



STRANMILLIS UNIVERSITY COLLEGE
A College of Queen's University Belfast

Selection Report

2006



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Bachelor of Education Degree Course

General Analysis of the BEd Degree Course

Intake Quotas

The intake quotas for the BEd, as determined by the Department of Education, were 115 Primary places, a decrease of 25 on the 2005 figure, and 50 Post-primary places, consistent with the previous year.

Applicants

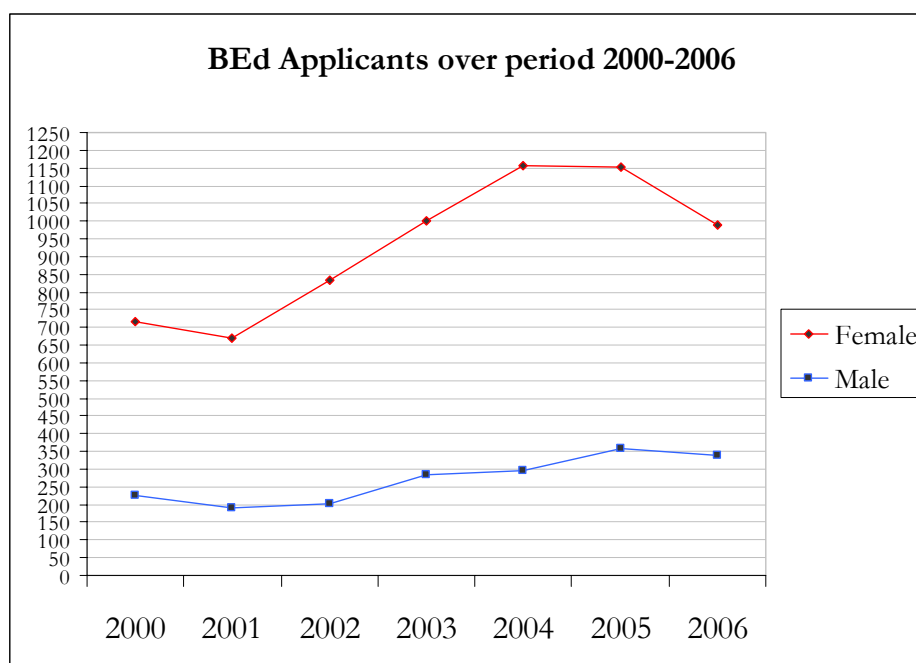
The number of applicants to the BEd was 1328, representing a decrease of 12% compared with the number of applicants in the 2005 cycle.

The purpose of Table 1 (a) is to provide evidence of the number of candidates applying to the University College compared with the previous year. Therefore, whether a person had submitted one application or a number of applications, as permitted by the UCAS system, he/she is only counted once. Because of the current interest in a possible undersupply of Post-primary teachers, Table 1 (a) also provides a breakdown of applicants by phase.

Table 1 (a) - Applicants

	2006			2005			Change
	Primary	Post-Primary	Total	Primary	Post-Primary	Total	
Men	262	78	340	270	89	359	-19 (-5%)
Women	801	187	988	938	213	1,151	-163 (-14%)
	1,063	265	1,328	1,208	302	1,510	-182 (-12%)

Figure 1



Entrants

The number of entrants overall is slightly down, reflecting the reduction in the intake quota for the Primary BEd. The number of entrants to the Primary BEd was 119 (slightly in excess of intake quota) whilst 47 students entered the Post-Primary BEd (slightly short of intake quota). Twenty-one males were admitted to the Primary BEd (a reduction of 2) and 18 males were admitted to the Post-primary BEd pathway (the same as 2005).

Table 1 (b) - Entrants

	2006			2005			% Change
	Pr.	Pp.	Total	Pr.	Pp.	Total	
Men	21	18	39	23	18	41	-2 (-5%)
Women	98	29	127	121	35	156	-29 (-19%)
	119	47	166	144	53	197	-35 (-16%)

Number of Applications and Entrants per Subject

Table 2 shows the number of applications (as opposed to applicants) and entrants per subject. A student may apply for up to 6 courses on his/her UCAS form. The majority of applicants to Stranmillis had applied, on average, for two courses. There is considerable variation in the number of applications for the various subjects in the BEd. Physical Education and English consistently attract large numbers whilst relatively small numbers apply for Mathematics and Music. For the Post-primary BEd, Technology and Design continues to pose difficulties with recruitment, although there has been some improvement in the number of entrants in recent years.

