

# Ministry Council: Periodic External Review Report

## St Mellitus College

October – November 2017

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## CONTENTS

GLOSSARY.....	3
LIST OF REVIEWERS.....	4
PERIODIC EXTERNAL REVIEW FRAMEWORK.....	5
SUMMARY.....	7
FULL REPORT.....	11
SECTION A: FORMATIONAL AIMS.....	11
SECTION B: FORMATIONAL CONTEXT.....	15
SECTION C: LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT.....	20
SECTION D: STUDENT OUTCOMES.....	24
SECTION E: PARTNERSHIP WITH UNIVERSITY.....	29
SECTION F: TAUGHT PROGRAMMES.....	42
CONCLUSION.....	49
LIST OF COMMENDATIONS.....	50
LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS.....	52

## GLOSSARY

AP(E)L	Accredited Prior (Experience and) Learning
ASE	Annual Self Evaluation
ATLA	American Theological Library Association
BAME	Black, Asian and Minority Ethnicity
BCP	Book of Common Prayer
CASS	Common Awards Student Survey
CofE	Church of England
CW	Common Worship
DDO	Diocesan Director of Ordinands
DLHE	Destination of Leavers from Higher Education survey
DULTA	Durham University Learning and Teaching Award
EBSCO	An on-line research / information database
IMEI/2	Initial Ministerial Education (phases 1 & 2)
JSTOR	A digital library of academic journals, books and primary sources
LLM	Licensed Lay Minister
PER	Periodic External Review
QAA	Quality Assurance Agency
SCONUL	Society of College and National University Libraries
SED	Self Evaluation Document
SMC	St Mellitus College
SMCNW	St Mellitus College North-West
SMCSW	St Mellitus College South-West
SPTC	St Paul's Theological Centre
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats
TEI	Theological Education Institution
ULO	University Liaison Officer
VLE	Virtual Learning Environment

## LIST OF REVIEWERS

*For Ministry Division*

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*For Durham University's Common Awards team*

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## THE PERIODIC EXTERNAL REVIEW FRAMEWORK

For ministerial training institutions that offer the church's Durham University-validated Common Awards programmes (as most do), Periodic External Review is a joint process that meets the quality assurance needs both of the sponsoring churches and of Durham University, and enables the church to conduct an external quality check of each TEI against national standards and expectations for ministerial training and formation.

On behalf of the sponsoring churches, review 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 has been prepared for the House of Bishops acting through the Ministry Council.

For Durham University, the PER process is the university's mechanism for gathering and evaluating information from multiple sources in order to inform decision-making on: (i) renewal of the Common Awards partnerships with approved Theological Education Institutions (TEIs); (ii) revalidation of Common Awards programmes that have been approved for delivery within TEIs.

Review teams are appointed by Ministry Division from a pool of reviewers nominated by bishops and TEIs and by Durham University's Common Awards office. The latter will take lead responsibility for PER criteria E and F covering teaching and learning infrastructure and delivery. In effect, this part of the review represents academic revalidation by Durham as the church's partner university, but will also include comment on wider formational matters where appropriate. Evidence-gathering is shared and judgements are owned by the review team as a whole.

### *Recommendations and Commendations*

PER reports will include Recommendations which may be developmental, naming issues that the reviewers consider the TEI needs to address, or they may urge the enhancement of practice that is already good. Reports will also include Commendations, naming instances of good practice that the reviewers specially wish to highlight. The reviewers' assessment of the TEI is expressed as much through the balance of Recommendations and Commendations in their report as through its criterion-based judgements.

### *Criterion-based judgements*

Reviewers are asked to use the following outcomes with regard to the overall report and individual criteria A-F. Throughout, the outcome judgements will be those of the Ministry Division-appointed reviewers, as university validation does not apply a similar framework; but in respect of sections E and F those judgements will be especially informed by the views, recommendations and commendations of the Durham-appointed reviewers in the case of TEI offering Common Awards programmes:

#### **Confidence**

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

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

### **Confidence with qualifications**

Overall outcome: likely to include commendations as well as a number of recommendations, including one or more of substance that questions the generally acceptable standards found in the review and which can be rectified or substantially addressed by the institution in the coming 12 months.

Criterion 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 review and the capacity of the institution to rectify or substantially address these in the coming 12 months.

Criterion 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.

In respect of Sections E–F, university validation does not currently apply a hierarchy of quality judgements. Instead, the practice is to grant continuing approval subject to the fulfilment of conditions expressed in the reviewers' recommendations. Thus, where Common Awards programmes are part of the PER, the reviewers' shared judgements under these two sections will normally be expressed as 'Confidence, subject to the implementation of the recommendations in this section'.

The Common Awards team's findings will be part of the joint PER report, but will also be included in a stand-alone report prepared for the university's governance bodies, and which can be made available to the TEI under review if wished.

For training institutions that do **not** offer the Durham-validated Common Awards programmes, PER will be undertaken entirely by Ministry Division-appointed reviewers, applying criteria A-F but with appropriate adaptation in the case of E and F. Some diocesan Reader training schemes, for example, will fall into this category.

# REPORT OF THE PERIODIC EXTERNAL REVIEW OF ST MELLITUS COLLEGE

October – November 2017

## SUMMARY

### Introduction

St Mellitus College (SMC) was founded in 2007 as a partnership between three separate bodies, each of which contribute to fund the College's activities: the Diocese of London, the Diocese of Chelmsford (who both sponsored the North Thames Ministerial Training Course, which preceded St Mellitus) and St Paul's Theological Centre (SPTC), which owns the lease on St Jude's, Collingham Road (SMC's main teaching venue), employs some of the College's staff on behalf of St Mellitus, and comes under the oversight of the College governance structures in all areas connected with academic accredited teaching.

At the time of the last Inspection (as it was then called) in 2009, SMC was a non-residential college. It moved into its main teaching and administrative premises, at St Jude's Church in Earl's Court, in 2012. This was after a substantial building project which added a number of purpose-built teaching and administrative facilities to the premises, while maintaining the church as a place of worship.

Durham University conducted a Common Awards validation visit to SMC in 2013. At the time of validation, the TEI was a single college with three delivery centres in London, Chelmsford, and Liverpool. SMC described its mission as *"To resource the mission of the whole church, through providing training in theology and ministry, initially in the Chelmsford and London dioceses, and elsewhere in the UK and globally."*

While initially focusing activities on the Chelmsford and London diocese, SMC has aspired to provide training more widely in the country and overseas. SMC North-West (2013) was the first step in this direction and this has been followed by SMC South-West (2017).

Its full-time programmes are based on a distinctive contextual model of learning, where students spend half of their time engaged in academic learning in the classroom or through independent study and the other half engaged in more practical learning through a placement in a church or mission context.

Student numbers have grown steadily since the college came into being: from 69 ordinands and 12 Readers (LLMs) in 2007 to 256 ordinands (122 full-time London, 48 full-time NW, 9 full-time SW, 76 part-time London/Chelmsford) and 49 LLMs in 2017. The total student community now numbers 488 (excluding Auditing, Beginning Theology and School of Theology students).

The summary of the 2009 inspection report concluded: *'Overall we were impressed by the breadth of training and quality of teaching available at SMC. This belied the stories about a predominance of one tradition, particularly in the mixed-mode training based at SPTC, because of the strong links with Holy Trinity Brompton.'*

Areas for attention included certain compliance issues, formational issues for Readers, chaplaincy provision, marking of work administration, inclusion of spouses and families, and teaching & office space. There were specific comments about Reader Training with particular concern about the strategy for Readers in the Diocese of London.

Durham University conducted a validation visit on 26 November 2013 with the aim of considering the proposed partnership and programmes in accordance with the Common Awards approval process agreed by the Quality and Standards Sub-Committee on 29 May 2013.

Following the consideration of evidence reviewed both before and during the validation visit, the validation team concluded that St Mellitus College successfully met the criteria for approving collaborative programmes, subject to the completion of a number of conditions (including revising the programme regulations to more clearly distinguish between levels of study; presenting the regulations for each programme separately; and revising the programme regulations to ensure that students chose modules in accordance with the parameters set out in the syllabus within the programme specifications).

Following a comprehensive review and approval process, the University approved the proposed partnership and programmes. On 6 March 2014, the University entered into a validation contract with St Mellitus College. At the time of signing the agreement, the TEI was a single college with three delivery centres in London, Chelmsford, and Liverpool. Since validation, the main partnership change has been the University's approval of a new delivery centre in Plymouth (SMCSW).

### **Periodic External Review: process and evidence**

Members of the Ministry Division review team attended a residential weekend (27-29 October) at High Leigh Conference Centre, Hoddesdon; a Monday teaching day (27 November) at Liverpool and London (two reviewers at each), a Tuesday teaching evening (28 November) in London, followed by a day (29 November) with the Durham reviewers. The senior reviewer also visited the Thursday evening (9 November) training centre at Chelmsford Cathedral, and two reviewers attended the Board meeting on 18 October and met separately with the Joint Chairs, the Bishops of Chelmsford and Kensington.

As well as observation of teaching, worship and the spouses' session, and an immersion in the College's community life (with plenty of opportunity for individual and informal group conversations), there were meetings with specific individuals and representative groups: the dean, the internal quality nominee, centre directors, Chelmsford ordinands, chaplains & counsellor, spouses, placement supervisors, full-time ordinands, former students, LLM officers (London & Chelmsford), senior management team, teaching staff, administrative staff, LLMs in training and part-time ordinands.

Written evidence was received from a range of stakeholders including sponsoring bishops, DDOs, former students and receiving incumbents, who were invited via a brief questionnaire to offer their views on strengths and areas for development for SMC and their hopes for its future.

A comprehensive set of documents was made available to the review team, including the following:

- (a) a Self-Evaluation Document, including SWOT commentary relating to educational provision and a formational scene-setter
- (b) previous validation and inspection reports;
- (c) curriculum mapping documents
- (d) prospectus and publicity
- (e) TEI handbooks and worship policy documents
- (f) anonymised sample student work and reflections
- (g) governance structure information
- (h) staff details
- (i) business plan



- (j) risk register
- (k) annual reports and financial statements
- (l) description of accommodation / facilities and development plans
- (m) programme regulations;
- (n) module overview tables;
- (o) external examiner reports;
- (p) annual self-evaluation reports;
- (q) statistical data;
- (r) committee minutes.

The review team also had access to the Common Awards framework and documentation, including:

- a. the core regulations for the Common Awards programmes;
- b. programme specifications;
- c. module outlines;
- d. assessment criteria and assessment guidance;
- e. contact hours parameters;
- f. the Common Awards TEI Handbook;
- g. the *Guide for PER Reviewers Appointed by Durham University* (incorporating the PER Criteria that were developed in conjunction with the Church of England).

The Review team would like to thank all the staff and students for the warmth of their welcome, the kindness of their hospitality, their thorough planning and preparation for this review, and their patient co-operation throughout.

### Summary of outcomes

The Review team has **Confidence with Qualifications** in regarding St Mellitus College as fit for the purpose for preparing candidates for ordained and licensed lay ministries.

CRITERIA	OUTCOME
A Formational aims	Confidence (Ordinands) / Confidence with Qualifications (LLMs in training)
B Formational context	Confidence with Qualifications
C Leadership and management	Confidence
D Student outcomes	Confidence

E Partnership with university	Confidence, subject to recommendations
F Taught programmes	Confidence, subject to recommendations
<b>Overall Outcome</b>	<b>Confidence with Qualifications</b>

### General Observations

The reviewers found a community of learning that was buoyant and largely happy. The ethos of ‘generous orthodoxy’ was apparent in all our visits and encounters. Staff and students – many evangelical and/or charismatic in tradition but including a wide spectrum of Christian backgrounds – were deeply loyal to the college, positive about their learning experience and upbeat about ministry and mission in the Church of England.

The college has seen phenomenal growth over its ten-year history and is now the largest training institution for the Church of England. The new centres in Liverpool and Plymouth were set up at the invitation of local bishops/dioceses but are also a result of the (well-placed) confidence of those partners that SMC has the strategic capacity and agility to innovate and grow, changing its structures and processes to fit the new challenges and realities.

A big question is whether the college could and should grow any larger, as the numbers involved place strains upon the infrastructure. We have chosen not to make any recommendations in this regard: having discussed this extensively during our visits with the staff and students, and amongst ourselves, our considered view is that the leadership team has the right instincts and concerns. Without the aid of a crystal ball we could not think of any recommendations that would add to what the college is already considering.

Our judgement in the end has been to have ‘Confidence with Qualifications’, though the ‘qualifications’ are there mainly because of the number of recommendations – and they are there mainly because the college’s size and rapid growth makes that almost inevitable.

The number of commendations also points to a range of strengths and good practices that are embedded in the college and which can rightly be celebrated.

