SERC

UNLOCK YOUR FUTURE

FURTHER EDUCATION

HANDBOOK

2026 - 27

BANGOR | DOWNPATRICK | LISBURN | NEWTOWNARDS | **SERC.AC.UK**

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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, Principal and Chief Executive

Vision & Mission

Vision

We empower individuals, strengthen communities, and drive economic prosperity.

Mission

As an innovative and inclusive College, we provide transformative education and training that meets the evolving needs of our students, community and economy, fostering a culture of excellence, collaboration and sustainability.

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…"

"I would say the support system at SERC is good as they offer diverse assistance through various departments including finance, learning support and career services. These resources are easily accessible and are always providing students with important information on the available support and how they can obtain that support.

Furthermore my tutor significantly enhanced my learning experience during both courses I took as they really take the time to get to know you and always had consistent support."

Level 3 in Hairdressing

"The facilities in the College are great, especially for Creative Media. The tutors are great too, they work with you and encourage you to get the grades that you want to achieve. Everything that we need for the course is available and you just have to ask and if you need help with something you just ask.

It is a completely different environment, and you are just given the opportunity to thrive. At SERC there is support for everyone, and for some people coming to college would be a good move. "

Level 3 in Creative Media

“You have a lot more freedom and independence at SERC compared to school, you have more responsibility for your own work, and you're treated like an adult by your tutors which I really enjoy. The induction week is very helpful as you are put into groups with other students to take on a project and work together, forming bonds and friendships within the first week of starting.

I would highly recommend SERC to others thinking of enrolling, everyone at the college is very friendly.”

Level 3 in Applied Science

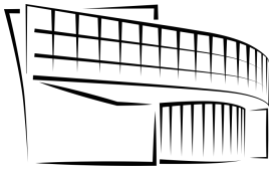
KEY INFORMATION

Key Information

Campus Contact Information

Space Bangor Campus

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

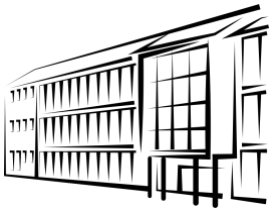


Bangor Campus

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 **Call us:** 0345 600 7555

FE Calendar 2026-27

Term 1

Tuesday 1st September 2026 to Friday 18th December 2026 inclusive

- **Halloween Break:** Monday 26th October 2026 to Friday 30th October 2026
- **Christmas Break:** Monday 21st December 2026 to Friday 1st January 2027

Term 2

Monday 4th January 2027 to Friday 19th March 2027 inclusive

- **Virtual/Inter Semester Week:** Mon 18th January 2027 to Fri 22nd January 2027
- **Mid-Term:** Monday 8th February 2027 to Friday 12th February 2027
- **Public Holiday (St Patrick's):** Wednesday 17th March 2027
- **Easter Break:** Monday 22nd March 2027 to Friday 2nd April 2027

Term 3

Monday 5th April 2027 to Friday 4th June 2027 inclusive

- **Public Holiday:** Monday 3rd May 2027
- **Public Holiday:** Monday 31st May 2027

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 2026-27.

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 (PEEPs)

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 risk 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 academic 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 Project-Based learning activities.
- 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 used 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 support and encourage you to progress through qualification levels in line with your skills, abilities and career aspirations. Please note that progression from one programme to another is not automatic and is subject to meeting the entry requirements, programme viability, availability of places and applicable funding requirements.

Throughout your time at the College, you will have opportunities to develop the skills, knowledge and personal qualities needed to support your academic, personal and professional development. We encourage you to complete your full programme of study, including any Essential Skills requirements, as this may be necessary to support progression to higher-level study, apprenticeships, professional qualifications or employment.

The College offers a range of progression pathways, and you are encouraged to discuss your future plans with your tutor and the Careers Team to ensure you are making informed choices about your next steps.

