

Ministry Council: Periodic External Review Report

Eastern Region Ministry Course including provision for Ely LLM and Norwich Diocesan Reader Training

February - March 2019

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GLOSSARY

CA	Common Awards
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
DDO	Diocesan Director of Ordinands
EAMTC	East Anglia Ministerial Training Course
ERMC	Eastern Region Ministry Course
IMEI/2	Initial Ministerial Education, pre- and post-ordination/licensing
LLM	Licensed Lay Ministry/Minister
PER	Periodic External Review
TEI	Theological Education Institution

LIST OF REVIEWERS

Dr Sally Buck, Senior Reviewer, Warden of Readers, Diocese of Lincoln.

Ms Sue Waterston, Licensed Lay Minister and West Bingham Deanery Lay Chair, Southwell and Nottingham Diocese.

Revd Dr James Bruce, Rector, Cartmel Peninsular Team Ministry, Carlisle Diocese; Associate Tutor, Cumbria Christian Learning.

Revd Dr John Fitzmaurice, Director of Ordinands and Vocation, Worcester Diocese.

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 both by Ministry Division from a pool of reviewers nominated by bishops and TEIs and by Durham University's Common Awards office. The latter will 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 also includes 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 either 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. They 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.

Criteria-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 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 are part of the joint PER report, but are also 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, fall into this category.

In the case of the current review of the Eastern Region Ministry Course, Durham University colleagues carried out a separate validation of ERMIC as a stand-alone TEI in spring 2018, including a review of its programmes. There was therefore no need for Durham's participation in the March 2019 PER, but the conclusions of its validation exercise have informed this PER and are reflected at Sections E and F of the present report.

REPORT OF THE PERIODIC EXTERNAL REVIEW OF THE EASTERN REGION MINISTRY COURSE AND ITS PROVISION FOR ELY AND NORWICH DIOCESES' READER TRAINING

March 2019

SUMMARY

Introduction

The Eastern Region Ministry Course (ERMC) was founded as the East Anglian Ministerial Training Course (EAMTC) in 1979 when the Ely Training Scheme merged with the Norwich Ordination Course. Its founders wanted to establish a 'theological college without walls', providing non-resident part-time pathways to ordination for candidates of the Dioceses of Ely, Norwich and St Edmundsbury & Ipswich, as well as candidates of the Methodist and United Reformed Churches. In the early 1990s EAMTC developed links with the Dioceses of Peterborough and Chelmsford as well as the Diocese in Europe.

In 2005, with the changes to theological education in the aftermath of the Hind Report (2003), a larger Eastern Region was formed, now including the Diocese of St Albans. As the training course for the new region, the newly formed Eastern Region Ministry Course was created as an amalgamation of EAMTC with part of the St Albans and Oxford Ministry Course.

As result of changes in their ministerial training policy the United Reformed Church and Methodist Church withdrew from regional training courses in 2006 and 2014 respectively; even though there are no formal links with the United Reformed Church and Methodist Church, ERMC aims to maintain its ecumenical ethos.

ERMC (EAMTC as it was then) joined the Cambridge Theological Federation in 1993. ERMC was, until 2018, one of the seven 'Full Member' institutions of the Federation, and the largest; a further two 'Associate Members' are within the Federation. Within the Federation, ERMC maintained its own separate ('regional') teaching arrangements in order to best meet the needs of its students. Together with the rest of the Federation ERMC began teaching Common Awards programmes when they were first introduced, in 2014.

At that stage, Durham University, the Ministry Division and the Quality Assurance Agency regarded the Cambridge Theological Federation as one TEI, comprising the Eastern Region Ministry Course including Norwich and St Edmundsbury and Ipswich diocesan Reader training centres; Ridley Hall; the Institute for Orthodox Christian Studies; the Margaret Beaufort Institute for Theology; Westcott House and Westminster College.

However, the ERMC Governing Council decided in November 2017 to request that the Ministry Council permit ERMC to become a designated TEI in its own right under the Common Awards framework. The Governing Council of the Cambridge Theological Federation endorsed this and in January 2018 the Chair of the ERMC Council submitted a formal application to the Chair of the Ministry Council for ERMC to be approved as a designated TEI within Common Awards. The Ministry Council subsequently approved the request for independent TEI status in February 2018.