Though a steady-state may now be more imaginable, things are still fast-moving, which means that both the opportunities and the risks remain high. We believe that the leadership of the college has shown the capacity to grow and evolve to meet the changing needs of the church; that gives grounds for confidence for the future, but not without a continuing determination to be strategic and innovative.

The Report is written in relation to the PER Criteria outlined in the September 2017 edition of the *Quality Assurance and Enhancement in Ministerial Formation Handbook*.

# FULL REPORT

## SECTION A: FORMATIONAL AIMS

### **A1 The TEI's formational aims are clearly stated and owned within the TEI.**

1. The college's website includes sections on 'Our Vision' and 'Our Values' up front. Their stated vision is 'to offer **theological education and training** set in the context of **prayer and worship** that combines **academic excellence**, a focus on **missional leadership**, the shaping of **Christian character**, and the **flexibility** to fit around busy lifestyles.' This is fleshed out in eleven values: academic excellence, generous orthodoxy, prayer & worship, theology & practice, formation of Christian character, leadership development, unity, accessibility, missional outlook, church planting & pioneer ministry, and joy & hope.
2. We found that these core values were well articulated by the staff both in the literature and in conversation. Students spoke of how these values were communicated through induction and they were able to articulate them with conviction and enthusiasm in conversation. Stakeholders also in their written and oral submissions referred to one or more of the values as key strengths of the college; all of the values were mentioned at least once in the written submissions.
3. The expression 'generous orthodoxy' occurs repeatedly through the paperwork; in our questioning and observation we wanted to see how this affected student attitudes and practices. Almost every student we spoke to was able not only to articulate the principle but also to testify to its effect on broadening their appreciation of other Christian traditions. This was true not only of charismatic evangelicals (clearly a well-represented group) but also of traditional Catholics and of much in between. Staff appointments have increased the theological diversity of the tutorial staff, and diocesan stakeholders, such as DDOs, speak appreciatively of how the ethos prepares ordinands for working in the wider Church of England and has also changed the atmosphere in dioceses, increasing collaboration across traditions and decreasing mutual suspicions.

### **Commendation I**

**We commend the college for its articulation of 'generous orthodoxy' and for the exceptional understanding of this demonstrated by staff, students and stakeholders.**

4. The outworking of some of the other values will feature in other parts of this report.

### **A2 The TEI's formational aims are appropriate to the ministerial requirements of its sponsoring church denominations.**

5. The documents mapping the training provided for ordinands and prospective LLMs onto the respective House of Bishop's Formation Criteria indicate that the formational aims are wholly in tune with CofE requirements – the areas of Christian Tradition, Faith & Life; Mission, Evangelism & Discipleship; Personality & Character, and Leadership, Collaboration & Community being particular strengths.

6. LLMs are trained for the dioceses of Chelmsford and London. They follow a three-year programme that leads to a Diploma in Theology, Mission & Ministry. There is a good deal of overlap with the programme for ordinands but with a particular focus on the role of LLMs as adult educators and trainers.
7. Our experience of the Chelmsford centre (where all the diocese's LLM students train alongside ordinands on Thursday evenings) was of a lively community, staffed and run by SMC, but with a strong sense also of being part of the diocese and of the life of the cathedral (where they meet). Six LLM Saturday teaching days a year are led by diocesan staff. The course was designed by SMC and the diocese following a review of Licensed Lay Ministry and includes modules not taken by ordinands but particularly relevant to the LLM adult educator role. A working group in the diocese has been responsible for overseeing the curriculum but there is less clarity now about where the governance lies and how the quality of teaching on the diocesan-led study days is reviewed.

### **Recommendation 1**

**We recommend that the TEI review the governance of its LLM training programme with its partner dioceses (including oversight of quality of teaching when not provided by SMC).**

8. We met a number of the LLM students from the diocese of London who attend the Tuesday study nights at the St Jude's centre. Their programme is similar but not identical to Chelmsford's, with participation in one of the college study weeks in place of four of the Saturday teaching days. The students spoke highly of the course, the lectures/classes in particular, and played a full part in leading worship. They are assigned a formation tutor and take part in the twice termly formation groups. There was evidence of some disconnect with their parish contexts – no written training agreements are in place and supervision is not universal (one student commented: 'no priest, no supervisor') – see paragraphs 21-22 and 179-82 and recommendations 3 and 19.
9. The diocese of London reviewed its policy on licensed lay ministry four years ago. The conclusion was that LLMs should be trained to be articulate lay theologians and adult educators. A number of the diocesan schemes for LLM training were closed and a course at SMC developed and promoted. The first-year intake of 22 proved to be the highest; there have been 8-10 per year since, and in the current first year there is only one LLM student. A different pathway for London LLMs-in-training (via the St Edmund's *Course in Christian Studies*) has produced a cohort of eight completing a year's formational training. One reason given for the low numbers at SMC was the high dropout rate due to the demands of the course.
10. Overall policy for the diocese of London is beyond the scope of this review but there is clearly a significant issue to be addressed between the diocese and SMC. If the diocese is still committed to training LLMs to be articulate lay theologians and adult educators then, on the face of it, SMC should be in a stronger position to provide such training than a non-accredited course. A cohort of one is clearly not a sustainable scenario either formationally or financially.

### **Recommendation 2**

**We recommend that the college review the viability and intensity of the LLM pathway with the diocese of London.**

**A3 The TEI's aims, activity and achievement are understood and supported by wider church audiences.**

11. At a diocesan/regional level, the college has grown institutionally and in its self-understanding in response to the initiatives of the local bishops. The college's origins lie in the coming together of the Bishops of London and Chelmsford with the St Paul's Theological Centre (part of Holy Trinity Brompton). Whilst the then Bishop of London has now retired, the strong diocesan link is maintained by the Bishop of Kensington (formerly Dean, now President, of SMC). The Bishop of Chelmsford (co-chair of the governing body) in his testimony to us is clear that a great strength of SMC is its strong partnership with the sponsoring dioceses and its sensitivity to their needs. The new centres in the NW and SW began at the request of local bishops: they and their dioceses are very much stakeholders and not just customers/consumers. The key role of the local supervisor/training incumbent also feeds into the college's review of its training programme. We received evidence, both orally and in writing, from a number of the bishops and a range of supervisors/training incumbents.
12. DDOs comment on the need for students to be able to engage with what they term ordinary or less successful parishes. But on the whole they are positive about the shape and quality of training offered. They feel that the context-based style of training enables good integration between academic and practical learning and prepares students well for curacy. DDOs appreciate good communication between SMC, students and the diocese. They note a high level of commitment and care. Dioceses tend to feel positive about the relationship they have with SMC local delivery centres and with what SMC offers and encourages in their region. In particular NW diocesan staff spoke positively about the partnership and the responsiveness of SMC, not least in developing vocations and establishing placements. The NW centre is felt to have been able to adapt SMC training in ways that fit well with regional culture and needs.
13. The college is confident that its principal partner dioceses are fully supportive of its formational aims and of its ability to achieve them (and this is backed up by all the evidence we received). At the same time, they realise that there is still suspicion of SMC in some parts of the church, either because of the college's historic and current connections with a particular church and tradition or because of the mode of training. Our view is that the college has probably done all it can in communicating its vision and ethos. Both the website and prospectus are excellent, and the success of their communication is borne out by the desire of new dioceses to enter into training partnerships.
14. On the issue of church tradition, SMC undoubtedly has a high intake from the charismatic evangelical constituency. This is clear in a good deal (though by no means all) of the worship and the styles of prayer. But in all or our interactions with students we encountered a genuine openness to respecting and learning from other traditions. There was a particular (and perhaps surprising) degree of affinity and sympathy between charismatic evangelicals and catholics as well as a highly positive spirit about being part of the Church of England. We met ordinands and LLMs-in-training from a wide variety of church traditions and there was no sign of resentment at any one line being dominant.
15. Concerning 'rivalry' with other colleges and courses, the college's view is that expansion has always been at the request of bishops and diocesan partners. The testimony from SMCNW was that the presence of the college there has increased both vocations and those logistically able to engage with training; overall numbers of ministerial trainees across the region have therefore been rising. In both

the NW and SW SMC has avoided engaging in part-time training in competition with other providers. We largely accept that, though our attention was drawn to at least two areas where the presence of SMC may have impacted other providers. Given ecclesial and geographical complexities this is probably inevitable in a market which has elements of competition as well as co-operation.

## Commendation 2

**We commend the college for its partnerships with bishops/dioceses and its responsiveness to their needs.**

16. The college produces an impressive array of statistics concerning the makeup of its student body and staff.
17. BAME students represent 9% of the ordinands (but 13% of the most recent intake); this rises to a commendable 40% in the *Beginning Theology* course; on the teaching staff 11% are BAME (cf. 13% national population). There is clearly progress still to be made but the college has actively sought to increase the diversity of its staff and the *Beginning Theology* course has been successful in nurturing both vocations and capacity for further study/training. We spoke to at least two BAME former students who had made this journey and whose testimony was impressive.

## Commendation 3

**We commend the college for the *Beginning Theology* programme and its widening of access to ministerial training.**

18. The student community is 50:50 female: male (49:51 for ordinands). The staff are also evenly divided (51:49) although the ordained staff (30:70) and teaching staff (39:61) are not so balanced.
19. We did not see statistics relating to age. SMC has a reputation for attracting younger ordinands and students. This was certainly in evidence at the London centre and one bishop commented that SMC was an attractive option for younger ordinands. But every part of the community we visited had a wide spread of ages and this was true also of the High Leigh residential weekend.

**In respect of Ordinands, the review team has Confidence with regard to Criterion A: Formational Aims.**

**In respect of Reader trainees, the review team has Confidence with Qualifications with regard to Criterion A: Formational Aims.**

## SECTION B: FORMATIONAL CONTEXT

### **B1 The TEI draws on partnership with theological educators in the region and local faith community organizations to enhance training and formational opportunities for students.**

20. The principal local partners for SMC are the respective dioceses. One DDO wrote, 'It feels more of a genuine and local partnership than with residential TEIs.' This gives the college access to a wide range of extra occasional tutors and also embeds the placement provision within a diocese-college axis where local knowledge and need meet with the college's experience of good contexts and supervision. For the full-time ordinands, half of their theological education is – or should be – happening within their mission & ministry context, and therefore the incumbent or local supervisor needs to be not only a good role model as a priest and minister of the gospel but also skilled (in some way) in theological education.
21. In our interviews with students and supervisors we found examples of very good practice - supervisors who would routinely sit down with their students and talk about what they had been learning 'in the classroom' and how that related to experience in the context. But we also heard a few examples where theological reflection was minimal and the two worlds seemed far apart.
22. Recent changes in the model of funding now give an opportunity for reviewing the way contextual placements are chosen, approved and managed.

### **Recommendation 3**

**We recommend that the college review the way contextual placements (and supervisors) are selected, resourced and integrated into the learning community (see also Recommendations 10 and 19).**

23. In particular we encourage the college to ensure that supervisors are (a) suitable for this role; (b) trained as theological educators (perhaps particularly in the art of theological reflection); (c) given opportunities to be supervised themselves (perhaps in peer groups), and (d) have full access to the whole of the curriculum (e.g. by providing Moodle access – see Recommendations 14 and 15).
24. Significant theologians are invited to speak at residentials as well as at the grant-funded McDonald lectures. These are an important enhancement to the programme.
25. The college told us that they had chosen to invite representatives of other faiths to come and speak at residentials rather than arrange *en bloc* visits to their places of worship. We saw examples of this in action. While commending the welcome and attention given to these visitors, we did wonder whether it made the inter-faith experience too easy and 'at home'. However, we understand that students are required to make visits to places of other faiths in their contexts; how they are supervised and helped to reflect upon these experiences theologically is therefore crucial (see Recommendation 3).

**B2 There are well understood and embedded practices of corporate life, so as to enhance the process of students' formation.**

26. Policies for all key areas such as welfare, equality, conduct, health and safety are in place and readily available to all staff and students on Moodle. Safeguarding procedures are clear and detailed. Although currently all three named safeguarding leads in SMC are male, all three diocesan leads are female, giving individuals choice if needed.
27. Some policies lack the document information about version number, and last and next review dates, which it would be helpful to include.
28. Ministerial and teaching staff are generally diverse in age and gender, and we commend SMC for the real strides made in recent years to increase ethnic diversity, which has proved relatively successful (6% BAME in employed staff; 11% in all teaching staff). Given the profile of the background population, further work could be done on improving ethnic diversity, but good progress has been made. Staff are mostly active in local ministry, a factor many students really appreciate, feeling this gives authenticity to their teaching and experience.

