

Welcome

Returning to education after a break from being in a learning environment can be a little daunting. However, SRUC is a unique institution offering course at all levels from access through college and university level study, to postgraduate taught courses and research opportunities. We're a small and friendly place where you won't be a lost face in a crowd and that has a supportive and flexible approach to learning.

SRUC's courses relate to ways in which we use the land and natural resources around us – from agriculture to the bio-economy, veterinary nursing, and a huge variety of exciting and relevant topics in between.

It's not just about sitting in a classroom...

At SRUC you learn in many different ways across all six of our campuses. Alongside traditional lectures, there may be guest speakers and practical classes, and depending on your course, laboratory. You will also participate in seminars and tutorials, group presentations, projects and written assignments. Whatever course you're studying you'll find that study tours, field trips and real life case studies all feature.

This guide has been designed to answer some of the questions you may have regarding returning to study. However, if you have any further questions please do not hesitate to contact our Student Recruitment Team by emailing recruitment@sruc.ac.uk or phoning **0800 269 453**.



Alicja Kaczmarcyk, Environmental Management

Originally from Poland, Alicja came to study at SRUC to study Environmental Management. As a mature student with a long break from education, the design to change career path wasn't easy.

"I chose SRUC because of its renowned reputation as a leading land-based educator. I wanted to study at an institution that had both academic and research credentials. In my opinion, being taught by lecturers who also undertake research and consultancy work brings many benefits; it enables students to hear from lecturers who are exposed to real-life work experience and provides opportunities to get involved in research projects. As a rather small Higher Education institution, SRUC seemed like a relaxed and friendly place to study.

As a small college, you get the opportunity to know your lecturers well. It's a place where lecturers know your name, your story, and are happy to have time to talk to you. Studying at a college where education has more of a personal touch is invaluable to me. I feel like I am part of something rather than a student lost among crowds and numbers."

Thinking About Returning To Learning?

Our students come from a range of backgrounds: urban and rural; direct from school or college; after an established first career or study whilst working or with family commitments.

We understand that for many, the chance to dedicate all their time to being a student is impractical or that you may wish to take small steps to achieving a qualification.

You can study any of our courses on a full-time or part-time basis and in some instances by distance learning. Our courses are designed to enable flexible study patterns with the opportunity to cash in your achievements at certain stages e.g. we offer both an HNC and HND as stand alone awards within a degree programme.

And our campus learning communities provide a supportive environment in which to learn, with an excellent staff to student ratio that ensures help is always available.

Please contact our recruitment team if you need any advice, or better still - come along to one of our open days (www.sruc.ac.uk/opendays) to meet the teaching staff and learn more about SRUC.



Donald Ferguson, BSc (Hons) Horticulture

Donald had previously spent 7 years abroad so when he returned home he wanted to be involved in an industry away from the office environment. He was always interested in landscapes and green spaces and having completed an HNC in Landscape Management, this allowed him access to 2nd year of the Horticulture degree at SRUC.

“I loved my time at SRUC; it shaped me academically and gave me the skills I need to succeed in my career. I really felt supported throughout my degree, the lecturers were always available for advice, and criticism was always constructive and aimed to further your development.”

Being a “Mature” Student

Whether you are thinking about studying full-time or part-time, taking the decision to return to learning after an absence is admirable.

You may be apprehensive about returning to learning. However, you can be assured that SRUC staff are hugely experienced in guiding you through the practicalities of being a student, and many students find our small class sizes and excellent access to lecturing and support staff really helps the transition. We particularly welcome the diversity of life experiences that older students bring into the learning environment and are delighted with the interaction and group bonding that emerges between those who join SRUC straight from school or college, and those who have taken a break from formal learning.

Around a third of our undergraduate student body can be classed as “mature” (age 25 or over) so you will find that you’re not alone when you join us. Some students have just taken a few years out before taking their education further, some have brought up families, some are planning to study while still working in order to improve their career prospects, and others have pursued careers in a different field before deciding to change direction and take up study again.