If you intend to progress to university, you should be aware that some universities require applicants to hold GCSE English and/or GCSE Mathematics, regardless of other qualifications achieved. You are advised to check entry requirements with your chosen university at an early stage. Where necessary, you should enrol on the appropriate GCSE course at the College. Your tutor and the Careers Team can provide guidance and support in making these decisions. Please note that fees may apply for GCSE courses.

The College is committed to supporting you to achieve a positive destination, whether that is further study, higher education, an apprenticeship, professional training or employment.

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.
- E-scooters (and their batteries) may not be brought into any of the campus buildings due to the Fire Regulations that the college must comply with.
- 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 or other platforms, and not displaying clothing or tattoos with emblems that would cause offence to others.

Our commitment to fostering a safe and inclusive environment extends to ending Violence Against Women and Girls and everyone has a role to play in preventing such violence and in supporting those affected by it. We have a zero tolerance approach to any behaviour, language or action that constitutes harassment, abuse or violence against women and girls, and we expect you to speak up and seek support from college staff if you witness or are made aware of any incidents.

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

SERC's Mobile Phone policy provides guidance for staff and students regarding the acceptable use of mobile phones while you attend the College. Learners are expected to follow the rules that each tutor will set for their particular learning environment, and these expectations will be clarified with your class during the induction period. Please note that mobile phones and smart watches must 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 to 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. Alternatively, you can 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 has developed 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.
- Transversal and 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 transversal and 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:

- Provide learners with skills to address economic and community needs in the local region by focusing 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 these 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, and 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. 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

Work placement is a valuable opportunity to gain real workplace experience and develop the skills employers are looking for. Placements may form a mandatory assessed part of your course or be undertaken as an optional opportunity to enhance your employability and career prospects. They provide a chance to apply the knowledge and skills learned in the classroom within a real working environment.

All full-time and part-time students are encouraged to participate in a work placement, even if it is not a requirement if their course. SERC will support you throughout the process and help you identify suitable placement opportunities. You will work closely with your tutor and Work Placement Officer, who will provide advice and guidance from application through to placement completion.

To help you find a placement, SERC provides access to the Work Placement App. This online system enables you to search for employers, browse placement opportunities and register placements that you have sourced independently. Students, placement providers and SERC staff are given secure access to information relevant to their role. SERC and placement providers are committed to handling personal data responsibly and in accordance with Data Protection legislation, including the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR).

Placements can take place with either large organisations or small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), both in Northern Ireland and overseas. The length and attendance requirements of placements vary depending on your course. Some placements may last for a full academic year, while others may run for several weeks. Attendance can range from one day per week to full-time (up to five days per week).

If your placement is not a compulsory part of your course, it must be completed in your own time. The placement must be relevant to your course of study and approved by your 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.

If your placement involves working with children, and/or adults at risk of harm or adults who may require protection, you may need to obtain a valid AccessNI check before starting. Further information about this process can be found in the SERC Safeguarding, Care and Welfare Procedure, available on the SERC website on the SERC website Policies and Procedures section.

AccessNI is the criminal record checking service for Northern Ireland. Depending on the placement role, students may need an Enhanced or Enhanced with Barred Lists check. These checks include the same information as a standard criminal record check, along with relevant information held by local police and, where applicable, checks carried out by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

SERC will manage the AccessNI application process for both full-time and part-time students in Further Education and Higher Education programmes. Students are responsible for paying the cost of their AccessNI check unless advised otherwise.

Details of the Work Placement Team are provided below should you require any support or guidance regarding the AccessNI process.

Carolyn King
Work Placement & Competitions Manager
cking@serc.ac.uk

Erin Harkness
Work Placement & Competitions Officer
eharkness@serc.ac.uk

Teigan Mitchell
Work Placement & Competitions Officer
tmitchell@serc.ac.uk

Alan Horne
Work Placement & Competitions Officer
ahorne@serc.ac.uk

Leah Hamilton
Work Placement & Competitions Officer
lhamilton@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 will 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

Competitions are a great way to develop your skills, gain experience, and challenge yourself. Throughout the year, the College runs a range of campus and intercampus competitions across different subject areas, giving students opportunities to improve their technical abilities and build important transferable skills such as teamwork, communication, problem-solving, and confidence.