**Commendation 4**

**We commend the proactive approach taken by SMC to develop a more diverse staff body.**

29. Training sessions (full-time, part-time and LLM) include time for meals and worship as well as teaching, giving students opportunities to socialise and build relationships within their own study contexts.
30. Formation groups, established for peers (same location, year group and type of ministry training), with their formation group tutors, are key both to individual formation and in building community. These appear to work well (see also E2). Fellowship groups, established across year groups, locations and types of training, and which therefore change membership every year, work better for some than others.
31. Residentials are key to building community and students remarked that these helped them most feel part of the whole community, particularly as the different centres come together and a significant part of the teaching takes place on these occasions.

**Commendation 5**

**We commend SMC for its efforts to build community in the different environments where students meet.**

32. There is good support for spouses, partners and families who are invited to two of the six residentials each year. Spouses/partners have a specific session at the beginning of each year to discuss their particular challenges and they have access to SMC chaplains and counsellor as well as students. They also have access to Moodle so they have a greater understanding of when key stress points are likely to occur, such as assignment deadlines.
33. Special sessions are arranged for single students that give space for them to articulate their concerns; nonetheless a number of single students past and present reported that they had felt excluded, both



by frequent references to students' families, and by a lack of recognition that single students' support needs were different.

#### **Recommendation 4**

**We recommend that SMC consider whether there is a normative understanding of partnered and family life present within the college ethos/culture, and if so, whether such an understanding needs to be broadened in order to take into account more fully the lived realities and experiences of all students.**

#### **B3 The provision of public social and private living accommodation is satisfactory.**

34. The accommodation (see also E3 for teaching accommodation) in the main SMC is excellent and we commend SMC for the way in which the conversion of the old St Jude's Church has been done. There is plenty of room for students to socialise and worship together and there are many different-sized rooms for a variety of teaching and social purposes.

#### **Commendation 6**

**We commend SMC for the high quality of the conversion of St Jude's church for use as its London teaching base.**

35. Using the cathedral as the main teaching base in Chelmsford and Liverpool earths students in the work of the diocese. This arrangement also allows diocesan staff to 'drop in' and work together with students on particular projects or services within the cathedral.
36. As the number of ordinands training with SMC has grown so significantly in recent years, the accommodation at the weekend residentials is stretched almost beyond its limits. High Leigh, used for these, does not have enough rooms and students were sharing 2-3 to a room. High Leigh has plans to build another 35 rooms, but this will not meet the current need, let alone cater for future growth. SMC's desire to keep ordinands together as a single group at the residentials is key to building community in this mixed-mode form of training (see B2), so if numbers stay the same in future years, another solution will need to be found. SMC are trialling a commercial venue for one residential weekend later in the year. As this is significantly more expensive, SMC would need to raise funds to support this as an ongoing option.
37. The final worship on the Sunday morning at High Leigh, when families were invited, was not able to be contained in one room. An overspill room was used, with CCTV, which worked reasonably well, although arrangements for communion need to be refined. However, we understand that High Leigh has plans for extending the main worship space with a semi-permanent structure that will address this issue in future. The week-long residentials are held in The Hayes in Swanwick, which has plenty of space, but is less accessible for students travelling significant distances just for the weekend.
38. We note that this is an ongoing issue for SMC and that they are trying to address it.

- B4 The TEI's corporate worship and liturgy are balanced in range and tradition, including authorised and innovative rites.**
39. During the residential weekend at High Leigh the worship included Morning, Evening and Night Prayer (Common Worship, more or less), an informal evening service, a said Common Worship Communion service and an all-age eucharistic celebration on the Sunday morning (when families were present). The music was led by a small band or individual musicians. The songs and liturgy were projected. The services were led (apart, of course, from the eucharistic presidency) by groups of students who had also planned the services (in accordance with a brief).
40. Worship at the centres was similar. A printed order of service was used occasionally (a good idea, extending the variety of practice). The centres use obvious worship spaces (e.g. the nave of Chelmsford Cathedral, St Jude's) whilst the rather functional feel at High Leigh is mitigated by importing church furnishings, including cross and candles. A student group is responsible for designing and furnishing a Prayer Space at residential. We observed one on the theme of 'autumn' (natural and metaphorical: it included reference to dementia) that was carefully and reflectively set out.
41. Eucharistic vestments were worn at the services we attended and the students leading Compline wore cassock-albs in the way of the St Anselm's community. Whilst some students are clearly not accustomed to robes, vestments and many traditional church furnishings, we observed and heard considerable graciousness and openness. Students commented on how they had surprised themselves by coming to appreciate liturgy and more catholic forms of worship. We spoke to the one or two traditional catholics amongst the students who were very positive about the inclusiveness of worship and, whilst appreciating they were a minority in their worship preferences, did not feel marginalised or neglected. As it happens, it was the case that both celebrants at the weekend were women (staff members) and suitable provision for those unable to receive communion had not been made.
42. Overall, we were satisfied that the balance of services was faithful both to the normative usages of the Church of England and to the make-up of the student body. We did not observe the use of the Book of Common Prayer but we understand that it is used and it features in the published guidelines.
43. Students led and had planned worship thoughtfully. There were occasional signs of unfamiliarity with the rhythms and practices of liturgical worship, e.g. when it is appropriate to sit, stand, join together or keep silent.
44. Some of the less formal and more charismatic forms of worship invited participants to share or pray in small groups. Whilst appropriate for the student body (though perhaps not all personality types would be equally appreciative), on the Sunday morning there were some family members who did not wish to participate. This, of course, has wider implications concerning public worship in the Church of England and whether ordinands are sensitive to different church settings. We understand that SMC briefs its students by email on matters such as the make-up of the congregation before they lead acts of worship.
45. Whilst recognising that both the BCP and CW use masculine pronouns and imagery for God, we saw no examples of more innovative worship that explored a more expansive (and less gendered) vocabulary. We think that this issue should at least be raised for consideration in worship guidelines.

## Recommendation 5

We recommend that the policy and/or guidelines on worship should include:

1. Provision for those unable to receive communion when the celebrant is a woman.
2. Guidance on posture and the 'mechanics' of worship.
3. Encouragement to explore ways of introducing a range of metaphors for God (or more expansive language and imagery) through creative prayer, visual imagery, hymns and preaching.

### **B5 Staff model appropriate pattern of spirituality, continued learning and reflection on practice.**

46. We observed a community where staff and students interacted in a wholly exemplary way. Many of the students spoke of their respect for their tutors who modelled for them a combination of academic rigour, pastoral insight and spiritual depth. The students were particularly appreciative of the ability of the tutors to ground and illustrate their theology through examples of their own ministry and missional engagement. There is an expectation that all students should make use of spiritual direction and this is modelled by the staff.
47. The staff are able to take sabbatical time and pursue their research and writing. This is monitored and supported through the annual review process.

## Commendation 7

We commend the college for fostering an ethos where the staff model an integrated and missional spirituality and theology.

The review team has Confidence with Qualifications with regard to Criterion B: Formational Context.

## SECTION C: LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

### **CI The TEI has clear and effective governance structures.**

48. The huge growth of SMC over the last 10 years, both in ordinands (full and part-time) and in other students, has posed significant management challenges. New centres opened in London (St Jude's, 2012), NW (Liverpool, 2013) and SW (Plymouth, 2017). Each time there has been a significant change in the nature of SMC, management has reorganised the structure to encourage local flexibility and autonomy, within an overarching framework of consistency of values and quality. The latest reorganisation, following the opening of the Plymouth Centre in September 2017, mixes monthly face-to-face management team meetings with weekly Skype management team updates, and includes two new working groups focused on ensuring consistency in both academic and administrative matters across all centres. Whilst this will need time to become fully embedded, it seems a strong basis for addressing the challenges of dispersed centres and increasing size.

### **Commendation 8**

#### **We commend SMC for being responsive and flexible in developing its structures to meet the changing needs of the organisation.**

49. SMC clearly feels accountable to its founding partners (dioceses of London and Chelmsford and SPTC), the sending dioceses and its students. We commend SMC for its responsiveness to bishops, DDOs and students when issues and concerns are raised. This was mentioned by many different people across a range of topics. There is a strong relationship of mutual support with dioceses around the centres outside London, particularly looking to meet needs that are not currently being met (i.e. provision of local full-time training for ordinands) and not looking to work in competition (i.e. provision of local part-time training for ordinands when there is already local provision). We hope SMC as an organisation does not lose its flexibility, responsiveness and willingness to change as it grows older and more established.
50. There is an up-to-date organisational structure chart with clear lines of reporting and accountability. Twice-yearly appraisals are held by line managers, and personal development plans are drawn up and regularly reviewed. Staff, academic and administrative, are encouraged to continue their own studies. The growing size of the organisation means there are more opportunities for internal career progression.
51. Staff are currently employed either by SPTC or by SMC (about 40%-60%) and SMC has recently been working on ensuring parity of staff care across the two groups. It is intended to produce a single Staff Handbook, as well as having a single set of employment-related policies, that will apply across both organisations and across all centres, and much work has already been completed on this which we commend.
52. Job descriptions would benefit from having dates when last reviewed and when they will be next reviewed. We were told that job descriptions form the basis of the annual appraisal meetings, which would suggest this process takes place naturally and only needs to be documented. Regular review and updating of job descriptions protects both the organisation and the individual from gradual and uncontrolled 'drift' in the scope of job roles.

## **C2 The TEI has effective leadership.**

53. We observed both collaborative and directive leadership styles appropriately applied at SMC and staff confirmed this was their experience.
54. The Dean, the two Assistant Deans and the Bursar attend the Board and we observed good working relationships between them and trustees. Board meetings appear focused and we observed a good level of interest and challenge from trustees, although we noted that no item at the meeting we observed was for decision. Actions are clearly identified and well followed up.
55. There is an up-to-date register of interests for trustees which is regularly reviewed.
56. The strategic plan, including financial plans and budgets, is presented to the Board largely for approval rather than for discussion or design. There is an executive committee of the Board, which includes the Dean, the Bursar, two trustees and sometimes an observer, which reviews this information on behalf of the full Board. However, as the organisation increases in size, this can risk losing clarity between the executive role of staff and the non-executive role of trustees.

### **Recommendation 6**

**We recommend that SMC gives consideration to establishing a senior executive group (which does not include trustees), to review matters such as strategy, finance, risk and quality, before this information is shared with trustees, and that the Board sets aside time each year specifically to discuss strategy, the forward financial plan and other key issues facing SMC.**

57. The strategic direction of SMC appears clear to everyone, particularly its values of mission and generous orthodoxy. We noted a clear desire for continuous improvement and learning from others, and we observed a very positive motivational climate in all the interactions we saw – teaching, social and residential.

### **Commendation 9**

**We commend SMC for its strong sense of strategic direction and desire for continuous improvement.**

## **C3 Trustees are appropriately recruited, supported and developed.**

58. SMC Board of Trustees operates under its original charity model of representation from its founding partners (Diocese of London, Diocese of Chelmsford, and SPTC). Whilst the Board is aware of the need for specific skills amongst its members, it depends on the people nominated by the partners. More recently, the Board has wanted representation from the NW and SW, and has had to use vacancies or observer status to make this happen. The Board is not diverse in terms of gender nor ethnicity (although this was commented on by the previous PER team in 2009) and has no academic representation. There is no student representation on the Board, although we found no appetite for this either amongst Board members or amongst students.
59. SMC is currently undertaking a governance review, which will report early next year. The college is a charitable company, limited by guarantee, and the constitution allows for between 6 and 11 trustees

(directors). Eight trustees are appointed by: the Bishops of London and Chelmsford individually (4), jointly (1), SPTC (2), and General Synod (1); 3 are 'ex officio' – the Bishops of London and Chelmsford and the Dean of the College. Although there have recently been 11 trustees appointed and serving, there are currently four vacancies, including the Bishop of London and the General Synod representative. The review team was informed the other vacancies were being held pending the recommendations of their internal governance review. We have not had sight of its emerging findings.

## Recommendation 7

**We recommend that SMC consider changing the terms under which Board members are recruited, giving founding partners different legal status without the right to appoint trustees directly (they could, for example, have rights of appointing the Chair and a right of veto over appointment of trustees); and introducing an open appointment process for trustees to encourage greater diversity in addition to appropriate skills, knowledge and experience, including academic.**

60. Induction of new trustees appears good, with meetings arranged with key people to explain the vision, values and priorities of SMC, the role of the Board and encourage them to take an interest in the activities of SMC. In fact, as they are nominated by the founding partners, they often have close connections with SMC or its work. If the appointment process were opened up, SMC may wish to revise its induction process.
61. Trustees are not mentioned by name in the SMC Prospectus nor on their website. We consider it good practice to give short biographies of trustees on the website, with a photo, setting out when they were appointed, what committees they attend and what they bring to the organisation.
62. We consider the Board could continue to enhance its performance by carrying out a regular self-assessment of its effectiveness every 2-3 years, perhaps with reference to the Charity Governance Code for larger charities (<https://www.charitygovernancecode.org/en>), a document itself regularly updated.

