
Strategic Plan 2030



Supporting People,

Supporting the Economy



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Introduction

This document provides an update on SERC Strategy, Supporting People, Supporting the Economy 2030 published at the end of 2019. As a result of the changes in the economic, social and environmental contexts within which the College now operates, the Governing Body undertook a review of the SERC Strategy 2030 at a planning meeting on 27 April 2023.





Background

The original SERC Strategy, *Supporting People, Supporting the Economy 2030*, had been developed in a very different context, prior to the impact of the covid pandemic and the cost of living crisis. Since the strategy was published, the College has successfully navigated a pandemic and a series of budget cuts. However, the current cost of living crisis is proving the most difficult operating environment for some time. The Governing Body therefore felt it timely to review the SERC Strategy 2030, the vision, mission and strategic priorities to ensure these enabled the college to respond to the ongoing budgetary challenges while meeting the needs of students and the economy.



Looking Forward

As we look forward to 2030, we must maintain the quality of our provision, deliver a curriculum that meets industry needs, deliver value for money and continue to listen and influence. In addition to this we must continue to move beyond the traditional concept of an education provider. We are agile and responsive and our evolving entrepreneurial approach to business support and support for students continues to set us apart as a key driver of economic and social wellbeing in Northern Ireland and beyond.

In an age where new technology solutions are changing rapidly and helping open doors to export markets for small business, providing health solutions, controlling our homes, we need to be open to working in a different way. New jobs will develop which do not currently exist. While artificial intelligence may replace process roles, creativity, collaboration, human interpretation and communication skills will be more essential alongside a willingness to learn, adapt and upskill. To meet this evolving need SERC will build innovative problem-solving partnerships between education, business, central and local government and embed project based learning and the development of transversal skills at the heart of our teaching practice.





Our aspirations in supporting people and supporting business into the future, in an innovative and impactful way, are reflected in our revised Vision and Mission and continue to be

demonstrated and enacted through our strategic priorities.

Our values are unchanged and remain at the heart of everything we do.





Strategic Context

SERC is a Non-Departmental Public Body and a key delivery arm of the Department for the Economy. This reflects the growing realisation of the sector's contribution to shaping the workforce of the future and to ensuring that people continue to update and develop their skills over the course of their lifetime. The critical role of SERC is evidenced through our increasingly agile, innovative, employer led approach that undeniably creates better skills, better jobs and better lives for the people of Northern Ireland.

We contribute to the Draft NI Programme for Government 2021, the NI Industry Strategy 2030, A 10X Economy Strategy and 10X Skills Strategy, FE means Success and Local Government Community Plans.