The Rural Business Management HNC by Distance Learning is very well suited to me since I work part-time and have two small children. The study weekends give you the chance to meet tutors and fellow students and clearly explain what is expected of you. There is always someone at the end of the phone or email to help. The skills I am learning on the course are helping me at work. My experiences are extremely positive and I would have no hesitation in recommending this course to anyone.”

Ann Walls, Rural Business Management by Distance Learning

Fees and Funding

Mature students (classified by SAAS as over 25) will, depending on their circumstances, be eligible to apply for loans, grants, and bursaries.

If you are a mature Scottish student applying to study full-time then you should apply to the Student Awards Agency for Scotland (SAAS) for funding to cover your tuition fees and a loan or bursary to support with your living costs (www.saas.gov.uk).

Support differs if you are applying to study part-time, but again, SAAS will be able to offer advice. Take a look at the eligibility criteria for the part-time fee grant.

If you are applying from elsewhere in the UK, you should contact your Local Education Authority (or Education and Libraries Board if in Northern Ireland) for further advice. SRUC has a bursary scheme to assist students from England, Wales and Northern Ireland with their tuition fees. Applications are made once you have enrolled for your studies.

International student fees are available on the SRUC website (www.sruc.ac.uk/internationalstudents). Part-payment of tuition fees will be required before your offer of a place becomes unconditional. SRUC regrets that it is unable to provide financial support for overseas students.

Distance learning course fees are also available on our website. If you are a Scottish student SAAS will be able to provide guidance on funding options for part-time students.

Mature Students' Bursary Fund

Mature students who are entering higher education for the first time will be entitled to the full amount of student loan and will also be eligible to apply for assistance from the Mature Students' Bursary Fund. This is administered by the college, and is primarily to help pay for formal childcare.

Dedicated Funding Teams

SRUC has dedicated Funding Teams and they are available to answer any questions you may have. The best way to contact them is by email at student.funding@sruc.ac.uk or alternatively you can call our funding teams on 01334 658 804/658 883 or on 01506 864800 during office hours. You can also source advice from the Education Office of your chosen campus.

“As a very mature student I would like to say that SRUC is a fantastic place for the mature student. All the staff have been very helpful and accommodating, especially in recognising that you may have other commitments which sometimes need to take priority. SRUC staff made the whole learning experience relaxed and enjoyable and returning to education after nearly 40 years was not nearly as daunting as I thought it would be. I am loving every minute!”

Alison Irving, Countryside Management Student

Funding examples: 2017

This information is for guidance only and may be subject to changes by the government.

1. Scottish individual who was working full-time, now studying full-time BA Rural Business Management, no partner, one child:

Independent Student Bursary	£875	Not required to be repaid
Loan	£6,750	Repayable
Lone Parents Grant	£1,305	Not required to be repaid
Childcare fund	Variable	Allocated by SRUC
Tuition fees	£0	Fees are paid by SAAS to SRUC*
Total	Income £8,625	

2. Scottish individual studying HND Horticulture part-time (50% full-time rate), who is earning less than £25,000 per year in employment.

Tuition Fees	£0	Fees are paid by SAAS to SRUC by the Part-time Fee Grant*
Total	No income, no fees.	

3. Scottish individual studying HNC Countryside Management by Distance Learning (50% full-time rate) who is earning over £25,000 in their full-time job.

Tuition Fees	£642.50 per year	Not supported by SAAS
Total	Self-funded, no income.	Payment of tuition fees required.

4. Scottish individual studying full-time BSc Agriculture, partner earns £30,000 p.a. 2 children:

Student Loan	£6,250	Repayable
Tuition Fees	£0	Fees are paid by SAAS to SRUC*
Total	Income £6,250	

Please note that in all scenarios any income the individual makes from part time employment is not assessed.

