities including completion of online modules as well as face to face activities with course tutors. Online modules will include, student finance, ILT facilities, counselling, Health and Safety. Your programme coordinator will inform you about induction dates. It is important that you attend these events.

### Course Handbook

You will be provided with a course handbook which will detail the modules to be studied in each year. Tutors will provide you with an outline of the module, known as 'the module content or specification'. This will detail the learning scheme for the module including topics to be covered, reading lists, assignment titles and assignment hand-in dates. These documents will also be available on Moodle or via Microsoft Teams.

FE course teams strive to provide a quality learning experience and your feedback is important to help us to do this. You will be invited to participate in a staff-student consultative meeting halfway through each semester and to undertake module reviews at the end of each module. You will also be requested to participate in student surveys.

### Tutorial Programme

You 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. You will have a weekly timetabled tutorial which will include careers education, cultural diversity and development.

### Students Placement and Insurance

A SERC placement may be undertaken as an assessed mandatory component of a course or a non-compulsory opportunity to provide valuable vocational experience. SERC recognises that placements are vital in the successful competition for jobs and provide an opportunity to put the theory taught in the classroom into practice.

Full and part time students from all disciplines including those without course stipulated placements are encouraged to participate in a work placement. SERC will support students in their search for a placement and expect them to work closely with their tutor and work placement officer who will guide them through the process.

To help in the search SERC has developed a highly functional software system accessible through the Work Placement App, which allows students to search for companies, placement vacancies or to inform staff of placements independently found by students. Placement students, college placement staff and placement providers are given secure access to their particular information. SERC and the placement provider will at all times act in compliance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the United Kingdom General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR).

Placements could be with a large company or SME (Small Medium Enterprise), in Northern Ireland or overseas. Modes of attendance vary depending on course requirements and can last an academic year or a number of weeks, attending one day per week to as many as five days per week. Non-compulsory placements are completed in the student's spare time and must be course related and in agreement with the course tutor.

SERC will put in place the necessary placement documentation to guarantee we have done all that is reasonably possible to ensure students have a safe and rewarding placement. This includes a risk assessment which is completed for each student.

Placement opportunities that involve working with children and/or adults at risk of harm or adults in need of protection may require students to get a valid ACCESS NI clearance. Further details of this process can be found in the SERC Safeguarding, Care and Welfare Procedure on the SERC website [Policies and Procedures section](#)

Access NI is a criminal history disclosure service in Northern Ireland, which provides different levels of information about an individual. When an 'enhanced' or 'enhanced with barred list' check is required this involves the same information as a standard check as well

as a check of police records held locally and information from the Disclosure and Barring Service.

SERC will process the applications for full and part-time, Higher and Further Education students. All students are required to pay for their ACCESS NI clearance. Details of work placement staff are provided below:

**Carolyn King**  
Work Placement & Competitions Manager  
[cking@serc.ac.uk](mailto:cking@serc.ac.uk)



**Erin Harkness**  
Work Placement & Competitions Officer  
[eharkness@serc.ac.uk](mailto:eharkness@serc.ac.uk)



**Teigan Mitchell**  
Work Placement & Competitions Officer  
[tmitchell@serc.ac.uk](mailto:tmitchell@serc.ac.uk)



## The SERC Learning Experience

At SERC you will be supported in your studies and through employability activities to help prepare you for the world of work. We can offer sound careers advice, guidance, and enterprise support if you are a budding entrepreneur!

### Schemes of Work

Schemes of work are developed for all teaching sessions. These are uploaded onto Microsoft Teams or your class Moodle site and will be available by the third teaching week. The scheme of work will assist you by providing details of the running order of lessons and thus give you opportunity to prepare for these in advance.

### Project-Based Learning (PBL)

FT programme teams will source real projects to enable you to have real life industry led learning experiences with either external companies or even at SERC itself. These projects will be practical with defined and agreed outcomes, specific milestones and resources and designed to meet the requirements of awarding organisation assessment criteria.

### Delivery Methods

A range of delivery methods will be used within your Programme of Study. These may include:

**Lectures-** The purpose of a lecture is to convey basic knowledge and concepts. You will learn both from the lecture content and from different approaches to the material presented.

**Tutorials-** There are two types of tutorials – academic and pastoral. The academic tutorial may be individual, or in small groups, but the key element is the interaction between tutor and you around problems that you have raised. They are important in helping you to learn to identify and articulate problems in your work, and to seek help and constructive criticism.

**Blended Learning-** All Programmes of Study are developing a blended learning approach. This means that the range of modules within a Programme of Study will use an appropriate variety of learning methods including theory, practical workshop/laboratories, as well as a range of online 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.

#### Student Portal

The student portal is used to track your progress. It also tracks your completion of a range of induction modules and other key records. Programme coordinators will support you to complete all induction materials with the first 3 weeks of your programme.

#### Campus and 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 campus and intercampus competitions across a range of curriculum areas to give students the opportunity to raise their technical standards and improve their transversal skills set.

There are two types of competitions that students in Further Education can participate in - Project Competitions and Skills Competitions. Information can be found in the student intranet Competitions Team site and from tutors.

#### External Competitions and Awards

SERC endeavours to embed competitions into the core teaching and learning curriculum for students of all levels, therefore the college has been involved in internal competitions for many years, which have led to strong SERC competitors contributing to Northern Ireland FE's performance at UK, European and WorldSkills Levels.

Course teams, supported by the Competitions Manager will identify appropriate competitions and the process for selecting students to participate. These can also be used to select the students that will enter for Regional, National, and International competitions.

#### Employability Skills

Through their vocational programme all students will be encouraged to develop the skills of working with others, improving own learning and problem solving. Course teams will also identify appropriate and relevant enrichment activities including the possibility of work experience and qualifications linked to vocational aspirations of the groups of students.

#### Local Site Visits and Study Trips

Visits to local companies and businesses are an important part of the curriculum and will give you an appreciation of a real working environment. Course coordinators will organise a number of visits appropriate to the programme you are on. You may be asked to contribute to the cost of these visits.

