



STRANMILLIS UNIVERSITY COLLEGE
A College of Queen's University Belfast

Selection Report

2007

(Adopted by Governing Body 29th November 2007)



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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 as follows:

Primary BEd: 90 places, a reduction of 25 places compared with 2006 figures. However, there was an actual reduction to 87 places because the intake quota had been exceeded by 3 places in September 2006.

Post-primary BEd: 50 places which represents a steady state from 2002. In reality, however the University College was permitted to admit 53 students because the post-primary intakes were 3 below quota in 2006.

Applicants

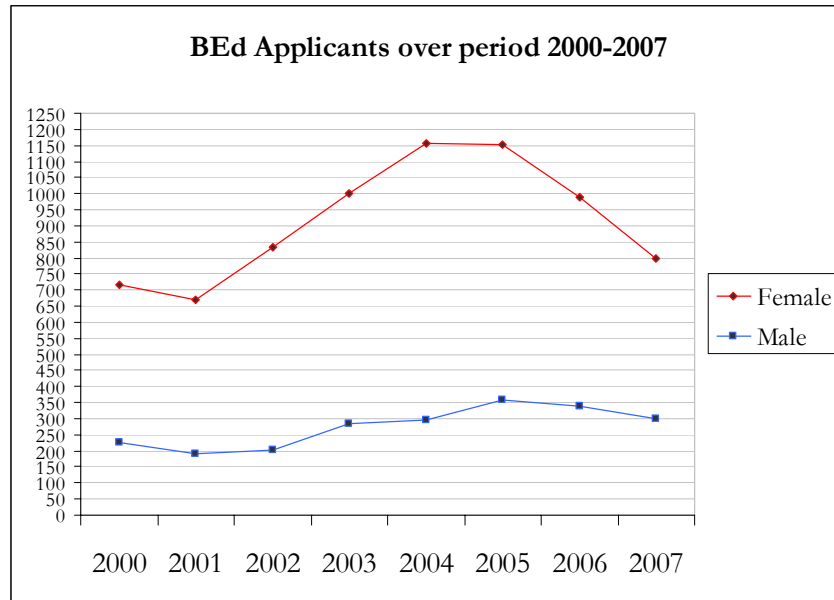
The number of applicants to the BEd was 1096, representing a decrease of 17% compared with the number of applicants in the 2006 cycle. Figure 1 shows a more marked decline in the number of female applicants than male applicants, particularly in the past two years.

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

	2007			2006			Change
	Primary	Post-Primary	Total	Primary	Post-Primary	Total	
Men	223	76	299	262	78	340	-41 (-12%)
Women	618	179	797	801	187	988	-191 (-19%)
	841	255	1,096	1,063	265	1,328	-232 (-17%)

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 88 (just one in excess of intake quota) whilst 51 students entered the Post-Primary BEd (slightly short of the 53 permitted). Nineteen males were admitted to the Primary BEd (a reduction of 2) and 14 males were admitted to the Post-primary BEd pathway (a reduction of 4).

Table 1 (b) - Entrants

	2007			2006			% Change
	Pr.	Pp.	Total	Pr.	Pp.	Total	
Men	19	14	33	21	18	39	-6 (-15%)
Women	69	37	106	98	29	127	-21 (-17%)
	88	51	139	119	47	166	-27 (-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 shows the significant increase in the number of applicants to the new Post-primary course – Mathematics and Science.

Table 2 Number of Applications and Entrants for each Subject Area

BEd Primary				
	Applications Change in brackets	Unsuccessful	Declined	Entrants
Art	102 (-25)	75	18	9
English	168 (-32)	123	39	6
Geography	122 (-24)	79	32	11
History	89 (-61)	51	26	12
Mathematics	79 (-16)	48	16	15
Music	63 (-16)	28	22	13
PE	220 (-28)	158	51	11
Religious Studies	137 (-59)	90	42	5
Science	86 (-36)	54	26	6
Total	1,066 (-297)	706	272	88
BEd Post-primary				
Business Studies	91 (-4)	52	20	19
Mathematics and Science	30 (+12)	12	11	7
Religious Studies	102 (-14)	48	37	17
Tech & Design	41 (-11)	11	22	8
Total	264 (-17)	123	90	51
Total Primary & Post-Primary	1,330 (-314)	829	362	139

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 55 entrants had achieved at least 3 A-Levels and 1 AS-Level or better – 1 with 4 A levels and 1 with 4 A levels + 1 AS. Four students (5%) of the Primary intake achieved grade A in each of their 3+ A-levels.

