



THE CHURCH  
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The **Methodist** Church



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United  
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Church

## Quality in Formation Panel

### Inspection Report

Cambridge Theological  
Federation

November 2011

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## GLOSSARY

ARU	Anglia Ruskin University
BA (Hons)	Bachelor of Arts degree from Anglia Ruskin
BTh University	Bachelor of Theology for Ministry degree from Cambridge
CTF	Cambridge Theological Federation
CTM	Certificate in Theology for Ministry from Cambridge University
ERMC	Eastern Region Ministry Course
FdA	Foundation Degree award from Anglia Ruskin University
MA in pastoral theology	A Master of Arts Degree from Anglia Ruskin University

## **LIST OF INSPECTORS**

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## **THE INSPECTIONS FRAMEWORK**

On behalf of the sponsoring churches, inspection teams are asked to assess the fitness for purpose of the training institution for preparing candidates for ordained and licensed ministry and to make recommendations for the enhancement of the life and work of the institution.

Within the structures of the Church of England, this report is prepared for the House of Bishops acting through the Ministry Council.

In coming to their judgements, inspectors are asked to use the following outcomes with regard to the overall outcome and individual criteria:

### **Confidence**

Overall outcome: a number of recommendations, none of which question the generally high standards found in the inspection.

Criteria level: aspects of an institution's life which show good or best practice.

### **Confidence with qualifications**

Overall outcome: A number of recommendations, including one or more of substance that questions the generally acceptable standards found in the inspection and which can be rectified or substantially addressed by the institution in the coming 12 months.

Criteria level: aspects of an institution's life which show either (a) at least satisfactory practice but with some parts which are not satisfactory or (b) some unsatisfactory practice but where the institution has the capacity to address the issues within 12 months.

### **No confidence**

Overall outcome: A number of recommendations, including one or more of substance which raise significant questions about the standards found in the inspection and the capacity of the institution to rectify or substantially address these in the coming 12 months.

Criteria level: aspects of an institution's life which show either (a) generally not satisfactory practice or (b) some unsatisfactory practice where it is not evident that the institution can rectify the issues within the coming 12 months.

# THE REPORT OF THE INSPECTION OF The Cambridge Theological Federation

October – November 2011

## SUMMARY

### Introduction

The Cambridge Theological Federation brings together eleven institutions in Cambridge and the Eastern region, many but not all of whom are engaged in training candidates for ordained ministry. It is an impressive ecumenical venture as it includes institutions serving the Anglican, Methodist, Orthodox, Roman Catholic and United Reformed Churches and it also includes the Woolf Institute, of which the Centre for Christian Jewish Studies is a part. Most of the institutions are in Cambridge but the Federation also includes the Eastern Region Ministry Course as a full member, which serves six Anglican dioceses and the Methodist Church in the Eastern Region, and that Course works in close partnership with two Diocesan Courses in Norwich and St Edmundsbury and Ipswich which are also associate members of the Federation. ERMC also serves the Anglican Diocese of Europe.

The Federation relates to two Universities, Cambridge University and Anglia Ruskin University, which is based in Cambridge and Chelmsford, and between those two universities it is able to offer a wide range of courses of preparation for ministry and Christian service, both ordained and lay.

### Summary of outcomes

The inspection team regards the Cambridge Theological Federation as fit for purpose for preparing candidates for ordained and licensed ministry.

<b>CRITERIA</b>	<b>OUTCOME</b>
A. Aims, objectives and evaluation of the institution	Confidence
B Relationships with other institutions	Confidence
C Curriculum for formation and education	Confidence
D Community and corporate life	Confidence
E Worship and training in public worship	Confidence
F Ministerial, personal and spiritual formation	Individual House Responsibility
G Teaching and learning: content, method and resources	Confidence with qualifications
H Practical and pastoral theology	Individual House Responsibility

I Teaching staff	Confidence
J Ancillary staff	Confidence
K Students	Individual House Responsibility
L Governance, management, constitution and organisation	Confidence with qualifications
M Business planning and risk management	Confidence with qualifications
N Financial policies and cost-effectiveness	Confidence with qualifications
O Reserves policy and statutory liabilities	Confidence with qualifications
P Accommodation	Confidence with qualifications
<b>Overall Outcome</b>	<b>Confidence with qualifications</b>

### **General observations**

Since the last inspection the Federation has completed the move from using University of Wales at Bangor to validate some of its courses to using Anglia Ruskin University, which move seems to have gone very smoothly. In March 2010 the Federation published a Strategic Plan 2009-14, which was a major document examining its way of working and indicating the ways in which it could move forwards. The implications of that review are still being worked through by the Federation as a whole and by the various member institutions. Inevitably with what is a complex organisation involving eleven different independent institutions there are some major issues relating to Governance that are being addressed, and those are made more complicated by a context when the funding of Higher Education has been subject to very major Government change. It says much for the Federation that these very demanding issues are being examined honestly and rigorously.

This inspection is concerned with the central functions of the Federation and it is being made at the same time that many of the member institutions are being inspected. Inevitably many of our recommendations are made in the areas of governance and finance, and they should be read in conjunction with the reports on individual houses.

### **Strengths**

The strengths of the Federation lie in

- The practiced ecumenism that is intrinsic to its life

- The relationship with two very different universities, which between them allow a wide variety of different courses in preparing men and women for ministry
- The rigour of the Strategic Review that the Federation itself instituted
- The openness and trust that evidently exists between the Principals of the member institutions even when facing complex and demanding matters relating to governance and finance.
- The presence of the Henry Martyn Centre as an Associate Member of the Federation now housed in Westminster College, which has an international reputation as a centre for the study of World Christianity and Mission and which exposes Federation students to aspects of the world church they may not otherwise encounter
- The presence of the Woolf Institute for Abrahamic Faiths also as an Associate member of the Federation housed in Wesley House, which places inter-faith issues in the life of the Federation itself.

### **Areas for attention**

The areas for attention are:

- Finding the right balance between what belongs to the Federation as a whole and what belongs to the member institutions
- The potential dangers of a complex bureaucracy
- The financial challenges of changes in the funding of Higher Education
- The long term provision of adequate accommodation and teaching facilities

# FULL REPORT

## INTRODUCTION

1. The Cambridge Theological Federation was formed in 1972 when three theological colleges in Cambridge, Ridley Hall, Wesley House and Westcott House agreed to work together. In 1976 Westminster College joined the Federation, when the ecumenical vision for some at the time was of the possibility of organic union between the churches, so the joint working of two Anglican, one Methodist and one United Reformed College seemed a natural element in the progression towards greater unity.

2. With the defeating of the Covenanting proposals the ecumenical agenda was modified at least for the immediate future towards more a period of closer co-operation between churches rather than organic union. At that time the regional training course serving East Anglia, then known as the East Anglia Ministerial Training Course and now known as the Eastern Region Ministry Course (ERMC), joined the Federation in 1993, the Margaret Beaufort Institute of Theology, dedicated to educating women for lay ministry in the Roman Catholic Church, joined in 1994 and the Institute for Orthodox Christian Studies joined in 1999.

3. In 1998 the Centre for Jewish – Christian Relations, now part of the Woolf Institute of Abrahamic Faiths, became an Associate member, joined in the following year by the Henry Martyn Centre for the Study of Mission and World Christianity. Two Diocesan Courses, the Norwich Diocesan Ministry Course and the St Edmundsbury and Ipswich Diocesan Ministry Course, both of which work closely with the Eastern Region Ministry Course, became Associate members in 2006.

4. This inspection is part of the process of the Church of England, the Methodist Church and the United Reformed Church all being assured that the preparation for ministry offered by some of the institutions in the Federation is fit for purpose. We do not presume to make any wider judgement about the Federation other than its suitability for being involved in the preparation of candidates for various forms of authorised Christian ministry. Each of the institutions involved in preparation for ministry in the Federation, the Eastern Region Ministry Course with the two diocesan Courses, Ridley Hall, Wesley House, Westcott House and Westminster College are subject to their own inspection, and the inspectors looking at the overall Federation are all involved in one of those institutional inspections as well. Extensive conversations have happened between the senior inspector and the President of the Federation, the Chairman of the Governing Council and the Registrar, as well as with most of the Diocesan Bishops in the Region and one of the Chairs of the Methodist Districts covering the region. In addition contact by the inspection team has been made with key figures in each of the other Institutions involved either as full or associate members of the Federation to obtain their perspective on the Federation's life. The inspectors

would like to pay tribute to the courtesy, help and encouragement they have been given by all with whom we have been in contact.