#### 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. The international team will work with course coordinators and course teams to identify links with partners across Europe and internationally and explore the opportunity to access funding to support the financial costs of an international work/study placement. All students will have the chance to participate in these activities relevant to their area of study.

#### Entrepreneurship and Enterprise

The College aims to accelerate the awareness amongst students of enterprise and provide opportunities to support business ideas generation and incubation. To develop these skills a range of activities will be embedded in your Programme of Study led by the College Enterprise Champions and supported by course teams.

#### Complaints and Compliments

SERC is committed to providing the highest quality of service to all our customers. If a customer is not satisfied with the quality of service provided by the College or College staff, they have the right to complain. The College will ensure that any issues or problems raised are resolved as quickly and as close to the source as possible, to the satisfaction of all concerned.

We would encourage customers to seek to resolve any issues informally with the relevant member of staff in the first instance, however where this is not possible or a resolution cannot be found, customers may submit\* a formal complaint in writing by either:

- Completing a complaints form, available at campus reception point;
- Emailing [complaints@serc.ac.uk](mailto:complaints@serc.ac.uk)
- Submitting complaint online - [Complaint - SERC](#)

\*If you require assistance in submitting a complaint, please make this known to reception staff, and assistance will be provided.

The College also welcomes compliments from customers. If we have excelled at something, we would love to hear from you. You can pass on your compliment by contacting the staff member concerned, emailing [compliments@serc.ac.uk](mailto:compliments@serc.ac.uk) or completing a compliments form, available at campus reception points. Forms are downloadable from the College website, or submitting compliment online - [Compliment - SERC](#).

All complaints and compliments received are recorded on an electronic register. If the comment is positive, we will ensure that the member of staff involved is informed. If the comment is not positive, you will receive an acknowledgement letter within 5 working days\*, and a senior member of staff will then investigate the matter and advise you of the outcome in writing within a further 20 working days.

\* Working days are those days on which the College is open. Weekends, statutory days, Bank Holidays and other college closures are classed as 'non-working' days.

Completed complaints or compliments forms can be returned to any campus reception point marked for the attention of the Senior Customer Services Officer.

The College's full [Complaints and Compliments Policy](#) is located on our website [www.serc.ac.uk](http://www.serc.ac.uk)

Once you have exhausted the College's Complaints Process you can still approach the awarding organisation if you remain unsatisfied. You can also refer to NIPSO. For further information please visit [www.nipso.org.uk](http://www.nipso.org.uk).

Complaint, Academic Appeal or Another Process?

Below is guidance as to which process covers which issue. Remember this is not an exhaustive list and Customer Services staff, your tutor or the Students' Union will help direct you. Please do act as soon as an issue arises as we always seek to sort out a concern as quickly as is feasible.

To submit an Academic Appeal please refer to Appeals forms in Appendix 2. Please ask your tutor to guide you to a copy of the FE and Work-Based Learning Appeals SOP for guidance.

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Relevant Process</b>
Admissions	Complaint process
Services e.g. LRC, Canteen, IT, Student Finance, Pastoral Care	Complaint process
Disciplinary issues including exclusion	Student and Trainee Behaviour and Disciplinary process
Plagiarism and malpractice	Academic Appeals
Course delivery e.g. resources, timetabling, teaching	Complaint process
College administration	Complaint process
Health and Safety	Complaint process
Outcomes of assessment, progression or awards	Academic Appeals
Perceived bias or equality issue	Complaint process



# SAFEGUARDING, CARE AND WELFARE

## Safeguarding, Care and Welfare

Our Learner Welfare is centred on promoting your personal development and wellbeing as you complete your qualifications. We work to foster positive attitudes within the College by promoting tolerance, resilience, fairness and equal opportunities for all so that every student can achieve to their full potential.

Our staff provide support to students through a tutorial programme and we also run activities and events at each Campus which aim to enhance student wellbeing and resilience.

However, from time to time we all meet challenges within our lives, for example health and mental health concerns, caring responsibilities, family problems, financial worries or housing issues, and SERC has arrangements in place to help ensure that our students can get the help that they need when they need it.

Any member of staff who is concerned about the wellbeing of a student will raise their concern through the College's cause for concern App. The Learner Welfare team will review the situation and arrange for the right support to be put in place.

SERC works closely with the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust, Inspire, Action Mental Health, Ascertain and others in providing information and care for our students.



**ASCERT**



SERC seeks to provide a positive, safe and supportive learning environment for all students including those who may be transsexual, transgender or undergoing gender reassignment. However, for the College to be able to specifically support students it is essential that the student discloses their concerns by talking to a member of staff who will signpost them to the Learner Welfare team. All students are assured that any issues raised will be dealt with

confidentially and in a non-judgemental manner. Further details can be found in the Safeguarding, Care and Welfare Standard Operating Procedure.

### **Health, Welfare and Counselling**

#### Inspire Counselling

As a SERC student you will have access to Inspire who are an independent source of support and counselling. Inspire can be contacted for free, confidential and immediate support on **0800 098 8816**. This number is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and we recommend all students to save it onto their mobile phone.

Once you've made the call to Inspire, their trained staff can assign a specific counsellor to work with you on an independent and confidential basis. This counselling can take place by phone, in person or using video call technology, and the College can set up a private area for you to take such a call.

It's also important to note that students can call Inspire Students at any time for support and assistance, and this does not necessarily need to progress to formal counselling. Sometimes all we need is someone independent to talk to who will listen and guide us.

You can also sign up to the Inspire HUB which has lots of practical resources to help you. To sign up, visit the HUB here [Inspire HUB](#) and your unique PIN is SERCHUB.

#### Youth Health Advice Service (YHAS)

During their time at the College many young people have many health-related worries and to help students to deal with these issues the Youth Health Advice Service has been established in partnership with the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust. All students (and young people within the area) can talk to a professional who can advise and guide them appropriately.