Table 2 Number of Applications and Entrants for each Subject Area

BEd Primary				
	Applications Change in brackets	Unsuccessful	Declined	Entrants
Art	127 (+11)	91	21	15
English	200 (-64)	141	48	11
Geography	146 (-52)	96	38	12
History	150 (+2)	109	27	14
Mathematics	95 (+4)	55	25	15
Music	79 (-20)	43	22	14
PE	248 (-27)	210	25	13
Religious Studies	196 (-12)	147	37	12
Science	122 (-7)	79	30	13
Total	1,363 (-165)	971	273	119
BEd Post-primary				
Business Studies	95 (-30)	45	28	22
Mathematics and Science	18	9	8+1	0
Religious Studies	116 (-17)	73	28	15
Tech & Design	52 (-7)	27	15	10
Total	281 (-36)	154	80	47
Total Primary & Post-Primary	1,644 (-201)	1,125	353	166

Academic Quality of Entrants

The academic quality of entrants remains at a very high level. The progressively higher grades achieved by entrants is evidenced by the fact that 78 entrants had achieved at least 3 A-Levels and 1 AS-Level. Seven students (6%) of the Primary intake achieved grade A in each of their 3+ A-levels.

The University College welcomes applicants who possess qualifications which are alternative to GCE A-level. Given the overall reduction in the BEd intake quota, it is worth noting that the number of entrants with alternative qualifications has increased by 7 from 2005. This contributes favourably to our widening participation activity.

Table 3 Academic Quality of Entrants

	Men		Women		Total	
	Pr.	Pp.	Pr.	Pp.	Pr.	Pp.
4 A-Levels + 1 AS-Level	1	0	0	0	1	0
4 A-Levels	1	1	2	1	3	2
3 A-Levels + 1 AS-Level	7	5	50	10	57	15
3 A-Levels	7	3	33	9	40	12
2 A-Levels + 1 AS-Level	0	1	0	0	0	1
Alternatives	5	8	13	9	18	17
Total	21	18	98	29	119	47

Table 4 Breakdown of Alternatives

	Men		Women		Total	
	Pr.	Pp.	Pr.	Pp.	Pr.	Pp.
3 Vocational A-Levels	0	2	1	3	1	5
Vocational A-Levels + A Levels	2	5	6	6	8	11
HNC + A Levels	0	0	1	0	1	0
BTEC National Diploma	0	1	0	0	0	1
Access/Foundation	3	0	4	0	7	0
Irish Leaving Cert	0	0	1	0	1	0
Total	5	8	13	9	18	17

UCAS Tariff Points Scores of Entrants

The UCAS tariff was introduced in the UK in September 2002. Its purpose is to provide a numerical system which gives value to a wide range of qualifications within the national frameworks and which allows comparison between them. It includes Irish Leaving Certificate, Scottish Highers and an increasing range of vocational qualifications. Key Skills (which are part of the tariff) have been included in the calculations for Stranmillis (final column).

The average tariff score for the BEd Primary is 380 and Post-Primary BEd is 330 (a small increase on the 2005 figures).

Table 5 (a) Tariff Points Scores of Entrants (A= 120, B = 100, C = 80, D = 60, E = 40
AS Levels: A = 60, B = 50, C = 40, D = 30, E = 20)

Subject	Average UCAS Tariff Points	
	2005	2006
Primary		
Art	320	380
English	360	390
Geography	370	380
History	370	380
Mathematics	340	380
Music	340	290
Physical Education	320	350
Religious Studies	370	430
Science	350	440
Average Primary	350	380
Post-primary		
Business Studies	330	350
Religious Studies	310	340
Technology & Design	280	300
Average Post-primary	310	330

Table 5 (b) Primary BEd Benchmarks

	Average Tariff Points 2004/2005
Homerton College	258
St Mary's College (Strawberry Hill)	244
Marjon	201
Liverpool Hope	243
Manchester Metropolitan	250
St Martin's College	244
University of Chester	276
Sector Average	258

Source: T.D.A website (2/11/06)

Interview Ratings of Entrants

The highest possible score on interview was 40 points (10 categories with a maximum of 4 points for each). In order to receive an offer, applicants must perform at a high level on interview and presentation, and also demonstrate academic potential. Any applicant who achieved a score of 20 or less was declared unsuccessful. There is no compensation between academic performance and performance at interview. In other words a candidate with 3 Grade As at GCE A-Level would not secure an offer if the interview was not of a high standard.