5. There have been a number of significant changes to the Federation since the last inspection, one of the most major being the completion of the move from using the University of Wales, Bangor as the validating university for some of the Federation courses to using Anglia Ruskin University based in Cambridge. This move seems now to be well established and is discussed in more detail in section B.

6. In May 2011 in the Federation 23 students were following the Certificate in Theology for Ministry Course and 71 were following the Bachelor of Theology Course, both of which are qualifications of the University of Cambridge. 91 were pursuing the BA (Hons) in Christian Theology, 126 the Foundation Degree Award, and 152 the MA in Pastoral Theology, all of which are validated by Anglia Ruskin University. All of these courses are taught by theological college or course staff together with staff of the University concerned. In addition 25 students were pursuing the Professional Doctorate Course of Anglia Ruskin University and 18 are following the BA in Theology and Religious Studies which is a Tripos examination of Cambridge University taught by University staff. There are, in addition, a small number of students pursuing an MPhil (7) or PhD (7). Not all of these students are necessarily candidates for ordained or licensed ministry, but with those numbers it was clear to the inspectors that the Federation is a very significant player in the whole field of theological education for ministry nationally as well as regionally.

7. Making the theological and teaching knowledge of all the institutions available across the whole Federation adds immeasurably to the quality of education that can be offered. The availability of courses at either Cambridge University or Anglia Ruskin University gives a range of possibilities that is impressive, and the encounter between students at the different institutions is in itself a significant educational and ecumenical opportunity. We have no doubt that the Federation has been a very positive development both within Cambridge and for the Churches who receive the ministry of those who have been educated there.

8. However there are several challenging issues. One of the most complicated is finding the right balance between what belongs to the central structures of the Federation and what belongs to the individual houses. One of the Principals said he had read an article about the European Union and felt that if the EU had been replaced by the Federation, and the nation states of the EU replaced by the houses, the article would have made complete sense for CTF. We found that an illuminating illustration. In the last year the tensions have been particularly in the context of finance and governance. The future loss of HEFCE funding from Anglia Ruskin University following government change in policy is going to make those matters of finance and governance even more acute in the coming years and we discuss some of those issues more fully in the rest of this report. It would

be tragic, however, if those challenges undermined the excellent work the Federation is doing and should be enabled to continue to do.

## SECTION ONE: AIMS AND KEY RELATIONS

### A Aims, objectives and evaluation of the institution

*Inspectors will consider to what extent the declared aims and objectives, strategies and policies of the institution correspond to the needs of the churches, to the institution's own curriculum proposals and to accepted public and legal criteria.*

*A.i The aims and objectives of the institution should be appropriate to the preparation of ordinands for public ministry within the breadth of traditions of the sponsoring church.*

9. In March 2010 the Strategic Plan 2009-14 for the Federation was published and it gives a very full statement of the Federation's Mission and Vision (p 14f). It is expressed in four main headings:

- Innovation and creativity for mission in today's world
- Excellence and accessibility in education and formation for Christian ministries and discipleship
- Distinctive contribution to the Church's ecumenical endeavour
- Engagement with the world-wide Church and higher education in learning and scholarship

Each of those headings has a number of sub-headings and as an expression of its overall mission and purpose we found it wholly appropriate for the Federation's role within the requirements of the churches for education for ministry.

10. The following section of that Strategic Plan deals with the Federation's Organisation and Structure, where it was noted that a significant issue has been assessing what was given to and received from the Federation by each of the individual houses. The report also observed that 'decision-making at all levels is described as being beset by unclear loci of responsibility and authority .... a low level of subsidiarity and a confused committee structure.'( p 17).

11. Since that report was published the committee structure has been revised and the Federation is working on governance issues, but an interim funding model designed to promote a move towards a more realistic way of distributing costs of Federation activities, which was initially agreed, proved to be more complex than originally thought. The Federation is working on 'a complex process to resolve those issues', of which they say 'many go to the heart of what it is to be a Federation' (Inspection Documentation p 10). The consequences of the loss of HEFCE funding for humanities subjects in universities and the more general financial problems that surround all theological education will only make these issues more acute.

12. We have no doubt that the ability and the goodwill to emerge from these challenges are present in the Federation, and in so far as anyone can be confident of the future in this area we are confident of their ability to respond sensibly to the issues. But no one should underestimate the complexity of the matters relating to finance and governance, not least of all the fundamental one of agreeing what lies with the Federation and what lies with the individual houses.

*A.ii There should be evidence that the current, published statements on training policy produced by the various denominational bodies have been suitably integrated into the training programme.*

13. The Federation is a resource for the individual houses but the policy statements of the various churches apply more to the houses than to the Federation. We have no doubt that the present courses on offer through the Federation meet the requirements of denominational bodies as supplemented by the practice within the individual houses. In addition, the Federation documentation in appendix 18 maps the learning outcomes from Shaping the Future against the Federation curriculum.

*A.iii There should be evidence of action taken in response to the previous inspection Report and any follow-up.*

14. The last inspection asked the Federation to produce a handbook of procedures and that was done in 2006. A revision of that is planned for the near future. The inspectors also asked that the Governing Council should establish and monitor a financial strategy. One of the Committees established under the Strategic Review is the Resources Committee and they now carry out that function, although the problems about the interim funding model (mentioned in paragraph 11) emerged in that context. The development of the role of President, held by one of the Principals, with other Vice-Presidents (also Principals) chairing the major Committees has gone a long way to meeting some of the other requirements of the last inspection, as has the establishment of the post of Registrar. The rest of the seventeen recommendations made in 2004 have been all worked on in various ways, although the security of the libraries continues to be a difficult issue to resolve.

**The inspection team has confidence with regard to Criterion A, Aims, Objectives and Achievements of the Institution.**

## **B Relationships with other institutions**

*Inspectors will examine how the institution relates to other educational provision (including any partner university) and to the churches and secular organisations in its locality, with particular reference to regional groupings of providers of theological education.*

*B.i The terms of academic and validation/accreditation arrangements with universities should be fair and appropriate to an institution offering training and formation for candidates for ordained ministry.*

The Federation relates to two Universities.

15. Cambridge University provides a number of the courses available to students at the residential Colleges including the Bachelor of Theology for Ministry and the Certificate in Theology for Ministry. All the academic staff of the Federation are recognised by Cambridge University and those teaching on the BTh and CTM are recognised as affiliated lecturers in the Faculty of Divinity. All students have access to Cambridge University facilities, including the University library and the Divinity faculty library. A relatively small number of students are following the Tripos Course within Cambridge University, which is taught by University Staff. The Chairman of the Divinity Faculty of Cambridge University at the Faculty's AGM in 2011 referred to its 'fruitful relationship with the Federation', and looked forward to developing it further.

16. Anglia Ruskin University, also in Cambridge, provides courses for both the residential and the non-residential courses. It had no theology department before the link with the Federation and the staffs of the theological colleges and courses effectively are the theology faculty of Anglia Ruskin. It has responded well to the demands of becoming the validating university for many of the courses provided in the Federation and is perceived by the college and course staffs to be very supportive of their work. The University has recently audited the work of the Federation and has renewed their partnership for a further five years.

*B.ii The institution should show signs of drawing as much benefit as may be possible from the demands and resources of universities in teaching quality assessment, staff development and the promotion of research.*

17. Both Universities offer quality assurance and staff development, which opportunities are taken up by Federation staff. Staff development in the areas of teaching and learning is co-ordinated by two staff members as a Federation wide activity. Peer Observation is used in ARU and the Federation have taken the same step for their staff; every member of the Federation staff being expected to participate. All staff are able to attend Senior Research seminars.

*B.iii There should be evidence of effective engagement with churches, other faith communities and secular organisations in the locality such as to enhance preparation for public ministry.*

18. Relationships with churches through placements are organised primarily by the houses. The Federation organises placements in secular organisations and the programme of January Intensive Courses, where particular issues are explored on a Federation wide basis in some depth, and which will include matters related to secular organisations and possibly to other faith communities. Within the Federation the presence of the Woolf Institute adds to the opportunities of encounter with other faith communities.

*B.iv The institution should demonstrate commitment to effective partnership with the other providers of theological education in the region.*

19. The Federation itself is the main vehicle for partnership for the Member and Associate Member institutions and so the demonstrable commitment to ecumenical partnership is inherent. It has also worked to develop a relationship with the Regional Training Partnership, with Federation staff playing key roles within that, and there is some evidence from the comments of church leaders in the area to some inspectors that the suspicion of Cambridge as an elitist and dominant influence has lessened in the region. However what is inevitable for some Cambridge institutions, including for some in the Federation, is that their focus will be, and should be, national and even international rather than regional.