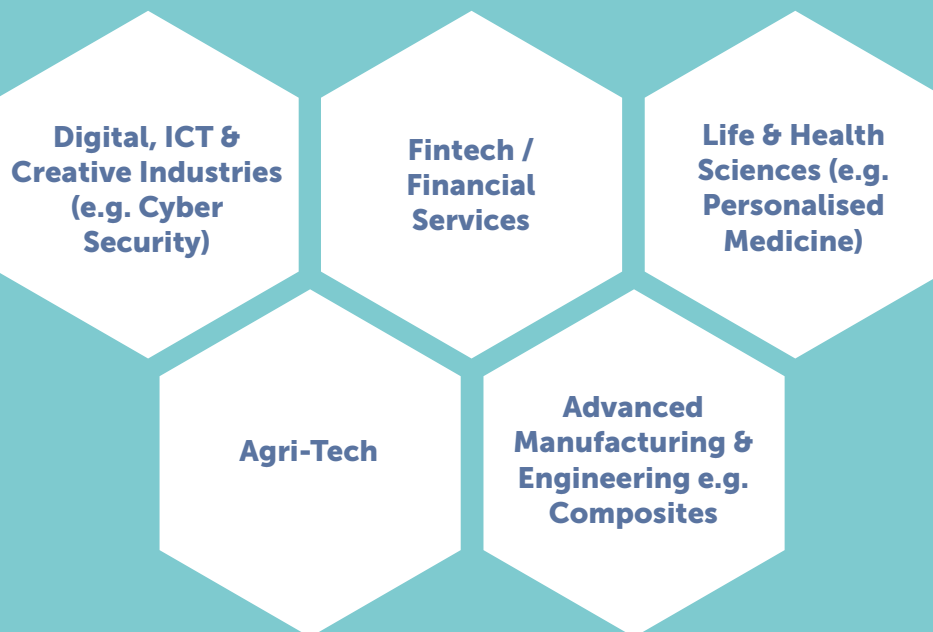
Draft Programme for Government

Contributing to Population Outcomes

A 10x Economy

Northern Ireland's Decade of Innovation

10x Priority Clusters



**Underpinned by
Innovation, Inclusion, Sustainability Pillars**

FE Means Success - The NI strategy for FE

Local Government Community Planning



FE: The Skills Engine for the NI Economy

The Open University Business Barometer asked employers "what skills were applicants lacking?"

The responses are set out in the list below:

- 19%** soft / human (team working)
- 34%** managerial (decision making)
- 34%** leadership (dependability)
- 26%** IT
- 24%** technical and operational
- 20%** industry specific



It is interesting to note that only 20% stated the need for industry specific skills. These findings are supported by the NI Skills Barometer and research undertaken by SERC with employers regarding the skills they desire candidates to have.

Increasingly, employers expect college leavers to be innovative, adaptable, resilient, and flexible and have an enterprising mindset.

Alongside developing industry relevant expertise, SERC students are supported in developing transversal skills (T Skills) such as communication, problem-solving, teamwork,

self-management etc, through 'Project-Based Learning' (PBL), enabling them to be innovative, adaptable and enterprising.

The embedding of PBL techniques across our curriculum is one of the key factors which sets SERC, and the FE Sector, apart from other education providers because - our students are work ready!

We do not just provide a qualification, but develop the whole individual, providing them with the skills to enable them to be a capable and valuable employee.



Our Vision

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

Our Mission

Our mission is to shape and influence our community, by promoting an 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.





Our Strategic Priorities

SERC is a world class organisation with highly qualified, professional staff, supporting businesses across the globe. We will deliver our vision through our eight strategic priorities.

Our strategic priorities set out the practical means through which we will create an entrepreneurial, creative environment where all our staff, students and clients are encouraged and supported to fulfil their potential.



How we will deliver our Strategic Priorities:

Students

Strategic Priority

We will enhance student capabilities and ambition, enabling them to fulfil their potential, through providing a professional, relevant curriculum; innovative learning and teaching approaches.

What we will do

We are recognised for our best practice pedagogy techniques, our award winning teaching teams, and our exceptional pastoral care. We will continue to be an organisation which supports and enables students to benefit from opportunities for personal growth, gain skills and qualifications and to progress to employment.





Business

Strategic Priority

We will promote economic development through supporting business to improve efficiency, productivity and sustainability.

What we will do

SERC has a well-established reputation for supporting businesses to innovate and grow through supporting local companies to develop new products, systems and services through a range of support programmes. SERC continues to support sustainability through its range of green technology courses.

Offering entrepreneurial support and investment for student companies and commercial start-ups we will enhance support of the NI Economy. Being entrepreneurial in our activities, we can further support organisations to recruit and grow their own talent pool.

Social Inclusion

Strategic Priority

We will address social inclusion, through communication, engagement and support, providing opportunities for economically inactive to obtain a professional qualification and obtain employment.

What we will do

SERC will take a dynamic lead in engaging private, community and voluntary sector organisations to create 'possibilities' for the economically inactive. Providing individuals in deprived communities with pathways to re-enter education and employment. We will continue to work with partners to address barriers to education and develop support mechanisms.

