Higher Education Admissions Policy

Policy Number:
072-2022

Academic Year:
2026/2027 Onwards

Target Audience:
All Staff and Students

Summary of Contents
This Policy outlines the process the College will follow to ensure a consistent approach to Higher Education (HE) admission and enrolment of students into the College.

Enquiries
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Review Information:
First Created: May 2022

Last Reviewed: September 2026

Next Review: March 2027

Change Type at last Review:

~~No~~/Minor/~~Significant~~ (delete as appropriate)

Approval/Noting By:
CMT: 28 September 2026

Lead GB Committee: Education Committee

Governing Body Approval: March 2026

Related Documents:

Higher Education Admissions SOP

Higher Education Accreditation of Prior Learning SOP

Higher Education Programmes SOP

Fees Policy

Complaints and Compliments SOP

Complaints and Compliments Policy

Recruitment and Monitoring of International Students SOP

Superseded Documents (if applicable):
N/A

Date of Equality of Opportunity and Good Relations Screening (Section 75):
May 2022**Date of Last Accessibility Screening:**

March 2025

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1.0 Change History

Changes to this SOP are documented in Appendix 1 of this document. When reading electronic copies of this document, you can click here to view the change history.

2.0 Purpose

SERC recognises the importance of admitting applicants to a course suited to their ability and aspirations. The admissions procedure takes account of all aspects of the application process, not just an applicant's academic profile to ensure equality of opportunity for all. SERC is committed to widening participation and to promoting wider access to Further and Higher Education.

All applications are considered without regard to any bias e.g. age, ethnic origin, disability, sexual orientation, gender, religious or political beliefs, marital status, care experience or socio-economic background.

SERC operates an online application process for all courses through its website www.serc.ac.uk. Applicants can use one of various social media accounts to register e.g. Facebook, Instagram. The online application portal will open for all Higher Education admissions in November each year.

SERC courses are also available through the UCAS system. Applications from those applying through the UCAS system are welcome in accordance with UCAS deadlines. The College will observe the procedures and deadlines for the handling of applications as set out by UCAS. SERC will also facilitate UCAS applicants via the Clearing system when results are released.

3.0 Scope

This Policy will apply to all higher education admissions at SERC. It will outline all aspects of the admissions process and will bring together the application and enrolment process.

This Policy will differentiate between those applicants applying directly through the College (Direct Entry) and those applying through the UCAS system.

This Policy meets the guidance of the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Quality Code in maintaining effective quality assurance practices.

This Policy also meets Competition and Markets Authority guidance for Further & Higher Education and Awarding Organisation requirements.

4.0 Procedure

4.1 Higher Education Applicants

Applicants will apply online and receive an automatic acknowledgement email confirming receipt of their application.

The personal data from UCAS applicants will be copied from the UCAS system to the Student Manager App, allowing SERC to contact all applicants within time constraints.

The College will make offers to full time applicants based on subsequent achievement in examination. Grades for UCAS students will be confirmed through the UCAS system. Direct entry applicants will be required to upload their results to their online SERC account. In both scenarios, the College reserves the right to request that applicants demonstrate competence. This could be an audition, submission or a portfolio, skills test. Applicants will be informed of the requirements once they submit their application.

The College will adhere to UCAS deadlines in terms of the issuing of offers. This will also apply to those programmes where additional methods of assessment are required. UCAS applicants will receive their offer via the UCAS system (offer also issued directly from SERC application system). Direct entry applicants will receive their offer via the email address attached to their SERC account.

Full-time applicants are issued with either a Conditional Offer or, if they already meet the entry criteria, they will be moved to 'EnrolNoFees' status.

Part-time applicants who are eligible for enrolment, will be moved to 'Application Approved' status. Those who have been unsuccessful with their application will be referred to the Careers Team for further advice and guidance.

Applicants will be moved to 'Enrolled' status once they complete all finance checks (full time) or pay any associated fees (part time).

4.2 Admissions Criteria

The College reserves the right to enhance the entrance criteria for all courses based on demand and required academic standards as specified by the awarding body/validating organisation. The College will notify applicants in writing of changes to admissions requirements prior to the commencement of any programme of study with the exception of Open University (OU) Courses. Entry criteria for Open University Courses will be determined by SERC and will be reviewed on an annual basis. Entry criteria will not change for students who have already been offered a place on an OU validated programme.

All applications will be received in the English language and the applicant must be competent in same. The obvious exclusion from this is for ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) provision.

Students wishing to come to the UK must satisfy the criteria for studying in the UK. Further details can be found in the Recruitment and Monitoring of International Students SOP.

