



Stranmillis University College
A College of Queen's University Belfast



2010 ENTRY

POSTGRADUATE CERTIFICATE IN EDUCATION (EARLY YEARS)

The PGCE (Early Years) course which is offered by Stranmillis University College is a one-year postgraduate which recognizes the importance of early years education and the need for professionals who are highly committed to working with young children. Successful completion of the PGCE (Early Years) will lead to 'Eligibility to Teach' status which is granted by the Department of Education (DE).

COURSE STRUCTURE

The course is offered on a full-time basis. It is of approximately thirty-six weeks duration, beginning early September and lasting until late June of the following year. At least eighteen weeks are spent obtaining practical experience. The initial placement will be spent in a nursery setting towards the end of October, lasting for a period of five weeks. An additional five weeks in January/February will be spent in a Foundation Stage classroom (i.e. Year 1 or 2 in a primary school) and a further 6 weeks will be spent in a Key Stage 1 classroom (i.e. Year 3 or 4 of a primary school) in April/May. Students will then get the opportunity to spend 2 weeks in an additional educational setting of their choice e.g. a hospital school in June. Students will spend every Monday in schools for observation purposes.

During the eighteen weeks on campus, students will experience a variety of teaching and learning methods such as seminars, workshops, peer group discussions and debates, presentations and individual consultation opportunities.

COURSE CONTENT

The course consists of 4 modules:

- Implementing a Play-based Curriculum
- Teaching the Key Stage 1 Primary Curriculum
- Professional Experience 1
- Professional Experience 2

'Implementing a Play-based Curriculum' - With the increased value on play as a medium for teaching and learning, both at pre-school and foundation stage levels, this module aims to provide students with an in-depth knowledge and understanding of how a play-based curriculum can be effectively put into practice. Guidance on the use of themes as a means of ensuring an integrated approach to children's learning will be provided. Students will critically examine relevant theory and research in this field and the appropriate role of the teacher will be discussed and debated. Much emphasis will be placed on preparing students to offer children a developmentally appropriate curriculum which builds on children's needs and interests and practical guidance on observation, planning and assessment through play will be provided.

'Teaching the Key Stage 1 Primary Curriculum' aims to enhance students understanding of the integrated nature of children's learning. It will focus on how the six key areas of learning at Key Stage 1 can be taught, principally through the use of themes and practical guidance of how this can be done effectively will be provided. The context of the Revised Northern Ireland Curriculum for Key Stage 1 will be discussed and examined and how to ensure an effective transition from play-based to more formal activities will be addressed. Emphasis will also be placed on practical teaching skills and competences such as observations, planning and assessment at Key Stage 1.

The 'Professional Experience' modules are completed through School Based Work and Teaching Studies classes. Students will undertake periods of observation and practice in Nursery, Foundation and Key Stage 1. In these modules students will study and engage in preparation and planning, practical classroom experience and management as well as self-evaluation to enhance professional expertise.

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

In keeping with all courses of initial teacher education, entrants are required to have achieved Grade C in GCSE (or equivalent) Mathematics, English Language and a single or combined Science subject. GCSE qualifications must have been gained at the time of application. Entrants to the PGCE (Early Years) will also be required to possess an upper second class honours degree in the area of Early Years. Substantial and recent experience of working with children in the 3-8 age range will also be required. Entry to the PGCE (Early Years) will be based on qualifications, reference, relevant experience and an interview.

Due to the competition for places, admission requirements may be enhanced at the short-listing stage, and applicants who are short listed will be called for interview, which will include a short presentation by the candidate.

In line with government policy it is a requirement that all entrants to the course must undertake a criminal record check through AccessNI.

ADMISSION PROCEDURES

Application should be made on the appropriate form which can be obtained from Academic Registry from October. Completed application forms should be returned (together with a £10 administration fee) not later than 1 February 2010.

FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS

Full details of fees and financial support arrangements can be found on the finance section of the Stranmillis University College website (www.stran.ac.uk).

CREDIT TRANSFER

From June 2006 all students who successfully complete a PGCE at Masters Level will be eligible to claim 30 M level credit points towards a Master's qualification.

PROPOSED MERGER WITH QUB

Potential applicants to this course may have heard of the proposed merger between Stranmillis University College and Queen's University with a target implementation date of August 2009. Until economic and legislative approval for the merger has been received from government, Stranmillis will continue with the current practice of separate recruitment and admissions processes.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Academic Registry
Stranmillis University College
BELFAST BT9 5DY

Email: Registry@stran.ac.uk
Web Site: www.stran.ac.uk
Tel: 028 9038 1271