20. The Federation is also linked to the Methodist South East Regional Training Forum, which will be the main vehicle for the Federation's input into the outworking of the Methodist Church's policy document for the future training of Methodist Ministers '*A Fruitful Field*', which will have a significant effect on the life of the Federation.

<p><b>The inspection team has confidence with regard to Criterion B, Relationships with other institutions</b></p>
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## SECTION TWO: CURRICULUM FOR FORMATION AND EDUCATION

### C Curriculum for formation and education

*C.i The institution should offer a theological rationale for its approach to mission and ministry consistent with the principles of the churches for which it trains ministers and for the education it offers other groups of learners.*

21. The theological vision of the Federation is set out in its Vision Statement, found in the Inspection Documentation on pages 26-7 and Chapter 3 of the Strategic Plan: 'to serve the mission of God in the world, as that mission is expressed and worked out in the life of the Church. Our vision is centred in the transforming love of Christ, who is the Wisdom of God, and this vision is given life by the transforming power of the Holy Spirit of God.' This Trinitarian statement is then unfolded into the Federation's understanding of the character and functions of the ordained ministry that will serve the mission of God in the contemporary context: 'Christian leadership which is theologically and pastorally wise, mission oriented, and committed to collaborative ways of discerning the truth in love.' The various partner institutions within the Federation interpret this foundational statement in their own ways within their individual statements of vision and mission.

22. However, at Federation level there are certain elements of the theological rationale that the Inspectors would wish to single out for comment. First, there has been an ongoing debate about the articulation of the ecumenical character of the Federation, and there is now an Identity Statement in place (Appendix 5 to the Inspection Documentation) that offers a robust characterization of *ecumenicity* as a shared commitment, rather than treating *ecumenism* as a discrete element in the curriculum. For example, 'in our learning together, we expand our horizons by discovering the true catholicity of the Church, and we model and inhabit ways of learning and teaching which foster the unity of the Church'. Discussion during the Inspection with students following the different academic pathways within the Federation has indicated that this accurately reflects the most positive benefit of the ecumenical character of Federation life as students experience it, and that most find this mutually enriching.

23. Second, the Vision Statement identifies 'innovation and creativity for mission in today's world' as a priority domain for growing together in 'effectiveness in serving God's Kingdom'. The Inspection Documentation (p.18) affirms that 'mission is central to the curriculum' and enumerates various ways in which this is embodied including Pioneer training, student mission engagements in particular church contexts, and certain new modules within the academic programmes, but despite this also states under 'weaknesses' (p.20) that 'we still

have work to do on the way in which mission might be integrated more widely in our curriculum'. The Strategic Plan contains a commitment to 'grow in the common vocation of mission...in generous co-operation with each other as a model of a community of communities'. While recognising the complexities of this issue across the various churches and between different traditions within each church in pursuit of this commitment the Inspectors *urge* further work is done towards a Federation-wide declaration of a shared theological understanding about the nature of mission.

24. A third point may be made about the requirement throughout the present section to take account of 'the education [the Federation] offers other groups of learners', i.e. other than those training for authorised ministries in their various churches. The Strategic Plan (chapter 5) in discussing the academic portfolio refers to 'an increasing interest in... theological lifelong learning for the whole people of God', and notes that 'our student profile includes independent students...who are not sponsored for ordained or public ministry by a particular church but are drawn to explore their Christian vocation through what the Federation has to offer.' While most of these have to date been moving towards some form of lay ministry, the Plan also envisages a growth among the student profile of those who are 'less likely to go into ministry', and there is a place here for further theological work in seeking an ecumenical understanding of such non-ministerial lay education, in which for example such partner institutions as the Margaret Beaufort Institute and the Institute for Orthodox Christian Studies could have a significant role to play.

*C.ii The institution should offer a formational and educational rationale for its approach to ministerial training and for the education it intends to offer to other groups of learners.*

25. Chapter 3 of the Strategic Plan contains a detailed set of commitments for the Federation to deliver the kind of Christian leadership it believes is needed in the contemporary context, under the four headings reported in paragraph 9 of this report. The Inspection Documentation (p.44) picks up from the Strategic Plan (p.25) the affirmation that the learning to achieve these ends will take place 'academically, contextually and doxologically', and notes in turn that this requires a diversity of academic programmes that aim to integrate academic learning with practical ministerial education and personal formation, together with the mutual enrichment across traditions that comes from the Federation's ecumenical character, and within this, the sharing of common worship. As with the previous sub-section, it is necessary to note that the means of delivering and sustaining this kind of integrated learning rests with the individual member institutions to address in their own ways.

26. We have already commented above on questions touching on ecumenicity and education for mission, and will further address issues of curriculum provision for formation for Christian ministries in the sub-section below. As further evidence of an agreed formational and educational rationale, we would also draw attention

to the Principals' Statement of Aims of Learning included as Appendix 3 of the Inspection Documentation, which offers a helpful articulation of a holistic approach to learning not limited to candidates for ordained ministry. One further provision at Federation level should however be mentioned here, which is the commitment to undergirding all its educational and formational activities with a cohesive research strategy for both staff and students, spelt out in chapter 8 of the Strategic Plan. The Inspection Documentation (p.23) contains a further account of this through an extract from the submission prepared by the Federation for the ARU Institutional Review in 2010 (see also Appendix 8 to the Inspection Documentation). The submission noted that 'there is a wide array of research interests across the staff of the CTF, with various members regularly presenting papers, publishing peer-reviewed journal articles, and writing books. This feeds into the design and content of class curriculum both directly and indirectly.' Interaction among academic staff and students of the different institutions at this level can be a further significant contributor to the sense of educational and academic common purpose across the Federation.

*C.iii The institution should offer a set of programmes which will enable candidates to be prepared for their envisaged ministries, in line with the developing policies of the sponsoring churches, and appropriate programmes to educate other groups of learners.*

27. One of the most noteworthy features of theological education within the Cambridge Federation is the wide choice of academic pathways available to students. These are designed to be responsive to the range of backgrounds from which ordinands come, in regard both to overall educational experience and achievement, and to previous levels of theological study. A table on page 32 of the Inspection Documentation helpfully sets out the basic facts and statistics of the several programmes. The co-existence of awards by both CU and ARU provides for a breadth of teaching and learning methods and educational philosophies to meet the needs of different types of learners (see further under section G on *Teaching and learning*).

28. Across the Federation the largest single pathway is the BA in Christian Theology validated by ARU, which also includes a Foundation Degree award at Level 2. The Inspection Documentation (p.16) notes that 'external examiners' reports evidence high standards of satisfaction with the work of the Federation through Anglia Ruskin University'. Both students training on this programme, and some academic staff teaching on it, have reported during the Inspection that this award offers a very appropriate access to Higher Education study especially for students previously unfamiliar with it, and the practical-based seminar pedagogy also appeals to many for whom this is a more favourable learning style. However, we also heard how the recent (and sudden) introduction by ARU of the requirement for a 'core curriculum' for its awards has meant that the BA no longer

offers the flexibility of module choices that had made it suitable for students needing an individually tailored programme of study.

29. The other ARU validated programme, the MA in Pastoral Theology, which pre-dates by some years the introduction of the FDa/BA, offers a very good alternative pathway for ordinands with significant prior theological study. The educational philosophy of this award is firmly rooted in reflective practice and this is modelled in the design and delivery of the programme. Students on this Pathway endorsed its theological reflection model, the content and process of its modules and approach to teaching and learning. An External Examiner recently reported that ‘the MA in Pastoral Theology is a well established programme which is delivering an excellent standard of training for those engaged in and preparing for the practice of ministry.’ Recruitment to this programme continues to be very healthy across the Federation, including many who are not ministerial candidates.

30. The principal University of Cambridge programme for ministerial candidates is the Bachelor in Theology for Ministry (BTh), together with the Certificate in Theology for Ministry (CTM), a flexible pathway that allows tailored programmes to be put together for particular students, typically those with previous theological study, by selecting certain papers from the BTh provision. This use of the CTM has been increasing since Anglia Ruskin University’s introduction of a compulsory core curriculum for its BA award. The BTh is designed to integrate academic theology studied with all the rigour of a Cambridge programme with reflective practice and pastoral experience, and conversations and meetings with students on this programme revealed a high level of agreement with this description. In 2010 an External Moderator wrote that the course was designed appropriately ‘for ensuring that different skills are tested’, and that she found ‘some very high quality work in all modes and across the academic spectrum, including biblical exegesis, doctrinal and historical studies, pastoral reflection, and engagement with some complex contemporary issues’.

