

# STUDENT PROTECTION PLAN 2023 / 24

**Final Approval by:**  
**CMT – 13 October 2023**

**Date of Next Review:**  
**June 2024**

## Student Protection Plan

Provider's Name: South Eastern Regional College  
Provider's UKPRN: 10020699  
Legal Address: SERC, Castle Street, Lisburn, BT27 4SU  
Contact: Gary Ritchie

### 1 Introduction

South Eastern Regional College (SERC) is committed to providing students with a learning experience that enables students to achieve the best possible academic outcomes. This plan sets out the College's arrangements for protecting the quality of provision and continuity of study for all our students. The plan outlines the College approach to the assessment of the range of risks to the continuation of study for our students whilst taking into account the College's specific circumstances.

Unless otherwise stated the Student protection Plan is applicable to all students enrolled with SERC.

### 2 Risk Management

The Risk Management Team comprises all members of the College Management Team.

The responsibilities are:

- Implement and embed the risk management process within the College.
- Identify and evaluate all risks within the College and to develop the College Risk Register.
- Report on Risk Management to the Audit Committee.
- Meet on a quarterly basis (or more frequently as determined by Audit & Risk Committee schedule) to review the existing College Risk Register, identification of new College Risks, Accountability & Financial Management Division (AFMD) guidance and Feedback Log.

In South Eastern Regional College all risks will be managed at one of two levels:

- **College / Strategic Risks**  
High level risks which could have a major impact on the College's business objectives. These risks are managed primarily by the College Management Team.
- **Operational Risks**  
Risks that relate to activities within the control of a School or Department, which could have a major impact on the delivery of service of achievement of objectives for that area. These risks are managed by the budget holder for the School or Department and may be escalated to College/strategic level by the College Management Team via the Integrated Monthly Performance Management System and Risk Management processes.

- 3 An assessment of the range of risks to the continuation of study for your students, how those risks may differ based on your students' needs, characteristics and circumstances, and the likelihood that those risks will crystallise

#### 4 Institutional Closure

The risk that the College is unable to operate has been categorised as **very low**.

##### 4.1 Programme of Study (Course) Closure

- 4.1.1 The Director of Curriculum and Information Services through the annual Curriculum Plan will propose courses for closure, suspension or substantial change. These proposals will be discussed by the College Management Team prior to presentation at the Education Committee of the Governing Body and as part of the annual bi-laterals at the Department for the Economy.
- 4.1.2 The College may, when deemed necessary, close a course meaning that there will be no further intakes to the course, and it will no longer be offered by the College. The mitigations outlined in the College [Higher Education Course Closure SOP](#) mean that the risk associated is categorised as **very low**.

##### 4.2 Substantial Changes

Substantial changes constitute alternations to a course that could potentially affect the decision of an applicant to take up their place and/or significantly vary the information provided to applicants or to students regarding the nature of the course and its component parts.

Substantial changes would include, but are not limited to:

- Change of course location (to another Campus);
- Change to the title of a course or award;
- Change to the accreditation of a course;
- Change to the mode of delivery (e.g. from full to part time); and
- Substantial changes to the curriculum, assessment or modules.

The mitigations outlined in the College [Higher Education Course Closure SOP](#) mean that the risk associated with any substantial change is categorised as **very low**.

- 5 The measures that you have put in place to mitigate those risks that you consider to be reasonably likely to crystallise

#### 5.1 Institutional Closure

SERC implements robust financial management and governance processes which ensure the College operates to the highest standards of corporate governance. Additionally, SERC is a Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB) of the Department for the Economy (DfE).

#### 5.2 Programme of Study (Course) Closure

Where the decision has been taken to close a course, those students already enrolled on the course will continue to progress and complete the course.

Where students have broken study due to extenuating circumstances or leave of absence the College will provide support for completion and this may include an alternative course or transfer to another provider. In these circumstances the College may not be able to provide continuation of study of the same units at point of enrolment.

However, the College will seek to uphold the principle of fairness so that the student is enabled to complete.

#### 5.3 Substantial Changes

The College procedure aligns with the UK Quality Code for Higher Education and is informed by the Competitions and Markets Authority guidance on consumer law for UK HE providers (2015) and the HEFCE statement of good practice on course changes and closures.

6 Information about the policy you have in place to refund tuition fees and other relevant costs to your students and to provide compensation where necessary in the event that you are no longer able to preserve continuation of study

6.1 The College Fees Policy establishes the guidelines by which fees and charges may be levied for the provision of appropriate educational facilities and services. The Fees Policy provides the fee for each category of course per academic year.

6.2 The Policy states that fees are not waived nor refundable except in a number of circumstances. These circumstances and the process associated is documented within the Colleges Fees Refund and Waiver SOP.

**7 Information about how you will communicate with students about your student protection plan**

7.1 The Student Protection Plan will be made available on the College website with links included within key student documents and platforms. This will include but not be limited to; Programme Handbook, College Website, SERC4U and Moodle. Students will be directed to the Plan during their College induction and where necessary in weekly tutorial session.

7.2 The Plan will be periodically reviewed with students provided with mechanisms to contribute to its development. The primary means to capture the student voice will be via Staff / Student Consultation Committee meetings. Additionally, the plan will be reviewed by the Higher Education Review Board which has student representation.

7.3 Where it is deemed necessary to implement any element of the Student Protection Plan this will be enacted in line with the process set out in the Higher Education Course Closure SOP.

## 8 Version History

<b>Version</b>	<b>Description of Changes</b>	<b>Date</b>
1.0	Created	January 2022
1.1	Minor date amendment for academic year and updated links throughout	May 2023