Expert help and advice can be provided in relation to:

- The use of alcohol and drugs
- Ongoing health worries or concerns
- Testing for sexually transmitted diseases (not involving any intimate examination)

- Pregnancy testing
- The availability of Emergency Hormonal Contraception (morning after pill)
- Advice on contraception and the provision of condoms
- Support for those who want to stop smoking
- Signposting to appropriate organisations to help those with emotional issues such as anxiety or depression.

You can contact the team by email at [YHAS@setrust.hscni.net](mailto:YHAS@setrust.hscni.net) or by phone on 07753 310352. Alternatively, you can visit the website [Youth Health Advice Service](#) and complete a Youth Health Advice Request Form. When you have submitted your form, a Youth Health Advice Nurse will contact you.

In addition, all students will have the opportunity to complete a short online training package that focuses on **Healthy Online relationships**. Through the programme you will learn to question behaviours online and know what actions to take to protect yourself and others. Some of the key topics covered in the programme include sexting, grooming, exploitation, bullying and scams. You can access the programme here [Healthy Online Relationships Sign Up](#).





**WHERE DO I GET  
HELP?**

## Where do I get help?

### Student Support

SERC is committed to ensuring that all students and trainees are protected from harm and abuse while they attend / avail of the College services. To enable the College to achieve this a range of support services are in place at each campus. If at any time any student or trainee (whether in college or while attending a work placement) experiences any issues, they should immediately raise that issue with a member of staff. All such issues will be dealt with using the College procedures, and if necessary the College will work with appropriate external agencies (e.g. PSNI, Social Services etc).

### Who's Who on Campus

Questions concerning your work should be addressed to the relevant unit tutor on your course. More general matters on course administration should be taken up with your Programme Coordinator.

If you have personal difficulties during your course, speak to your tutor, or any member of staff, in the first instance who will advise and signpost you depending on the nature of your concern. Please remember that no issue is too small to raise with a member of staff.

The Campus Management Team details are as follows:

#### **Bangor Campus**

**Kieran McKenna**  
[kmckenna@serc.ac.uk](mailto:kmckenna@serc.ac.uk)



#### **Lisburn Campus**

**Roger Duncan**  
[rduncan@serc.ac.uk](mailto:rduncan@serc.ac.uk)



**Newtownards Campus**

**Barbara McNeill**

[bmcneill@serc.ac.uk](mailto:bmcneill@serc.ac.uk)



**Downpatrick Campus**

**Paul Walsh**

[pwalsh@serc.ac.uk](mailto:pwalsh@serc.ac.uk)



Designated Safeguarding Officer

Lists of the College's designated Safeguarding Officers are displayed throughout the College buildings. These staff have been trained to deal with safeguarding issues and can be approached by any student or trainee at any time.

## Learning Support



The Learning Support team works with students who face additional challenges due to physical disabilities, long-term medical conditions or learning difficulties. A member of the team will work with you to identify the best way to help as you learn at SERC. This could, for example, include access to a laptop with specialist software; an orthopaedic chair or adjustable desk; one to one support with a Learning Support Assistant; or access to a British Sign Language Interpreter. We can also advise your teaching team on how best to support your individual needs.

We will also work with the Examinations team to make sure any suitable adjustments are put in place for you at exam time. You will need to provide appropriate evidence for this, and we can help you collect any medical evidence necessary for the Awarding Body to approve these arrangements.

All students requiring Learning Support are responsible for disclosing their need and for providing the evidence of this to Learning Support staff as soon as possible, ideally at the beginning of their course. If you do not provide the appropriate evidence by any stipulated cut off point, it may result in the College not being able to provide the appropriate adjustments.

Learning Support can be contacted by email [learning-support@serc.ac.uk](mailto:learning-support@serc.ac.uk) from your student portal, or in person at each Campus.

The Learning Support (LS) team details are as follows:

**Downpatrick - Paul Walsh**  
Head of Learner Welfare  
[pwalsh@serc.ac.uk](mailto:pwalsh@serc.ac.uk)



**Ards/Bangor - Grace Curran**  
Learning Support Manager  
[gcurran@serc.ac.uk](mailto:gcurran@serc.ac.uk)



**Bangor - Jean Liddell**  
Learning Support Manager  
[jliddell@serc.ac.uk](mailto:jliddell@serc.ac.uk)



**Lisburn - Gerard Madden**  
Learning Support Manager  
[gmadden@serc.ac.uk](mailto:gmadden@serc.ac.uk)



**Lisburn - Christine Crangle**  
Learning Support Manager  
[ccrangle@serc.ac.uk](mailto:ccrangle@serc.ac.uk)



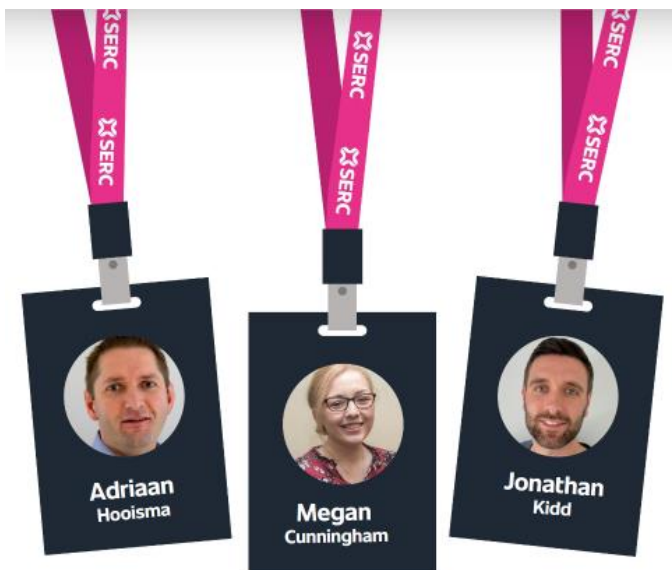
**Downpatrick - Sinead Boyd**  
Learning Support Manager  
[sineadboyd@serc.ac.uk](mailto:sineadboyd@serc.ac.uk)



## Student Finance

The College Student Finance Team can advise you on the sources of financial assistance available to assist students with the costs associated with studying. Assistance is available towards the costs of travel, books, tuition fees, living/maintenance costs and childcare. Check out the [Further Education Funding Quick Guide](#) for more detailed information.