**As long as you meet the SAAS eligibility criteria and have not received funding before.*

Entry Requirements for Mature Applicants

Appreciating Non-Formal Qualifications

SRUC makes its offers based upon the academic potential of the applicant and their suitability to the course. As many of our courses are vocational and involve practical activity and placement, a level of maturity is required.

This policy has been adopted particularly for mature students and those returning to learning. The aim is to offer the most flexible policy possible whilst securing entry standards.

Maturity, work experience and motivation are recognised alternatives to formal qualifications and alternative qualifications, as well as appropriate access courses are all considered.



Martin Roy, *Advanced Certificate in Forestry (Arboriculture)*.

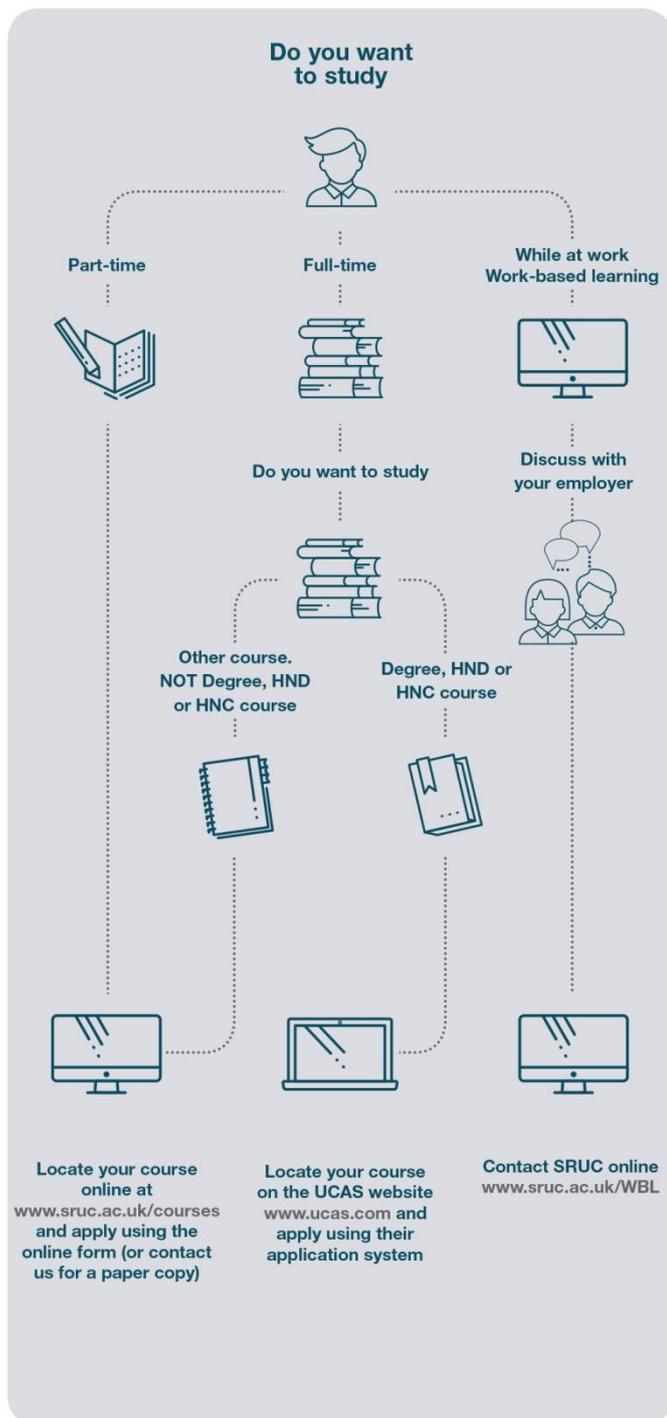
Before coming to SRUC Barony Campus, Martin was in the hospitality industry. He had always enjoyed working outside, and wanted to work with and study trees – a desire which only grew stronger as he got older.