ERMC's rationale for the request was as follows. The Federation operated its Common Awards programmes through two separate strands: the 'Cambridge delivery' for Cambridge Houses, namely Westcott House, Ridley Hall and Westminster College, and the 'Regional delivery' for ERMC. The two strands delivered different curricula and had different terms, submissions deadlines and staff. Whilst there was some sharing of academic processes (such as moderation), the economies of scale and synergies of operation were limited in practice. Furthermore, some Houses within the Federation required access to tier 4 visas and government student loans for their students; as a result the Federation was also considered an Alternative Provider by the Quality Assurance Agency and subject to regular review. ERMC did not require access to tier 4 visas or government funding for its students and so, for ERMC, becoming an independent TEI would allow it to be more flexible in order to meet the needs of our partner dioceses.

Accordingly, Durham University's Common Awards team conducted a validation on 18 April 2018 to consider approval to stand-alone TEI status for ERMC. The visit team explored the implications of the separation for ERMC in detail. Based on evidence encountered before and during their visit, it considered that ERMC successfully met all the criteria for approving collaborative programmes, subject to a number of conditions and recommendations as detailed in the University's Validation Visit Report. Approval was granted accordingly.

ERMC remains a member of the Federation for all other purposes apart from its academic validation arrangements with the University of Durham, albeit with Associate rather than Full Member status. It continues to have access to the Federation's physical and online library facilities and to staff development programmes, and continues its ecumenical partnership with respect to shared worship in particular. The new arrangement also intends to strengthen ERMC's long term viability: its annual fee payment to the Federation is significantly reduced and saving funds a new administrative post within ERMC to support the delivery of its Common Awards programmes as an independent TEI.

Training at ERMC

ERMC describes its mission as 'to undertake the education and training of recognised students for ordained ministry in the Church of England, the Methodist Church, the United Reformed Church and other mainstream Christian Churches and, where appropriate, for the preparation of suitable candidates for lay ministry'. ERMC sees itself as a community which is passionate for making connections between faith and life and which prepares ministers who can be attentive to the world whilst being contextually rooted in the life of the local church.

In line with this vision, the TEI has a relatively diverse study body which includes students for lay and ordained ministries as well as independent students. Students at ERMC come from Evangelical, Catholic, Liberal, Charismatic traditions of the Church. Based on figures available at the time of validation, ERMC had 106 students registered in the 2017/18 academic year. 101 of these students were part-time and five were full time; 87 enrolled in undergraduate programmes and four on postgraduate programmes. Numbers have since risen to 122 students: 60 ordinands, 54 Readers in training and 8 independent learners.

ERMC delivers the Common Awards Certificate in Theology, Ministry and Mission (120 credits) and Diploma of Higher Education in Theology, Ministry and Mission in their entirety. Until becoming a TEI in its own right, ERMC also contributed to the teaching of the BA in Theology, Ministry and Mission and Masters (MA) in Theology, Ministry and Mission, which were predominantly delivered by staff elsewhere within the Cambridge Theological Federation. ERMC now delivers its BA and MA teaching in house.

As a part-time, non-residential course, training is offered in two different forms of a dispersed learning mode: either through attendance of evening classes in the Cambridge, Norwich or St Albans centres, or by means of an on-line live class using 'BigBlueButton'. There are six residential weekends per annum as well as an eight-day summer school. In 2017, ERMIC moved into its current offices in The Bounds in Westminster College, Cambridge.

ERMIC has four core academic staff members: two full-time and two part-time. It employs three members of professional support staff and two part-time chaplains. It draws on some 24 associate tutors, each of them linked with a particular centre, but all core staff contribute to the online and residential elements of the programmes.

March 2019 Periodic External Review

The Ministry Division-appointed reviewers carried out their visit over some 4-5 days during February and March 2019 including attending an ordinands' residential at Belsey Bridge Retreat Centre, and bespoke meetings and series of conversations focused around Reader training for Ely and Norwich dioceses. The team gathered information by:

- attending ERMIC Board of Trustees meeting
- attending Reader board meetings in Ely and Norwich
- speaking to Bishop Richard (Bishop of Bedford and chair of ERMIC Board of Trustees)
- meeting with the Principal
- meeting with core staff, administrative staff, chaplains
- speaking to present students (both Readers and ordinands and both informally and in organised meetings)
- meeting with past Reader students
- observing courses being delivered both at a residential weekend and in local teaching centres in both Dioceses of Ely and Norwich
- conversations with DDOs incumbents and placement supervisors
- meeting the Wardens of Readers for the Dioceses of Ely and Norwich

They were also able to have access to a variety of paperwork and information including:

- Durham Common Awards validation report
- Previous Ministry Division inspection report
- Terms of reference for Reader Boards
- ERMIC's website
- Diocesan websites
- Many documents helpfully uploaded to Moodle both prior to and after the PER visit.

