

transforming education

The Certificate in Religious Education

04

To gain permanent employment as a teacher in a Maintained primary or nursery school in NI applicants need to have completed an RE certificate approved by the Catholic bishops and CCMS.

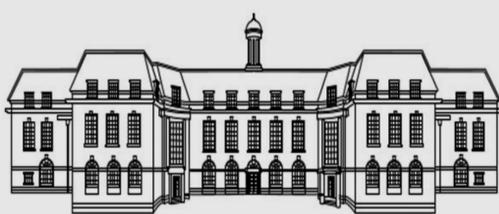


CCMS
Council for Catholic
Maintained Schools

Approved Certificate courses are completed by nearly all student primary school teachers that attend St Mary's University College and Ulster University. Ulster has a 'mixed' intake and the RE Certificate course has been developed to reflect both Catholic and Protestant faiths. St Mary's has historically been attended almost exclusively by Catholics and aims to provide teachers for Maintained schools.



Until September 2019 students at Stranmillis University College who wanted to complete the Certificate had to do so by distance learning – they now have an option of taking the St Mary's course. Stranmillis has historically been attended predominantly by Protestants and has provided teachers for schools in the state Controlled system.



STRANMILLIS UNIVERSITY COLLEGE
A College of Queen's University Belfast

Most primary schools in the Republic of Ireland are managed by Catholic authorities as are a small proportion of schools in Great Britain. Teachers in these schools also need to have completed a similar Certificate. Half of teachers in Catholic schools in England are non-Catholic; only around 2% of teachers in NI Maintained primaries are Protestant - the English Certificate was re-designed to make it more applicable to non-Catholics.

Schools Under Catholic Management (Great Britain)

Primary Schools Under Catholic Management (Northern Ireland)

Primary Schools Under Catholic Management (Republic of Ireland)



Catholic Management Non-Catholic

While the Certificate requirement affects almost all posts in the Republic of Ireland and only a small proportion of posts in GB it applies to around half of all primary schools in NI. Those who have it can work in any type of primary school in NI – those without it are limited to jobs in non-Catholic primaries. The Certificate requirement has therefore been used as a justification for the exception of teachers from Fair Employment laws (FETO).

Many teaching students from NI attend university colleges in GB. Protestant students generally attend secular institutions while Catholic students attend colleges managed by Catholic authorities where they can complete an RE Certificate that is accepted by CCMS

ITE institutions in GB that were attended by:

Catholic teachers from NI



Protestant teachers from NI



84% of primary school teachers and nearly all teachers in nursery schools in NI are female – women's employment opportunities are therefore disproportionately affected by the Certificate requirement.

A DE review in 2013 suggested that CCMS could consider:

- Allowing teachers to complete the certificate after appointment
- Linking the Certificate requirement only to designated posts

Practice in England suggests that:

- The Certificate could be revised in order to prepare non-Catholics for working within the specific ethos of a Maintained school

There may also be merit in adoption of the ecumenical principles demonstrated in the model of the Certificate that is delivered at Ulster University