“I have always had an active interest in the natural world and have always enjoyed working outside. I decided the time had come for me to make my ambitions a reality and set myself on a more rewarding career path.”

“I would not be in the position I am in now without my year at college. In that time I have gone from a complete novice who was unable to work a chainsaw, to a competent employee with a good base knowledge of the industry. The structure and format of my training and my determination to learn made all the new information given to me easy to digest, and I have made sure to keep a keen attitude towards learning as there is still so much to learn.”

“I am now employed by a local Forestry and Arboriculture contractor and have a challenging but exciting role within the company. While studying I was able to achieve 8 NPTC qualifications as well as my academic qualifications. I now have a diverse skill set, both theoretical and practical, which I now use on a daily basis and one which is constantly expanding.”

How to Apply



Choose a course that interests you.

If you want to study **full time** you must apply through **UCAS**. Visit the UCAS website: www.ucas.com for some advice.

You should aim to apply for your course before the first UCAS deadline (**15th January**) before the course starts. If you have missed this deadline, don't worry. SRUC will carry on accepting applications until the course is full.

If you want study part-time or by distance learning you need to apply direct to SRUC. You do this through SRUC's own website.

For both types of application you will need to enter details about your qualifications and experience, as well as a statement about why you would like to study the course. You will also need to think of someone who can act as a **reference** for you – someone you have worked with, your course tutor if you have been studying elsewhere, or someone who can provide a character reference (but who isn't a relative!).

We know that it can be trickier for mature applicants to arrange a reference – don't delay your application. Just put "to follow" into the details box and begin a conversation with us over email by contacting **admissions@sruc.ac.uk**. Once you get your reference sorted out, we will tie it to your application.

If you have any problems at all, please just contact us for help.

IT Skills

All SRUC students are required to complete a basic Information Technology (IT) module as part of their studies. We understand that some people are not used to using computers for studying, so there is always assistance available. For those that are completing a course by distance learning, IT system requirements can be found on our website.

The IT module to be completed will enable all students to use IT systems with minimal support. Topics covered will include the use of internet and e-mail, data security, resolving common hardware and software problems and the use of software packages to produce information. Our tutors will be able to assist you throughout, and you will be given a range of fun and interactive assignments to improve your IT skills. The module is designed to provide you with the skills that you will need to produce your coursework assignments, build presentations, and use IT to assist in research.

All SRUC students are given a personal computer log on and email account at the beginning of their course. The email account is usually the primary form of communication between students and staff and it is recommended that you check your emails regularly. All SRUC campuses have computers for use by students, however you may find that access to a computer at home is also beneficial.



Simon Garnett, BSc (Hons) Garden Design and Greenspace Design

Having completed a BSc in Garden and Greenspace Design, Simon Garnett's degree acted as a springboard to a variety of employment opportunities, and has enabled him to work both as a private landscape designer and a local authority officer.

"I chose SRUC as I wanted to study Garden Design to degree level, and to give myself the opportunity of designing in the public realm. I had a great relationship with my lecturers, and still keep in contact with many of them. The third year International project is a great chance to socialise with lecturers and fellow students."

"The course has given me the opportunity to become a licentiate member of the Landscape Institute, and I am currently completing my landscape architecture chartership, being mentored by one of my lecturers from SRUC. I am also working as a Landscape Development Officer for South Lanarkshire Council and I practice privately as a landscape designer through a small design practice called 'Outlandish' which I set up with two fellow graduates.

Frequently Asked Questions

I haven't studied for a while – will my qualifications allow me to get in?

SRUC's policy is to encourage participation in, and wider access to, our courses. The primary criterion to be satisfied by any applicant seeking entry will be that he or she has a realistic chance of success and will benefit from the course. Maturity, work experience and motivation are recognised as alternatives to formal qualifications and entry is also possible with appropriate access-level qualifications. All applicants are normally expected to have a Standard grade (1-3), GCSE (A-C) or equivalent, in English and Maths as evidence of literacy and numeracy skills.