The number of entrants with qualifications which are alternative to A-level has reduced by 9 from 2006.

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	0	0	1	0	1	0
3 A-Levels + 1 AS-Level	13	6	40	19	53	25
3 A-Levels	3	6	20	16	23	22
Alternatives	2	2	8	2	10	4
Total	19	14	69	37	88	51

Table 4 Breakdown of Alternatives

	Men		Women		Total	
	Pr.	Pp.	Pr.	Pp.	Pr.	Pp.
Vocational A-Levels + A Levels	1	1	4	0	5	1
Btec National Award + A- Levels	1	1	0	0	1	1
Foundation/Access	0	0	2	1	2	1
Irish Leaving Cert	0	0	2	1	2	1
Total	2	2	8	2	10	4

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.

The average tariff score for the BEd Primary is 360 and Post-Primary BEd is 310 (a small decrease on the 2006 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	
	2006	2007
Primary		
Art	380	340
English	390	380
Geography	380	360
History	380	370
Mathematics	380	370
Music	290	340
Physical Education	350	340
Religious Studies	430	360
Science	440	350
Average Primary	380	360
Post-primary		
Business Studies	350	320
Mathematics & Science	0	300
Religious Studies	340	320
Technology & Design	300	280
Average Post-primary	330	310

Interview Ratings of Entrants

The highest possible score on interview (which includes a presentation) was 40 points. 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+	10	8	51	20	61	28
30-34	9	4	16	9	25	13
25-29	0	1	2	6	2	7
Below 25	0	1	0	2	0	3
Total	19	14	69	37	88	51

Geographical Distribution of Entrants

Table 7 Geographical Distribution of Entrants

	Men		Women		Total		Change from 2006
	Pr.	Pp.	Pr.	Pp.	Pr.	Pp.	
Belfast	5	2	5	6	10	8	-8
Co Antrim	6	5	25	11	31	16	+2
Co Armagh	3	2	2	3	5	5	-12
Co Down	2	3	18	9	20	12	+4
Co Fermanagh	0	0	2	1	2	1	+1
Co Londonderry	1	1	7	3	8	4	-13
Co Tyrone	2	1	7	3	9	4	-4
Republic of Ireland	0	0	2	1	2	1	+2
England	0	0	1	0	1	0	+1
Total	19	14	69	37	88	51	

Types of Schools from Which Entrants Have Come

Table 8 Types of Schools from Which Entrants Have Come

	Men		Women		Total		Change from 2006
	Pr.	Pp.	Pr.	Pp.	Pr.	Pp.	
Grammar	16	9	53	26	69	35	-14
Non-Grammar	0	3	11	8	11	11	-7
Further/Higher Education	3	2	5	3	8	5	-6
Total	19	14	69	37	88	51	

Results of Applications from Mature Students

Mature students (defined as students 21 years of age and over) represent just 3% of student intake to the BEd which is a reduction of 2% in 2006. The majority of mature students qualified for entry on the basis of an Access (Foundation) course taken at a College of Further Education.

Figure 2

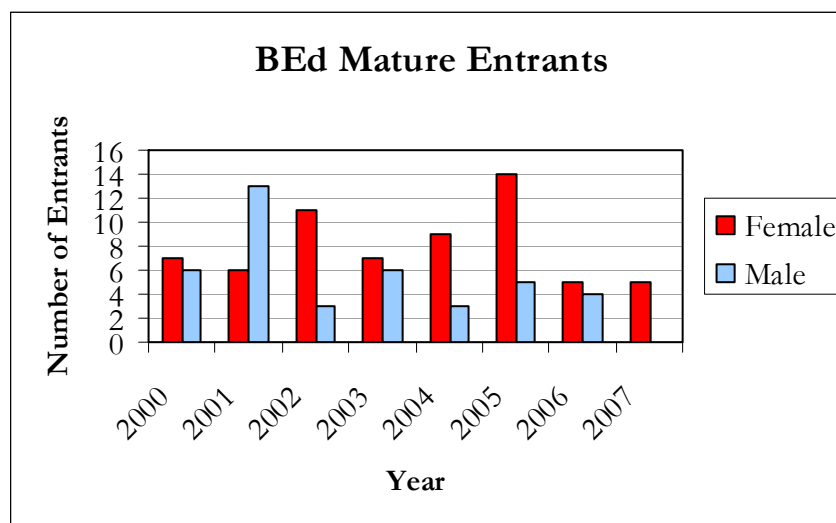


Table 9 Age Bands of Entrants

Age Band	Men		Women		Total	
	Pr.	Pp.	Pr.	Pp.	Pr.	Pp.
Under 21	19	14	66	35	85	49
21-24	0	0	1	2	1	2
25 and over	0	0	2	0	2	0
Total	19	14	69	37	88	51