You can contact the Student Finance team for advice and guidance by telephone, email or by arranging an appointment:



### Bangor/ Ards Campus

**Megan Cunningham,**  
**Student Finance Advisor**  
03456007555 Ext 8641  
[studentfinance@serc.ac.uk](mailto:studentfinance@serc.ac.uk)

### Downpatrick Campus

**Jonathan Kidd,**  
**Student Finance Advisor**  
03456007555 Ext 8641  
[studentfinance@serc.ac.uk](mailto:studentfinance@serc.ac.uk)

## **Lisburn Campus**

**Adriaan Hooisma,**  
**Student Finance Advisor**  
03456007555 Ext 8641  
[studentfinance@serc.ac.uk](mailto:studentfinance@serc.ac.uk)

## **Customer Services**

The Customer Services Team are based at the main reception points within the four main campuses. They can help you with a range of things, including Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA), Travel Passes, Free School Meals, payment of courses and trips, and updating personal details on your student record. Customer Services is also where you collect examination certificates upon course completion. The team can be contacted in person, by phone (0345 600 7555) or by one of the following email addresses:

Admissions, Application and Enrolment Queries: [admissions@serc.ac.uk](mailto:admissions@serc.ac.uk)

General Enquiries: [info@serc.ac.uk](mailto:info@serc.ac.uk)

EMA Queries: [ema@serc.ac.uk](mailto:ema@serc.ac.uk)

## **SERC Careers Service**

The Careers Service at SERC provides careers information, advice and guidance to support current and prospective students, as well as the local community. Our professionally qualified Careers Officers provide a service that is accessible, impartial, confidential, and focused on your needs. We can help you make informed decisions about your next steps.

You can talk to us about choosing a career, UCAS applications, CVs, interview skills, job searching and volunteering. Lecturing Staff will work closely with the Careers Service in providing relevant vocational and occupational information to students in their specific areas.

To keep students informed of the latest career opportunities, we send out a weekly careers bulletin direct to your SERC email, which has useful information and opportunities.

We also have an Online Careers Hub on MS Teams where you can access the latest information on careers, events, job opportunities, CVs, job applications, interview skills, volunteering, UCAS, support organisations and much more. You can join the Online Careers Hub [here](#).

SERC Careers run a series of events throughout the year where you can speak to exhibitors, find out about career opportunities and pick up some freebies. These will be advertised on the Online Careers Hub and Careers Bulletin.

You can contact us by emailing [careers@serc.ac.uk](mailto:careers@serc.ac.uk) or contacting one of the team directly.



Bangor Campus Room A27b  
**Shirley Moore, Senior Careers Officer**  
03456007555 Ext 2713 / 07790 347492  
[smoore@serc.ac.uk](mailto:smoore@serc.ac.uk)



Bangor Campus Room A27b  
**Louise Mulligan, Careers Officer**  
03456007555 Ext 2779 / 07557 259926  
[lmulligan@serc.ac.uk](mailto:lmulligan@serc.ac.uk)



Bangor Campus Room A27b  
**Julie Wilson, Careers Officer**  
03456007555 Ext 2779 / 07790 341875  
[juliewilson@serc.ac.uk](mailto:juliewilson@serc.ac.uk)



Newtownards Campus, Careers Hub  
**Anne Reid, Careers Officer**  
03456007555 Ext 3851 / 07971 303601  
[areid@serc.ac.uk](mailto:areid@serc.ac.uk)



Downpatrick Campus Room B2-8  
(Ballynahinch & Newcastle)  
**Julie George, Careers Officer**  
03456007555 Ext 6225 / 07769 359094  
[jgeorge@serc.ac.uk](mailto:jgeorge@serc.ac.uk)



Downpatrick Campus Room B2-8  
(Ballynahinch & Newcastle)  
**Cahir Clancy, Careers Officer**  
03456007555 Ext 5025 / 07825 060348  
[cclancy@serc.ac.uk](mailto:cclancy@serc.ac.uk)



Lisburn Campus Room 1B-7  
**Carolyn Mulholland, Careers Officer**  
03456007555 Ext 1600 / 07825 060293  
[cmulholland@serc.ac.uk](mailto:cmulholland@serc.ac.uk)





[www.facebook.com/SERCCareers](https://www.facebook.com/SERCCareers)



[www.serc.ac.uk/support/careers-service](https://www.serc.ac.uk/support/careers-service)

## **Students' Union**

As an enrolled student at the College, you are automatically a member of SERC Students' Union (SERCSU). SERCSU exists to promote the interests and the voice of students and champions the education and personal development of its members through the election of student officers and representatives.

Elected officers provide a channel of communication and means of engagement between students and the College staff, management, and governing body.

SERCSU aims to represent and support the general welfare and inclusivity of the diverse student body through various campaigns, health and wellbeing activities, volunteering opportunities, clubs, societies, and social events. SERCSU endeavours to inspire a sense of belonging and enrich your educational journey.

Getting involved with SERCSU offers a unique opportunity for students to influence and make a difference to the student experience at SERC. You can do this by becoming an elected member of the Student Leadership Team, becoming a Class Representative or by joining our volunteering committee. These opportunities enable students to make a positive contribution to the wider student community while developing personally and professionally. The training, networking and skills gained in officer roles allow students to gain an advantage in today's challenging job market and competitive entry to third level education. To find out more on becoming an SU officer or volunteer, please get in touch with us by emailing [studentsunion@serc.ac.uk](mailto:studentsunion@serc.ac.uk)

You can expect a wide range of on campus and online events such as Freshers' and Refreshers' Fairs where you can pick up freebies and talk to local organisations about their services and products, fundraising, welfare information days, social events, competitions and much more. The Students' Union hosts an online hub through Microsoft Teams. This hub provides blogs, information on clubs, societies, and opportunities as well as a dedicated health and wellbeing

channel. You can join the online hub using the link below. You can also keep up to date on events on your campus by following us on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.