## C4 The TEI has effective business planning and fundraising.

63. There is a comprehensive strategic plan that sets the current situation in context and gives an overview for five years (2016-2020). The first year of this plan (2016-17) is reviewed and priorities for the next year (2017-18) are set out.

## Recommendation 8

**We recommend that SMC consider including more specific and measurable objectives in its strategic plan for at least the following year, so the annual review can set out the extent to which these were achieved and what might need to change if they were not met or if they were exceeded.**

64. As mentioned below (C5) there could also be much closer integration between the strategic plan and the risk register.

65. SMC has recently recognised the need for greater fundraising capacity to support its income from students, particularly in the light of financial challenges presented by two major IT projects and the costs of the repair of St Jude's tower. SMC is turning its attention to this through the appointment of another member of staff, but it is yet to be determined how successful this will be.
66. SMC has good communications and social media policies with clear targets and performance indicators to monitor progress, for example of particular campaigns. Although early days, this appears an excellent start.

#### **C5 The TEI has sound financial and risk management and reporting.**

67. Management accounts are prepared for Board and Executive Committee of Board showing actuals against budget, forecast outturn for the year-end for each Centre and overall, as well as the balance sheet. This is clear and easy to understand, although the use of different colours for under and over budget could add an additional layer of clarity. Reporting appears timely, with no significant delay after month end. All returns to the Charity Commission have been on time for at least the last five years.
68. SMC has strong reserves and an appropriate reserves policy.
69. SMC has excellent procurement procedures and practices, using the significantly greater resources of one of its founding partners to support its purchasing power, building maintenance programme, catering, IT systems, employment practices and disaster recovery planning. This gives it greater stability and resilience than would normally be expected of an organisation its size.

#### **Commendation 10**

##### **We commend SMC on its financial management and reporting.**

70. SMC has a comprehensive risk register which identifies risk by category with a raw risk score (likelihood times impact), mitigating actions and a residual risk score. This is a good format.
71. However, the risk register does not appear closely related to the strategic plan (i.e. setting out the risks of achieving the strategic plan) and does not feel a particularly 'live' document, used by management or the Board on a regular basis. In some cases, the risks identified are generic rather than specific (employment law issues; regulatory failure). Key risks discussed during the Review, such as the accommodation position at High Leigh, ensuring Plymouth reaches its financial targets in future years, or the escalating costs of the repair of the tower, are not specifically mentioned on the register.

#### **Recommendation 9**

**We recommend that the risk register is reviewed to become more specific to risks likely to affect SMC in the next 2-3 years, is related more closely to the achievement of its strategic plan, and is reviewed and updated at least quarterly.**

**The review team has Confidence with regard to Criterion C: Leadership and Management.**

## SECTION D: STUDENT OUTCOMES

### **D1 Students are growing in their understanding of Christian tradition, faith and life.**

72. Evidence from Interviews demonstrates that students at St Mellitus College display an engagement with biblical text, and an ability to interpret and understand that text in the light of their context. Past and present students and placement supervisors all speak warmly of this quality, and are able to give clear evidence of ways in which this happens, summarised in a comment from a Placement Supervisor that 'what is learned [by the student] on a Monday is put into practice on a Tuesday.'
73. The college's emphasis on 'generous orthodoxy' fosters among the student body an enormous respect for diversity of belief and practice. A general comment from students demonstrates their appreciation of this, and their intention to live this out throughout their ministry. A number of former students commented that it has enabled them to consider accepting title parishes outside their own preferred tradition, something which they very much credit SMC for.
74. We did, however, feel that in the college's determination to embrace the diversity of the Church of England's traditions, there was a danger that the more 'broad church' tradition between the two extremes could be overlooked. We would therefore like to commend the college on their emphasis on generous orthodoxy (see A1 above), but also to challenge them to ensure that the middle ground within the church's tradition is kept in mind.
75. We were heartened to hear of the range of placements ordinands are exposed to, and were pleased to hear that a number of ordinands are working in parishes of a very different tradition to their own, and that this has been fruitful in their development of understanding of the faith. We were surprised, though, that ordinands are only required to engage in one other contrasting placement; this provides a more restricted experience than is usual in traditional residential training. Reader training seemed to allow the students to remain in their home parish without the formal need for a placement elsewhere.

### **Recommendation 10**

**We recommend that SMC review the quantity and range of placement opportunities for both ordinands and (with its partner dioceses) for LLMs (see also Recommendations 3 and 19).**

### **D2 Students have a desire to share in mission, evangelism and discipleship**

76. Placement supervisors noted that the College instils in its students a confidence in the gospel, which overflows into their work within the parishes; students were seen as being well trained for a ministry that will be world facing (indeed, one supervisor noted that they were far better trained for this than they had been themselves!). Supervisors and former students commented on the way in which the college prepares its students to teach and learn about the faith and enable others to grow in it. They were appreciative of the very natural way in which this was enabled in the context of the placement.
77. In our conversation with former students there was clear evidence that students understood that Christianity is a religion of mission, and we were clear that they were particularly committed to engaging with evangelism. However, some students noted that there seemed to be a lack of focus on



social justice or on the stewardship of creation, although a number of taught modules do include relevant material.

### **Commendation 11**

**We commend the college on its very proactive approach to preparing students for proclaiming the gospel and leading in discipleship.**

### **Recommendation 11**

**We recommend that SMC review how the marks of mission concerned with social justice and stewardship of creation are reflected in the college's life and curriculum.**

### **D3 Students are growing in personal spirituality and engagement with public worship.**

78. Students are engaged in leading worship, both within the college setting and in the placement. We have experienced a variety of worship styles during our visits, and have been given good evidence through interviews with staff, students and placement supervisors, indicating that this occurs naturally, and that they are given constructive feedback on it, to enable them to develop their own styles. All were appreciative of the support that was given, through the college's emphasis on generous orthodoxy, to experience worship in styles different from their own. We were convinced by this that students were engaged in corporate worship shaped by the expectations of public ministry in the Church of England.

79. Conversations with students convinced us that students were enabled to grow in their own personal prayer life and spirituality. They were appreciative of the provision of chaplaincy and of prayer rooms at residential, but also spoke extremely highly of the opportunities for making retreat, particularly the encouragement to do that in a tradition which might not be their preferred one. One student, for instance, commented that this had given her a much greater appreciation of the value of silence in her spiritual life.

### **Commendation 12**

**We commend the college on its excellent provision of chaplains and counsellor throughout the course, and particularly on the residential.**

80. This was an aspect of College life which appears to be universally appreciated, and which is clearly a strength of St Mellitus' provision.

### **D4 Students' personality, character and relationships.**

81. Students' comments about the quality of teaching they receive, and their appreciation of it, give evidence that they are teachable. We gained good evidence from them that they are able to deal with pressure. A number spoke of the pressure on time and energy in training in this way, but demonstrated that they had found ways of dealing with it well. Our conversations with students demonstrated a generally healthy attitude to work-life balance issues, and many appreciated the opportunities the college gave them to develop strategies for this before they move into ordained ministry. Such consideration may be appropriate particularly for part-time students, who did note that

the demands were high when trying to balance the requirements of their training with a secular full-time occupation. There also appeared to be some confusion among students about how many days' private study are expected per week. This might simply need some clarification. LLM students spoke of their struggles with regard to the intensive sessions and fitting everything in, particularly the required reading.

82. The college clearly takes students' abilities to reflect on their strengths and weaknesses quite seriously, and we saw quite clear evidence of this through our encounters. We were pleased to see that reporting is taken seriously, and the comments avoid being too bland and genuinely seek to tackle issues with students as they arise. Conversations with students past and present demonstrate that this is appreciated by the students, and that they are able to receive criticism in this way, as they can see the ways in which it enables them to grow as Christian ministers.

**D5 Students are developing in the dispositions and skills of leadership, collaboration and ability to work in community.**

83. Students spoke of opportunities to grow in their leadership through engagement in formation groups, and in taking the lead on planning of worship. In addition, student representatives and senior students demonstrate leadership skills among the college community, and model this for other students.
84. Supervisors, in our conversations with them, gave us good evidence of students promoting the gifts of others through their presence in the parish, and through their identification of others' vocations. Former students spoke warmly of being job-ready when they entered into curacy, and gave good evidence of being able to take the lead within the community from very early on in their ordained ministry.

**D6 Students show a calling to ministry within the traditions of the sponsoring church denomination.**

85. Ordinands demonstrate that they are rooted within the traditions of the Church of England, and in interview articulated something of their vocation to serve within that church as ordained ministers. Placement supervisors supported this in their comments that students from SMC were ready and willing to offer ministry generously within their parishes. This was true whether the placement parish was of the student's tradition or not. We saw evidence that students were willing to serve within the breadth and diversity of the church's traditions, and they also demonstrated a willingness to be accountable in the exercise of their ministry. LLM students also recognised their willingness to be accountable, and noted in our conversation with them that this would be under the authority of their incumbent, given the nature of the ministry they were preparing for.

**D7 Pioneer Ministers**

86. It was clear from conversations with students and supervisors that students are more than able to demonstrate enthusiasm for unfamiliar contexts, and that the nature of the training that SMC offers gives them the opportunities to be innovative in their approach from an early stage in their formation. We were convinced that this was appropriate for those who were preparing for pioneer ministry. We suggest that, as the challenges of supervision in a pioneer/plant environment are different from

supervision in traditional parishes, there is scope for bringing some of those more specialist supervisors together either regularly or occasionally.

**D8 The TEI has clear and robust procedures for the end-of-training assessment of students' knowledge, skills and dispositions, and reporting on students' achievement.**

87. There is an established end of year reporting process for ordinands, which students seem to find useful and informative. An outline of the reporting process and timetable would be a helpful addition to the handbook on Moodle. Reports are well evidenced from student self-assessment, academic assessment, placement supervisors' reports, and tutorial staff comment. Areas from the BAP report are noted, and help shape formational areas of development, and specific training goals for the year ahead. Students feel that staff know them well and that the staff as a whole share responsibility for their formation and reporting on them as part of the formative process. Students feel reports are an accurate reflection of their progress, supportive and appropriately challenging. However, the length of the self-assessment form and number of questions is seen by some as an additional task which needs to be fitted in around other scheduled work. From the examples seen by the review team, reports are thorough and well written, but with some repetition from year to year. Reports seem excessively long and perhaps expectations around length could be reviewed to ensure the reports have value as working documents.
88. Second and third year ordinands valued meeting with their centre director and the Dean, in addition to their formation tutor, to discuss their report. They further valued meeting with the Dean or an assistant dean to discuss curacy plans. The final year student self-appraisal form encourages the student to consider training needs during curacy. The final year report is considered to be a good representation of what the student has done as they move into curacy.

**D9 The student has, during and at the end of initial training, a personal learning plan or other clear basis from which to learn and grow further in ministry and discipleship.**

89. Students do not have a separate personal learning plan drawn up at the beginning of training; instead the college makes use of the BAP report to shape the individual student's focus for formation in the first year of training, after which end of year reports are used as a guide. Formative and training needs indicated in BAP reports are attended to by tutors, for example, in ensuring there are opportunities for a student to gain the necessary skills or experience. Areas from the BAP report are picked up in placement context arrangements and monitored through the reporting process.
90. From September 2017, SMC are using the Candidate Formation Plan to gather and monitor particular training and formational needs. Of the two examples provided by SMC, one set out a more detailed plan as to how specific needs would be addressed through placements, academic study and formative work such as spiritual direction. Since this is a new process, it will be interesting to see how revision of the Candidate Formation Plan relates to the end-of-year report, so as to prevent repetition of process and information gathering. The design of the Candidate Formation Plan is such that it envisages being a working document which accompanies the student through IME1 and IME2.

## Recommendation 12

**We recommend that SMC consider whether independent students and (in cooperation with the dioceses) LLMs may benefit from having a personal learning plan.**

91. While SMC is clearly committed to the formation and development of independent students, some independent students felt less supported by their formation tutor. A personal learning plan may help encourage greater responsibility and focus for learning.

### **D10 The TEI learns from the pattern of its students' ministerial and formational achievement and acts on areas of particular need.**

92. SMC has a close relationship with founding and key sending dioceses. Each centre is in regular contact with local diocesan staff. This enables centres and the college as a whole to be responsive to diocesan developments and feedback. The college monitors where students are placed during curacy. Former students consider that their training equipped them well for curacy, although there was some frustration as to how IME1 and IME2 fitted together, alongside recognition that since curates in the same diocese will have completed a variety of pathways at different TEIs, some repetition of content was inevitable.
93. Student feedback informs the review and development of the programme. Students gave numerous examples of the college responding positively to feedback concerning the timetabling of residential events and provision of more detailed course information, for example as to who would deliver individual module sessions. Students from the NW mentioned the responsiveness of the college in changing the structure of Sunday mornings of residential weekends to enable them to catch earlier trains home. See Section F6 for student feedback on academic aspects of the programme.