Table 6 Interview Ratings of Entrants

Ratings	Men		Women		Total	
	Pr.	Pp.	Pr.	Pp.	Pr.	Pp.
35+	13	10	70	19	83	29
30-34	5	5	17	8	22	13
25-29	3	2	11	2	14	4
Below 25	0	1	0	0	0	1
Total	21	18	98	29	119	47

Geographical Distribution of Entrants

The geographical distribution of entrants (Table 7) remains fairly constant.

Table 7 Geographical Distribution of Entrants

	Men		Women		Total		Change from 2005
	Pr.	Pp.	Pr.	Pp.	Pr.	Pp.	
Belfast	6	1	15	4	21	5	+2
Co Antrim	2	8	25	10	27	18	-7
Co Armagh	2	4	13	3	15	7	-1
Co Down	4	3	19	2	23	5	-13
Co Fermanagh	2	0	0	0	2	0	-4
Co Londonderry	4	2	12	7	16	9	-1
Co Tyrone	1	0	13	3	14	3	-7
Republic of Ireland	0	0	1	0	1	0	0
Total	21	18	98	29	119	47	

Types of Schools from Which Entrants Have Come

This measure remains fairly constant.

Table 8 Types of Schools from Which Entrants Have Come

	Men		Women		Total		Change from 2005
	Pr.	Pp.	Pr.	Pp.	Pr.	Pp.	
Grammar	14	8	78	18	92	26	-26
Non-Grammar	2	8	11	8	13	16	-1
Further/Higher Education	5	2	9	3	14	5	-4
Total	21	18	98	29	119	47	

Results of Applications from Mature Students

Mature students (defined as students 21 years of age and over) represent just 5% of student intake to the BEd which is a reduction on an average of 8% in the 4 years prior to 2006. The majority of mature students qualified for entry on the basis of an Access (Foundation) course.

Figure 2

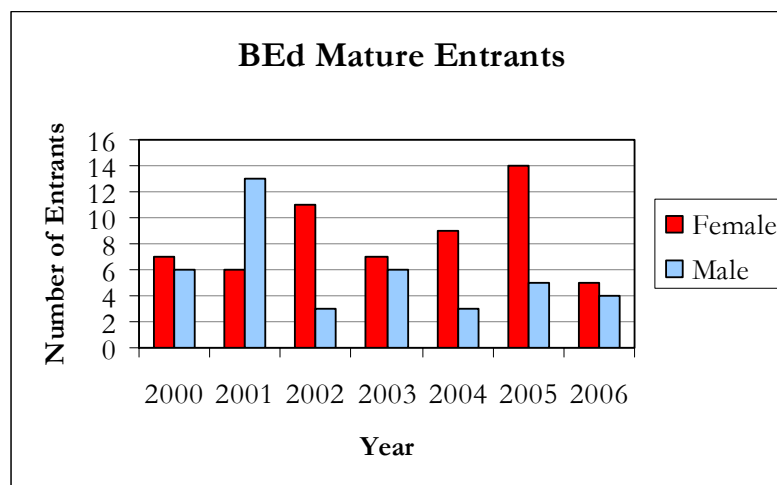


Table 9 Age Bands of Entrants

Age Band	Men		Women		Total	
	Pr.	Pp.	Pr.	Pp.	Pr.	Pp.
Under 21	18	17	93	29	111	46
21-24	1	1	2	0	3	1
25 and over	2	0	3	0	5	0
Total	21	18	98	29	119	47

Table 10 Educational Attainment of Successful Mature Students

	Men		Women		Total	
	Pr.	Pp.	Pr.	Pp.	Pr.	Pp.
HNC + A Levels	0	0	1	0	1	0
BTEC National Diploma + A Levels	0	1	0	0	0	1
Access/Foundation	3	0	4	0	7	0
Total	3	1	5	0	8	1

Male Applicants

Table 11 (a) and 11 (b) show that the percentage of male applicants and entrants to the BEd as a whole in 2006 is the highest over the past six years. In terms of applicants and entrants the 2006 percentages are the highest in six years for the Primary BEd and the highest in four years for the Post-primary BEd.