Are there many Mature Students at SRUC?

Around a third of our student population are classed as mature students. Staff at SRUC are here to assist you during your return to learning. If you are having any doubts or worries please do not hesitate to ask a member of staff – we are here to help!

How many hours a week will I be studying?

A full-time student can expect to be in classes for around 15 hours per week. Part-time and distance learning students will find that their hours will vary depending on how many modules they are studying, however most students have 7 – 8 hours of classes per week. All students will be expected to do further work on assignments outside of class time.

Does SRUC have childcare facilities?

Unfortunately SRUC does not have any childcare facilities on site. We do however have a discretionary fund for mature students to support childcare costs. Please contact the Education Office at your campus after enrolment and they will be able to provide details of this scheme.

Do you offer accommodation for families?

SRUC does not have any family rooms in its halls of residence, however we can provide assistance and advice when looking for accommodation to rent within the local area. Local private landlords usually have properties available within easy reach of our campuses.

Can I get assistance with IT skills?

Every new student at SRUC is required to complete a basic IT skills course as part of their studies. If you require additional support with IT matters we have staff available who are able to assist you and we also have a very helpful student computing helpdesk.



How much will it cost?

Please see the finance and funding section for information on tuition fees. Students will have additional costs such as fees for study tours, accommodation fees and living expenses. Tuition fees are published annually on our website www.sruc.ac.uk/study

Can I work part-time?

Many students at SRUC have a part-time job to support their income whilst studying. We do however recommend that students studying full-time work no more than 15 hours per week in order to fulfil their study commitments.

How will I balance home life with studying?

Some students have concerns on the impact their return to study will have on their home life. The adjustment to a lifestyle of studying can take time. SRUC are here to support you throughout that adjustment period. If you have concerns about any aspect of your studies, or about managing your time between home and study, please let us know. We are committed to supporting our students and ensuring that they have a fantastic student experience.

What have previous students gone on to do after graduation?

Our graduates make very desirable employees and many have gone on to work in fantastic areas, very relevant to their course of study. Our graduate employment rate is 92.5%. Some students go on to further study or training after they graduate.

Have a look at the student profiles throughout this booklet, and in the relevant Course Leaflet for your course, for further information on what our graduates have gone on to do.



Come and visit us!

www.sruc.ac.uk/opendays

SRUC holds multiple Open Days to give you the best possible opportunity to come and visit us. We tell you as much as possible as we can in this guide and on our website, but we encourage you to come and visit the campus(es) to speak to staff about your course and have a look around.

If you are unable to attend one of these Open Days, please contact the Marketing and Student Recruitment Team and we will try to make alternative arrangements for you to visit us and meet staff.

Contact Us

General Contact Information

For general enquiries please email recruitment@sruc.ac.uk or phone **0800 269 453**.

For admissions queries please email admissions@sruc.ac.uk or phone 01292 886151 or contact us by post at: The Admissions Office, SRUC Ayr, University Avenue, Ayr KA8 0SX.

International enquirers should email internationalstudent@sruc.ac.uk.



Campus Contacts

If you know the campus at which you would like to study please contact them directly for further information:

Aberdeen SRUC Aberdeen Craibstone Estate ABERDEEN AB21 9YA E: aberdeen@sruc.ac.uk	Ayr SRUC Ayr Riverside Campus, University Avenue, AYR KA8 0SX E: ayr@sruc.ac.uk	Barony SRUC Barony Parkgate DUMFRIES DG1 3NE E: barony@sruc.ac.uk
Edinburgh SRUC Edinburgh King's Buildings, West Mains Road, EDINBURGH EH9 3JG E: edinburgh@sruc.ac.uk	Elmwood SRUC Elmwood CUPAR Fife KY15 4JB E: elmwood@sruc.ac.uk	Oatridge SRUC Oatridge ECCLESMACHAN West Lothian EH52 6NH E: oatridge@sruc.ac.uk