31. Across the Federation as a whole, a much smaller proportion of students take the Cambridge Theological Tripos award and therefore undertake their academic studies within the Divinity Faculty as members of specific Cambridge colleges in addition to being members of their particular House. This pathway ‘is taken by the most academically able residential students who do not have a previous degree in theology (Inspection Document, p.35). The Federation is mindful that as ‘Tripos students are studying for a theology degree which is not designed *per se* to equip them for ministry’ (p.46), this places a greater onus on the training institutions to ensure that ministerial preparation is adequately covered in other ways by means of in-house provision such as placement activities and the Life and Service programme, which each House that trains ministerial candidates offers in a form designed to meet the needs of its own denominational constituency.

32. Lastly, a small number of ministerial students are studying for research degrees, chiefly though not exclusively with the University of Cambridge, and some of the same issues about the integration of academic study with ministerial training and personal formation apply to them as for those on the Tripos pathway.

33. The Inspectors are satisfied that, taken together, these programmes enable candidates to be prepared for their envisaged ministries, in line with the developing policies of the sponsoring churches. Further consideration of educational methods is given below in section G, *Teaching and learning: methods, content and resources*.

*C. iv The proposals concerning assessment should enable the institution to advise church leaders on the suitability of candidates for the envisaged ministry, in line with the guidelines of the sponsoring churches. Assessment proposals for other groups of learners should be consistent with the aims and objectives of the programmes being offered.*

34. The Federation institutions employ a wide range of means of assessment of suitability of candidates for ministry, both those required by the institutions validating the academic programmes, and those devised and implemented internally. Detailed information about academic assessment supplied by CU and ARU is published on FedNet, the website of the CTF, and via the CU website for Cambridge Tripos and postgraduate programmes. Documents prepared and disseminated by individual training institutions within the Federation contain information about the assessment of pastoral and practical elements of training that are delivered in-house, and for reporting on student progress as required by the sponsoring churches.

35. ARU awards are summatively assessed by module assignments that comprise a range of assessment strategies including essays, placement reports, case studies, presentations and group tasks. An External Examiner has commented that ‘professional practice, for example preaching and pastoral listening, are also tested effectively through modules. There is an effective combination of theory, practice and reflection.’ However, contributing to the Inspection process, representatives of some institutions within the Eastern Region Training Partnership have remarked that even within the ARU BA there seems to be a preference for more traditionally ‘academic’ assessment strategies such as essays, rather than non-standard types of assessment such as portfolio, oral assignments, group tasks and case studies, a point also made by an External Examiner in 2010. This may reflect a significant difference of expectation between, for example, those delivering non-residential ministerial training for a diocesan course and others looking towards what is most academically valued within the Cambridge setting. It is an issue that will merit further consideration in any discussion of the future make-up of the academic

portfolio of the Federation, and we *urge* that this matter be considered in the context of such a discussion.

36. CU awards are assessed by a mixture of final examinations and essays, with an oral examination for certain pastoral papers. Internal assessment procedures include Supervisor's reports on pastoral attachments and placements, and various forms of student self-assessment. The Federation has noted (Inspection Document p.38) that academic programmes differ in their approaches to formative assessment, and indeed that there can be differences of emphasis among tutors within the same programme. The achievement of maximum levels of consistency in assessment is something that can fittingly be addressed at Federation level through its staff development provision, and also through the Curriculum Development Committee on which the Directors of Studies of the member institutions sit.

37. We are satisfied with the range and suitability of assessment procedures across the curriculum; further comment on assessment, marking and feedback practices can be found in section G.vii and viii below.

**The inspection team has confidence with regard to Criterion C, Curriculum for formation and education.**

## SECTION THREE: MINISTERIAL DEVELOPMENT

### D Community and Corporate Life

*Inspectors will consider how the institution understands and structures community life, and interprets the role of corporate life in training for ordained ministry; also how far corporate life is evident in the relationships between members of the institution.*

*D.i The institution should offer a clear statement of how it understands its corporate life, including issues of gender, ethnic grouping and disability and other matters of natural justice, in a way, which harmonises with its aims and objectives in preparing candidates for public ministry.*

38. The majority of community and corporate life for students is based in their colleges/houses. However, the Federation makes a distinct and commendable effort to enhance this experience by providing a range of community events that are organised and sponsored by the Federation for all Federation members to join in. There is a clear and very helpful statement which undergirds this known as the Identity Statement which was affirmed by all member institutions in 2011.

*D.ii The institution should show evidence that the structures, requirements and practice of the institution reflect the stated policy.*

39. The community and corporate life of the Federation is overseen by the Worship and Community Life Committee. There is wide and engaged representation from tutorial staff, support staff and students and the committee is effective in delivering its aspirations based on the minutes from the committee and observation of one of their meetings.

40. The corporate life of the Federation is facilitated in several ways. There is a Federation programme for the Induction Week at the beginning of each academic year, bi-weekly Federation Worship services, twice yearly Federation Lectures, occasional social events, and provision for students to dine at other member institutions. This aspect of Federation life is helpfully communicated through the FedLife weekly email news bulletin. Students expressed appreciation for this dimension of their formation and felt it added value to what they received from their own houses.

<p><b>The inspection team has confidence with regard to Criterion D, Community and corporate life</b></p>
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## **E Worship and training in public worship**

*Inspectors will consider the arrangements for common worship and the policy underlying them, noting the use of the authorized and other forms of worship, and how worship is conducted. Inspectors will note the ways in which ministerial candidates are trained to plan, prepare and conduct public worship.*

*E.i The spaces designated for prayer and worship should be appropriate for their purpose.*

41. There is no Federation facility able to accommodate the whole Federation community. So Federation worship is held in different city-centre churches which are convenient to all students and adequate for their purpose.

*E.ii There should be a publicly stated policy on, and arrangements for, corporate worship. The policy and arrangements should take account of, and equip candidates to work within, the variety of practice within the sponsoring church.*

42. Most worship and training in public worship is conducted within member institutions. Hence there is no comment on *Ev-ix* below. There is a clear and helpful policy statement known as Guidelines for Planning and Organising Federation Worship.

*E.iii There should be a policy concerning balance of worship, including authorized and innovative forms, and of denominational worship in ecumenical situations.*

43. Federation policy and practice enables a balance of styles and traditions which are representative of the breadth of traditions within the Federation members yet which are ecumenically sensitive. Students preparing for a Federation Worship event are given an opportunity to explore wider worship issues than arise in their own college. Students comment that preparing and leading Federation worship helps them grow in understanding of their tradition and in the ecumenical issues posed by offering that to a diverse community. The worship event observed and the sample order of services provided confirm the practice of the policy.

*E.iv. There should be a policy about expected attendance at public worship and evidence of its outworking.*

44. Attendance at Federation worship is expected in the Federation policy and in the policies of the individual houses and the time allocated is protected in the Federation timetable.

Sections E.v to E.ix: INDIVIDUAL HOUSE RESPONSIBILITY

- E.v *In the light of preparation for public ministry, there should be provision to address the tension between worship as an activity of the Church and as a vehicle of professional training.*
- E.vi *The institution should have a policy, available to candidates, on training in public worship. It should ensure that candidates plan, prepare, and effectively conduct public worship, including preaching*
- E.vii *The institution should ensure that the policy is adhered to and that proper oversight is exercised over this part of the programme of formation.*
- E.viii *There should be an appropriate policy and practice for reviewing and assessing the leading of worship.*
- E.ix *The students should receive critical and constructive comment, attending to performance, content and process from staff and peers.*

**The inspection team has confidence with regard to Criterion E, Worship and training in public worship.**

## **F Ministerial, personal and spiritual formation**

*Inspectors will consider how the institution helps candidates in their ministerial, personal and spiritual formation, and how candidates are encouraged or enabled to deepen their spiritual life and their self-awareness*

### **INDIVIDUAL HOUSE RESPONSIBILITY**

- F.i *The policy regarding ministerial formation should be easily available and communicated to candidates.*
- F.ii *The institution through its common life and through the way it guides and supervises candidates should enable them to grow in Christian discipleship with a view to exercising a public role in ordained ministry.*
- F.iii *The institution should enable candidates to be immersed in the traditions of their own churches, together with an empathetic understanding of strands other than their own. It should also increase candidates' understanding of the traditions of other churches and deepen their sense of their ecclesial identity.*