There are two main types of competitions available to Further Education students:

- **Project Competitions** – where you complete and present a project based on a specific challenge or theme.
- **Skills Competitions** – where you demonstrate your practical skills in a timed and competitive environment.

You can find out more about available competitions on the Competitions Team site on the student intranet or by speaking to your tutor.

External Competitions and Awards

SERC is committed to providing students with opportunities to take part in competitions as part of their learning experience. Many students have progressed from internal College competitions to represent SERC and Northern Ireland FE at regional, national, and international competitions, including WorldSkills events.

Course teams, with support from the Competitions Manager, will identify suitable competitions and explain how students are selected to take part. These competitions may also be used to identify students who could go on to compete at regional, national, or international level.

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 the globe 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 support and develop students' entrepreneurial mindset, skills, confidence, and innovative thinking. Through ideation, project-based learning, competitions, and a year-round programme of activities, students are encouraged to explore and test their ideas. Innovation Advisors work in partnership with course teams to deliver workshops, tutorials, and 1:1 mentoring, supporting students at every stage of their enterprise journey.

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 points;
- Emailing complaints@serc.ac.uk

**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 or completing a compliments form, available at campus reception points.

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 email 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

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.

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 1. Please ask your tutor to guide you to a copy of the FE and Work-Based Learning Appeals SOP for guidance.

Issue	Relevant Process
Admissions	Complaint process
Services e.g. Library, 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, Lena by Inspire, Action Mental Health, Ascert and others in providing information and care for our students.

SERC seeks to provide a positive, safe and supportive learning environment for all students. 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.

Health, Welfare and Counselling

Lena by Inspire Counselling

As a SERC student you will have access to Lena by Inspire who are an independent source of support and counselling. They 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 Lena by 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 Lena by Inspire 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 Lena by 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.

Health Issues

During their time at College, young people often have health-related worries and to help students to deal with these issues we have established links with the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust. 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.

In addition, all students will have the opportunity to complete a short online training package that focuses on **Healthy Relationships in a Digital World**. 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.

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

Lisburn Campus

Roger Duncan
rduncan@serc.ac.uk

Newtownards Campus

Barbara McNeill
bmcneill@serc.ac.uk

Downpatrick Campus

Paul Walsh
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 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

Bangor - Grace Curran
Learning Support Manager
gcurran@serc.ac.uk

Bangor - Jean Liddell
Learning Support Manager
jliddell@serc.ac.uk

Bangor – Siobhan Ferguson
Learning Support Manager
sferguson@serc.ac.uk

Lisburn - Gerard Madden
Learning Support Manager
gmadden@serc.ac.uk

Lisburn - Christine Crangle
Learning Support Manager
ccrangle@serc.ac.uk

Downpatrick - Sinead Boyd
Learning Support Manager
sineadboyd@serc.ac.uk

Newtownards – Madison McCreery
Learning Support Manager
mmccreery@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 home to college 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 Campus

Megan Cunningham
Student Finance Advisor
03456007555 Ext 8641
studentfinance@serc.ac.uk

Lisburn Campus

Adriaan Hooisma
Student Finance Advisor
03456007555 Ext 8640
studentfinance@serc.ac.uk

Newtownards / Downpatrick Campus

Stephanie Lyness
Student Finance Advisor
03456007555 Ext 8641
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
General Enquiries:	info@serc.ac.uk
EMA Queries:	ema@serc.ac.uk

SERC Careers Service

SERC Careers Service provides careers information, advice and guidance for current and prospective students, as well as members of the local community. Our professionally qualified Careers staff offer support that is impartial, confidential, and designed to help you make informed decisions about your next steps, whether you are progressing into employment, further study or training.

We can support students with making career choices, accessing labour market information and opportunities, preparing for interviews, CV development, UCAS, and applications for further study. Lecturing Staff will work closely with the Careers Service in providing relevant vocational and occupational information to students in their specific areas.