The reviewers would like to thank all members of staff and students of ERMIC and of the Reader training programmes in the dioceses of Ely and Norwich for the time given, the very warm welcome received and for entering into the process of external review openly. We found a desire for theological rigour, well balanced with an understanding of different ways of expressing wisdom and understanding and the value of rounded formation for all entering public ministry. In its relationship with partner dioceses, ERMIC is not only developing its understanding of ordained ministry but also that of licensed lay ministries.

Reviewers were privileged to have access to significant paperwork and to a number of hours of contact time with both Reader trainers and ERMC core staff. We have not reported separately on diocesan Reader training as the clear picture we gained was of partners who desire to work closely and coherently in training women and men for ordination and licensed lay ministries. We therefore offer a report which we hope will encourage the dioceses and ERMC to work together as they consider some of the recommendations made.

The reviewers acknowledge the very significant changes that have been taking place in ERMC over the past few years; from becoming a TEI in its own right to many staff changes and the tightening of the institutional processes which hold ERMC staff to account and ensure its ongoing development. One key change has been that of taking ERMC from some stormy waters into a safe harbour. This has clearly been achieved and is reflected both in the way students and staff speak and in the growing structures.

One overarching observation shared by all members of the review team is that this ‘safe harbour’ is the place that ERMC has needed to be. We would urge those who influence the decision-making processes to be alert to the possibility that the safety of harbour may become a familiar and comfortable space but could hem in a solid and robust community, capable of facing more exciting, if sometimes choppy, waters. Being more adventurous will be essential into the next stage of ERMC’s development if numbers are to grow, new pathways to be established (particularly the lay pioneer pathway) and a real breadth of worship is to be experienced and valued.

It is in the light of these strengths and challenges that we offer this report.

Summary of outcomes

CRITERIA	OUTCOME
A Formational aims	Confidence
B Formational context	Confidence with qualifications
C Leadership and management	Confidence
D Student outcomes	Confidence with qualifications
E Partnership with university	Confidence
F Taught programmes	Confidence
Overall Outcome	Confidence with qualifications

The Report is written in relation to the PER Criteria outlined in the November 2018 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, understood and owned within the TEI.

1. It was clear to the reviewing team that since becoming a TEI in its own right, all stakeholders in ERMC have put considerable focus on the production, ownership, and implementation of a clear set of Formational Aims, and this has contributed to a sense of focus and direction within ERMC after a period of significant turbulence.
2. We found these aims to be clearly stated on in a prominent position on the ERMC website, and to be an integral part of ERMC's key policy documents and self-appraisal. A new printed prospectus is currently being designed but was not ready in time for the PER. The Formational Aims were central in an Open Day presentation given to prospective students, and were summarised by the principal as the acquisition of 'practical wisdom' in ministry.
3. In its self-evaluation document ERMC listed the new vision, aims, and strategic plan as a strength, and reviewers would concur. The document also articulated a realistic analysis of both the hopes and challenges the ERMC will face over the next 5 years, as well as the resource requirements it will need to fulfil its Formational Aims and be sustainable in the long term.
4. An action plan for the implantation of the Strategic Plan was rigorous and offered a clarifying focus for holding staff accountable to these aims.
5. We noted however that the Community, Staff, and Student Handbooks do not contain a reiteration of the Formational Aims, being more 'detail/process-orientated' documents.
6. The Formation Aims of ERMC reflect the intent of its governing documents in the provision of '*education and training of recognised candidates for ordained ministry...and, where appropriate, for the preparation of suitable candidates for lay ministry*'. Governing documents speak of an ecumenical intent and vision for ERMC in training ordained and may ministers for '*...the Church of England, the Methodist Church, then United Reformed Church and other mainstream Christian Churches...*' This ecumenical dimension has lapsed in recent years for reasons beyond the control of ERMC. The Articles of Association that determine the membership of the Board of Trustees is currently being amended to reflect this new reality.
7. The introduction of a Board of Studies has further enabled ERMC's ability to deliver its Formational Aims, not least in terms of monitoring the quality and standards of learning and teaching and the promotion of good practice, curriculum development, consideration of student feedback, oversight of the Annual Self-Evaluation process, and the ability to make recommendations to the management board.
8. Staff members reported a regular focus on Formational Aims as part of their ongoing discussions and many staff meeting agendas include matters of strategic and formational importance. The Formational Aims are reviewed annually by both staff and trustees. The regular review of the Implementation of the Strategic Plan by trustees keeps them clear oversight of the progress towards and the centrality of

ERMC's Formational Aims, and given that there is representation from all partner diocese of the trustees, this enables a diocesan and regional awareness.