- F.iv The institution should provide corporate and individual guidance and supervision for candidates. There should also be encouragement to seek confidential spiritual counsel.*
- F.v The institution should enable candidates to reflect on the breadth of Christian spiritual tradition and its engagement with the world, and to work with the personal issues arising out of the whole process of training.*
- F.vi The institution should enable candidates to develop as people, as future public ministers and as life-long learners, able to look forward to working effectively in the context of traditions other than their own, both within and beyond their own church.*
- F.vii Candidates should be encouraged to make time for private prayer and to explore the expectations on the ordained in the areas of corporate and individual prayer, of general conduct and of lifestyle.*

## SECTION FOUR: EDUCATION AND TRAINING

### **G Teaching and Learning: content, method and resources**

*Inspectors will attend a representative sample of different teaching and learning activities, noting their quality and effectiveness and the methods used. They will examine the adequacy of educational resources and libraries, and will look at samples of students' written work. They should report on the full range of educational activities of the inspected institution including provision for other types of ministries and for independent students and auditors.*

46. The rich pattern of ecumenical experiences offered through the various programmes of the Federation find positive resonance amongst the majority of students and staff. It is only through the sharing of resources – in terms of staff, estate and libraries - that such a comprehensive offering can be made to those who prepare for ministry in Cambridge. The work with two very different Universities is undertaken collectively and serious effort is expended in ensuring that the demands of both validating bodies in terms of quality assurance are met with rigour.

47. The Inspectors recognise that the Federation does not operate within a vacuum and that significant challenges lie ahead, particularly in terms of individual denominational policy with regard to ministerial formation and the need for substantial investment in the learning environment. Having said that, the staffs are committed to making the Federation not only function as effectively and efficiently as possible, but become a properly research-informed community of learning. Their enthusiasm for the task of formation and commitment to scholarship of the highest quality is to be commended.

*G.i Principles concerning what is included in pre-ordination/authorisation training and left to post-ordination training should be available and consonant with any denominational requirements*

#### INDIVIDUAL HOUSE RESPONSIBILITY

*G.ii Teaching and learning programmes should serve the aims and objectives of the institution and the educational programmes of which they form a part. They should demonstrate a proper balance between the academic, formational and practical aspects of training.*

48. Two universities with very different cultures of learning are responsible for the Federation's programmes. These cultures obviously influence the work of the Federation itself and it is apparent that, for the majority of students, there is a great deal of independent learning expected from the beginning. The work of the Directors of Study within each of the Houses is critical in enabling students to

navigate the potentially bewildering array of courses of offer and their working together to develop good practice across the Federation is acknowledged.

49. The Strategic Plan acknowledged the lack of a Teaching and Learning Policy within the Federation and recommended that such a policy be drawn up to establish the current position and articulate a common educational vision. This lack has recently been addressed by the Academic Committee with a policy articulating the need for a consciously ecumenical approach to formation that fits students for a proper engagement with the contemporary world. The policy is very much in keeping with the expectations of the sponsoring denominations and articulates a proper balance between ecumenical encounter and confessional self-awareness.

*G.iii Units of teaching and learning should have clear and appropriate aims, be well structured and enable students to achieve appropriate learning goals.*

50. The Inspectors observed a range of teaching sessions across the programmes offered and garnered feedback from a number of students. We noted that teaching was generally of a very high standard with clear aims and structure. Student feedback was generally extremely positive and constructive and there was an overall impression that students were keen to engage in the educational process. The wide range of learning styles present was catered for with some considerable skill. Students were exposed to a wide range of input from lecturers both in Federation and House programmes.

51. The Federation recommends that peer observation of teaching be carried out to ensure consistency but the conduct of such observation is organised centrally. The inspectors picked up some lack of clarity amongst some staff about the process which needs to be dealt with at a House level. Further the inspectors hope that all those engaged in teaching will be offered opportunities for ongoing development in line with the new Teaching and Learning policy.

*G.iv Teaching programmes should introduce students to the appropriate knowledge and learning processes, while drawing on student experience.*

52. The various modules offered through the Federation's programmes are well-designed and have comprehensive written supporting materials, pointing the students to a wide range of written and on-line resources. The modes of delivery are varied and the modules observed used lecture, seminar, workshop and group-presentation methods. The inspectors were particularly impressed with the work done through small groups and the extensive use made of student experience.

53. The Federation recognises that students come from a wide variety of educational and professional backgrounds which presents an additional

challenge to the teaching staff. The Inspectors also observed a number of teaching sessions during the week and felt that the levels of input and engagement were generally of an extremely high quality. The work of staff to encourage full participation of all students in teaching sessions is appreciated.

*G.v The educational methods employed, and the balance of methods within the educational programme, should underpin the stated aims of the programme.*

54. The Inspectors were impressed with the varied methods employed and encourage the staff to continue to make full use of the experiences and expertise of the students they teach. There were some examples of outstanding practice in the facilitation of teaching and learning; of particular note is the work being done by the ERMC and the use of Adobe Connect to work with a dispersed group of students. The move to making more use of blended learning through the development of a Virtual Learning Environment and the use of Moodle is particularly exciting in this regard.

*G.vi Teaching programmes should be complemented by structured opportunities for students to learn, as individuals and as groups.*

#### INDIVIDUAL HOUSE RESPONSIBILITY

*G.vii Staff should provide formal and informal feedback to students and assessment of work and of candidate's progress, both in terms of academic progress and in terms of preparation for beginning public ministry. There should be both affirmation and constructive criticism, as appropriate, of students and of work.*

55. The Federation has created a set of programmes that are now extremely diverse in order to respond comprehensively to the evolving demands of denominations and those preparing for ministry within them. The desire to create effective partnerships with Higher Education has necessitated work with more than one institution but, even with the added complexity this brings, it is generally felt to be a very positive environment in which to operate. The staffs of the Federation are to be commended on the work that has been done to make the relationships as effective as they are.

56. Feedback within the academic programmes is coordinated by the Federation, especially the Programme Directors. It is recognised that the two Universities have different approaches to feedback and this raises issues of parity among students. This becomes particularly acute where certain modules are offered for more than one programme.

57. The feedback system for students also relies, in large part, on the tutorial systems operating within each House. These are felt to be extremely supportive and there are examples of excellent practice.

*G.viii Published assessment criteria should be used by the teaching staff and be available to the staff.*

58. One of the advantages of working with two Universities is that it allows for a variety of methods of assessment within programmes. Criteria for assessment are generally very clear in the academic elements of the programme and students appreciate this. Observation showed that assessments were introduced and addressed within the teaching programme very clearly.

*G.ix The educational programmes offered should be supported by an appropriate learning environment. This should include adequate provision of resources, library and information and communications technology, placements and practical opportunities to learn.*

59. The Inspectors were acutely aware that the issues with the estate were a major concern for the Federation as a whole. We were grateful at the open acknowledgement of the scale of the problem and what was necessary to address it, and we report on this in greater detail in Section P.

60. In terms of library facilities, although the Federation pays a facility fee to the Faculty of Divinity which allows all Federation students to use its library, students raised concerns over availability of key texts in hard copy. It was acknowledged that additional resources within Cambridge University were valuable. The Inspectors feel that the issue of library security also needs to be addressed. The loss of relatively large numbers of volumes each year from libraries belonging to the member institutions is worrying given the scarcity of resources generally.

### **Recommendation 1**

**We recommend that the issue of library security be reassessed in order to create a more secure environment.**

61. The teaching staff across the Federation are, however, to be commended on their work to make resources available electronically and the plans to develop Moodle are to be welcomed in this regard. The support for IT resources is also worthy of comment though it is recognised that further investment in technology is essential to ensure an adequate learning environment.