[Join the SU Online Hub HERE](#)

As we are affiliated with NUS-USI (National Union of Students-Union of Students Ireland), we offer a student discount app where you will have access to over 200 discounts with well-known brands such as Misguided, ASOS, boohoo, Domino's, Co-op Food, and Superdrug. For full details on discounts and to purchase a TOTUM Card {powered by NUS extra} visit: [www.totum.com](http://www.totum.com) If you're interested in finding out more or would like to get involved in the Students' Union you can contact us at [studentsunion@serc.ac.uk](mailto:studentsunion@serc.ac.uk), via Facebook at [www.facebook.com/SERCSU](http://www.facebook.com/SERCSU) or on Twitter @SERCSU.



### Student Carers

If you provide or intend to provide substantial care for a family member or friend on a regular basis who is disabled, physically or mentally ill, has a long-term illness or a substance misuse problem, you are legally defined as a Carer. SERC recognizes the additional burden Student Carers may need to cope with and are committed to being as accessible and inclusive as possible. If you are a Student Carer, you can make us aware when completing your online application forms, alternatively you can contact us at [studentcarers@serc.ac.uk](mailto:studentcarers@serc.ac.uk) during your studies. We will then contact you confidentially and discuss how we will support you to successfully complete your course. Submission of assessment work, study patterns, signposting to financial assistance and networking are just some of the ways in which we can help you. If you require any further information, please get in touch [at studentcarers@serc.ac.uk](mailto:studentcarers@serc.ac.uk). Further information may also be found at the link [SERC Student Carers](#).

SERC has achieved the Carers Federation Quality Standard in Carer Support accreditation through the Driving Change Project. This award acknowledges that we recognise Student Carers contribution and have robust Student Carer support services in place.

## Learning Resources



### Moodle

The College uses a combination of Microsoft Teams and Moodle as a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). Your tutor will guide you to the appropriate VLE for the programme. Here you will find course information, storage and organisation of learning and assessment materials and the ability to submit completed assessments. All FT and significant PT programmes will have either a Moodle or Microsoft Teams site, or a combination of both.

### College Internet and Intranet Sites

The College's Internet site is [www.serc.ac.uk](http://www.serc.ac.uk). This contains up to date information on the College and its courses. You can access the student intranet from the site, under the 'My SERC' tab. Announcements to students will be posted on the Intranet site. Students can access the intranet both in college and externally. You should visit it regularly.

### Learning Resource Centres



The College Learning Resource Centres provide support for student learning in Ards, Bangor, Downpatrick and Lisburn. These Centres offer a welcoming environment for both individual private study and group work and are designed to enhance the student learning experience. LRC staff will provide you with advice on the most appropriate resources for your course and how to find them, how to complete a bibliography, and how to reference your assignments. We can

provide you with one-to-one help and guidance in the LRCs (just call in and see us), or in a group setting in your classroom (please ask your tutor to book a session with the LRC staff).

- Experienced and knowledgeable LRC staff to help you research your assignments.
- 30,000+ printed books.
- 1500+ eBooks.
- Specialist subject databases.
- Library inductions.
- E resource and e book demonstrations.
- Access to computer facilities with specialist course specific software.
- Designated silent study rooms.
- Group study rooms.
- Soft seating and individual study areas.
- Printing, scanning and photocopying facilities.
- Binding and laminating service.
- A range of stationery for sale.

Remember if you need help with academic skills including referencing and bibliographies, the LRC staff are happy if you drop by for help and assistance.

The Online LRC

E-Resources and Online Access:

Our online resources include e-books, e-resources and research support which are available both on and off campus. If you need help using any of our online resources, then please ask the LRC staff for assistance.

Online Library Catalogue:

You can search the catalogue, renew and reserve books online using our Online Library Catalogue App.

Inter-Campus Loans:

You can request books to be transferred from one campus to the other via our inter-library loan service. During term time books are normally transferred within a couple of days. Please ask the LRC staff for details.

You can also email us at [lrc@serc.ac.uk](mailto:lrc@serc.ac.uk) or ask a question using [Ask a Librarian](#).

Please note that all SERC Libraries and Resource Centres are closed during holiday periods.

HE Study Rooms

Dedicated Higher Education study rooms are available in Bangor, Lisburn, Ards and Downpatrick for students studying Higher Level Courses within the College.

## IT Help

General Guidance

IT can be complex and confusing, so we do

our best to try to simplify things for you.

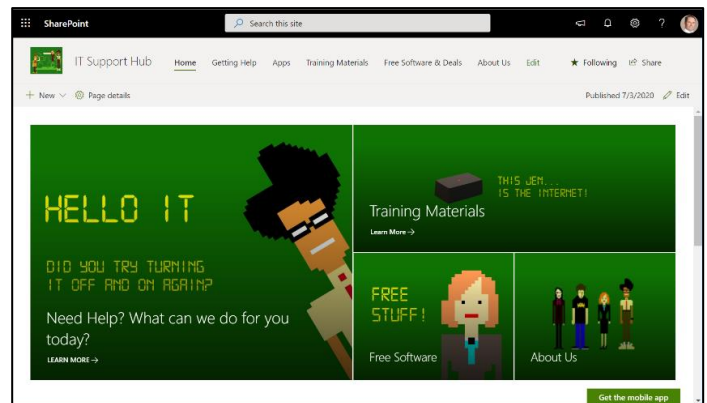
We've created a special website to help

you which can be accessed from the IT

Support Hub icon on the desktop of all

college PCs, and also from this link:

<http://www.serc.ac.uk/helpme>



You will always find the most up to date information and help here. The site can be used to report faults, get help and training, access remote apps that let you work from home and access information about discounted and free software that you get as a student.