9. When questioned, students were able to give an impressively complete version of the Formational Aims and it was clear that this vision is important to them and owned by them, and reflects external stakeholders' perspectives.

Commendation I

We commend ERMC for a clear, coherent, and energising Formational vision and set of aims, which are widely stated, understood and owned within the TEI.

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

10. The Formational Aims of ERMC speak of '...the highest standard of teaching and learning which integrates academic learning, ministerial skills and spiritual development...' reflecting the emphasis in the House of Bishop's Formation Criteria for Initial Ministerial Training Phase I on the acquisition of the dispositions, knowledge and skills for ministry.
11. ERMC clearly seeks to fulfil the expectations of the House of Bishops Formation Criteria for IME Phase I. These criteria are mapped on an audit document across four primary contexts, the academic course, the residential programme, the community life of ERMC, and the local church context.
12. There was clear evidence of ERMC's proactive engagement with its partnership dioceses, not least through the representation of those dioceses mainly by their Diocesan Directors of Ordinands (and by Ely Diocese's LLM training officer), who have responsibility of oversight of IME Phase I, on the ERMC trustees, but also by regular visits to partner dioceses by the principal and other staff. It was our experience that ERMC was in touch with and responsive to the needs and ministry/missional agendas of partner dioceses – the reintroduction of a Pioneer pathway in response to the Diocese of Ely's Market Town initiative was a good example of this.
13. We welcome the reintroduction of a Pioneer Pathway from September 2019, and the diversification in other pathways particularly the introduction of a Foundation Pathway for those exploring a vocation and the possibility of attracting more independent students.
14. Feedback from external stakeholders and DDOs affirmed a good level of satisfaction with ERMC's provision, with particular praise for its excellence in distance learning and context-based training.
15. There is a great richness in the Formation Vision of training 'lay and ordained' together and this captures the nationally expressed desire that future ministers should be collaborative, though there was some concern as to whether current structure allowed for real parity between these vocations.
16. A focus on mission and evangelism is to be found in the Formational Aims of ERMC that say it seeks to prepare people for Christian ministry to '*...engage with God's mission and proclaim the Gospel in the world...*' and to '*..send out students who are equipped to embrace change with confidence and faith.*' Reviewers were unsure as to whether this captured the wider church's urgency for a ministry of apologetics in a post-modern and arguably post-Christian society. We detected amongst the student body a genuine love and care for the world and the church and a desire to be of service to it in God's

name. We were concerned that this often felt reactive as opposed to proactive. We understand that there are plans to add further material on mission and apologetics to IME2, and we would encourage more focus on these areas within IME1 also.

Recommendation I

While recognising the existing formational focus on flexibility, adaptability, and collaboration, we recommend a refocusing of some of the Formational Aims around the dispositions, knowledge and skills needed for proactive / entrepreneurial mission and evangelism in the Future Church, across all modes of ministry, not least in ‘making new disciples’.

A3. The TEI’s aims and achievement are understood and supported by wider church audiences.

17. ERMC’s primary interface with the public is its website, which is of a high quality. The website contains information not only on academic and ministerial aspects of ERMC, but also seeks to represent the strong community culture amongst staff and students. A new prospectus is currently under design.
18. ERMC offers an annual Open Day at its Belsey Bridge residential centre and a series of Open Evenings at its regional centres. Potential students are also able to arrange individual visits to the regional centres.
19. Close links with regional DDOs and senior diocesan staff mean that ERMC’s aims and achievements are widely understood and supported regionally. This was affirmed by the feedback from a variety of external stakeholders.
20. External stakeholders including diocesan officers, former students and receiving home incumbents and context-supervisors note appreciatively EMRC’s commitment to *a high standard of learning and teaching and innovative and responsive pathways*.
21. The Validation Visit Report carried out by representatives of Durham University noted that *‘The mission, ethos and purpose of ERMC...are consistent with those of the Church of England, and so, by extension of the University’s partnership with the Archbishops’ Council – are consistent with those of Durham University*.
22. Reviewers heard two narratives around recruitment during the PER. Firstly a concern about under-recruitment and the financial impact this would have on the course. EMRC has a geographical advantage with no other local ministry course near its core dioceses in most cases (although St Mellitus is an option for those in the south of St Albans diocese), yet the fluctuating numbers of candidates going to BAP remains a concern. The other narrative was a concern for too much growth that would lead to the outgrowing of the Belsey Bridge Residential Centre, and the comfortable sense of home and community it provides. In saying this we draw on the evidence of a number of conversations – see further Section B3 and paragraph 38.
23. The supportive and inclusive nature of ERMC is widely understood and valued not least by partner dioceses. It is clearly seen as a high support formation environment. The community itself reflects that diversity and inclusivity. There are currently 60 Readers in training, 54 ordinands and 8 independent students. Females outnumber males 81/33. Married students outnumber single students, as graduates