<p><b>The Inspection team has confidence with qualifications with regard to criterion G, Teaching and learning: content, method and resources</b></p>
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## **H Practical and pastoral theology**

*Inspectors will consider the way in which the institution understands the relation between theory and practice, how it enables students to develop skills in their integration, and how the overall programme of training is effective in preparing candidates for ordained ministry or other vocational pathways.*

- H.i The training institution should have a policy on how the curriculum integrates theory and practice and should communicate it to students.*
- H.ii The structures for learning - courses, seminars, groups, placements, private study, marking, feedback - should be configured so as to facilitate this integration.*
- H.iii The institution should demonstrate how it is enabling candidates to develop an appreciation of the pluralist and multifaith/cultural society in which we live. There should be evidence in the work of students that they are becoming theologically reflective practitioners within it.*

INDIVIDUAL HOUSE RESPONSIBILITY (but see paragraphs 29 – 31 above)

## SECTION FIVE: STAFF AND STUDENTS

### I Teaching Staff

*Inspectors will consider the provision of teaching staff and the policy underlying it, the procedures for appointment of teaching and other staff, and provision for staff development.*

62. Essentially the policy and practice for appointing teaching staff resides in each of the member institutions. Within the Federation both the BA Director and MA Director are academic posts, the latter employed by Anglia Ruskin University but working for 80% of her time within the Federation. There is a central monitoring of appointments, including representation for all other Federation houses and from the Faculty of Divinity in all academic staff appointments. There is limited central oversight and central provision for staff development. Comments are therefore limited to *I.iii* and *I.v*.

- I.i Appointments should involve appropriate consultation with the relevant sponsoring churches and partner institutions, and the method for making appointments should be clear and fair to all concerned.*
- I.ii Recruitment and selection should be in line with current good practice. Job descriptions and conditions of service should be clear at the time of appointment and should be revised at regular intervals.*

#### INDIVIDUAL HOUSE RESPONSIBILITIES

- I.iii The number, field of expertise, scholarly and teaching competence of the staff should enable the educational programmes of the institution to be offered at the appropriate levels, both in terms of academic achievement and of preparation for public ministry.*

63. The Federation is dependent upon the individual member institutions to ensure the field of expertise and competence of teaching staff are maintained. However, based on conversations with the Registrar and the course directors, from the minutes of relevant committees, and from the submitted documentation, the Federation works centrally to enable the educational programmes. The Resources Committee and its sub-committee, Cambridge Resources Committee, monitor the field of expertise to ensure the academic programmes can be delivered and they make recommendations to individual houses regarding expertise needed when appointments come open. Where gaps might exist, the Cambridge Resources Committee identifies the need for sessional teachers to cover curriculum delivery. There are also two full-time course directors, one for the BA/FdA and one for post-graduate awards (primarily for the Federation, the MA), who help to ensure appropriate staffing for delivering the programmes necessary. Recently, to help facilitate this, three stream leaders have been appointed from among the teaching staff to monitor and encourage appropriate

levels and quality of teaching across common subject areas. All this works well to provide the teaching competence necessary to deliver the various academic pathways.

*I.iv The gender, lay/ordained and denominational balance among staff members should enable the institution to offer appropriate models of learning and of ministry, and should comply with denominational guidelines. (For Church of England Guidelines see Appendix F.)*

#### INDIVIDUAL HOUSE RESPONSIBILITY

*I.v The institution should have in place an effective framework and programme for the continuing professional development of its staff. All staff are to have annual appraisals.*

64. Continuing professional development is provided by the Federation through centrally organised staff development days. The programme for the days which the inspectors saw were very good in providing a wide range of professional development appropriate to the needs of the teaching staff and the challenges of the academic programmes. This is overseen by the Staffing and Staff Development sub-committee of the Resources Committee. In addition, staff development opportunities at CU and ARU are made known to all teaching staff and provision is made for staff to attend these. The opportunities are enormous and every encouragement is given, but based on conversations with teaching staff and the minutes from the committees take-up is mixed for the Federation provision. However it appears from house inspections that staff are regularly engaged in continuing professional development.

65. Appraisals for teaching staff rest with the individual member institutions. Practice varies according to reports from the various houses. The Federation encourages Houses to provide regular appraisals, but there is no formal Federation policy as it remains an individual house responsibility. A helpful appraisal form has been devised and member institutions are encouraged to use it. In addition, there is an informal peer review system facilitated by the course directors which supports staff development. The inspectors would *urge* the Federation to consider making the peer review system more formal in the way it is implemented and monitored (see para 51 above).

*I.vi Staff should model an appropriate pattern of spirituality, continuing learning and reflection on practice.*

#### INDIVIDUAL HOUSE RESPONSIBILITY

<b>The inspection team has confidence with regard to Criterion I, teaching staff</b>
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## **J Ancillary staff**

*Inspectors will consider the provision of administrative, support and domestic staff, the policy underlying it, and procedures for their appointment.*

*J.i There should be an adequate number of ancillary staff for the type of institution and its way of working.*

66. There are nine staff (three full-time and six part-time equivalent to 6.47 full-time) employed by the Federation. This staff provides a central secretariat to support the academic programmes. While the tutorial staff in the houses have varying opinions as to whether this extent of central staffing is necessary, it is the opinion of the inspectors based on discussion with the ancillary staff and on conversations with members of the Management Committee that there is no overstaffing. Whether this level of staffing can be maintained or whether some of the services provided by central staff can be devolved to staff in the member institutions is being carefully assessed by the Management Committee and other committees. The inspectors are satisfied from observation, minutes of committees and conversations with principals and staff that the ancillary staff provides a necessary level of support and service in order to deliver the academic programmes.

*J.ii The institution should establish and make known clear lines of responsibility and accountability for its administrative staff.*

67. Documentation provided and conversations with ancillary staff confirm that there are clear lines of responsibility and accountability for the administrative staff.

*J.iii Recruitment and selection should be in line with current good practice. Job descriptions and conditions of service should be clear at the time of appointment, be revised at regular intervals, and include opportunities for professional development. Staff contracts should be provided. Appropriate professional development and appraisal should be provided in line with I.v above.*

68. In conversation with the Registrar and with support staff and based on documentation provided, recruitment and selection of administrative staff is in line with good practice. In addition, there is a policy to have job descriptions and, based on discussion with ancillary staff, job descriptions are in place. Staff state that they have not been regularly reviewed though there has been a recent review of all job descriptions to facilitate the review of staffing levels in light of the financial challenges at this time. Where amendments are required they are done in the form of a letter from the Registrar. Conditions of service are stated in contracts of employment and all staff have signed contracts of employment. It is not evident that contracts of employment are reviewed regularly. The employee handbook exists and is a helpful document and legally binding but it officially

remains in draft form: all copies on file have 'draft' and no record of the handbook being approved is available. Documentation and conversations with staff confirm that appropriate professional development opportunities are made known to all staff and encouragement and finance is provided for this. It is to be commended that staff development not only provides opportunities to develop skills necessary for their present work; but opportunities are given to develop skills for potential future work. According to policy in contracts of employment appraisals are meant to be annual and appropriate forms are designed to facilitate this. Staff commented that yearly appraisals have not always happened, although all have happened in 2011 and we are assured will be done in 2012. The Registrar stated that in most cases there were extenuating circumstances for the appraisals not happening in earlier years. In some cases, the circumstances were reasonable. Staff would appreciate yearly appraisals and greater consistency in receiving written summaries of the appraisal interview.

## **Recommendation 2**

**We recommend that the Governing Council and Management Committee ensures that job descriptions are reviewed regularly, that the employee handbook is finalised, and that appraisals are done yearly with completed paper work.**

*J.iv The institution should ensure that ancillary staff know how they can contribute to the decision-making processes of the institution.*

69. Documentation provided, committee minutes, and interviews with staff confirm that ancillary staff are able to contribute in numerous and effective ways to the decision making of the institution. There is a Support Staff Forum and members of that forum sit on numerous committees. In addition, the Registrar and President of the Federation make every effort to be available to staff for informal conversations about the life of the institution. Some staff who minute committee meetings would value the opportunity to contribute to these proceedings, if desired and asked.