Table 10 Educational Attainment of Successful Mature Students

	Men		Women		Total	
	Pr.	Pp.	Pr.	Pp.	Pr.	Pp.
A Levels	0	0	1	2	1	2
Foundation/Access	0	0	2	0	2	0
Total	0	0	3	2	3	2

Male Applicants

Table 11 (a) and 11 (b) show that the percentage of male applicants and entrants to the BEd as a whole in 2007 is the highest over the past seven years. In terms of applicants and entrants the 2007 percentages are the highest in seven years for the Primary BEd. On the other hand, in the Post-primary BEd, male entrants as a percentage of all entrants took a slight dip from 38% to 27%.

Male Applicants and Entrants to the BEd: 2001-2007

Table 11 (a) Primary BEd

Year	Total Applicants	Males as a % of all applicants	Male Entrants	Males as a % of all entrants
2007	223	27%	19	22%
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
2007	76	30%	14	27%
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		
	2007	2006	2005	2007	2006	2005	2007	2006	2005
Male	1	3	5	1	0	2	3	0	0
Female	12	8	23	1	1	2	6	6	9
Total	13	11	28	2	1	4	9	6	9

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 2007 prize winner is:

KEARNEY, Ruth Alexandra	DOB	23.02.89
ACADEMIC SUBJECT	ART	
SCHOOL ATTENDED	FRIENDS SCHOOL, LISBURN	
A LEVELS:	ART AND DESIGN	GRADE A
	ENGLISH LITERATURE	GRADE A
	RELIGIOUS STUDIES	GRADE A
AS LEVELS:	ART AND DESIGN	GRADE A
	ENGLISH LITERATURE	GRADE A
	RELIGIOUS STUDIES	GRADE A
	SPANISH	GRADE A
GCSE'S	SIX GRADE A*	
	FOUR GRADE A	
GRADE 3 ABRSM	PIANOFORTE THEORY	
INTERVIEW SCORE:	40 (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. Seven students with high-quality third level qualifications were admitted directly into the second year of the degree.

There would appear to be a slight shift this year with a slightly larger proportion of students coming from the schools sector, as opposed to FE.

The imposed reduction of places in the Primary BEd by 25 was compensated for by a permitted increased intake of 25 divided between the BA and BSc degrees

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

	2007		2006		Change	
	Applicants	Entrants	Applicants	Entrants	Applicants	Entrants
Men	7	1	13	1	-6	0
Women	441	62	507	45	-66	+17
Total	448	63	520	46	-72	+17

Table 14 Academic Attainment of Entrants

Entrants to Year 1	Entrants	Average UCAS Tariff points
A-Levels	32	310
Vocational A Levels (combination)	1	300
BTEC Nat. Dip.	5	350
BTEC Nat Cert + A Level	1	280
CACHE Diploma	2	350
Advanced CACHE Diploma	8	Not on tariff
HND	2	Not on tariff
Foundation/Access	5	Not on tariff
Entrants to Year 2		
HND	5	Not on tariff
Advanced Cache Diploma	2	Not on tariff
Total	63	320

Table 15 Types of Schools from Which Entrants Have Come

	Men	Women	Total
Grammar	1	20	21
Non-Grammar	0	13	13
Further Education	0	29	29
Total	1	62	63

Table 16 Age Bands of Entrants

Age Band	Men	Women	Total
Under 21	1	53	54
21-24	0	6	6
25 and over	0	3	3
Total	1	62	63

Table 17 Geographical Distribution of Entrants

	Men	Women	Total
Belfast	0	6	6
Co Antrim	0	15	15
Co Armagh	0	4	4
Co Down	0	22	22
Co Fermanagh	1	2	3
Co Londonderry	0	5	5
Co Tyrone	0	5	5
Republic of Ireland	0	3	3
Total	1	62	63

BSc (Hons) Health and Leisure Studies (Full-time)

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. Of the 42 entrants, 3 were direct entrants into Year 2 of the degree, because of high quality HND qualifications. Like the BA Early Childhood Studies, there is a slight increase in the proportion of entrants from the schools sector. The academic quality of entrants in terms of A-levels or equivalent has also increased.