do non-graduates. The vast majority of students are aged over 40, with the largest cohort aged between 50-60. The presence of indigenous continental European ordinands as well as UK nationals living abroad from the Diocese of Europe adds a real richness. There are very few students from a BAME background. This might reflect the demographics of partner dioceses, though there were no obvious processes for encouraging applications from such communities. As a step towards doing so, we would urge that ERMC give consideration to reviewing its website and other publicity material with a view to promoting the TEI's intentional and genuine inclusivity, in terms not only of church tradition but of – for example - age, gender, diverse nationality and ethnicity.

Recommendation 2

We recommend that ERMC review its publicity material with a view towards encouraging applications from a wider demographic including those of BAME heritage.

The review team has **Confidence** 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.

24. ERMC has many partners in formation across the region and in Europe. Its major partnership with Cambridge Theological Federation has changed significantly with the establishment of ERMC as a TEI in its own right. ERMC's Principal, teaching staff and members of the Board of Trustees all speak of a much better relationship with the Federation now that they are no longer intermediaries in the academic processes. Staff training days and Principals' meetings were identified as particularly valuable resources offered by this partnership.
25. Partnerships with the dioceses of Ely, Norwich and St Albans are key to Reader/LLM training. This review team has not been involved in St Albans diocese as a separate review of that diocese's Reader training took place in May-June 2017. There are good working relationships, supported particularly by the involvement of both Charles Read and Nick Moir in the teaching of Common Awards modules. These partnerships are, however, to a greater extent, informally organised and maintained and rely heavily on individuals (whose involvement was spoken very highly of by current and past students), although we have been informed that a memorandum of understanding is being produced. In order that these partnerships might be strengthened and made sustainable, the reviewers suggest ensuring the formalisation of the links and increased communication with those who have responsibility in dioceses for the shape of further LLM/reader ministry for which candidates are being trained (i.e. Wardens of Readers and Diocesan Reader/LLM Boards).
26. A strength of working with a number of partner dioceses is the variety of placement opportunities available to students. Placements are reported as being valuable and stretching by current and past students. Placement supervisors expressed mixed responses when asked about the level of communication with ERMC. We are aware that some work is in place to establish training agreements and to provide training days for placement supervisors. It is still noted, though, that supervisors generally would appreciate clearer instructions about how their role fits into the overall training pathways of the students and how they can effectively contribute to the students' progress through the reporting process. Which would be assisted by a simple, short, clear handbook.

Recommendation 3

We recommend a continuation and development of the process of formalising links with partner diocese in relation to Reader/LLM training to ensure these links are embedded in the institutional policies rather than relying on individuals to maintain relationships.

Recommendation 4

We recommend that ERMC formulates a clear and simple method of communicating with placement supervisors which enables them to be more effectively part of the overall training pathway for supervises. This may take the form of short training sessions, a short handbook with key tasks and expectations clearly articulated and/or a more clearly communicated and realistic reporting process.