Male Applicants and Entrants to the BEd: 2001-2006

Table 11 (a) Primary BEd

Year	Total Applicants	Males as a % of all applicants	Male Entrants	Males as a % of all entrants
2006	262	25%	21	18%
2005	270	22%	23	16%
2004	214	18%	15	10%
2003	227	21%	26	17%
2002	160	17%	14	9%
2001	154	20%	25	15%

Table 11 (b) Post-Primary BEd

Year	Total Applicants	Males as a % of all applicants	Male Entrants	Males as a % of all entrants
2006	78	29%	18	38%
2005	89	29%	18	34%
2004	83	28%	17	35%
2003	59	27%	19	46%
2002	51	29%	15	34%
2001	34	24%	12	30%

Key Skills

The uptake of Key Skills continues to be relatively small. This is in line with national trends.

Table 12 Entrants with Key Skills qualifications at Level 3

	Communication			Application of No.			IT		
	2006	2005	2004	2006	2005	2004	2006	2005	2004
Male	3	5	4	0	2	1	0	0	2
Female	8	23	36	1	2	4	6	9	12
Total	11	28	40	1	4	5	6	9	14

Worship Prize

The Worship Prize is awarded annually to the student who is considered first in order of merit on entry to the BEd degree course.

After his death in 1848 The Reverend William Taylor Worship left a legacy of £100 to show the great value which the donor attached to the books published by the Commissioners of National Education in Ireland. It was decided that the money should be used to establish an annual prize for the entrant to Marlborough Street Model School in Dublin who was adjudged best qualified to commence his or her course of teacher training. After partition the prize money was allocated to Stranmillis College.

The 2006 prize winner is:

JOHNSTON, Laura Jayne	DOB 26.07.87	
ACADEMIC SUBJECT	SCIENCE	
SCHOOL ATTENDED	BELFAST ROYAL ACADEMY	
A LEVELS:	BIOLOGY	GRADE A
	CHEMISTRY	GRADE A
	MATHEMATICS	GRADE A
	RELIGIOUS STUDIES	GRADE A
AS LEVELS:	BIOLOGY	GRADE A
	CHEMISTRY	GRADE A
	MATHEMATICS	GRADE A
	RELIGIOUS STUDIES	GRADE B
GCSE'S	TEN GRADE A*	
	ONE GRADE A	
ABRSM	PIANOFORTE	
ABRSM	FLUTE	
LCME	SINGING	
INTERVIEW SCORE:	39 (out of a possible 40)	

BA (Hons) Early Childhood Studies (Full-time)

The BA (ECS) continues to attract a large number of applications. As a result, market forces have resulted in the average grades at A-level rising to BBB. Ten students with high-quality third level qualifications were admitted directly into the second year of the degree. More than half of the entrants came from the Further Education sector. The intake quota was increased by DEL in compensation for the reduced number of BEd places.

Table 13 Applicants to the BA (Hons) Early Childhood Studies Degree Course

	2006		2005		Change	
	Applicants	Entrants	Applicants	Entrants	Applicants	Entrants
Men	13	1	20	2	-7	-1
Women	507	45	555	50	-48	-5
Total	520	46	575	52	-55	-6

Table 14 Academic Attainment of Entrants

Entrants to Year 1	Entrants	Average UCAS Tariff points
A-Levels	14	340
Vocational A Levels (combination)	5	330
BTEC Nat. Dip.	3	350
CACHE Diploma	5	350
Advanced CACHE Diploma	1	Not on tariff
HND	4	“
HNC	1	“
Foundation/Access	3	“
Entrants to Year 2		
HND	8	“
Advanced Cache Diploma	2	“
Total	46	340

Table 15 Types of Schools from Which Entrants Have Come

	Men	Women	Total
Grammar	0	13	13
Non-Grammar	0	7	7
Further Education	1	25	26
Total	1	45	46

Table 16 Age Bands of Entrants

Age Band	Men	Women	Total
Under 21	0	37	37
21-24	0	6	6
25 and over	1	2	3
Total	1	45	46

Table 17 Geographical Distribution of Entrants

	Men	Women	Total
Belfast	0	6	6
Co Antrim	0	10	10
Co Armagh	0	2	2
Co Down	1	15	16
Co Fermanagh	0	2	2
Co Londonderry	0	3	3
Co Tyrone	0	5	5
Republic of Ireland	0	1	1
Scotland	0	1	1
Total	1	45	46

BSc (Hons) Health and Leisure Studies

This is the only programme in the University College in which the number of applicants was almost equally divided between men and women. The course is well established, but it is still necessary to attract a greater number of applicants. For a large number of applicants the BSc Health and Leisure Studies degree continues to be treated as a fall-back position (the first choice being UUJ, Sport, Exercise and Leisure degree). Of the 57 entrants, 5 were direct entrants into Year 2 of the degree, because of high quality HND qualifications. Like the BA Early Childhood Studies, a significant proportion of entrants came from the FE sector.