Table 18 General Analysis of Applicants

	2007		2006		Change	
	Applicants	Entrants	Applicants	Entrants	Applicants	Entrants
Men	87	23	105	28	-18	-5
Women	96	19	94	29	+2	-10
Total	183	42	199	57	-16	-15

Table 19 Academic Attainment of Entrants

Entrants to Year 1	Entrants	Average UCAS Tariff Points
A-Levels	28	290
BTEC National Diploma	9	320
HND	1	Not on tariff
Foundation/Access	1	Not on tariff
Entrants to Year 2	Entrants	
HND	3	Not on tariff
Total	42	310

Table 20 Types of Schools from Which Entrants Have Come

	Men	Women	Total	Change
Grammar	7	7	14	-3
Non-Grammar	2	6	8	-12
Further Education	14	6	20	+1
Total	23	19	42	

Table 21 Age Bands of Entrants

Age Band	Men	Women	Total
Under 21	21	17	38
21-24	2	1	3
25 and over	0	1	1
Total	23	19	42

Table 22 Geographical Distribution of Entrants

	Men	Women	Total
Belfast	1	3	4
Co Antrim	8	4	12
Co Armagh	7	6	13
Co Down	1	4	5
Co Fermanagh	3	0	3
Co Londonderry	1	2	3
Co Tyrone	2	0	2
Republic of Ireland	0	0	0
Total	23	19	42

Postgraduate Certificate in Education

General Analysis

The intake quota for the PGCE (Early Years) option was 20. A total of 20 students were admitted to the PGCE (matching the overall intake quota). The number of applicants was down by 23. All places were filled with applicants of excellent quality, both academically and in terms of professional and personal potential. None of the 13 male applicants secured a place. All entrants to the PGCE possessed at least an upper second class honours degree.

Table 23 Results of applications to PGCE Early Years

	Accepted	Withdrawn	Unsuccessful	Total Applicants
Men	0	0	13	13
Women	20	1	136	157
Total	20	1	149	170 (-23)*

* change in brackets

Table 24 PGCE Early Years – Undergraduate Degree Profile

Degree Content	1st	2.1	Numbers
Early Childhood Studies	4	11	15
Applied Psychology	0	1	1
BA Education	4	0	4
Total	8	12	20

Table 25 PGCE Early Years – University of first degree

University	1st	2.1	Entrants
Stranmillis University College	4	11	15
QUB	0	1	1
University of Worcester	4	0	4
Total	8	12	20

Early Childhood Studies Part-Time Undergraduate Degree

BA (Hons) Early Childhood Studies

The number of applicants to the Stranmillis campus has decreased again with an increased number of students applying to study the degree at Omagh FE College. 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 26 General Analysis and Results of Applications

BA (Hons) Early Childhood Studies						
	Stranmillis			Omagh		
	2007	2006	2005	2007	2006	2005
Applicants	32	40	71	50	43	64
Entrants Year 1	11	14	16	13	10	10
Direct Entry: Year 2	6	0	1	0	0	1
Total	17	14	17	13	10	11

Table 27 Age Bands of Entrants (Stranmillis and Omagh)

Age Band	Stranmillis	Omagh	Total Entrants
Under 21	1	3	4
21-24	6	3	9
25 and over	10	7	17
Total	17	13	30

Table 28 Breakdown of Qualifications on Entry

	Stranmillis	Omagh	Total Entrants
A Levels	0	1	1
HND	0	3	3
HNC	0	2	2
NVQ Level 3	4	4	8
BTEC National Diploma	3	0	3
CACHE Diploma	1	0	1
Advanced CACHE Diploma	7	0	7
Foundation/ Access	1	1	2
BTEC Professional Development Certificate	1	0	1
FETAC	0	2	2
Total	17	13	30

Table 29 Geographical Distribution of Entrants

	Stranmillis	Omagh	Total Entrants
Belfast	4	0	4
Co Antrim	4	0	4
Co Armagh	2	0	2
Co Down	6	0	6
Co Londonderry	1	3	4
Co Tyrone	0	4	4
Co Fermanagh	0	3	3
Rep. Of Ireland	0	3	3
Total	17	13	30

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, a focused information day led by the Health and Leisure Studies team, etc. The outcome was therefore a little disappointing. All entrants had considerable experience of working in the Health or Leisure sectors and were aged 25 years and over. Entrants were selected on the basis of qualifications and experience. Those who did not possess GCSE Mathematics Grade C (or equivalent) were independently set a test of Mathematics competence by a member of the Mathematics team within the Primary BEd Department. All passed the test.

BSc (Hons) Health and Leisure Studies

Table 30 Applicants to the BSc (Hons) Health and Leisure Studies Degree Course

	2007	
	Applicants	Entrants
Men	6	6
Women	2	1
Total	8	7

In relation to qualifications on entry applicants had achieved the following; three entrants had achieved a National Diploma in a related area, one a HND in Leisure and Recreation Management, two a HNC in Sports Science and one applicant gained entry with a NBES management award and fitness instruction qualifications.

