



St Mary's  
University College  
Belfast  
A College of Queen's University



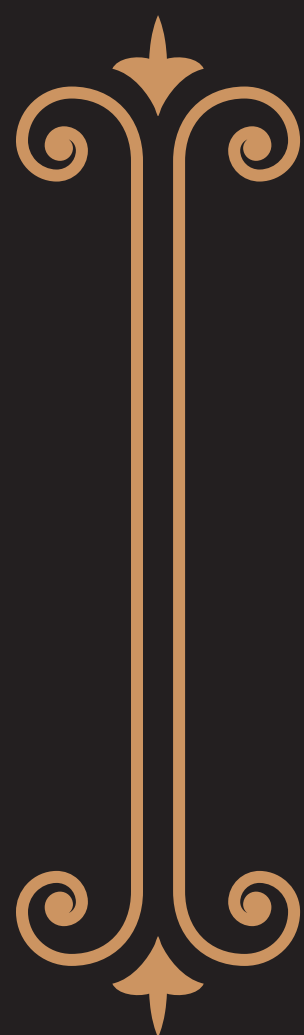
# RELIGIOUS EDUCATION Certificate Course



[smucb.ac.uk](http://smucb.ac.uk)



# INTRODUCTION



I am very pleased to introduce our brochure on the Certificate course in Religious Education offered at St Mary's University College. The College certificate is validated through the Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference. St Mary's seeks to ensure that there will be an adequate supply of suitably qualified teachers for the Catholic school sector in Northern Ireland. Those teachers should be competent to assist parents in educating their children in the faith according to the principles of Catholic Education. We consider prerequisites for this task to be a mature understanding of the faith and a commitment to the values of Catholic Education. The Certificate course in Religious Education seeks to enable student teachers to be well prepared for their role in Catholic schools.



This brochure aims to describe not just the content of our Certificate course, but also how the course is an integral part of the College's mission and provides a holistic formation for our students which will enable them to fulfil their role as partners in the wider educational mission of the Church.

*Peter Finn*

Professor Peter Finn KSG  
Principal



# COLLEGE MISSION

IN OUR COLLEGE'S MISSION  
STATEMENT WE DECLARE:

Our purpose is to make a distinctive contribution, in the Catholic tradition, to Higher Education in Northern Ireland. St Mary's is an academic community committed to the search for meaning and value in the intellectual life, to academic excellence and to individual attention for students. We work for the development of the whole person in a Christian, values-sensitive environment in preparation for a lifetime of learning, leadership and service. We wish the College to be a religious, educational, cultural and social resource for the local community and to show concern for the poor and powerless. We provide stimulating and relevant programmes for the education of teachers (in English and in Irish) and in Liberal Arts. We offer students on these courses high quality learning, teaching and support.

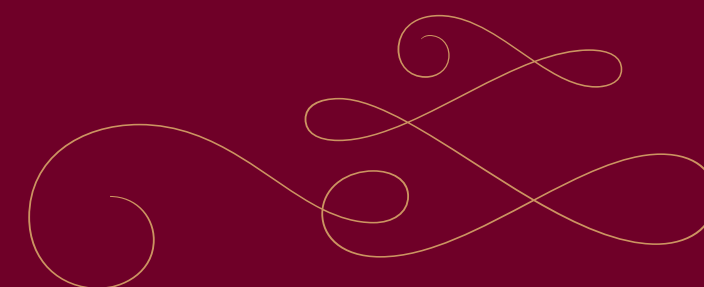
As an integral part of our mission the College offers a Certificate course in Religious Education to all full-time students enrolled for teacher education programmes.



# HUMAN VALUES

“The Catholic school is committed to the development of the whole person, since in Christ, the perfect man, all human values find their fulfilment and unity. Herein lies the specifically Catholic character of the school. Its duty to cultivate human values in their own legitimate right in accordance with its particular mission to serve all people has its origin in the figure of Christ. He is the one who ennobles humanity, gives meaning to human life, and is the model which the Catholic school offers to its pupils.”