**The review team has Confidence with regard to Criterion D: Student Outcomes.**

## SECTION E: PARTNERSHIP WITH UNIVERSITY

### E1 Quality control and assurance procedures governing the partnership are robust.

#### *Management and oversight*

94. SMC has a successful track record of managing academic quality and standards. It is subject to regular external quality reviews from the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA). Recent QAA annual monitoring reports confirm that the college has appropriate policies and procedures for managing its provision in line with the UK Quality Code for Higher Education. SMC underwent its QAA Higher Education Review (Alternative Providers) in November 2017; the review report was not available at the time of the PER.
95. The review team noted that SMC's Common Awards Management Committee operates in alignment with the Terms of Reference, as specified within the validation contract. In addition to the Management Committee, the college operates regular Boards of Studies which operate as its student-staff consultative committees. Students are represented on both of these committees and minutes of the committees demonstrate student engagement with the matters discussed at these meetings.
96. At present, the Board of Trustees is comprised of eleven trustees and meets three times a year. The Board retains full overarching governance responsibility for its constituency delivery centres but in each a case, a local advisory board has been established and advises the Board of Trustees on a number of matters including, but not limited to: the local operating context to ensure the centre remains responsive to local needs; developing strong partner relationships with sponsoring dioceses; and developing appropriate strategies to attract potential applicants. The local advisory boards comprised of representatives from the College and local partner dioceses meet three times a year. A representative from each local advisory board also attends the Board of Trustees.
97. An Executive Committee of the Board meets four to six times a year and its membership comprises the Dean, Assistant Deans, Centre Directors, Bursar, Finance Director and representatives of the Board of Trustees. The primary purpose of the Executive Committee is the operational management of the College's activities. The Management Team, responsible for the ministerial, operational and administrative leadership of the College, under the direction of the Dean, meets weekly.
98. The TEI informed the University of its intention to review its governance structures in January 2018 to ensure that they remain responsive in light of the College's recent, and expected, growth. The TEI was reminded of the need to ensure that the University was kept informed of any subsequent developments.
99. The review team read documentation which demonstrates the governance structures operating effectively. All policies and processes of the College operate across all delivery centres.

#### *Engagement with the University*

100. The review team noted that the college's engagement with the University has been very positive. SMC highlighted that engagement with the University Liaison Officer (ULO) had been particularly effective with the ULO attending at least one Management Committee meeting a year, and a Board of

Examiners once every two years, in line with expectations. SMC had also welcomed the comments and feedback provided by the ULO in advance of advertising new roles within the college.

- I01. Support and guidance had also been provided to the college on the recent QAA Higher Education Review (Alternative Providers) (November 2017), with members of the Durham University Common Awards Team providing feedback on the college's Self Evaluation Document.
- I02. The ULO had also provided dedicated support to the college when requested. For instance, SMC had sought advice on the most appropriate approach to allocating dissertation supervisors across the College.
- I03. The review team noted that SMC would welcome attendance from a member of the Common Awards Team at their graduation celebration events. Whilst it was recognised that the University hosted the official graduation ceremony for Common Awards programmes, the college had organised its own celebration event for those students who were unable to attend, or who were ineligible for, the Durham graduation ceremony.
- I04. SMC also reported that the issuing of Durham Campus Cards for students studying on Common Awards programmes was well received by students.
- I05. In discussions regarding possible enhancements to the partnership with the University, the college reported that they would welcome an opportunity to discuss the possibility of introducing classifications for the undergraduate diploma award (V60447).

#### *Applications and admissions*

- I06. The TEI's admissions policy and entry requirements apply to all delivery centres. All admissions and APL decisions related to Common Awards programmes are managed through the College; the administration of the admissions process is held centrally by the Admissions Officer, overseen by the Director of College Operations. Admissions processes and guidance on admissions and APL processes are monitored by the college's Management Committee.
- I07. Information to prospective students, including academic and non-academic entry requirements, information on APL and AP(E)L and the application process itself, are detailed in the College prospectus, on the College's website and in Open Day materials. A standard interview template is used by admissions interviewers to ensure parity in the process for all prospective students. An appeals process against admissions decisions is also detailed within SMC's admissions policy.
- I08. The review team reviewed a sample of APL requests considered by the college and confirmed that the process for considering and approving APL requests was operating effectively, and in line with the University's policy and processes.

#### *Concessions*

- I09. The review team reviewed a sample of concessions requests considered by SMC and confirmed that the process for considering and approving concession requests was operating effectively, and in line with the University's policy and processes.

## Assessment

- I 10. Students with whom the review team met were generally positive about their experiences with assessment. Students confirmed that they were aware of the assessment criteria, and knew where the criteria were published. Students were confident that they understood what was expected of them with regards to different types of assessment and reported that specific study skills sessions were delivered by teaching staff in support of this (c.f. paragraph I 23).
- I 11. Marking and moderation is carried out anonymously and centrally within in the College: students from all teaching centres submit their assessed work electronically via Moodle (VLE). Assignments are randomly allocated to markers across the College. The Lead Tutor for Assessment is responsible for creating an annual marking schedule which allocates, in advance, the marking (and moderation) responsibilities for all markers for each academic year; this allows staff to plan sufficiently and ensure that turnaround times are met. SMC recognised turnaround times for assessment as a key area for development and has introduced a minimum expectation of a five-week turnaround (and four weeks for the first piece of work at each level). Students are informed of the deadline for the receipt of feedback at the start of each module. The name of the marker is made known to the student upon receipt of their feedback so that students may seek additional feedback, where required. Plagiarism detection software (Turnitin) is used for all assignment submissions.
- I 12. The quality of feedback is monitored by the internal moderators and the external examiner. The Lead Tutor for Assessment is responsible for ensuring that all markers are trained to undertake the assessment of student work. A dedicated training session is scheduled prior to any members of staff undertaking this responsibility for the first time at the College. A template proforma is used to provide feedback on assessments so as to ensure a consistent level of feedback to students, regardless of the marker. The college highlighted the importance of 'feeding-forward', (i.e., providing constructive guidance on how to improve on future assignments) and had provided specific staff development on this concept.
- I 13. A single TEI-level Board of Examiners confirms module marks and considers progression decisions for all students on the college's Common Awards programmes. SMC confirmed that this process is working well and has been improved since the introduction of Moodle. A good working relationship has been developed with the University to ensure that the required data and meeting documents are provided for the College's completing students to be considered by the overarching Common Awards Board of Examiners. Moodle has been developed in collaboration with Ministry Division to enable the College to provide the data in the required format directly from the system. The use of Moodle has also enabled the College to more effectively prepare meeting papers and student profiles for the TEI-level Board of Examiners meeting.
- I 14. In discussions with the review team, SMC reported that whilst they recognised the delegation of responsibilities between the TEI Board of Examiners and the overarching Common Awards Board of Examiners - in so far as the TEI is responsible for considering student progression, and the University Board of Examiners is responsible for conferring awards - SMC felt that they had a lack of responsibility when it came to recommending classifications or awards, which it felt confident to undertake. Under the current operation, the college was responsible for reporting the confirmed module marks to the University only.

115. The college has effective internal procedures in place to maintain the security of assessment. Plagiarism detection software (Turnitin) is used for all assignment submissions; students must sign in to their personal Moodle site in order to submit their assessed work; and all new markers receive an induction and training before undertaking marking responsibilities. Marking and Moderation processes allow for any assessment irregularities to be identified. The University Liaison Officer report (2014-15) had highlighted the relatively high number of plagiarism cases at the college. The College has introduced specific study skills sessions to further aid students' understanding of what constitutes poor academic practice; provided guidance and examples on the different types of academic misconduct (e.g. plagiarism; collusion; poor referencing); as well allowing students to see their Turnitin originality report before submitting their final draft. Discussions with students confirmed that they were aware of these steps taken by the college and welcomed the support and guidance provided by the TEI. Students also highlighted that this information was shared as part of the induction process and confirmed that they felt confident seeking support and guidance from staff at the college on matters related to academic practice.

*Student Engagement (See also F6)*

116. SMC uses a range of effective mechanisms to gather student feedback in order to assure and enhance the quality of provision. Upon the completion of every taught module, students are required to complete a module feedback form. Students are also asked to complete an 'End of Year' student survey. The anonymous feedback gathered through student surveys is considered at Boards of Studies and Management Committees. The College participated in the National Student Survey for the time in 2017 and also participated in the Common Awards Student Survey (CASS).
117. In addition to student surveys, the college also ensures student representation within the College's governance structures. Each delivery centre elects a Senior Student to represent their cohort, and who meets regularly with the Management Team. Students from each programme, cohort and year are elected to represent their peers on the Board of Studies and Management Committee. The Management Committee consists of student representatives from each level of study; whereas the Boards of Studies includes student representatives from each centre, cohort and pathway. Student representatives also receive training from the College to support them in their role.
118. The students with whom the visit team met spoke positively about the seriousness with which their views were considered by staff at SMC. The review team heard several examples of how provision had been improved as a result of student feedback; for instance, students had reported that they had influenced the College's decision to move to the specific turnaround policy on feedback (5 weeks; c.f. paragraph 131), and improving the quality of this feedback. Some students did note however that they felt they were not always explicitly informed of the changes made in response to their student feedback; although the College confirmed that such information was clearly communicated via the Student Handbook and Moodle. Students were satisfied that they had sufficient formal and informal opportunities to ensure their voice was heard, collectively and individually.

### **Commendation 13**

**We commend SMC for its responsiveness to student feedback.**



## **E2 Overall provision for academic and pastoral support and guidance is adequate.**

### *Academic and pastoral support*

- I19. The review team received very positive comments about the level of pastoral support offered to students by SMC staff and the community. The QAA monitoring visit of 2016 commended the level of student support offered by the College.
- I20. The TEI operates a tutorial system which brings together and integrates various aspect of the student experience: academic, formational and personal: this is achieved through 'Formation Groups'. Each student is allocated to a Formation Group at the beginning of their programme and will remain with the same group of peers for the duration of their time at the College. Each group is led by a member of the academic teaching staff who acts as the primary and initial contact point for academic, administrative or pastoral issues for that group of students (~12 students in size). Students meet twice-termly with their tutor in Formation Group meetings and in regular one-to-one meetings throughout the year. Formational Groups play a central role in the life of the College and this was reinforced in discussions with students and staff.
- I21. Students commented favourably on the value of the routine care and pastoral structures embedded in the College (such as the Formation Groups), but also how tutors provided increased support at times of illness or crisis. The Ministry Division reviewers also met with students to explore the support provided to students during key stages of their transition and found that students felt well supported by tutors at moments of transition - such as during the curacy search and transition into curacy – and that this was valued by students. Students are encouraged by the College to maintain a good work-life balance; to be attentive to self-care (including their mental health); and to make time for family and friends. The team of chaplains are highly valued members of the community and students have the opportunity to meet with them throughout their studies. A college counsellor is also available. Alumni with whom the Ministry Division reviews met also commented favourably on the provision of pastoral support provided by the college.

### **Commendation 14**

#### **We commend SMC for the high quality of pastoral care offered to students.**

- I22. Students with whom the review team met placed great value on the Formation Groups and felt that these provided important, structured support for students. However, in discussions with students it was apparent that students had received a varied experience. The review team was informed that students were separated into groups by pathways and that this had resulted in a varied approach to the formality of the group. Independent students commented that they would welcome greater clarity around the formative process and their Formation Groups with an increased academic focus. This feedback had been responded to positively by the College, which has developed bespoke documents to describe clearly the expectations for the operation of the Formation Groups for all students.

### **Recommendation 13**

#### **We recommend that SMC continue the work being undertaken to clarify expectations for the operation of the Formation Groups for all students.**

### *Tutorial Support*

123. The College maintains a regular programme of study skills events for all students to engage with. Typical sessions include general study skills; how to understand what was expected of each type of assessment (supported by example completed assignments on Moodle); how to interpret assessment feedback; and guidance on understanding assessment criteria. Such sessions are supplemented by drop-in sessions for any other matters that might otherwise not be addressed by the scheduled programme of events. Study skills tutors are employed at each delivery centre within the College. Students confirmed that there was adequate support with study skills and were aware of the programme of scheduled study skills sessions. It was confirmed that these sessions were not compulsory but were often made available multiple times during the academic year to allow students to seek support when required.