If you're really stuck, you can call 028 9127 6767, leaving your name, student ID, a return phone number and description of the problem you are experiencing and we will call you back between 09:00 and 17:00.

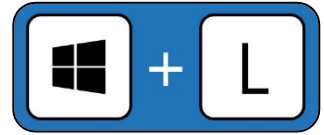
User Accounts

As a student at SERC, you will be issued with a username and password that will give you access to E-Mail, Online Storage, access to the College Virtual Learning Environment (Moodle) and a range of other services & benefits. The account is yours, and you should not share the account or your password with anyone.

Your username is also your email address and is normally written as 8 numbers and then finished with an '@serc.ac.uk' suffix. For example, the account for Sam Smith might look like

[50099999@serc.ac.uk](mailto:50099999@serc.ac.uk)

You should make every effort to protect your account, including locking your PC/Mac whilst unattended. This can be done using 'Ctrl + Alt + Del' and selecting "Lock this computer" or the Windows Key & the letter 'L' on your keyboard.

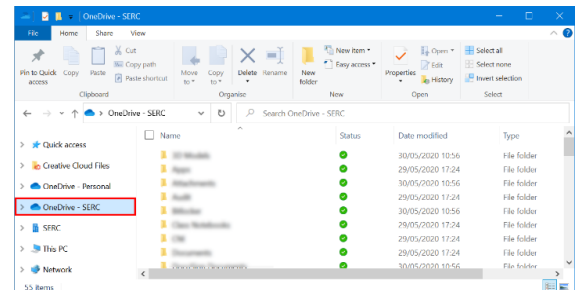


### Storage of Files & Documents

As a student, you have been allocated 25GB of storage in the College's Office 365 Service, known as OneDrive. The key advantage for you is that OneDrive enables you to access your files/documents from any internet connected device, including tablets, PC, Macs or even on your mobile phone.

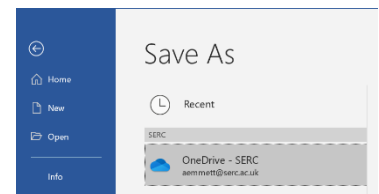


Before we go any further, you should know that the use of portable media, i.e. USB Keys, is strongly discouraged. You should consider using OneDrive for all file storage. OneDrive brings strong protection for your data in terms of backup, versioning and Malware/ransomware protection.



When you are on a college PC, you can see OneDrive to the side of the Windows Explorer. You should save your files here.

If you are in a Microsoft Office product such as Word or Excel, you can also save directly to OneDrive.



If you are at home, you can access your college OneDrive by clicking on the 'OneDrive' link in the 'Apps' section of the Student Intranet or by typing [www.onedrive.com](http://www.onedrive.com) into your web browser. If you are prompted to login, use your college email address and password and then select the 'Work or School Account' option. Apps are also available for Mobile Phones & Tablet devices for all major platforms. Simply search for 'OneDrive' in your device's App Store.

Finally, as a student, you are entitled to download and install Microsoft Office onto up to 5 of your personal PCs, MACs, Laptops, Tablet & Phone Devices. To download the software, navigate to [www.office.com](http://www.office.com) and sign in with your college username & password. We ask that you also

encourage your fellow students to avail of this free service too. There are other services and benefits that are available to you. This will be communicated at the start of the academic year.

#### Password Protection Standards

Passwords are an important aspect of computer security. They form the front-line protection for users' accounts. A poorly chosen password may result in the compromise of the College's entire network. As such, you are responsible for taking the appropriate steps to select and secure your password.

You are strongly advised not to use the same password for SERC accounts as you may use for other non SERC accounts such as personal e-mail accounts, banking accounts, PIN numbers, or any other account. The College requires that passwords are 15 characters long. This change is enforced automatically by the system.

You should **not** share your password with anyone, including classmates, administrative assistants or line managers. If someone demands a password, refer them to this document or have them call someone in the IT & Services department.

You should never disclose your password in response to an email or phone call purporting to be from the IT department. The IT & Services department **should not and will not** ask an end user to divulge their password.

#### **For the avoidance of doubt, it is not permissible to:**

- Reveal the password over the telephone to anyone.
- Reveal a password in a single e-mail message.
- Reveal a password to a manager or lecturer.
- Reveal a password to co-workers for their use while you are on holiday.
- Talk about a password in front of others.
- Hint at the format of a password.
- Reveal a password on questionnaires or security forums.
- Share a password with family members.
- Write passwords down and store them anywhere in your office.
- Store passwords in a file or on ANY device without encryption



- Use the “Remember Password” feature of applications on devices, unless the device is password protected and uses encrypted storage.

The single exception to the above guidance applies if you have a specific physical and/or learning need. In this scenario, a support worker may, with your consent, be allowed to hold knowledge of your password for the purposes of assisting you with your study.

If you suspect your password has been compromised, report the incident to the IT and Services Department and change your password immediately.

#### General Password Guidelines

The College requires the use of complex and strong passwords. The following characteristics are required:

- Passwords need to be at least 15 characters long and no longer than 127 characters.
- Passwords should not contain either your username or your forename & surname.
- The space character can be used in a password, but this is not a requirement.
- Passwords must contain characters from three of the following categories.
- Uppercase letters (A through Z).
- Lowercase letters (a through z).
- Numbers (0 through 9).
- Non-alphanumeric characters (special characters): (~!@#\$%^&\* \_+=`|\(){}[]:;'"<>,.?/)

Note: Currency symbols such as the Euro or British Pound are not counted as special characters for this policy setting.

Users are asked to consider a ‘passphrase’ instead of a password. Passphrases can be a sentence, song title or other phrase that is easy to remember. Some example passphrases would be:

- The Only Way 1s Up!
- H0ld the d00r!!
- My fav0rite c0l0ur is Red.

Passwords should never be written down or stored online as clear text. Users should also avoid common usage words such as:

- Your forename, surname, name of family, pets, friends, co-workers, course title etc.
- Computer terms and names, commands, sites, companies, hardware, software.
- SERC, South Eastern Regional College.
- Birthdays and other personal information such as addresses and phone numbers .
- Word or number patterns like 1234567, abcdefghi, qwertyuiop etc.
- Any of the above spelt backwards.
- Any of the above preceded or followed by a digit (e.g. password1).