- B2. There are well understood and embedded practices of corporate life, so as to enhance the process of students' formation.**
27. The reviewers observed a tight-knit community, particularly amongst its ordinands and the Norwich Reader students. While not present at all residential events, Norwich Reader students do attend the Summer School in their first year of training, with the possibility of attending the 2nd year Summer School if diocesan funds allow. There is also a June weekend away held in conjunction with the ERMC June weekend and regular Saturday sessions at Belsey Bridge when ordinands are in residence. This level of community provides a safe place for learning and development with significant amounts of support being offered between students as well as from staff to students.
28. The level of commitment from the Diocese of Norwich to the training and support of its Readers is commendable, allowing them significant access to this formational community from the start of their training when they take part in Summer School and then in the ongoing contact at Saturday teaching days and the final weekend of each academic year. The level of identification with ERMC was high among these students and the sense of belonging to a bigger learning and formational community was articulated strongly.
29. Stating in their mission statement that they wish to “offer innovative and responsive pathways that meet the needs of our students, partner dioceses and the wider Church” clearly evidences ERMC’s desire to provide relevant training for emerging ministries in a changing church. As discussed further at section D6, this desire does not always translate into reality, particularly in relation to training ministers for the work of ‘making disciples’. We acknowledge that this may be an outworking of the need to find safe space but would ask ERMC staff to ensure that ‘innovative and responsive’ pathways are kept to the fore when next working on the curriculum review.
30. Reviewers were less convinced of the lines of communication with Reader/LLM partners than with those representing the needs of ordained ministries and would therefore encourage ERMC to find ways of communicating with Wardens of Readers in partner dioceses in the way that they already do very effectively with DDOs. This is particularly important in the light of ongoing national revisions of Reader identity.
31. Stakeholders, students (past and present) and staff all speak of the importance of community in dispersed learning environments as well as at residential. This was evidenced by the uniform emphasis on gathering for food and worship before evening study sessions.
32. This community ethos was evident, and valued, across all of the learning communities including the newly created Wisbech Learning Community. Whilst some teething problems were reported with the setting up of a new learning centre, the appointment of a diocesan staff member who will accompany these students through their learning was expected, by current students and diocesan staff, to ease any early difficulties.
33. Having acknowledged the strengths of the community ethos, reviewers were aware of a number of habitual uses of language which, with some small adjustments, could make the community of ministry students more inclusive of its Reader/LLM members. Student badges were labelled ‘ERMC’, ‘Ely LLM’ or ‘Norwich Reader’. We would question the reason for all students not being ERMC or ordinands not being labelled as such. Whilst being very welcoming of guests, the ordinands who had been

meeting from the Friday also welcomed visiting Reader/LLM students on Saturday morning, possibly creating a feeling of those training for lay ministries not being ERMC students. The student forum meeting, held on Friday evening, is timed to exclude Reader/LLM representation and therefore to make it difficult for lay ministry students to be elected to positions of representation on ERMC boards.

34. Students expressed their gratitude for the open way in which families are welcomed to worship and meals at the beginning and end of academic years. When questioned further, however, it was apparent that there are few opportunities for families to come together to consider the implications of life as families of those in public ministry. Some students felt their families would appreciate the enabling by ERMC of some opportunities for learning and support, particularly as they consider the meaning of ordination and its potential impact on the whole family.

Commendation 2

ERMC provides an extremely supportive learning community framework which gives students considerable freedom to use their skills and previous experiences to support one another, in particular through alphabet groups and the student forum. We commend this intentional community ethos, both in the gathered and dispersed settings of ERMC's learning community, and encourage ERMC to constantly review the outworking of this ethos in the light of recommendations 1 and 12.

Commendation 3 (Norwich)

The reviewers commend the integrated way in which Reader training is viewed in line with other diocesan policy topics in the Diocese of Norwich. We saw evidence of financial commitment which allows Norwich Reader candidates access to the Summer School at the beginning of training and a residential weekend each year. In turn this allows Reader candidates to fully participate in alphabet groups and worship preparation.

Recommendation 5 (LLM/Reader partner dioceses)

We would recommend all partner dioceses to consider ways in which Reader/LLM candidates might more fully access ERMC's formational components to training; in particular Summer School participation which would provide an even playing field for students' understanding of the practicalities of studying with Durham and a more integrated role in ERMC's community life.

Recommendation 6

We would recommend a review of the way in which Reader/LLM students are referred to by, and given equal opportunities to participate in, the student community as a whole.

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

35. Reviewers observed week night teaching sessions in both Chesterton and Norwich where accommodation was appropriate and allowed students to meet together before sessions to eat and worship as a whole group before splitting into smaller tutor groups.