### *Information for students*

124. All students from across the teaching centres attend a Welcome and Induction Day before their studies commence; this provides new students with an opportunity to meet their peers, tutors and key college staff. This contributes to Commendation 16. The day also includes break-out sessions with their Formation Group. Centre-specific inductions are also provided in the first week of teaching and cover additional information on the library, Moodle and how to submit assignments via Turnitin.
125. A 'New Student Survey' (requesting specific feedback on the induction processes) is circulated to all new students after the completion of the first term. The results of this are considered by the Management Team, and from 2017-18 onwards, with students at the Management Committee. Student feedback, via this survey, has been used to inform the enhancement of the Welcome and Induction Day. The students with whom the review team met confirmed that the induction process was valuable.
126. Moodle houses programme documentation, relevant policies, study skills resources, and software for online submission of assessed work (Turnitin). Students with whom the review team met spoke positively about the importance of Moodle as a repository for key information and learning materials, and expressed the opinion that it was a great improvement to the VLE system previously in place. In particular, students commented favourably on the ease of navigation around Moodle and their confidence in the accuracy of information provided; students are only ever able to access areas of Moodle which are relevant to them and their programme of study. The TEI confirmed that this mechanism of restricted access also ensured that students were only exposed to the relevant programme regulations.
127. Students did comment however that Moodle was not used effectively (or in most cases, at all) for collaboration or to facilitate group work. For instance, the Discussions Board on Moodle were rarely used. In discussions with staff, it was noted that the Moodle site was often used to upload learning materials (such as audio lectures or screencasts) but that its full potential for supporting learning and teaching had not yet been exploited. Staff at the College therefore acknowledged that there were opportunities for enhancement in its use of Moodle but had concentrated on implementing an effective structure for its use in the first few years.

## Recommendation 14

**We recommend that SMC considers using Moodle more creatively, and not simply as a repository for programme information.**

128. The Ministry Division reviewers noted there was general consistency in the lay-out and content of module pages (on Moodle). Some sessions are led by a number of different tutors and external speakers; the order of sessions is sometimes dependent on tutor or speaker availability, potentially risking a lack of coherence in the module (a point noted in the Ministry Council Inspection Report of 2009). The QAA Self-Evaluation Document (SED) (August 2017) also recognized that modules that have a stronger module lead (and fewer contributors) are better received by students. It noted that there was a need for clearer descriptions of module sessions and better briefing of external speakers.
129. The Ministry Division review team noted that session handouts can vary in length, style and purpose across centres, reflecting a range of module tutors and the use of some external speakers. Better use could be made of Moodle to ensure core content is shared across the centres (e.g. introductory videos, Moodle books, podcasts, shared handouts), helping to improve the consistency of different approaches to module delivery across centres.
130. SMC engagement with Moodle is very recent, and staff are keen to develop practice and usage, and are working with Common Awards to do so. They are aware that Moodle could be better used to resource a range of teaching and learning styles. The Ministry Division team felt that further development could include making use of (for instance) audio and interactive resources, discussion forums, quizzes and external links in order to create a more blended learning approach, which could relieve pressure on face-to-face teaching sessions. Time together as a learning group might then have more space for discussion and consolidating insights gained from preparatory work. Moodle forums could be used both before and after teaching sessions. Alongside preparatory reading, students could be encouraged to complete tasks which were then integrated into group work in teaching sessions. Forums could be used to confirm and reinforce learning following the teaching sessions.

## Recommendation 15

**We recommend that SMC develop its use of online teaching via Moodle to support greater parity of module delivery across centres, facilitate the wide range of learning styles, and open up space for discussion and interaction during face to face teaching sessions (Ministry Division).**

### *Feedback on Assessed Work*

131. Students with whom the review team met were broadly happy with the provision of feedback they received. Markers generally give full and helpful feedback on assignments, including targeted comments on the scripts and clear overall comments which justify the mark; although students reported some variability in the amount of feedback provided. Students felt that the introduction of the five-week turnaround policy had been a helpful enhancement to ensure they were able to make effective use of their feedback. Not all students were aware of the Inclusive Language Policy and the policy was not often referenced within their assignment feedback. Students felt that it was important to receive feedback that enabled them to improve upon their next assignment - a practice which the College had committed to implement across the College.

132. In the sample of marking seen by the Ministry Division reviewers, it was felt that markers did not always encourage students to reflect critically on their own faith and ministerial experience. There could be further encouragement to students to engage critically and in a more nuanced way with biblical texts, in both biblical modules and more broadly (as noted also by the external examiner in their report 2015-16). It was also not fully clear to the Ministry Division review team how students are helped to reflect on research ethics matters when reflecting on placement experience, including conversations and encounters with people in the context.

#### *Complaints and Appeals*

133. SMC maintains a student complaints policy; this is available to students and staff via Moodle and is set out in the student handbook. The college encourages complaints to be dealt with informally in the first instance and looks to the Formation Group system as an effective mechanism in resolving student dissatisfaction. Notwithstanding this, the policy clearly outlines the formal mechanisms for raising a complaint, the timescales for its consideration, and the stages involved. The students with whom the review team met confirmed that they were aware of the process for submitting a complaint to the college and to the University should this be necessary, and having first exhausted the college's internal processes. The college reported that while students were aware of the complaints process, no formal complaints or appeals had been made since the beginning of the Common Awards partnership.
134. Students are encouraged to be tested for dyslexia as appropriate. A dedicated member of administrative staff is the first point of contact for accessing support for dyslexia and other specific educational needs. At least one staff member has received training in dyslexia support and the Annual Self Evaluation of 2016 mentions continuing enhancements in this area. Students with whom the Ministry Division team met felt there could be more guidance to staff as to how they should respond to a declaration of dyslexia when marking an assignment.

#### *Graduate destinations*

135. The TEI had participated in the DLHE survey for the first time in 2017 and recognised that there was a diversity of graduate destinations from their programmes. The data was shared with Ministry Division and local dioceses to support future planning. The College had hosted alumni panels to support students to understand the range of possible graduate destinations.

### **E3 The overall learning support and infrastructure in relation to the ability to meet requirements for awards are adequate.**

#### *Library resources*

136. SMC has a dedicated library at each of the four delivery centres. Students at all delivery centres have full access to the physical library at St Mellitus College in London. **This contributes to Commendation 16** noted below paragraph 184. Students are helped to use other theological libraries, including at Liverpool Hope, Exeter and King's College London universities, the fees for some of which are covered by the College.
137. The College regularly discusses its library provision and the College is in the process of investing both in traditional learning resources, such as library provision and books, and in digital resources via

Moodle and making better use of the EBSCO, ATLA and JSTOR journal access provided through the University. The College has also introduced a digital investment strategy from 2017-18 to support its commitment to investing in online resources and has recently spent £8,000 on journal subscriptions and e-books. Students were broadly positive about access to online resources and noted in particular the importance of SCONUL access. Students informed the review team however that they had not yet received their SCONUL letters, despite these being issued by the University.

138. Students with whom the review team met perceived a difference in the provision of library facilities at each of the centre libraries. Students were aware that the College's library at the SMCSW centre was relatively new, and growing, but felt that it was not always possible to access the required texts. Students at the London centre felt that the provision of physical library books could be improved and also cited examples of not being able to access key course textbooks. Students studying at the North-West centre however reported that the College was able to purchase new books almost immediately on line, if requested by students. Staff at the College reported that usage data on resources was available and that they regularly encouraged students to read around the indicative reading lists to minimize the overreliance on some key texts.
139. On the whole, students felt that for the size of the College the physical library resources at constituent centres could be improved. The recent Common Awards Student Survey (CASS) also highlighted a below average student satisfaction rate with the access to textbooks.
140. Students further commented on the library opening hours and felt that these were not fully reflective of the opportunities students had to study in the library. The review team were informed that the library was not open on weekends and closed at 5:30pm on a weekday, with the exception of a Tuesday where the library remained open until 6:30pm. Students felt it was not always possible to make effective use of the library and its study spaces when students often had other commitments during the working week; this was particularly acute for part-time students.

## Recommendation 16

**We recommend that the TEI: (a) should keep under review its investment in physical resources, making use of management information (usage data) and student feedback; (b) ensure that SCONUL information is routinely circulated to students at the earliest possible opportunity to ensure that students are able to benefit from accessing this facility; and (c) consider the opportunities for extending the library opening hours.**

*IT & teaching facilities (Ministry Division observations)*

141. The Ministry Division review team visited teaching locations and observed a selection of teaching sessions. The Ministry Division team concludes that teaching spaces are well equipped with IT resources and projection equipment. SMC administrative staff are present at residential teaching events in order to assist with IT needs during teaching sessions. IT staff are present at St Jude's to set up Skype calls, etc. during meetings. SMC have begun to record or live stream lectures, notably lectures delivered at St Jude's, but also non-modular lecture series which have been streamed from several delivery centres. Students value these resources. The Ministry Division team encourages SMC to explore how streaming might be used further to develop module delivery and discussion across the delivery centres.

142. Teaching spaces vary across delivery centres and residential events. High Leigh is used for residential teaching weekends. There are several large and medium lecture spaces, including a newly renovated chapel space which is light and airy. While these spaces in themselves are generally pleasant, accessible and well equipped with IT and projection, the Ministry Division team observed that they are often crowded due to the number of students, resulting in students balancing papers, books and laptops on their knees, and sometimes struggling to find a seat. The overcrowding may impact on the style of teaching, which Ministry Division reviewers noted often took the form of lecturing mode with little use of group work or kinesthetic learning, and at times making anything but small buzz groups impossible in terms of class discussion. This is not to say that the quality of learning is harmed, but Ministry Division reviewers are nonetheless concerned that the choice of teaching and learning styles may be constrained by the space (see also F3, paragraph 166). SMC have considered splitting residential teaching events into year group cohorts, but are resistant to this due to the increased pressure that will place on staff, as well as an awareness that part of what is valued by students is the experience of being part of a large, diverse and lively learning community. SMC are attentive to the need to ensure students receive sufficient attention during large residential events. Times to meet in small groups, such as the practice of sharing a meal as a formational group, are recognized as an important balance. SMC recognise that they are on the verge of outgrowing High Leigh – see paras 36-37 above. Swanwick is used for residential teaching weeks and offers more space but is not so accessible in terms of transport links.
143. Elsewhere, teaching takes place in Chelmsford Cathedral, Liverpool Cathedral and St Matthias Church Plymouth. Students value being located in these centres of worship and community, enjoying how the space is used for worship, fellowship, and learning. The Ministry Division review team did not visit the Plymouth centre. In terms of Liverpool and Chelmsford, students find the various cathedral communities to be welcoming and supportive of their presence. Staff are in regular contact with cathedral staff to review and develop usage. At Chelmsford, students enjoy starting the evening eating together in the cathedral. They value having the bookshop and library available before lectures begin. Students are similarly positive about the experience of worshipping and learning at Liverpool Cathedral. The cathedral offers a variety of teaching spaces, some with more limited facilities. A new teaching space, to be called St Aidan's, is being built as an extension to the Diocesan offices next to Cathedral. The central space at St Jude's is welcoming and light (Commendation 6). There are a range of different size teaching and meeting spaces, including a fixed tiered lecture space and more flexible medium and large teaching spaces. The teaching spaces are well equipped, but the Ministry Division team felt that the building can feel overfull during teaching times.
144. Students with whom the Ministry Division team met with felt able to voice concerns about teaching space and facilities, including accessibility issues. Students recognize the constraints of the various buildings and appear confident in the efforts staff make to ensure the best possible teaching experience.

**E4 The overall staffing (academic and support) in relation to the ability to meet requirements for awards is adequate.**

145. SMC benefits from a large, well-qualified academic staff team. The current staff team at the College comprises 47 employed staff members (including full- and part-time employees), supported by 17 volunteer and associate staff. Reports from the ULO and discussions with the College confirm that the

process seeking feedback from Durham in advance of advertising positions at the College, and for sharing CVs with the University, operates well.

146. The suite of CVs for members of staff at the College was made available to the review team as part of the PER documentation. The external examiner report (2015/6) observed that tutors were up to date with their subject areas. There is a good range of subject specialisms amongst staff, and staff are able to teach in their subject discipline. The review team concluded that members of academic staff were suitably qualified and experienced to deliver the approved programmes.