<b>The inspection team has confidence with qualifications with regard to Criterion J, Ancillary staff</b>
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## **K Students**

*Inspectors will examine procedures for admission and suspension or dismissal, for assessing progress during training, and for ministerial candidates, for reporting to the sponsoring church and for supporting candidates in finding their first appointments.*

*K.i Written information for students about admission, welfare, complaints, discipline, assessment, reporting to sponsoring churches and arrangements for first appointments should be publicly available.*

- K.ii The institution should show evidence of compliance with its own policies, and denominational policies where they exist.*
- K.iii The decision-making structure of the institution should enable students to take an appropriate part in the institution. Students should take responsibility for their own participation in the institution.*

#### INDIVIDUAL HOUSE RESPONSIBILITY

## **SECTION SIX: GOVERNANCE, MANAGEMENT AND FINANCE**

### **L Governance, management, constitution and organisation**

*Inspectors will examine the role of the governing body and other bodies in the oversight and administration of the institution, taking particular note of the way decisions are made and implemented at different levels of the institution.*

70. The Strategic Plan examined the organisation and structure of the Federation and made some recommendations which have largely been implemented. Most of their recommendations related to the Management Committee and its three main committees. The Management Committee brings together the Principals of all of the colleges and courses and the Award Secretaries and is chaired for a fixed term by the President of the Federation, who is one of the Principals. The three main committees, each chaired by a Principal who is a Vice-President of the Federation, cover different areas of the Federation's life; the Academic Committee with academic matters, the Resources Committee with the financial and other resource questions, and the Worship and Community Life Committee with the joint worship that happens on a roughly fortnightly basis in the Federation and other aspects of the corporate community life, including social gatherings. From the comments we received they are effective bodies. Each of the main committees has a number of sub-committees, and with such a large number of committees there is a suspicion voiced by some principals and tutorial staff that the Federation is becoming over bureaucratic. We *urge* each of the Committees, including the Management Committee, to reflect on that fear.

71. With such a structure there remains the question of what the role of the Governing Council is and who should sit on it. It is the only body that brings together representatives of the governing bodies of member institutions. There is some disagreement on the issue of its membership within the Federation, with some considering the Principals should simply be present at the Governing Council but not formally members, and others who think they should continue, as at present, to be Trustees. The matter is awaiting the outcome of a review of the role of the Governing Council led by Dame Mary Tanner, which is due to report in 2012..

72. Clearly this issue relates to the matter of what belongs to the Federation and what belongs to the individual houses as mentioned in paragraph 8, and it is a major issue that needs to be resolved.

*L.i There should be evidence of effective financial, administrative and management structures that facilitate the stated aims and objectives of the institution.*

73. The new Committee structure of the three main committees and the Management Committee appears to be working reasonably well in very

demanding circumstances. Uncertainty about student numbers, an inevitable outcome of the selection processes of the sponsoring churches before knowing definitely whether they are going to start at a college, and the more general financial pressures that are on the Federation and its member institutions, are all factors that make the management of the Federation demanding, but the structures are in place to enable the issues to be properly considered.

*L.ii There should be evidence of a structured contribution made by the student body so that it plays an effective role in decision-making processes.*

74. Students are well represented in the committees of the Federation, with the Chair of the Student Forum sitting on the Federation Governing Council as a Director of the Limited Company. The ARU Institutional Review was particularly complimentary on the way in which students in the Federation are involved in planning.

*L.iii There should be evidence that tutorial and ancillary staff are able to fulfil their job descriptions both individually and corporately and are resourced to do so.*

75. The facilities for the tutorial staff are provided in the individual member institutions and comments on the adequacy of this provision will be found in the inspection report of each house. With regard to Federation staff, the two offices provided are rented from a member institution and are adequate with regard to supplies and equipment. However, the premises are not adequate. Comments from staff and observation by inspectors note that some offices feel over-crowded (where there are three desks in one space) even if, according to the 1992 Workplace regulations, they are technically not, and that lighting is not adequate in all offices. We *urge* that this matter be considered to ensure that Health and Safety issues are not being contravened. In addition, no staff room is available for breaks and lunch, though there are two small kitchens to enable refreshments. Decoration is in a poor state as well.

76. Both Universities provide opportunities for continuing professional development for the academic staff and the Federation provides a staff development programme. Provision is made for the professional development of ancillary staff as well (*see under Jiii above*).

### **Recommendation 3**

**The Governing Council and the Management Committee should review the premises for Federation staff and ensure they are adequate to perform the work required and enable a good working environment.**

*L.iv There should be a well-designed and operative appraisal system for all staff.*

(See under I.v. and J.iii above).

*L.v The training institution should meet the current legal requirements, including fire prevention, health and safety, safeguarding, charity registration, immigration and any other current legislation.*

77. Responsibility for these matters lies generally with the member institutions. The Federation's Registrar, who is compliance officer for the Federation but not for all the member institutions, assures us that these requirements are met and documentation for Health and Safety and charity registration was provided. Immigration compliance is the responsibility of the academic institutions with which the student is registered. The Federation complies with its obligations under immigration regulations. With regard to health and safety and fire prevention, we were very concerned to be told that two of the Federation staff working in the Federation's offices cannot hear the fire alarm and are concerned about their well being should there be a fire. We were informed that this has been brought to the attention of the landlord, but they believe they are compliant.

#### **Recommendation 4**

**We urgently recommend that the Governing Council and the Management Committee ensure the safety and well-being of the employees with regard to fire safety and the fire alarm at the Federation offices by further consultation with the House concerned.**

<b>The inspection team has confidence with qualifications with regard to Criterion L, Governance, management, constitution and organisation</b>
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#### **M Business planning and risk management**

*M.i The inspectors should be satisfied that the governing body has clearly identified its role in policy formation and delegation of authority in the areas of business planning, risk management and financial policies.*

78. At present, the terms of reference and the operating parameters of the Governing Council are under review. Some federation staff mentioned, and from the Council minutes there appears to have been some confusion about the primary role of the Governing Council whether it is in developing and overseeing strategy (which is the normal primary role for a governing council) or in managing day to day operations in relation to the Management Committee. Hopefully, this will be addressed when the Tanner review is provided (*see under L above*) and terms of reference and responsibility are clarified between the Governing Council and the Management Committee. However, the strategy document, the inspection documentation, and minutes of the Council and other appropriate Federation committees show that due attention is being given to business planning, risk management and financial policies.

*M. ii The inspectors should satisfy themselves that the trustees/directors have carried out a proper risk assessment process to ensure that the institution is not at risk from loss, or claims that have not been identified or for which provision has not been made in the accounts.*

79. An appropriate risk assessment policy and practice is in place and documentation to demonstrate this has been seen.

*M.iii The inspectors should be satisfied that the institution has in place a business plan which identifies the aims and objectives of the institution over the short and medium term and identifies how the organisation intends to meet the opportunities and needs identified therein.*

80. The Strategic Plan 2009-14 provides the essential business plan. However, in light of recent developments in HEFCE funding, much of that strategy with regard to a business plan is in serious question. It is evident from minutes of the various committees and documentation provided that careful business planning up to 2013 is in place. There is no business plan in place beyond 2013. The Governing Council should be giving serious consideration to medium and longer term strategic and business planning considering the various scenarios that might occur.

### **Recommendation 5**

**We recommend that the Governing Council creates various medium to long term business plans that respond to the potential scenarios that might occur given the known changes in HE funding for the arts and humanities.**

<b>The inspection team has confidence with qualifications with regard to Criterion M, Business planning and risk management</b>
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### **N Financial policies and cost-effectiveness**

*N.i The inspectors should satisfy themselves that proper books of account are kept enabling the trustees/directors to determine on a day-to-day basis the assets and liabilities of the institution.*

81. The Registrar confirmed, as the person who oversees day to day financial records, that accounts are computerised and that assets and liabilities are available to the trustees upon request. In addition, outside financial assistance and advice is provided to ensure this.

*N.ii The inspectors should be satisfied that the annual budget planning process correlates to the business plan and is reviewed regularly by the governing body that the financial position of the institution is reported on a regular basis to the governing body and that appropriate and timely action in respect of such reports is taken.*

82. The inspection documentation, observation of the management committee, conversation with the chair of the Resources Committee and minutes of the Governing Council and other committees all confirm that careful procedures are in place for annual budgeting and correlating it to the business plan as well as for regular monitoring of the budget.

*N.iii The inspectors should satisfy themselves that proper budgets are prepared and that expenditure against these budgets is regularly monitored and reported to the trustees. Authority for virement between budget heads should be properly authorised within set limits and recorded.*

83. As inspection documentation and committee minutes confirm, the Resources Committee, which meets 3 – 4 times a year, and its sub-committees carefully monitor expenditure against budget.

84. The Registrar confirmed that they have very few budget heads so a policy of virement is not in place. There is little if any movement of monies from budget headings. Both sundries and contingencies budget lines are in place to cover unexpected expenditure not covered in the annual budget.

*N.iv The inspectors should ensure that the trustees/directors have properly delegated power to operate the bank accounts and to enter into binding contracts to staff members. There should be evidence that these arrangements are regularly reviewed and that the governing body regularly reviews all covenants in respect of any bank or other loan covenants or agreements have been observed.*

85. The delegation of power to operate bank accounts by the trustees is in place. The Registrar acts as the day to day financial officer. Evidence that this authority and agreement is reviewed regularly is not obvious from the minutes of the Governing Council. There is no evidence from the minutes that this is done with this particular criterion or any other policy the Governing Council is required to review regularly.

