



The Northern Ireland Degree in
Social Work Partnership

Guidance on Preparation for Social Work Interviews (Oct 2017)

INTRODUCTION

Preparing for a social work interview is an important part of your application for social work training. In our experience, if you have been shortlisted for interview, you have already achieved an important milestone so the next phase, the interview itself, requires you to make careful preparation.

The interview is a two-stage process:

Stage One – Case Scenario

On attending for interview, applicants will be issued with a short Case Scenario and will be allocated 15 minutes, under supervision, in preparation for their formal interview.

Stage Two – Formal Interview

The first 2 questions at interview will focus on the Case Scenario. The remaining questions will concentrate on your ability to demonstrate your knowledge of social work, your ability to use your life experience and work experience to make links with social work, and your ability to reflect on yourself and your learning about social work practice.

GUIDANCE

1. Access the NISCC (Northern Ireland Social Care Council) website at www.niscc.info and the NIDSWP (Northern Ireland Degree in Social Work Partnership) website at www.nidswp.net to find out information about social work.

WHY? You need to be able to familiarise yourself about what social work training involves and the range of social work settings.

2. Talk to a social worker to find out about their role and function.¹

¹ You could request to speak to a NI Social Work Ambassador. More information about SW Ambassadors is available on the NISCC website at www.niscc.info

WHY? You need to be familiar with the range of work they are involved in, their duties and how they work as professionals.

3. Think about how your own life/work experience could be applied to social work.

WHY? You need to be able to make links between your experience and social work practice e.g. if you have cared for an older/younger relative who has faced physical health, disability or mental health issues, you know how this impacts on the quality of their life, what their needs are, what resources they receive, and how the “caring role” impacts on family members and carers.

4. Think about units that you are studying at the moment and how you might transfer your knowledge and learning to the Social Work Degree e.g., sociology; psychology; citizenship; reflective writing; counselling skills, etc.

WHY? Transference of knowledge and understanding and the ability to reflect are core aspects of social work practice.

5. Read topical social work periodicals e.g. Community Care and Professional Social Work.

WHY? You will find current issues and concerns covered in these periodicals.

Refer to a key social work textbook such as:

Trevithick, P. (2012) *Social Work Skills and knowledge: A Practice Handbook*. 3rd ed. Maidenhead: Open University Press

Cree, V. (Ed) (2003) *Becoming a Social Worker* London: Routledge

6. Think about social work values.

WHY? This is a core aspect of any social worker’s motivation and professional practice. You need to understand what professional values are and why they are important. (Refer to NISCC Standards of Conduct and Practice for Social Work Students – Nov. 2015 available on www.niscc.info)

7. Remember to revisit your personal statement before the interview.