Table 18 General Analysis of Applicants

	2006		2005		Change	
	Applicants	Entrants	Applicants	Entrants	Applicants	Entrants
Men	105	28	99	16	+6	+12
Women	94	29	96	14	-2	+15
Total	199	57	195	30	+4	+27

Table 19 Number of Applications and Entrants

	Applications (change in brackets)	Unsuccessful	Declined	Entrants Main Scheme	Entrants Clearing	Total Entrants
Health & Leisure Studies	204 (+9)	57	90	47	10	57

Table 20 Academic Attainment of Entrants

Entrants to Year 1	Entrants	Average UCAS Tariff Points
A-Levels	25	270
Vocational A Levels (combination)	15	250
BTEC National Diploma	4	270
BTEC National Certificate	1	300
HND	5	Not on tariff
Foundation	1	“
Associate Degree	1	“
Entrants to Year 2	Entrants	
HND	4	“
120 Undergraduate Level 1 CATS points	1	“
Total	57	270

Table 21 Types of Schools from Which Entrants Have Come

	Men	Women	Total	Change
Grammar	11	6	17	+5
Non-Grammar	10	11	21	+15
Further Education	7	12	19	+7
Total	28	29	57	

Table 22 Age Bands of Entrants

Age Band	Men	Women	Total
Under 21	25	25	50
21-24	3	2	5
25 and over	0	2	2
Total	28	29	57

Table 23 Geographical Distribution of Entrants

	Men	Women	Total
Belfast	9	8	17
Co Antrim	5	4	9
Co Armagh	3	3	6
Co Down	6	10	16
Co Fermanagh	0	1	1
Co Londonderry	1	1	2
Co Tyrone	2	2	4
Republic of Ireland	2	0	2
Total	28	29	57

Postgraduate Certificate in Education

General Analysis

The intake quota for the PGCE (Early Years) option was 20 and the intake quota for the PGCE (Educational Psychology) was reduced by DE to 10. A total of 30 students were admitted to the PGCE (matching the overall intake quota). The number of applicants was down by 56. All places were filled with applicants of excellent quality, both academically and in terms of professional and personal potential. None of the 14 male applicants secured a place. All entrants to the PGCE possessed at least an upper second class honours degree.

Table 24 Results of Applications to PGCE Educational Psychology

	Accepted	Withdrawn	Unsuccessful	Total
Men	0	0	4	4
Women	11	5	59	75
Total	11	5	63	79 (-12)*

* change in brackets

Table 25 PGCE Educational Psychology – University of first degree

University	Numbers
QUB	4
University of Ulster	6
Open University	1
Total	11

Table 26 Results of applications to PGCE Early Years

	Accepted	Withdrawn	Unsuccessful	Total
Men	0	1	9	10
Women	19	8	156	183
Total	19	9	165	193 (-44)*

* change in brackets

Table 27 PGCE Early Years – Undergraduate Degree Profile

Degree Content	Numbers
Early Childhood Studies	13
Applied Psychology	4
BA Education	2
Total	19

Table 28 PGCE Early Years – University of first degree

University	Numbers
Stranmillis University College	13
QUB	2
University of Worcester	1
University of Castilla	1
Open University	1
Glasgow Caledonian	1
Total	19

Table 29 PGCE Early Years – Degree Classification

Degree Classification	Numbers
1 st	1
2.1	18
Total	19

Early Childhood Studies Part-Time Undergraduate Degree

BA (Hons) Early Childhood Studies

The number of applicants to both the Stranmillis and the Omagh campuses has decreased over the figures for 2005. The majority of entrants were over 25 years of age, all had gained a substantial amount of relevant experience in an Early Years setting and all were selected on the basis of: qualifications, experience and interview.