With regards to geographical distribution four entrants were from County Antrim, two from County Down and one from Belfast.

Disability

Table 31 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 31 Entrants to undergraduate degree programmes who have declared a disability on their UCAS form

Disability (by UCAS definition)	Entrants 2007		
	BEd	ECS	HLS
1: You have a specific learning difficulty (for example, dyslexia)	1	1	0
2: You are blind or partially sighted	0	0	0
3: You are deaf or hard of hearing	1	0	0
4: You use a wheelchair or have mobility difficulties	0	0	0
5: You have Autistic Spectrum Disorder or Asperger Syndrome	0	0	0
6: You have mental health difficulties	0	0	0
7: You have a disability that cannot be seen, for example, diabetes, epilepsy or a heart condition	0	0	0
8: You have two or more of the above	0	0	0
9: You have a disability, special need or medical condition that is not listed above	0	1	0

General Comments

- (a) The 2007 Primary BEd intake quota was reduced by 25 to 90 by the DE. The Post-Primary BEd intake quota remained at 50. For the first time this year, DE has imposed a penalty/compensation for over/under recruiting in the previous year. For this reason, the Primary BEd quota in reality was reduced to 87 students because of over-recruitment in 2006. The Post-primary quota was effectively 53 because of under-recruitment in 2006. DE has at the time of writing not provided any forward planning information, although it has promised to do so. 88 students were admitted to the Primary pathway and 51 to the Post-Primary pathway. It is expected that there will be further reductions in intakes in each of the Northern Ireland ITE providers in the next few years related to official predictions regarding demographic trends. The media reports in relation to demographic trends have contributed to speculation and rumours within Northern Ireland schools that Stranmillis was no longer recruiting. Considerable effort has been made by Admissions Staff in the past year to dispel this myth. Teaching staff, in their interaction with schools also need to reassure schools, that whilst reductions are being experienced by all ITE providers in Northern Ireland, there is no indication from government that Stranmillis is not recruiting students.
- (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 commencing in September 2006. 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. 30 applications were received for the 2007 entry with 7 students being admitted.
- (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 2007 entry in respect of most Primary BEd subjects were set at ABB.
- (d) The academic quality of BEd entrants continues to remain very high. It can be seen that the Stranmillis University College average tariff for the BEd Primary is 360 points. When compared with the most recent comparable figures received from the TDA, only one provider in the UK has exceeded this level. This is Bishop Grosseteste University College in Lincoln with an average tariff of 419. The best 25% by average tariff score was 298 with a sector average in England of 269.
- (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 second year, 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 7 years. Taking male applicants as a proportion of all applicants to the BEd Primary, 27% is the highest in 7 years, whilst male entrants represented 22% of all entrants. This is also the highest proportion in the past 7 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 a number of schools which have agreed to participate in the intervention initiatives.
- (g) The Department of Education has withdrawn the PGCE Educational Psychology option. 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 25 additional places for the two non-ITE undergraduate degrees - Early Childhood Studies and Health and Leisure Studies. Early Childhood Studies has recruited well, but work still needs to be done in attracting a greater number of students to the BSc Health and Leisure Studies. DEL has indicated that the additional 25 students is permitted for the 2007 cohort only.
- (i) Part-time undergraduate provision. The part-time BA Early Childhood Studies continues to recruit smallish but steady numbers whilst the intake to Omagh FE College has been more encouraging this year. The newly introduced BSc Health and Leisure Studies degree requires a concentrated effort by the course team if it is to truly 'get off the ground'. An intake of 7 is less than satisfactory.
- (j) A Foundation Degree in Early Childhood Studies has been developed in association with a consortium of 5 FE Regional Colleges, with an articulation route into the BA. Whilst the University College has currently the capacity only in terms of part-time places to articulate graduates with the Foundation Degree, it is anticipated that an approach will be made to DEL to grant full-time articulation.
- (k) 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.
- (l) 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.
- (m) 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.

- (n) 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 in terms of decision making in the more restricted time period after the publication of results.
- (o) The Swartz Report has also informed a revised Admissions Policy which will be produced in the current year. This will take account of the Widening Access agenda and will address the challenges presented by high-demand courses in a policy environment where full-time numbers are being reduced by government.
- (p) Under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, an Equality Impact Assessment on Admission of Students to the University College will be undertaken in the 2007/08 academic cycle.

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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 2007