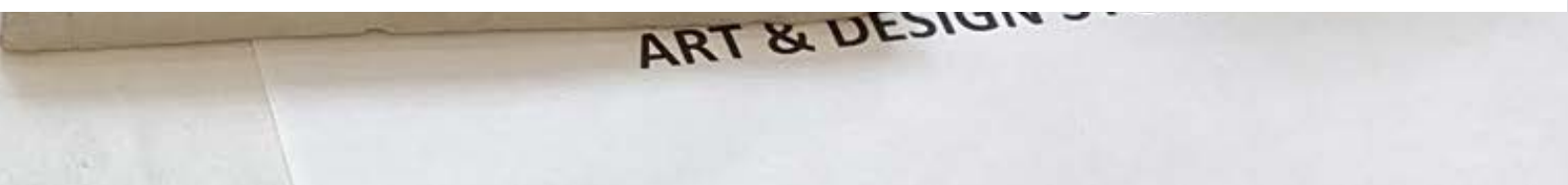
Staff

Strategic Priority

We will support and develop all our staff, encouraging creativity and entrepreneurial culture.

What we will do

In order to deliver a high quality service we will continue to invest in our highly valued, professional and motivated staff. We will build managerial capability and promote equality and inclusion in the workplace.



National and International

Strategic Priority

We will further develop national and international partnerships to enhance learner, staff and business opportunities.

What we will do

SERC aims to nurture innovation and provide opportunities for development beyond academic and vocational achievement. In developing further national and international links, SERC will drive economic development through making Northern Ireland a successful, globally competitive and sustainable region

Wellbeing

Strategic Priority

We will promote and support healthy and resilient learners and staff through a range of inclusive wellbeing initiatives, creating a supportive learning environment.

What we will do

The physical and mental wellbeing of our students and staff is of prime importance to us. We will continue to provide a range of services, support initiatives and events throughout the academic year which creates a culture of care and builds resilience.

Qualifications

Strategic Priority

We will work to secure a fit for purpose suite of portable and relevant qualifications which meet the needs of the local economy.

What we will do

The ability to quality assure and award industry relevant, Professional and Technical qualifications would enhance the ability of Colleges to support the NI economy. We will continue to work with other NI Colleges and DfE towards achieving Awarding Body Status and a suite of fit for purpose qualifications.



Student Experience

Strategic Priority

We will provide extracurricular opportunities which enhance the student experience at SERC.

What we will do

Innovation and sustainable enterprise are key to driving productivity in NI. Extra-curricular opportunities will continue to be provided through the Enterprise and Entrepreneurship team, SU clubs and societies, volunteering and fund raising initiatives to ensure work ready skills are well developed.



Our Values & Our Culture

Our values and culture remain key to our effective delivery and underpin everything we do.

We encourage staff to act on their ideas, to bring a customer focused, problem solving mentality. We care about staff wellbeing and provide the tools for continuous development.

WE ARE:

SOLUTION FOCUSED
EXCELLENCE DRIVEN
RESPONSIVE
COLLABORATIVE





And here is how we do it!

Solution Focussed

We focus on providing creative and innovative solutions for our customer rather than academic theories. We invest in pioneering developments to make our offering customer led and take a similar approach to our internal processes and systems to avoid bureaucracy, focusing always on the end users' needs.

Excellence Driven

Our Culture of Excellence underpins everything that we do, focusing on the activities which add value for customers. Our standards are recognised at an international level and we take pride in the levels of professionalism, expertise and industry experience of our staff. We are and aim to be outstanding and help our customers to achieve the same.

Responsive

We are responsive to the needs of our students, colleagues, businesses, economy and local communities.

Collaborative

We nurture relationships with stakeholders and are open to new partnerships. We create partnerships with organisations such as schools to ensure that our local community has access to the very best of education. This also includes working with others within the FE sector.



Delivering our Aspirations

The College Development Plan sets out how we will deliver the aspirations in this strategic plan in three main sections for qualifications and skills to be delivered, support for business and actions to address social inclusion.

Our delivery and actions for improvement are further outlined in the Curriculum plan, Whole College Self Evaluation Report, Whole College Quality Improvement Plan and Annual Report.

These documents are available to download from the College website.



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