#### *Teaching quality*

147. The TEI monitors and enhances teaching quality in a number of ways, including cross-centre teaching, marking and moderation; an institutional-wide peer-review scheme; the effective use of the External Examiner reports and ULO reports; through the Annual Self-Evaluation process; and seeking regular student feedback. The College felt that both formal and informal feedback mechanisms at the local level of the delivery centres would be used to identify and resolve any concerns regarding teaching quality.
148. There is an established induction process for new staff, both academic and administrative to ensure that staff are familiar with the operation of the College, and its policies, processes and procedures. New academic staff receive further support during their first experience of marking at SMC.
149. All staff at the College receive an appraisal and personal development review twice-yearly. A template proforma is used by those conducting the appraisal to ensure a consistency of approach and the identification of training or development needs, where required. There is a formal, institution-wide process for academic peer-review of teaching which is explicitly linked to the appraisal process. Key themes arising from the peer-review of teaching are identified and acted upon by the College. Discussions with staff confirmed that the process was effectively in supporting individual colleagues but also for identifying and sharing good practice. The Academic Coordinator is responsible for ensuring that all teaching staff undertake a peer-review, and for the identification of key themes for enhancement. The Academic Coordinator identifies good practice from the peer review process and this is disseminated across the staff team during staff training. The peer-review process also feeds into line management review meetings.
150. Regular staff development and training events take place, and staff are also encouraged to benefit from external training opportunities. The College has introduced a programme of monthly national meetings which is dedicated to staff development and training; the agenda of this is often informed by the key themes identified through the peer-review process. Administrative staff receive training in relevant areas.
151. Staff are also supported to enhance their professional development via training and research opportunities. Academic staff are research-active, which allows them to keep up to date in subject-specific scholarship. Weekly research time is encouraged by keeping Wednesdays free of teaching commitments and internal meetings, and the College offers one term of study leave every four years. The College also offers book grants to colleagues and provides financial support for attendance at conferences, events and seminars, as well as membership to relevant societies. Four colleagues were registered on the Durham University Learning and Teaching Award (DULTA).

152. Staff with whom the review team met felt that SMC had a strong commitment to supporting colleagues to achieve whilst at the institution and thus, in turn, had a very strong affinity with ensuring the College's and its students' success. The Dean also informed the review team that the College intends to enhance its support for staff by creating a focus on enhancing progression routes and opportunities within the College: for instance, from lecturer to senior lecturer.
153. Support staff, including administrators and IT support, are knowledgeable and competent and are valued as an integral part of the wider staff team. Relevant professional support staff are present at residential teaching events to provide assistance. Professional support staff across all teaching centres meet regularly and as part of the monthly whole staff meetings.
154. The review team heard examples of tutors drawing on their own research to shape module design and delivery. Students appreciate and are enthused by staff sharing their research. Staff publications are celebrated within the College, with recent publications including texts on church planting, spirituality and biblical studies. Staff recognized the importance of being research active for the development of their teaching. Part-time staff, perhaps inevitably, find it more difficult to make time for research, and several mentioned that research was undertaken in their own time.
155. Staff valued receiving training on unconscious bias last year, and have sought to put into practice some of the insights gained. In recent years, SMC have been successful in recruiting several new Black and Minority Ethnic academic staff, but have recognized that the ethnic diversity of the academic team remains a key priority for the college.

### **Commendation 15**

**We commend SMC for its commitment to staff development and the opportunities for staff research for full-time staff.**

#### **E5 The TEI has appropriate mechanisms to ensure the accuracy of all public information, publicity and promotional activity relating to the partnership.**

156. SMC maintains a Public Information Policy which outlines the roles and responsibilities for key members of staff within the College. Significant changes are checked by the Director of College Operations, the Dean and the University. The approval of the communication plan for the launch of the SMCSW teaching centre was a good demonstration of how this process works in practice.
157. SMC has appropriate mechanisms in place to ensure the accuracy of all public information, publicity information and promotional activity relating to the partnership.

**Subject to implementation of the recommendations in this section, the review team has Confidence with regard to Criterion E: Partnership with University.**



## SECTION F: TAUGHT PROGRAMMES

### **F1 The programme is viable in terms of market and likely number of entrants.**

158. The TEI has experienced a growth in student numbers from 188 students in 2014/15 to 246 students in 2015/16, and 285 students in 2016/17.
159. The SMCSW teaching centre recruited for the first time in September 2017 and registered 9 ordinands and 4 independent students, an increase on projected numbers; the TEI's financial model was based on a minimum of eight full-time ordinands in the first year of operation. For SMCNW, the TEI had exceeded their expectations for their year three projections, registering 24 ordinands for 2017/18, compared to the target of 15. In London, the TEI has recruited 40 ordinands. The TEI highlighted the positive impact the Common Awards partnership has had on the recruitment of non-ordinand students.
160. The TEI had identified, within its SWOT analysis, the importance of maintaining quality in growth. The TEI emphasised the importance to the College of maintaining its quality of provision which had enabled it to grow in the first place.
161. The review team was made aware that the TEI had been approached by the relevant bishops with a view to providing full-time context-based ordination training in a new location in the East Midlands. This would result in an additional delivery centre for the TEI. Discussions were currently ongoing.

### **F2 The structure and design of the curriculum are appropriate to the aims and learning outcomes, and to the target student body.**

162. The aims and learning outcomes for the Common Awards programmes are defined in the relevant programme specifications. Each programme contains a 'syllabus' to define the programme structure, including credit requirements at each level of study and for each sub-discipline. The framework ensures that the structure and design of the curriculum are appropriate to the aims and learning outcomes. Through the initial validation process, the University reviewed the TEI's proposed programme regulations, module overview table, and curriculum mapping document. These documents confirmed that the structure and design of the curriculum was aligned with the programme specifications, and that the curriculum design was appropriate to the target student body.
163. The TEI has engaged with the curriculum development process to review and update its curricula in response to institutional review and student feedback. The TEI sought and received approval for each of the programme amendments, which included: the addition of new programmes for new and existing delivery centres; the inclusion of approved Common Awards modules, and changes to assessment options within modules. Despite the incremental changes brought about through the curriculum development process, the TEI's programmes remain very similar to those that were originally approved.

### **F3 The programme employs teaching, learning and assessment methods that will enable the learning outcomes to be achieved by typical students and that achievement to be measured.**

## Teaching

164. The students with whom the review team met commented positively on the quality of the teaching, referring to their experiences as excellent, dynamic and reflective. In particular, students reported that they felt lecturers were respectful of their opinions and encouraged positive and reflective discussions in class, and welcomed student feedback on their teaching. Where students were slightly less satisfied, this was predominantly with the style of teaching, and in particular, a perceived overreliance on lectures in some instances. Students did however acknowledge the challenges that staff face when teaching very diverse groups of students with different learning styles and appreciated the efforts of the College to accommodate these, where possible.
165. SMC has a large academic staff team, many of whom teach across delivery centres and at a variety of levels. The Ministry Division review team observed teaching sessions at a residential teaching weekend, and at three delivery centres: Liverpool, Chelmsford and St Jude's (both daytime and evening) and felt that staff are knowledgeable and enthusiastic about their subject areas and that students are highly appreciative of the teaching they experience, even to the extent of clapping at the end of teaching sessions. The Ministry Division review team noted that student enthusiasm for the teaching they receive and the high regard in which they hold academic staff, who are seen as the experts, needs to be balanced with encouragement to ask critical questions and to develop as confident and questioning theologians.
166. Although the QAA Self-Evaluation Document (August 2017, p. 28) suggested that 'most lecturers include a variety of components to engage a range of learning styles', the Ministry Division reviewers did not see much evidence of this range in the sessions they attended. A significant proportion of the teaching sessions attended followed a traditional lecture format (the dominance of the lecture model was criticized in the Ministry Council Inspection Report of 2009), with lengthy input from the tutor (generally supported by PowerPoint slides), punctuated by brief 'buzz group' discussion or a short time for questions. In part, this may be due to the limitations placed on teaching style by the room layout and large size of groups (see also E3, paragraph 142). In observations by the Ministry Division team, at level 6 and level 7, with smaller groups, sessions were more participative and there was much more of a discussion and sharing of ideas, often skilfully facilitated by the module tutor. Staff commented that the residential teaching week offers more space for interactive group work and application of learning, and that the modules scheduled for that week are those that require this space. There is encouragement from the academic leadership to develop a diversity of teaching styles. With the exception of MA seminars, it was not always clear from observation of teaching sessions by the Ministry Division team as to how student engagement with preparatory reading was tested. The provision of optional reading seminars would appear helpful here.
167. The Ministry Division review team found that students value teaching sessions that have a clear structure and purpose, and in which lectures are supported by visual aids, such as PowerPoint. Some students commented to the Ministry Division team that module tutors at NW are more consistent in giving an overview at the start of the session and in clarifying learning outcomes. Students noted space for discussion in some lectures, but also in Formation Groups and with module tutors outside of teaching sessions. They feel that they are exposed to a range of views and perspectives, for example in the teaching of liturgy, and enjoy co-taught sessions or panel discussions.

168. The Ministry Division review team found that students feel lectures related well to ministerial practice and formational issues, although such connections were not always evident in the teaching sessions attended by the review team. Staff recognize the importance of making connections between academic theology and ministry, and many draw on their own experience of being in both the academy and parish, modelling dialogue between pastoral, practical and academic work. Students see how their understanding and practice of preaching and leading worship have developed through engagement with relevant academic modules.
169. The QAA Self-Evaluation Document (August 2017) recognized the risk of lack of parity of module delivery across different teaching centres. To counter this, each module has a module lead, and a module tutor who holds delivery of the module at each centre. Module tutors meet regularly to plan and review the module. Staff often travel to different centres to teach on modules, and teaching days vary across some centres to enable staff to teach parallel sessions at different centres. Some teaching sessions are streamed to enable students at other centres to benefit from them. At residential teaching events, modules are taught to the whole cohort. These are good cross-centre quality assurance measures and contribute to Commendation 16. Nonetheless, the Ministry Division reviewers consider that it remains important to stay alert to the risk of any lack of parity in delivery. The points noted above about module descriptions and briefing external speakers (paragraph 128), library space/access (paragraphs 136-40) and consistency of module overviews and the presentation of learning outcomes (paragraph 167) contribute to this concern. Chelmsford LLMs are taught some modules separately and here also it is important that there is parity and shared responsibility for delivery and quality.
170. Module tutors sit in on sessions taught by external speakers and their observations and feedback from students are used to review sessions. With a large staff team, there is less need for external speakers or for staff to teach outside of their area specialism.

### **Recommendation 17**

**We recommend that SMC support the tutorial staff in using a range of teaching styles, which make more use of the opportunities for student discussion and interaction, and which help students to develop as skilled theologians able to facilitate the learning of others (Ministry Division).**

171. SMC have taken steps to improve both the ethnic diversity of core academic staff and the gender diversity of external speakers (see Commendation 4). The College's commitment is articulated in the Increasing the Diversity of External Lecturers statement. Board of Studies minutes demonstrate a critical self-awareness of the areas within the College that could benefit from a greater diversity of voices.
172. Students commented that the indicative reading lists provided by the College were helpful but would welcome additional diversity in views. The External Examiner report had also highlighted this matter, encouraging the TEI to seek texts from within a wider scholarly context. Module reading lists seen by the reviewers revealed a gap in the range and diversity of theologians and theological perspectives, with female, black and LGBTQ\* authors and those from the global south being underrepresented. Notwithstanding this, students did comment that teaching staff were receptive and inclusive when

differing views were discussed in teaching sessions (c.f paragraph 164). The College recognised this matter and had committed to undertaking an audit of its suggested texts with a view to reflecting upon its diversity and encouraging students to read more widely around the subject content.

## **Recommendation 18**

**We recommend that SMC undertakes a review of the range of contexts and perspectives reflected in module reading lists and teaching sessions, and considers how best to support students engage with the breadth of theological voices, including those from marginalized contexts and those offering alternative critical perspectives.**

### *Learning Hours*

173. Students with whom the review team met reported that information on learning hours is provided to students at the beginning of each module and is easily accessible. The review team explored students' workload experiences and found that some students tended not to use the learning hours as a reflection of how much time or effort would be required for any given module, but instead felt that the number and type of assessments for each module gave a better indication of the workload required. Notwithstanding this, students were able to demonstrate an understanding of how the learning hours were broken down (e.g. independent learning; lecturers, etc.) even though they had not explicitly reflected upon these in order to support their learning. Other students felt that learning hours were a useful guide, particularly at the earlier stages of their programme when they may not have the opportunity to draw upon previous experiences to influence the time spent on assessments and studying for the module. The review team did note however that students did not appear to demonstrate a full understanding of what might be required as part of the independent learning workload allocation.

### *Assessment*

174. The External Examiner has consistently confirmed that the range of assessment is appropriate to the curriculum and the intended learning outcomes.
175. Students felt that, on the whole, the volume of assessments was appropriate and supported them in their learning. Some students did comment, however, that they felt the assessment deadlines were closer together at levels 5 and 6 of the BA programme, but also felt that this was a natural progression for the programme. They felt well supported in understanding what is required of them at each level of their programme and commented positively on the variety of assessment in their programmes, the clarity of assignment titles, and the links between academic study, ministerial formation and practice. In particular, students welcomed assessment that explicitly linked to other areas of their programme. For instance, students provided examples of assessments that required students to deliver a presentation in the style of a sermon and author a magazine article for a public audience, skills which they felt would support them upon the completion of their studies and had been able to demonstrate whilst on placement.
176. The students with whom the review team met confirmed that they perceived and experienced a marked progression throughout their programmes, with higher levels of work demanding a greater

depth of engagement, providing more academic challenge, and requiring more independent learning. The students reported that specific study skills sessions were available on understanding the key differences in what was required at different levels of study.

