



The Northern Ireland Degree in
Social Work Partnership

Guidance on Preparation for Social Work Interviews

July 2014

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 interviewers will be keen to see you 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. The following guidance will enable you to undertake this preparation.

GUIDANCE

1. Access the NISCC (Northern Ireland Social Care Council) website at www.niscc.info 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.
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 carer.
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; **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.

WHY? You need to be familiar with what social work practice entails.

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 Code of Practice for Social Care Workers available on www.niscc.info)

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