86. The Trustees do not have any covenant bank agreements or loans to review.

## **Recommendation 6**

**We recommend that the Governing Council set up annual list of financial policies and practices which require regular review as part of its annual meeting programme. It is advisable that this be done for all policies which require annual or regular review.**

*N.v The inspectors should examine the cost-effectiveness of the institution. The inspectors should be satisfied that the institution has in place procedures to ensure that due economy is exercised in respect of the*

*purchase of goods and services. There should be defined limits for authority to purchase without quotations being obtained and the terms and levels of authority for officers and trustees should be clear.*

87. From the budget and financial information provided and in conversation with the Registrar and members of the Management Committee, cost-effectiveness of the operations of the Federation is well monitored. Cost-effectiveness of purchases of goods and services is ensured by the Federation and member institutions using the preferred services and suppliers of the University of Cambridge which are negotiated at a much larger scale than the Federation could achieve on its own. The Registrar and President of the Federation confirmed that there are defined limits for authority to purchase without quotations. There is a good understanding about levels of authority in this regard with the officers and trustees but a clear statement of policy and practice is not evident nor a practice of review of the exercise of this financial authority.

### **Recommendation 7**

**We recommend that the Governing Council set out a clear policy and practice of limits for purchase and for delegation of financial authority in this regard between the trustees and officers.**

*N.vi The inspectors should satisfy themselves that the institution provides cost effective education and training when compared to the costs of similar institutions.*

88. As far as can be discerned, the Federation is providing cost effective education in comparison with similar institutions, though there is no national benchmarking available to do any rigorous comparison.

*N.vii The inspectors in making their recommendations should evaluate the expected cost to the institution. The inspectors should state whether in their opinion the institution has the necessary resources to achieve a satisfactory response to the recommendations*

89. The inspectors believe their recommendations do not require any extraordinary resources to achieve a satisfactory response to the recommendations, although they recognise that if Recommendation 9 is implemented that may well have longer term major financial implications.

<b>The inspection team has confidence with qualifications with regard to Criterion N, Financial policies and cost-effectiveness</b>
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## **O Reserves policy and statutory liabilities**

*O.i The inspectors should satisfy themselves that the trustees/directors can be satisfied that the institution is solvent and the institution has sufficient reserves to ensure that it is able to meet at least 3 months expenditure or such other amount as the trustees/directors have deemed appropriate.*

90. Based on the audited accounts presented and in discussion with the Registrar and the President of the Federation, the Federation is solvent. Based on the draft accounts for 2011 available, the Federation has enough reserves for two months expenditure. The Governing Council is working to a policy of increasing reserves which will enable them to have at least three months expenditure in reserve, hopefully within the next year or so.

### **Recommendation 8**

**We recommend that the Governing Council have three months reserve expenditure as soon as possible.**

*O.ii The inspectors should satisfy themselves that appropriate advice has been taken on VAT and PAYE liabilities and that appropriate controls exist to ensure that any payments made correctly identify potential liabilities.*

91. From the documentation provided and from conversations with the finance officer, all PAYE liabilities are met and appropriately controlled to ensure correct payments and to identify any liabilities. The Federation as an educational institution is not registered for VAT.

*O.iii If the accounts are kept on a computerised system there should be adequate provision to ensure that all data is properly backed up on a regular basis and that adequate backup data is kept offsite.*

92. The finance officer and IT officer have confirmed that computerised accounts are properly backed up regularly and adequate backup date is also kept offsite.

<p><b>The inspection team has confidence with qualifications regard to Criterion O, Reserves policy and statutory liabilities</b></p>
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## **P Accommodation**

*Inspectors will examine the suitability of the accommodation for teaching and residence.*

*P.i The teaching and residential accommodation should be fit for the purpose of enhancing the community and corporate life of the institution and of facilitating good adult learning.*

93. The Inspectors were acutely aware that the issues with the estate were a major concern for the Federation as a whole. We were grateful at the open acknowledgement of the scale of the problem and what was necessary to address it.

94. The Federation is, regarding accommodation, the sum of its parts. Responsibility for teaching as well as accommodation space ultimately rests with the owners, i.e., the individual Houses. This leaves the Federation vulnerable to change of usage and individual House or denominational policy development and makes strategic planning complex. The Inspectors commend the work done recently by the President and Principals to address the issue of estates and work towards a strategic plan.

95. The inspectors experienced teaching in rooms that was, in some cases, uncomfortable both in terms of space and heating. Some teaching rooms were not equipped with IT resources or a hearing loop system, though it is understood that there were available if requested, on a portable basis.. The Inspectors attended classes in parts of the Federation which were so cramped that the addition of the Inspector meant that a student had to sit on the floor. The picture gleaned from observations was a mixed one and it was felt the Federation is aware of the inadequacies.

96. As mentioned earlier in the report, in terms of library facilities, students raised concerns over availability of hard copies of key texts and it was acknowledged that additional resources within Cambridge University were essential for resourcing the learning outcomes of the Federation curriculum. (See Recommendation 1)

97. On the basis of this evidence we concluded that teaching rooms and library resources in some parts of the Federation are scarcely fit for purpose.

*P.ii There should be an awareness of perceived inadequacies, and a policy and programme for addressing them.*

98. While we recognise that accommodation matters are primarily the responsibility of the individual houses, we note too the Federation's role in driving strategy for change. The Inspectors acknowledge and welcome the existence of an Estates strategy for the Federation and the ambitious funding proposals it contains, but are concerned at the scale of investment required to bring the learning environment up to the necessary standard and the fact that responsibility for it lies with the role of President. So while we are confident that the Federation staff are well aware of the inadequacies in the residential and teaching accommodation and commend the fundraising efforts of Houses such as Westminster for investment in their buildings we must highlight again the vulnerability that exists in the current arrangements with the Houses and the

current conversations within the Methodist Church on future training strategy and the use of Wesley House demonstrate this all too clearly.

99. The inspectors acknowledge the current difficulties faced with regard to the Estates. However, an avenue to explore might be to ensure that a person with significant experience of estates and fundraising be appointed to the Federation Governing Council to advise on strategic planning.

### **Recommendation 9**

**We recommend that the Federation Governing Council continues to address the outstanding accommodation and updating issues with the colleges, including those places where the teaching space is inadequate, and pursues as a priority the fundraising strategy currently in place to help steer an effective refurbishment plan. To achieve this we recommend that the Federation Council should appoint someone with significant experience of estates and fundraising.**

**The inspection team has confidence with qualifications with regard to Criterion P, Accommodation**

## **CONCLUSION**

**Overall outcome: The inspection team has confidence with qualifications in the Cambridge Theological Federation for preparing candidates for ordained and licensed ministry.**

## **LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Recommendation 1**

**We recommend that the issue of library security be reassessed in order to create a more secure environment.**

### **Recommendation 2**

**We recommend that the Governing Council and Management Committee ensures that job descriptions are reviewed regularly, that the employee handbook is finalised, and that appraisals are done yearly with completed paper work.**

### **Recommendation 3**

**The Governing Council and the Management Committee should review the premises for Federation staff and ensure they are adequate to perform the work required and enable a good working environment.**

### **Recommendation 4**

**We urgently recommend that the Governing Council and the Management Committee ensure the safety and well-being of the employees with regard to fire safety and the fire alarm at the Federation offices by further consultation with the House concerned.**

### **Recommendation 5**

**We recommend that the Governing Council creates various medium to long term business plans that respond to the potential scenarios that might occur given the known changes in HE funding for the arts and humanities.**

### **Recommendation 6**

**We recommend that the Governing Council set up annual list of financial policies and practices which require regular review as part of its annual meeting programme. It is advisable that this be done for all policies which require annual or regular review.**

### **Recommendation 7**

**We recommend that the Governing Council set out a clear policy and practice of limits for purchase and for delegation of financial authority in this regard between the trustees and officers.**

### **Recommendation 8**

**We recommend that the Governing Council have three months reserve expenditure as soon as possible.**

### **Recommendation 9**

**We recommend that the Federation Governing Council continues to address the outstanding accommodation and updating issues with the colleges, including those places where the teaching space is inadequate, and pursues as a priority the fundraising strategy currently in place to help steer an effective refurbishment plan. To achieve this we recommend that the Federation Council should appoint someone with significant experience of estates and fundraising.**