177. At Level 6, students complete either an independent learning project or apply to complete a longer dissertation. For independent research projects, students tend to work with their formation tutor; for dissertations (at Level 6 or 7), they are allocated a tutor with the appropriate subject specialism, following submission of a dissertation proposal. The College ensures that supervisors can be allocated from across all delivery centres to ensure that students have access to staff members with relevant experience or expertise in their project area (c.f. paragraph 184). **This contributes to Commendation 16.** The teaching timetable also includes a dedicated session on supporting students towards deciding upon their research questions. Students are encouraged to submit a draft piece of work, which receives some feedback; although some students expressed some lack of clarity as to how many hours supervision they were entitled to receive.
178. The range of assessment methods is under review (Annual Self-Evaluation 2016). A new Academic Working Group will review assessment types. Both staff and students expressed concern over the amount of assignments currently required on the Common Awards programme; following a recent review, assessment choices were within the College's control. Students recognized that both context-based training and part-time training alongside other responsibilities place limits on the amount of time for assignment writing.

#### **F4 There are appropriate arrangements for placements.**

179. Strategic oversight for the arrangement of placements for full-time ordinands rests with the Assistant Dean. Staff within the College seek to arrange placements for students and liaise with potential and current placement supervisors; a handbook specifies the criteria that must be met for a placement location to be considered. Each student is assigned a supervisor in their local church placement context (often the incumbent or equivalent), who oversees their training, and works with SMC to ensure that students are well supported. The responsibilities of the College, the placement provider – and supervisor – and student are articulated within the handbook. Full-time students and supervisors must sign a working agreement before commencing the placement. Students confirmed that they were aware of these documents and that these were useful. Students and staff confirmed that visits to the placement were undertaken by the College and reports of the visit produced. Mechanisms are in place to identify any potential problems whilst students are on placement, and intervene, if required. Pastoral support for students on placement was commented on favourably by students. The review team heard examples of flexibility from the college where difficulties had been encountered, and the pastoral and academic support put in place for those who had encountered illness during their placement (see Commendation 14). Relevant health and safety policies, insurance, and DBS checks are in place for the placements.
180. Supervisors are encouraged to attend a Supervisor Day, which is also attended by students; this provides an opportunity for the sharing of good practice and ensures that all parties are cognisant of their respective responsibilities.

181. Part-time students and LLMs do not have working/learning agreements with their supervisors. SMC staff confirmed that that this was intentional with respect to part-time ordinands and reflects their restricted time. The college provides a full and helpful handbook for incumbents of part-time students that urges students to reduce their church workload to make room for their course work, but we would urge that a specific working agreement is included that would make expectations clear for each student. Such agreements often set the tone for post-ordination/licensing working agreements. The same principle applies to LLMs, though it was recognised by the review team that responsibility for such arrangements may lie with the respective dioceses.
182. Students with whom the review team met were broadly positive about their placement experiences but provided varied views on how well the placement had integrated with their broader studies. Students had previously discussed that they welcomed assessments that linked with the placement element of their programmes (see paragraph 175); however, some students had reported that they felt a clear disconnect between the placement learning and their academic studies (cf paragraph 21). Notwithstanding this, the review team was provided with one example whereby the supervisor had explicitly and routinely sought information from the student on their learning in modules so as to inform and support their learning on placement. Relatedly, the review team heard of varied levels of contact from their placement supervisor and that this could lead to a varied student experience. The review team also felt that the College would benefit from strengthening the opportunities to share good practice with regards to placement provision.

## **Recommendation 19**

### **The review team recommends that SMC:**

- a) **strengthens the link between the learning in the placement context and the classroom;**
- b) **ensures clear expectations with regards to placement supervisor engagement;**
- c) **strengthens the opportunities for sharing good practice on placement provision;**
- d) **ensures that all trainee LLMs (in consultation with their dioceses) and part-time ordinands have working/learning agreements for their placements;**
- e) **routinely share key programme documentation with supervisors to support their engagement with the wider curriculum; and**
- f) **consider the opportunities to provide additional support and guidance to supervisors**

**(See also Recommendations 3 & 10)**

### **F5 The programme appropriately addresses the University's Principles for the Development of the Taught Curriculum.**

183. Students have the opportunity to complete independent research projects, sometimes drawing on their experience of working in a local parish. They are encouraged to follow Common Awards research ethics policy. There is a process through which a student's ability to complete a dissertation is assessed.
184. Students reported that appropriate support and guidance is provided when undertaking independent learning projects. Students are allocated a specific academic tutor (supervisor) for their project. The

College ensures that supervisors can be allocated from across all delivery centres to ensure that students have access to staff members with relevant experience or expertise in their project area. This contributes to Commendation I6. The teaching timetable also includes a dedicated session on supporting students towards deciding upon their research questions.

### Commendation I6

**We commend the clear and established links between the TEI's multiple delivery centres to ensure that students benefit from the TEI's collective resources (c.f. paragraphs I24, I36 and I84)**

**F6 The programme is subject to appropriate processes for curriculum review, including mechanisms for student representation and engagement (see also E3).**

I85. Members of staff in the TEI are involved in the TEI's processes for curriculum monitoring, review and enhancement. Student feedback on teaching is requested frequently.

I86. Teaching staff actively request student feedback via module evaluation questionnaires. A standard template is used to ensure consistency. The Academic Coordinator is responsible for reviewing the results across the College for consideration at the Board of Studies, of which student representatives are members. Module Leaders have responsibility for implementing any agreed changes. The TEI reported that in most cases proposals for curriculum development will be seen by the Board of Studies more than once to ensure full and considered student engagement with any future changes. Further to this, the review team heard examples of conducting focus groups to seek student feedback on possible changes to the programme or curriculum.

I87. Members of staff from within the TEI contribute to the Common Awards Annual Self-Evaluation (ASE) process. The TEI expressed the opinion that the ASE process has been extremely helpful in providing a structured approach to reflection, supported the process of strategic thinking and has seamlessly integrated into the College's existing quality assurance mechanisms, particularly allowing for sufficient time to consult with students via the Boards of Studies. The TEI did note however that they felt undertaking the 2016-17 ASE process, as well as the QAA Higher Education Review and Durham-Ministry Division Periodic External Review (PER) - and within a very short space of time; all three events were to take place in November 2017 - was, in their view, excessive for one academic year.

**Subject to implementation of the recommendations in this section, the review team has Confidence with regard to Criterion F: Taught Programmes.**

## CONCLUSION

### Overall outcome:

**The review team has Confidence with Qualifications in St Mellitus College, in preparing candidates for ordained and licensed lay ministry.**

## LIST OF COMMENDATIONS

### **Commendation 1**

We commend the college for its articulation of 'generous orthodoxy' and for the exceptional understanding of this demonstrated by staff, students and stakeholders.

### **Commendation 2**

We commend the college for its partnerships with bishops/dioceses and its responsiveness to their needs.

### **Commendation 3**

We commend the college for the *Beginning Theology* programme and its widening of access to ministerial training.

### **Commendation 4**

We commend the proactive approach taken by SMC to develop a more diverse staff body.

### **Commendation 5**

We commend SMC for its efforts to build community in the different environments where students meet.

### **Commendation 6**

We commend SMC for the high quality of the conversion of St Jude's church for use as its London teaching base.

### **Commendation 7**

We commend the college for fostering an ethos where the staff model an integrated and missional spirituality and theology.

### **Commendation 8**

We commend SMC for being responsive and flexible in developing its structures to meet the changing needs of the organisation.

### **Commendation 9**

We commend SMC for its strong sense of strategic direction and desire for continuous improvement.

### **Commendation 10**

We commend SMC on its financial management and reporting.

### **Commendation 11**

We commend the college on its very proactive approach to preparing students for proclaiming the gospel and leading in discipleship.

### **Commendation 12**

We commend the college on its excellent provision of chaplains and counsellor throughout the course, and particularly on the residentials.

### **Commendation 13**

We commend SMC for its responsiveness to student feedback.



**Commendation 14**

We commend SMC for the high quality of pastoral care offered to students.

**Commendation 15**

We commend SMC for its commitment to staff development and the opportunities for research for full-time staff.

**Commendation 16**

We commend the clear and established links between the TEI's multiple delivery centres to ensure that students benefit from the TEI's collective resources.

## LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

### Recommendation 1

We recommend that the TEI review the governance of its LLM training programme with its partner dioceses (including oversight of quality of teaching when not provided by SMC).

### Recommendation 2

We recommend that the college review the viability and intensity of the LLM pathway with the diocese of London.

### Recommendation 3

We recommend that the college review the way contextual placements (and supervisors) are selected, resourced and integrated into the learning community (see also Recommendations 10 & 19).

### Recommendation 4

We recommend that SMC consider whether there is a normative understanding of partnered and family life present within the college ethos/culture, and if so, whether such an understanding needs to be broadened in order to take into account more fully the lived realities and experiences of all students.

### Recommendation 5

We recommend that the policy and/or guidelines on worship should include:

1. Provision for those unable to receive communion when the celebrant is a woman.
2. Guidance on posture and the 'mechanics' of worship.
3. Encouragement to explore ways of introducing a range of metaphors for God (or more expansive language and imagery) through creative prayer, visual imagery, hymns and preaching.

### Recommendation 6

We recommend that SMC gives consideration to establishing a senior executive group (which does not include trustees), to review matters such as strategy, finance, risk and quality, before this information is shared with trustees, and that the Board sets aside time each year specifically to discuss strategy, the forward financial plan and other key issues facing SMC.

### Recommendation 7

We recommend that SMC consider changing the terms under which Board members are recruited, giving founding partners different legal status without the right to appoint trustees directly (they could, for example, have rights of appointing the Chair and a right of veto over appointment of trustees); and introducing an open appointment process for trustees to encourage greater diversity in addition to appropriate skills, knowledge and experience, including academic.

### Recommendation 8

We recommend that SMC consider including more specific and measurable objectives in its strategic plan for at least the following year, so the annual review can set out the extent to which these were achieved and what might need to change if they were not met or if they were exceeded.

### Recommendation 9

We recommend that the risk register is reviewed to become more specific to risks likely to affect SMC in

the next 2-3 years, is related more closely to the achievement of its strategic plan, and is reviewed and updated at least quarterly.

#### **Recommendation 10**

We recommend that SMC review the quantity and range of placement opportunities for both ordinands and (with its partner dioceses) for LLMs (see also Recommendations 3 & 19).

#### **Recommendation 11**

We recommend that SMC review how the marks of mission concerned with social justice and stewardship of creation are reflected in the college's life and curriculum.

#### **Recommendation 12**

We recommend that SMC consider whether independent students and (in cooperation with the dioceses) LLMs may benefit from having a personal learning plan.

#### **Recommendation 13**

We recommend that SMC continue the work being undertaken to clarify expectations for the operation of the Formation Groups for all students.

#### **Recommendation 14**

We recommend that the TEI consider using Moodle more creatively, and not simply as a repository for programme information.

#### **Recommendation 15**

We recommend that SMC develop its use of online teaching via Moodle to support greater parity of module delivery across centres, facilitate the wide range of learning styles, and open up space for discussion and interaction during face to face teaching sessions (Ministry Division).

#### **Recommendation 16**

We recommend that the TEI: (a) should keep under review its investment in physical resources, making use of management information (usage data) and student feedback; (b) ensure that SCOUNL information is routinely circulated to students at the earliest possible opportunity to ensure that students are able to benefit from accessing this facility; and (c) consider the opportunities for extending the library opening hours.

#### **Recommendation 17**

We recommend that SMC support the tutorial staff in using a range of teaching styles, which make more use of the opportunities for student discussion and interaction, and which help students to develop as skilled theologians able to facilitate the learning of others (Ministry Division).

#### **Recommendation 18**

We recommend that SMC undertakes a review of the range of contexts and perspectives reflected in module reading lists and teaching sessions, and considers how best to support students in engaging with the breadth of theological voices, including those from marginalized contexts and those offering alternative critical perspectives.

### **Recommendation 19**

The review team recommends that SMC:

- (a) strengthens the link between the learning in the placement context and the classroom;
- (b) ensures clear expectations with regards to placement supervisor engagement;
- (c) strengthens the opportunities for sharing good practice on placement provision;
- (d) ensures that all trainee LLMs (in consultation with their dioceses) and part-time ordinands have working/learning agreements for their placements;
- (e) routinely share key programme documentation with supervisors to support their engagement with the wider curriculum; and
- (f) consider the opportunities to provide additional support and guidance to supervisors  
(See also Recommendations 3 & 10)