36. Belsey Bridge, where the weekend component of the review took place is well appointed and offers good residential, teaching, worship and social accommodation.
37. ERMC's library is housed in Belsey Bridge in a space allocated to it after its previous home was converted into bar space. Reviewers found the library space to be less than ideal in that it is in an otherwise unused area of the house which is not regularly cleaned and has inadequate light protection leading to some of the spines of books coming away and being bleached. Given that the library is reportedly well used, consideration should be given to the care of the books, which are a considerable resource; both academic and financial.
38. The limitation of Belsey Bridge is its potential for growth. Reference was made, in ERMC's trustees meeting and in a number of conversations, to the pressure on rooms if student numbers grow or if more Reader/LLM students are funded to participate in ERMC residential. We detected a reluctance to consider a larger venue due to the fact that the group would be more dispersed in accommodation and meeting rooms; and re-housing the library was cited as an additional challenge. Therefore, the impression we gained was, on a number of occasions, that Belsey Bridge was a 'safe space' and that to encourage growth (at this time particularly in relation to Ely Readers sharing residential) was not a possibility. The reviewers considered this level of awareness to potentially be limiting motivation for growth and for encouraging equity for lay ministry students. Belsey Bridge has understandably become a loved home and part of the narrative of ERMC but it is important that it does not become a limiting environment.

Recommendation 7

The reviewers would recommend that serious consideration is given to improving the way in which the library is housed (e.g. simply putting blinds at windows would make a significant difference).

Recommendation 8

It is recommended that the possibility of outgrowing Belsey Bridge should be addressed openly and objectively so that a possible future for larger student numbers participating in residential components of training can be articulated before it needs to be handled as an urgent and immediate problem.

B4. The TEI's corporate worship and liturgy are balanced in range and tradition, including authorised and innovative rites.

39. Worship is clearly expressed as being central to ERMC's life; both in its gathered community and in the dispersed learning communities of the dioceses. This centrality is expressed in handbooks, in the lived ethos of staff and students who we were privileged to meet and from the very beginning of contact with potential students in open days and open evenings where the structure of ERMC's formation for ministry is explained.
40. Previous reviews of ERMC's worship have encouraged a greater emphasis on BCP and Common Worship liturgies, stating that students seemed unfamiliar with these standard Anglican rites. This advice has been acted on carefully. However, during the sessions and residential weekend of the observation period, reviewers found this redressing of the balance to have led to a pattern that

offered little innovation or variety within its handling of Common Worship. No optional or seasonal CW materials were used and one reader read both readings, suggesting a limited, uncreative, way of using the material available. It needs to be acknowledged that we saw a very small sample of worship and that we were extremely impressed with the A-F group worship offered on the Saturday evening. Indeed, the overall balance of worship has much to commend. Our concern here is that, on the evidence of the practice we saw modelled during the weekend, students may come to view Common Worship as intrinsically monochrome and to value it less than they might in terms both of its potential variety and its role as a resource for public ministry.

Recommendation 9

We recommend that ERMC should review the handling of Common Worship liturgy within its community, with a view to extending its range of use and mindful of its status as public worship as well as being the worshipping practice of the community.

41. Guidelines for worship are clearly stated in the worship handbook. However, this handbook is only written with weekend worship in mind. Much of the community's worship takes place before the mid-week teaching sessions. While these times are short, it would be possible for students to be encouraged to explore various traditions; maybe linking worship with the taught module for the term in the way that Norwich's Tuesday evening worship has been. If all students, whether present at weekends or not, received the guidance offered in the worship handbook (extended to cover all acts of ERMC worship, whether gathered or dispersed) the experience and variety could be enhanced.
42. Placements are organised with the expressed intention of widening students' experience of church tradition. This will have the effect of also broadening experience of a variety of worship styles. Past and present students and placement supervisors were all clear about the purpose of extending experience of different styles of worship. Students happily spoke of being taken outside their comfort zones in their placement contexts, both in church and chaplaincy settings.

Recommendation 10

We would recommend ERMC to expand its worship handbook to include not only the worship at residential weekends, but also the evening worship before local tutorial sessions in order that all worship offered by ERMC students (ordinands and Reader/LLM candidates) is being located within the same ethos and practical guidelines in a way that articulates clearly what Norwich Tuesday evening worship is already putting into practice.

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

43. Staff and students relate extremely well with one another. This was evidenced particularly clearly in the diocesan learning environments where mutual support and encouragement seem to be normal practice.
44. The core staff team, together with the Reader/LLM diocesan training staff, is a very small team and throughout the review period we heard from staff who feel they are at full stretch and from students who are concerned for the staff members known to them. Particular concern was expressed by

Reader/LLM students of the pressure that the diocesan lay formation staff are under.
Hence we make the following recommendation:

Recommendation 11

We recommend that, with the support of ERMC as needed, Ely and Norwich dioceses review the staffing of their LLM training function with a view to the sustainability of that training.