(THE CATHOLIC SCHOOL # 35,  
CONGREGATION FOR CATHOLIC  
EDUCATION, ROME)





*“Teachers must remember that it depends chiefly on them whether the Catholic school achieves its purpose. They should therefore be properly prepared for their work, having the appropriate qualifications and adequate learning both religious and secular.”*

(THE DECLARATION ON CHRISTIAN EDUCATION # 8, SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL)

The Certificate in Religious Education offered by St Mary’s has two formats there is a three-year programme that may be taken in addition to the BEd programme. There is also an intensive one-year course which runs concurrently with the PGCE. The Certificate in Religious Education course is comprised of three main elements; lectures, which aim to develop the students’ own understanding of key aspects of Church teaching; tutorials, which aim to familiarize students with the RE programme in use in schools and assist them with preparing teaching materials for the teaching of RE in schools; and support visits by College tutors during periods of School Experience.



The Certificate course enables students to:

- ▶ Guide pupils in developing their spiritual literacy through engaging in prayer and reflecting on their faith journey;
- ▶ Demonstrate that teaching in Religious Education is based on both sacred scripture and the tradition of the church; and
- ▶ Articulate the distinctive ethos of the Catholic school and within it, understand the role of the classroom teacher.



Central to the present RE programmes used in schools is the desire for pupils to experience various types of prayer. The students in St Mary's are prepared for this by not only being introduced to various types of prayer, but by also having opportunities to organize and participate in a variety of liturgies held in the College in the course of the academic year.



"The vocation of every Catholic educator includes the work of ongoing social development: to form men and women who will be able to take their place in society, preparing them in such a way that they will make the kind of social commitment which will enable them to work for the improvement of social structures, making these structures more conformed to the principles of the Gospel."

(LAY CATHOLICS IN SCHOOLS # 19, CONGREGATION FOR CATHOLIC EDUCATION, ROME)



The students in St Mary's are encouraged to explore practical ways in which their academic study can lead to faith in action. Strong links exist with groups such as Trocaire, St Vincent de Paul Society and Friends of Africa, as well as other charitable organizations which exist to provide assistance and care for those with a variety of needs.



The course is assessed through a combination of examination, written assignments and assessment of practical teaching skills during designated periods of School Experience. A certificate is awarded according to the following categories:

### Distinction

(An average of 65% or higher in examination and course work, plus one grade A on School Experience)

### High Commendation

(An average of 60% - 64% in examination and course work, plus two grade Bs on School Experience)

### Commendation

(An average of 55% - 59% in examination and course work, plus one grade B on School Experience)

### Pass

(An average of 40% - 54% in examination and course work, and two pass grades on School Experience)

At the end of each academic year there are celebrations of achievement for those who have completed the Certificate course, comprised of a Mass of Thanksgiving and formal Presentation of Certificates. These events are attended by students' families and friends and have become the highlight of the year for the graduating students.



## The following topics are studied through the Certificate Course in Religious Education

### Old Testament:

Creation, Adam and Eve, the Fall  
The Patriarchs - Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph  
Moses, the Exodus and the Covenant  
The teaching of the Prophets

### New Testament:

Introduction to the Four Gospels  
Jesus' teaching on the Kingdom of God  
Jesus' use of parables and miracles  
Jesus and discipleship  
The death and resurrection of Jesus  
The Holy Spirit and Pentecost  
The beginnings of the Church

### Theology:

The Revelation of God  
Understanding Jesus - high and low  
Christology  
History of the Sacraments  
Understanding the nature of the Church

Moral and social issues  
Prayer and Worship  
The mystery of evil and suffering  
Understanding the Mass  
Ecumenism – exploring other Christian traditions  
Inter-faith dialogue  
Catholic Social Teaching  
Celtic spirituality

### Catechetics:

The vocation of the Christian educator  
The history of catechetics and approaches today  
The Catholic Church's view on education  
Teaching the Sacraments in the classroom  
Faith development and religious education  
Developing an adult faith  
Prayer in the classroom  
Education for Love  
Evangelisation and Mission  
The themes and content of the main religious education programmes





# St Mary's University College Belfast

A College of Queen's University



**For further information contact:**  
**Email:** [admissions@stmarys-belfast.ac.uk](mailto:admissions@stmarys-belfast.ac.uk)  
**Telephone:** +44 (0) 28 90327678  
**Website:** [www.smucb.ac.uk](http://www.smucb.ac.uk)