4.3 Applicants with Additional Needs

The College welcomes applications from all learners who have a learning disability and / or difficulty. The College will make reasonable adjustments to ensure support for any applicant with a learning difficulty and/or disability to assist them in the admissions and enrolment process and in the progression and completion of their studies.

There may be times, however, taking into account the resources of the College, when the nature of a student's ill health or behaviour requires support and adjustments beyond the expertise or capacity that the College can reasonably offer.

The College reserves the right to refuse admission to an applicant who has been previously excluded from the College or partner organisations or who previously attended but failed to make sufficient effort towards successfully completing their studies. The College reserves the right not to admit an applicant who has any outstanding debts to the College.

4.4 Applicants under the age of 18 years of age

Applicants who are under the age of 18 at the point of enrolment will be considered using the same academic admissions criteria as all other applicants.

Where an applicant under the age of 18 is offered a place, they will be treated academically as an adult learner and will participate in the same classes, assessments, student representation structures and higher education learning environment as other students. However, parents/guardians remain responsible for the young person outside the College's educational responsibilities, and the College does not act in loco parentis.

Prior to enrolment, the following additional requirements apply:

- Completion of an individual assessment by the College to consider any safeguarding, welfare and support arrangements that may be required.
- Provision of parent/guardian and emergency contact details for inclusion within College records.
- Confirmation that the applicant and their parent/guardian understand the nature of the higher education environment and the support arrangements available.

4.5 International Applications

An international applicant is defined as a student who does not qualify as a resident or citizen of UK/Ireland or an EEA National with pre-settled or settled status in the UK and was granted a Student visa.

International applicants, at the point of enrolment will be considered using the same academic admissions criteria as all other applicants.

The process for admissions for International Students can be found in Recruitment and Monitoring of International Students SOP.

5.0 Definitions

Type of offer or enrolment	Definitions
Conditional Offer	Applicant has attended pre-entry advice and guidance session but has yet to attain the required entry criteria. Applies to full-time applicants only
Application Approved	Applicant has attended pre-entry advice and guidance session and has met the entry criteria for the course. Applies to part-time applicants only

Further contact to follow	Applicant has attended a pre-entry advice and guidance session but is required to submit something further or attend a follow-up session
Entry requirements not met	Applicant has been unsuccessful in gaining a place on their chosen course
Enrolled	Applicant's place has been confirmed

6.0 Disclosure of Criminal Convictions

SERC is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all applicants, trainees and staff while they attend the College. SERC is also committed to making sure that there is an equality of opportunity for all applicants including those with criminal convictions.

To help the College fulfil its commitments, all applicants must declare whether they hold or have held any convictions at the time of their application. Such declarations will be dealt with via the Criminal Disclosure Procedure. Where appropriate a risk assessment and management plan will be completed and agreed with the applicant prior to the offer of a place on a course

7.0 Tuition Fees for Higher Education

Full time Higher Education students are required to provide evidence of how they will fund their studies at the point of enrolment. The College will issue document requests via email to each authorised student for either a Student Award Letter or a Direct Debit mandate as soon as the offer of a place has been issued.

Part time Higher Education students must pay any associated fees at the point of enrolment.

8.0 Complaints and Appeals

If an applicant wishes to lodge a complaint about the admissions process, they should be directed to the College's Complaints Process - Complaints Process.

9.0 Responsible Owner

It is the responsibility of Head of Admissions and Information Services to ensure that this policy is implemented, adhered to and reviewed.

10.0 Communication Plan

This Policy will be uploaded to the College intranet and referred to in staff induction and training.

11.0 Review

This Policy will be reviewed annually, or when the need for change has been identified.

Appendix 1: Document Change History

Version	Date	Change Detail
1.0	July 2023	Updated to new Accessibility Template
1.1	March 2025	• Cover Sheet updated • Title – Head of Knowledge Management - changed to Head of Admissions and Information Services • All references to FE or Further Education Removed • Purpose, Scope and Procedure updated to include UCAS • Review changed to “Annually”
1.2	October 2025	No Changes
1.3	March 2026	Addition of new related document: Recruitment and Monitoring of International Students SOP 2.0 Purpose – paragraph 4 reworded to include “ The College will observe the procedures and deadlines set out by UCAS.” 4.0 Procedure – updated to remove the requirements for PEAG attendance. 4.2 Admissions Criteria – Paragraph added to include UK study eligibility.
1.4	September 2026	New sections added as per CMA guidance: 4.4 Applicants under the age of 18 years of age 4.5 International Applications