#### Additional Security Measures

The safety and security of your information is our highest priority. In order to ensure that we can protect you, there are two additional security measures that we have in place that will directly affect you.

The first restriction involves a special security feature, known as Two Factor Authentication (2FA) or Multi Factor Authentication (MFA). This is a requirement for all users on the College network. You will be required to setup 2FA during the setup of your new SERC account or alternatively, you can visit our guide at [www.serc.ac.uk/2fa](http://www.serc.ac.uk/2fa) to learn more.

When working on a college computer, you will only need to use your username and password when logging on. However, if you are on a personal device, such as a laptop, tablet or phone, you will be required to use 2FA to login.

In addition, access to college computing facilities is geographically restricted to the UK & Ireland. So, if you were going to Spain, you would not be able to access your account. If you are on a college trip or on holiday and wish to have access to your account when away, you should contact the College IT team via the College ServiceDesk ([servicedesk.serc.ac.uk](http://servicedesk.serc.ac.uk)) and submit an 'International Travel Request' fault.

## Online Study

As part of your course, the College intends to deliver a small portion of your course 'Online'. There are several benefits for you with this approach:

- You'll gain an understanding of the technology & tools needed to effectively communicate when working at a distance.
- Home working has become an option in many jobs. Understanding how to work effectively from home will help you in your future career.
- If you must isolate due to sickness, you can still participate in your classes.
- If there is another lockdown, you'll know what you need to do.

What does 'Online Study' mean?

'Online Study' means that you can participate in your lesson from the comfort of your home. It can be in your Study (if you're lucky), the kitchen table, dining room table or even in your bedroom. You just need some peace to concentrate and to ensure you don't annoy others.

Do I need an internet connection?

Yes. To work online, you will need at minimum a broadband internet connection e.g. BT, Talk Talk, Sky, Virgin Media etc. You can also use the data connection from your phone, however, due to the high cost of mobile data, you should not use this for activities such as video conferencing unless you understand the consequences.

What equipment do I need?

You will need the following:

- At a minimum, to participate in video conferences, you need a smartphone or tablet with a camera capable of running Microsoft Teams. We suggest that, if you have a phone, you use the case or stand that will support a phone on a desk so that you can focus on your work and not worry about holding the phone.
- You can also video conference if you have a PC, Mac, Laptop or Chromebook, but you will need to ensure that you have a webcam and speakers or headphones.
- To participate in interactive lessons, a device larger than a smartphone is strongly recommended. Ideally, you'll need a tablet device or PC, Mac, Laptop or Chromebook.

- If you are studying in a specialist area such as engineering and need to use specialist software, you will need a device with a trackpad or mouse. This might be a PC, Mac, Laptop or Chromebook as some specialist applications don't work well with touch screens.

**Note: You can even use 2 devices at the same time as most mobile phones are an excellent, high quality webcam substitute. Install Microsoft Teams on both devices and experiment.**

### Optimising Your Environment

Try to do the following:

- Select a suitable workspace, that is:
  - free from distraction
  - quiet
  - doesn't inconvenience others
  - allows you space to make notes etc.
- Sit in a chair that allows you to be comfortable for the duration of you lesson

Switch on your Camera if possible

Turning on your camera during a class allows you to maximise the communication channel, adding more sentiment and expressions that spice up the discussion and enables you to listen more effectively. In fact, studies show that people are better able to comprehend and recall complex information when they can observe the speaker's nonverbal gestures.

However, when a camera is switched on, it may allow part of your home to be visible to others. For this reason, please make sure that the camera does not pick up private information e.g., lists or photographs on a wall, or private personal effects. The College recommends that you use a standard background, available on Teams or that you use the "blur" function. These suggestions are to help you to protect yourself.

### Microphones

You are expected to keep your microphone on mute when not required to speak and to use the chat function to ask the lecturer a question, or to use the "put your hand up" function to get the tutors attention. Remember that when online, there may be many others asking questions, so patience may be required until the lecturer gets a suitable moment to address your question.

## Other Points

Please make sure that you have notepad, pen or any other course material available to you:

- Remember that your online lesson is designed to help you to learn. Having other people in the room or chatting on social media will distract you. If it is only possible for you to participate from a room that others may have to use it is requested that you use headphones to minimise any disruption.
- You should not record any online classes etc without first obtaining the permission of all of those who will be participating, including the tutor.
- When attending an online class, the Colleges rules regarding respect for others including staff still apply. Failure to do comply with these requirements may result in:
  - your permissions to participate in online classes being withdrawn.
  - more formal disciplinary procedures being applied online with the Student / Trainee Performance, Behaviour and Disciplinary Management Procedures.

If at any time you feel concerned that something you said or did online could be misconstrued, or if someone else is behaving inappropriately towards you, please raise it immediately with your tutor.

The College's online equipment and technologies are there to help you to learn and it should only be used for this purpose. As with all technology it is your responsibility to use it and to behave in a manner that is appropriate.

What about software?

Studying at SERC comes with some great advantages. Firstly, as a registered student, you are entitled to download, install and use Microsoft 365 applications for free, including Word, PowerPoint, Excel, Teams and many other useful apps. See [www.serc.ac.uk/freesoftware](http://www.serc.ac.uk/freesoftware) for more info.

The College also offers a 'Remote App' service, so if you're using specialist software such as AutoCAD, Sage Accounts, Visual Studio or any other specialist apps, you can use them on your home PC, Mac, Laptop or Chromebook. You don't need to install the software itself, just a small client app that connects back to the College. This service is available 24 hours a day just for you! Get more info at [www.serc.ac.uk/remoteapps](http://www.serc.ac.uk/remoteapps)

There are lots of other benefits too, e.g. discounts on equipment such as laptops, and services including Spotify, Amazon Prime etc. Visit <http://www.serc.ac.uk/helpme> for the most up to date offers and help.