Table 30 General Analysis and Results of Applications

BA (Hons) Early Childhood Studies						
	Stranmillis			Omagh		
	2006	2005	2004	2006	2005	2004
Applicants	40	71	69	43	64	39
Entrants Year 1	14	16	17	10	10	7
Direct Entry: Year 2	0	1	4	0	1	2
Total	14	17	21	10	11	9

Table 31 Age Bands of Entrants (Stranmillis and Omagh)

Age Band	Stranmillis	Omagh	Total
21-24	4	2	6
25 and over	10	8	18
Total	14	10	24

Table 32 Breakdown of Qualifications on Entry

	Stranmillis	Omagh	Total
A Levels	1	0	1
HND	1	0	1
NVQ Level 3	2	2	4
BTEC National Diploma	0	3	3
CACHE Diploma	5	0	5
Advanced CACHE Diploma	2	0	2
Access	0	2	2
Degree	1	0	1
FETAC	0	1	1
Certificate in Social Care	1	0	1
Advanced GNVQ	1	2	3
Total	14	10	24

Table 33 Geographical Distribution of Entrants

	Stranmillis	Omagh	Total
Belfast	4	0	4
Co Antrim	4	0	4
Co Armagh	2	0	2
Co Down	3	1	4
Co Londonderry	0	0	0
Co Tyrone	1	6	7
Co Fermanagh	0	2	2
Rep. Of Ireland	0	1	1
Total	14	10	24

Health and Leisure Studies Part-Time Undergraduate Degree

A considerable marketing effort was undertaken to recruit to the reintroduced BSc part-time programme. This included letters to FE providers, mail shots via the Sports Council database, etc. The outcome was therefore a little disappointing but it does represent a start, on the basis of which further efforts will be made for 2007.

BSc (Hons) Health and Leisure Studies

Table 34 Applicants to the BSc (Hons) Health and Leisure Studies Degree Course

	2006	
	Applicants	Entrants
Men	4	1
Women	4	4
Total	8	5

Disability

Table 35 has been included to show the number of entrants to programmes who have declared a disability at the time of application. Some applicants do not disclose the fact that they have a disability so the table does not provide a complete picture of students entering the University College with a disability. The benefit of declaring it at the point of application means that the Student Support Officer is able to follow-up the application and discuss specific requirements with the student.

Table 35 Entrants to undergraduate degree programmes who have declared a disability on their UCAS form

Disability (by UCAS definition)	Entrants 2006			Continuing Students All Programmes	
	BEd	ECS	HLS	Continuing	Total
1: You have a specific learning difficulty (for example, dyslexia)		2	2	6	10
2: You are blind or partially sighted	2				2
3: You are deaf or hard of hearing	2			1	3
4: You use a wheelchair or have mobility difficulties				1	1
5: You have Autistic Spectrum Disorder or Asperger Syndrome					
6: You have mental health difficulties					
7: You have a disability that cannot be seen, for example, diabetes, epilepsy or a heart condition				4	4
8: You have two or more of the above	1			1	2
9: You have a disability, special need or medical condition that is not listed above	2			7	9

General Comments

- (a) The 2006 Primary BEd intake quota was reduced by 25 to 115 by the DE and it is expected that there may be further reductions in the next few years related to official predictions regarding demographic trends. However, DE has at the time of writing not provided any forward planning information, although it has promised to do so. The Post-Primary intake quota remains unchanged at 50. Again some future reduction in this quota is possible. 119 students were admitted to the Primary pathway and 47 to the Post-Primary pathway.
- (b) In the light of the research commissioned by DE which indicated a shortage of Maths/Science teachers in post-primary schools, the University College was permitted to introduce a Maths/Science option in the Post-Primary pathway. Places were to be allocated from within the existing Post-Primary intake quota. However, permission from DE had not been received in time to place an entry in the UCAS Directory. Schools were informed by letter from the University College, but most candidates had already made up their minds regarding application choices and UCAS forms had already been completed by many students. No students entered the course, but it is anticipated that the application field will be larger for the 2007 entry.
- (c) Whilst the UCAS tariff is acknowledged and used in publicity materials as a guide, offers continue to be made in terms of grades at GCE A-level (or equivalent). Conditions in terms of grades for 2006 entry in respect of most Primary BEd subjects were set at ABB.
- (d) The academic quality of BEd entrants continues to remain very high. The increase in overall tariff points gained on entry is due to two factors, namely the fact that a greater number of candidates has achieved more than three A-levels and also because of the general improvement in A-level results in the UK and in particular in Northern Ireland. The QUB Academic Plan for 2006-2011 sets a target of enhancing student qualifications by raising the average entry tariff score towards 400. It can be seen that the Stranmillis University College average for the BEd Primary (380 points) is currently not far off this score. The average tariff for the University College as a whole is 330 points. (QUB did not provide an average UCAS tariff score for the University).
- (e) Successful entrants to the BEd and ECS degrees also demonstrated a high level of professional commitment and communication skills, which were determined by the selection interview and included for the first time a 5-minute presentation. Feedback from candidates, interview panels and careers teachers considered this to be a positive development.
- (f) Tables 11(a) and 11 (b) demonstrate the pattern of male applicants and entrants over the past 6 years. Taking male applicants as a proportion of all applicants for the BEd Primary, 25% is the highest in 6 years, whilst male entrants represented 18% of all entrants. This is also the highest proportion in the past 6 years. (The latest DE statistics (05/06) by gender show that 16% of primary school teachers in Northern Ireland are men). Work has commenced on the two projects which have been identified in the University College ACCESS agreement – one is to attract more students from the lower socio-economic groups and the second is to attract more males into teaching. The Widening Access Promoter is currently engaged with 8 schools which are hoping to participate in the intervention initiatives.