To support your progression, the Careers Team will send you weekly Careers Bulletins to your SERC student email, featuring jobs, volunteering, events and useful resources. Students can also join the Online Careers Hub to access information on careers, jobs and volunteering opportunities, interviews and CVs, further study and training, upcoming events and external support organisations. You can join the Online Careers Hub here.

Throughout the year, SERC Careers host events designed to support your transition into employment or further study, including jobs and careers fairs, HE Fairs, skills workshops (e.g.: CVs and interview preparation) and employer talks. These are advertised in the Careers Bulletins as well as the Online Careers Hub.

Students can contact us to book a careers appointment, or with quick queries by emailing careers@serc.ac.uk or by contacting staff directly.

Bangor Campus Room A27b

Shirley Moore, Careers Manager
03456007555 Ext 2713 / 07790 347492
smoore@serc.ac.uk

Bangor Campus Room A27b

Louise Mulligan, Careers Officer
03456007555 Ext 2779 / 07557 259926
lmulligan@serc.ac.uk

Bangor Campus Room A27b

Julie Wilson, Careers Officer
03456007555 Ext 2779 / 07790 341875
juliewilson@serc.ac.uk

Newtownards Campus, Careers Hub

Anne Reid, Careers Officer
03456007555 Ext 3851 / 07971 303601
areid@serc.ac.uk

Lisburn Campus Room 1B-7

Carolyn Mulholland, Careers Officer
03456007555 Ext 1600 / 07825 060293

cmulholland@serc.ac.uk

Downpatrick Campus Room B2-8

(Ballynahinch & Newcastle)

Julie George, Careers Officer
03456007555 Ext 6225 / 07769 359094
jgeorge@serc.ac.uk

Downpatrick Campus Room B2-8
(Ballynahinch & Newcastle)
Elish Crilly, Careers Officer
03456007555 Ext 6225 / 07825 021830
Ecrilly@serc.ac.uk

www.facebook.com/SERCCareers

www.serc.ac.uk/support/careers-service

Students' Union

'Hi everyone, and a warm welcome to South Eastern Regional College! I'm Merlin Gilliland, your Student Governor, and I'm here to represent your voice at the highest level of decision-making in the college. My role is to make sure students are heard and supported, and that your experience here is the best it can be. I am also the prime representee of the Students' Union, which is your hub for student life—organising events, campaigns, and opportunities to get involved and make a difference. Whether you're just starting or returning, I'm excited to see what we'll achieve together this year.'

Merlin Gilliland
Student Governor, SERC, 2026-27

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

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

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,.

If you're interested in finding out more or would like to get involved in the Students' Union you can contact us at studentgovernor@serc.ac.uk or studentsunion@serc.ac.uk. or contact one of the team directly. The contact details for the team are found below:

Bangor Campus, Room D23
Newtownards Campus, Room A16A
Ross Currie, Student Engagement Manager
rcurrie@serc.ac.uk

Lisburn Campus, Room 1D-12
Downpatrick Campus, Room B5-12
Danielle Carey, Student Engagement Officer
dcarey@serc.ac.uk

STUDENT CARERS
studentcarers@serc.ac.uk

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 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. Further information may also be found at the link SERC Student Carers.

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. 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, though Teams or from the course Moodle site. Students can access the intranet both in college and externally. You should visit it regularly.

The Library

The College Libraries 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.

Library 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 Libraries (just call in and see us), or in a group setting in your classroom (please ask your tutor to book a session with the Library staff).

- Experienced and knowledgeable Library staff to help you research your assignments.
- 27,000 + printed books.
- 1100+ 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.

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

The Online Library

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 Library 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 Library staff for details.

You can also email us at library@serc.ac.uk or ask a question using Ask a Librarian.