# APPENDICES

## **Appendices**

### **Appendix 1: Student Agreement Summary**

I understand that the points below detail the terms and conditions of my enrolment at SERC and the minimum standards of performance and behaviour expected of me. I will adhere to them during the course of my studies as well as when I am engaged in college related activities at non-SERC establishments. Failure to meet these expectations may result in the disciplinary processes being invoked.

#### **Personal Information**

- I agree that the information I have provided to the College on my online application form is accurate and up to date
- I am not currently excluded from the College
- I will notify the College of any changes to my information or circumstances, including criminal charges or convictions obtained during my time at SERC
- I understand the College will process my personal data within the limitations of the Data Protection Act (2018) and will only share my data where legislation permits/demands

#### **Enrolment and Fees**

- I undertake to pay all relevant fees owed by me to the College in relation to my programme e.g. tuition, examinations, materials, uniforms etc
- I understand that should I withdraw from my programme; I will remain liable for full payment of all relevant course fees
- I understand my qualification/certificate will be withheld until all monies have been fully paid.
- I am aware that the College reserves the right to cancel/withdraw classes where there are insufficient enrolment numbers to make the class viable
- In the event of classes being cancelled or postponed, the College may notify me via text message and/or email
- Refunds will only be paid in line with the Fees Policy



### **Policies and Procedures**

- I agree to abide by the relevant college policies and procedures.
- I will not aid, procure or incite others to breach college policies and procedure

### **Marketing/Social Media**

- I will not bring SERC, its staff or other students into disrepute by making defamatory comments, participate in online arguments or posting inappropriate comments/links on social media
- I will not use social media to express my views about courses, other students or staff

### **Compliance with Attendance, Performance and Classroom Behavioural Requirements of the Programme of Study**

- I will attend class punctually, as timetabled
- I agree to submit coursework as directed by my tutor
- As a Trainee I agree to present my timesheet for signing by my Tutor, Technical Support Officer or Employer after each session
- Coursework, essays and other work will be a true reflection of my own research and studies
- I agree to behave during all classes in a manner that is conducive to both my learning and that of others
- I agree to comply with the instructions and direction from my tutors
- I understand that registration and progression into the next year of my programme is subject to satisfactory performance and attendance

### **Compliance with Awarding Organisation and Examination Processes**

- I will comply with rules and requirements as established by the validating body for my courses, SERC Curriculum Policy and Quality Assurance Procedures

### **Health and Safety**

- I will conform with all fire evacuation and other Health and Safety instructions e.g. safe use of machinery and the wearing of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
- I will not behave in any manner likely to cause injury or a risk of injury to myself or others, including appropriate driving and parking on campus grounds
- I will not consume, possess or distribute any controlled drug substance or alcohol while engaged in SERC related activity
- I will not bring items to college which could harm other

### **Compliance with the Acceptable Use of Policies for the IT System**

- I will comply with all policies and rules regarding the safe and appropriate use of college IT systems

### **SERC Respect Agenda**

- I agree to behave in a fashion which respects the rights of other students, staff, college contractors and those living and working in the vicinity of the College Campuses to be able to learn and work without distraction, disruption or inconvenience from antisocial behaviour
- I will respect all college property and equipment and that which belongs to others

### **Anti-bullying**

- I agree to comply with the SERC Anti-Bullying Policy (SOP No: 187-05 2015) Link to: [SERC Student Bullying and Harassment SOP](#)

## Appendix 2: FE Appeals Forms

### Learner Appeals Form (Stage 1)

The Assessor is required to complete this form when the learner is making a Stage 1 appeal.

Learner name	
EBS learner ID	
Date of assessment	
Name of assessor (against whose decision the appeal is being made)	
Nature of the appeal (describe the area of concern)	
Details of the original Assessment decision	

Date of meeting	
Assessor's response	
Assessor's signature:	Date:
Learner's signature:	Date:

**Completed forms should be retained in the Course Teamsite and a copy forwarded to the programme Lead Internal Verifier / Internal Quality Assurer (IQA).**



**Part C:** To be completed by the Lead Internal Verifier / Internal Quality Assurer (IQA)

**Outcome (Tick one only)**

Uphold the original assessment decision.	
The evidence presented is an adequate demonstration of knowledge/competence and a recommendation that the assessment decision be reconsidered.	
Lead IV/IQA signature:	Date:

Learner signature acknowledging outcome of Stage 2 appeal.	Date:
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**Completed forms should be retained in the course teamsite.**

### Learner Appeals Form (Stage 3)

**Part A:** To be completed by learner.

Describe the reasons for your Stage 3 appeal as fully as possible in the box below. You must ensure that the reasons meet the grounds for an appeal as detailed in the Appeals Standard Operating Procedure (SOP). This should include learner evidence, records of feedback from the assessor and the outcome of the Stage 2 appeal from the Lead IV/IQA. Learners should keep a copy of this form.

Reasons for Stage 3 Appeal:
Learner's signature:
Date:

**Part B:** To be completed by the DHOS/HOS

Date of Stage 3 appeal received.	
Stage 3 Panel members	
Appeal investigation details (including assessment records, learners evidence reviewed and reason for stage 3 decision).	

**Outcome (Tick one only)**

Uphold the original assessment decision.	
The evidence presented is an adequate demonstration of knowledge/competence and a recommendation that the assessment decision be reconsidered.	
Lead IV/IQA signature:	Date:

**The learner should be informed of the outcome of the Stage 3 Appeal in writing within 10 working days.**

Learner signature acknowledging outcome of Stage 2 appeal.	Date:
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### Stage 4 Outcome Form

To be completed by the DHOS following the Awarding Organisation decision.

#### Awarding Organisation Decision (Tick one only)

Uphold the original assessment decision.		
Disagree with the original assessment decision and recommend the following action:		
DHOS signature:	Date:	
Learner signature:	Date:	

**Completed form should be retained in the course teamsite**