- (g) The Department of Education has informed the University College that the PGCE Educational Psychology option is to be withdrawn and that the final intake permitted in September 2006 would be 10. The justification for this is that the British Psychological Society has altered its requirements for registration as an Educational Psychologist, with the consequence that graduates to the profession will no longer need to possess a teaching qualification.
- (h) In the light of the reduced intake quota for the BEd, the Department for Employment and Learning has allocated a proportionate number of additional places for the two non-ITE undergraduate degrees - Early Childhood Studies and Health and Leisure Studies. Both courses have recruited well, and all available places have been filled. It remains to be seen whether a similar transfer of places would be permitted if further reductions in the BEd quota took place in future years.
- (i) In line with practice in recent years, all decisions confirming offers of places were posted on the Northern Ireland UCAS Decision Service web site and updated daily during August. Most students were placed within one week of publication of results. In addition to applicants accessing results from the web site, principals and careers teachers could also access and receive daily updates of offers to students in their own schools.
- (j) Complaints and Appeals. There were numerous requests for feedback to unsuccessful applicants and their parents, head teachers, etc. All were handled by staff in Admissions. No complaints were pursued through the official appeals/complaints procedure.
- (k) The poor quality of service provided to HEIs by UCAS in the 2006 admissions cycle has been widely reported in the media. In smaller institutions such as Stranmillis, the impact of a series of technical and other difficulties is felt more severely. The Principal wrote to the CEO of UCAS expressing the dissatisfaction of the University College and an apology has been received. Quality of service is on the agenda for the next meeting of the UCAS Northern Ireland Standing Committee. It is fair to say that HEIs, including Stranmillis made every effort to ensure that applicants were not disadvantaged by the difficulties.
- (l) The withdrawal of St Mary's University College from UCAS has resulted in serious difficulties, particularly in terms of the number of offers to make. Given the reduction in the BEd intake quota it is extremely difficult to reach precisely the number of entrants determined by the DE, and when this is combined with the 'St Mary's effect' it is almost impossible to achieve the precise target.
- (m) The '*Admissions to Higher Education Report*' for the Government which was published in September 2004 by a group chaired by Professor Schwartz is likely to bring about significant change to the way in which students apply for university. It is likely that a hybrid Post-Qualification-System (PQA) will be introduced in 2008 where students apply for courses as at present, but offers are not made until they receive their results – removing some of the risk-taking associated with making offers on the basis of predicted grades. This change however, would not lighten the load of interviewing for Stranmillis but additional work would have to be undertaken by Academic Registry staff in consultation with teaching colleagues in the more restricted time period after the publication of results.

Acknowledgements

The University College Selection Committee would wish to record its thanks to the many people who assist its work. These include: the teaching staff of the University College; the experienced practising professionals who play a major role on interviewing panels; the careers officers of the Department for Employment and Learning and the officials at the Department of Education with whom Academic Registry has contact. The additional support of principals and careers teachers of schools and colleges, together with the Admissions Office of Queen's University, has been particularly appreciated throughout our work.

I would wish, particularly to express my appreciation for the work of the administrative staff of Academic Registry, who, under the direction of Elaine Halliday, undertake so much background activity before any student enters the University College. The climate of endemic change means that Admissions staff are constantly learning new qualifications, new ways of grading and coding qualifications and dealing with evolving technical systems. The Admissions function in Stranmillis is executed with an exceptionally high level of commitment, enthusiasm and attention to detail.

Mae Watson
Vice Principal (Registrar)
November 2006