

STRANMILLIS UNIVERSITY COLLEGE
A College of the Queens University of Belfast

Initial Teacher Education and Early Childhood Studies

NOTES FOR CANDIDATES ON PREPARATION FOR INTERVIEW

These notes are intended to give you some advice on preparing for the interview, and on what to expect when you arrive at the University College for your interview.

Please remember, that the University College is seeking to establish:

- that you have the potential to become a teacher or specialist in early years;
- that you are able to communicate your ideas clearly and effectively;
- that you have sufficient resilience to cope with the inevitable stresses of working within an educational environment;
- that you have the motivation to carry you through a long and demanding course;
- that you have a commitment to self-development and learning.

This does not mean that you will be expected to display the attributes and knowledge which might be expected of a new graduate seeking a first job.

Before the interview

In preparation for the interview, you should reflect on your own educational experience, the type of school which you attended, the quality of teaching and the value of the broader aspects of school life. You should also familiarise yourself with current debates about issues in the field of education/childcare.

What should I bring to the interview?

You should bring the following documentation along to the University College on the day of the interview:

- birth certificate (including any certification of a change of name, such as a marriage certificate);
- original result slips for all examinations already taken.

Your certificates will be returned to you on the day of the interview.

What will the interview be like?

The interview will be conducted by a panel of two, normally comprising one University College lecturer and one teacher or other professional from the field of education.

No audio/visual support will be permitted and you should bring only brief notes to support your presentation, perhaps in the form of cue cards. Candidates should avoid simply reading from a prepared text.

The presentation will contribute 50% of the overall mark for the interview.

The presentation will be followed by a short interview (50% of the total mark) during which the interviewers will ask you a number of set questions. You will be given an opportunity at the end of the interview to ask questions or expand on points that you made earlier. The interview, including the presentation will last approximately 20 minutes.

You will have the opportunity at some stage in the process to ask questions about the University College and the courses on offer. The interviewing panel may not be able to answer specific questions about selection procedures. If you have such questions, these should be directed to Registry staff.

Both the presentation and the interview will be assessed using the following criteria:

- **Focus and Selection** – time management, relevance to the topic.
- **Understanding & Criticality** – the ability to relate your personal development to the role of the professional in Early Years/Primary/Post Primary Education.
- **Coherence & Structure** – a logically structured and fluent presentation, and coherent response to questions.
- **Verbal Communication Skills** – clearly articulated views, a lively and informative presentation.

After the interview

Full-time undergraduate applicants

All applicants whose forms have been processed through UCAS will be formally notified of the outcome of their application through the normal UCAS channels (see UCAS Directory or www.UCAS.com).

Part-time undergraduate & PGCE applicants

The outcome of your application will not be known until confidential reports from referees are received (and in the case of PGCE, intake quota numbers received from the Department of Education). You will then receive a letter indicating a conditional offer, placement on a waiting list until A-Level (or equivalent) or degree results are known, or that your application has been declared unsuccessful.

Initial Teacher Education

All teacher education courses at the University College lead to ‘Eligibility to Teach’ status and our graduates may seek employment in primary and post-primary schools, and where appropriate, in Institutes of Further and Higher Education.

If potential students have aspirations to teach in the maintained sector in Northern Ireland, they should obtain details about courses leading to the Catholic Certificate in Religious Education from the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools, 160 High Street, Holywood, Co Down. The Department of Education has agreed to provide funding to cover the fees for the Catholic Certificate in Religious Education.

Early Childhood Studies

It is important for applicants to understand that the BA (ECS) degree does **not** provide a teaching qualification and graduates are not eligible to apply for teaching posts. The degree provides opportunities for graduates to become Early Years Specialists and to take up employment in nursery schools, crèches, parent and toddler groups, NIPPA centres, toy and book libraries, childcare and family centres. ECS graduates may apply for a PGCE (Early Years) which is offered by Stranmillis, or other UK Higher Education Institution so that they may ultimately enter the teaching profession.