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

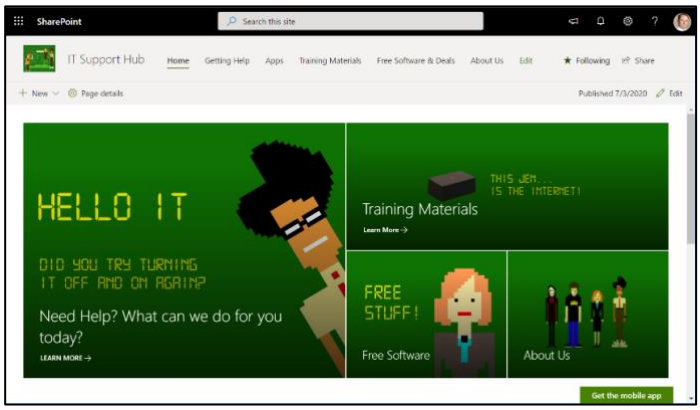
HE Study Rooms

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: IT Support Hub - Home



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.

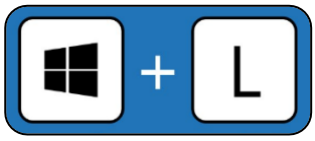
If you're really stuck, you can call into your local IT office on campus, or email servicedesk@serc.ac.uk or call 028 9127 6767, leaving your name, student ID, a return phone number and description of the problem you are experiencing, and we will call you back between 09:00 and 17:00.

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

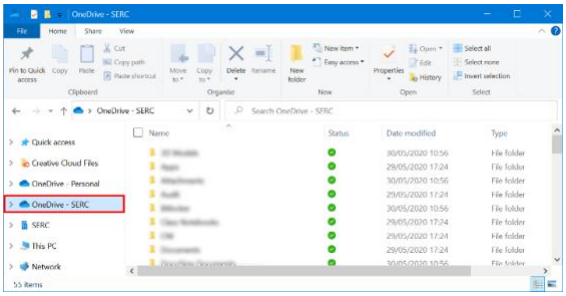
You should make every effort to protect your account, including locking your PC/Mac whilst unattended. This can be done using ‘Ctrl + Alt + Del’ and selecting "Lock this computer" or the Windows Key & the letter ‘L’ on your keyboard. On a Mac, you can lock the computer from the Apple menu.



Storage of Files & Documents

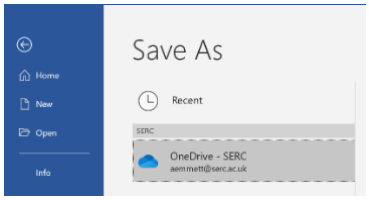
As a student, you have been allocated 1TB of storage in the College’s Office 365 Service, known as OneDrive. The key advantage for you is that OneDrive enables you to access your files/documents from any internet connected device, including tablets, PC, Macs or even on your mobile phone.

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 device, you can see OneDrive to the side of the Windows Explorer or macOS Finder. 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 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 on up to 5 of your personal PCs, MACs, Laptops, Tablet & Phone Devices. To download the software, navigate to https://m365.cloud.microsoft/apps/ 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 to change your password when you first log in and to not 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 0nly 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 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) 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 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

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

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: 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).

Learner Appeals Form (Stage 2)

If the issue is unresolved after Stage 1, learners are required to complete Part A and Part B of this form to make a Stage 2 appeal. This should be completed within 5 working days from the date of the Stage 1 meeting and forwarded to the qualification Lead Internal Verifier / Internal Quality Assurer (IQA).

Part A

Learner's name	
EBS learner ID	
Qualification registration number	
Email Address	
Date of assessment	
Date of Stage 1 meeting	
Name of assessor (against whose decision the appeal is being made)	
Date Stage 2 appeal submitted	

Part B: Describe the reasons for your Stage 2 appeal as fully as possible in the box below. Please include copies of any associated documents. This should include learner evidence and record of feedback from the assessor. Learners should keep a copy of this form.

Reasons for Stage 2 Appeal
Learner's signature: Date:

Please return this form to qualification 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:	

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:

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