45. In relation to this pressure, the lack of time to engage in research or study was expressed both at the trustees meeting and in conversation with individual staff. Reviewers were concerned that the long-term effect of this lack of personal development has the potential to lower the teaching standards both in terms of content and staff morale.
46. Chaplaincy provision for students in ERMC was observed as being highly valuable and a significant part of the wellbeing of ERMC's learning community. We commend the way in which the current chaplains consciously complement one another in gifting and personality and work for the good of all students.
47. The work of the chaplains can be stressful. When asked about supervision, both said they seek supervision which, if payment is necessary, they pay for themselves. Their work would be more overtly valued if supervision was part of their working agreement and remuneration package.
48. Staff appraisal happens but more often on an informal basis than in an organized way. Staff stated that they would value a more formalized system of appraisal and professional development as well as clearer induction processes which would lead to greater confidence from the start of their time of employment.

Commendation 4

The reviewers commend the work of the chaplains; in particular their commitment to working as a team and acknowledging their different backgrounds and skills. The value added by their presence is, we believe, greatly in excess of the financial cost incurred.

Recommendation 12

Having commended the work of the chaplains, we would recommend ERMC to consider the level of supervision offered as part of the chaplaincy contract. The work is exacting, emotionally and spiritually, and supervision is essential if chaplains are to model 'appropriate patterns of spirituality, continued learning and reflection on practice'.

Recommendation 13

Likewise, we recommend a review of the formal structures in place for staff supervision, professional review and opportunities for CPD which for academic staff should include personal research/study time.

<p>The review team has Confidence with Qualifications with regard to Criterion B: Formational Context.</p>
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SECTION C: LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

C1. The TEI has clear and effective governance structures.

49. The ERM Council is the governing body of ERM, which includes representatives from the sponsoring dioceses, as well as ecumenical partners, the Church of England's General Synod and the Cambridge Theological Federation. (Prior to its validation in 2018 as a stand-alone TEI, ERM was represented on the Federations' Governing Body with 'Full member' status.) Both staff and students are also represented on the Council. The Rt Revd Richard Atkinson, Bishop of Bedford, chairs the Council. A full list of the directors can be found on the TEI website. Board members are appointed in accordance with the Articles of Association of ERM. When a new Trustee is appointed they receive an induction pack.
50. The Council meets termly. Reports (which we have seen) are produced by the Principal on the progress being made by the TEI and also by the Finance Sub-Committee on financial matters. We have seen copies of accounts and were able to ask questions at the meeting of the Directors and Annual General Meeting held on 15th March 2019.
51. An annual Away Day is the venue for a robust review of progress being made and the development of strategy and priorities for the following year. Members of the Council spoke highly of the benefit of this. We challenged the Council on its quality assurance processes and were reassured that the Federation and Durham University have had influence and involvement in these processes. Since the Durham University Validation Visit Report was produced and recommendations made regarding the formalisation of the quality assurance procedures of the TEI, a paper explaining the academic governance and quality assurance procedures has been produced. A second paper clarifying and formalising student representation on the Management Committee and student feedback has also been produced. Terms of reference for the Board of Studies (Management Committee) and Board of Examiners have also provided additional clarity, not least for their respective members.
52. On the evidence we had, financial structures and serve ERM well. We saw evidence of good administrative support and good systems of communication and planning which those involved are constantly seeking to improve. The clarity of purpose for the future that we gleaned from the Directors' Meeting on 15th March illustrates well the strength of leadership and business management in the organisation.

Commendation 5

The reviewers commend the strength of leadership and business management in the organisation and the way in which structures and communication have been improved recently.

C2. The TEI has effective leadership.

53. In considering this Criterion we sought evidence as to how well the Principal worked with both the leadership team and the governing body. We were impressed at the success of this, which was appreciated and reciprocated by the principal and his colleagues. The approachability of the Principal was a key factor in this as was the desire for all involved in the leadership of the TEI to develop a jointly owned realistic strategic direction for the future. This enhances our belief that the senior

leadership team, along with the Principal, is able to be both directive and collaborative, enabling us to be satisfied that both have an effective working relationship with the governing body.

54. When we spoke with individual students, as well as attending the student forum, we were pleased to hear that their observations reflected our own that there is a widely owned vision for excellence and a good motivational climate in the TEI. Students feel empowered to raise any concerns they may have and recognise that their input is also valued for the development of the strategy going forward.
55. Council Minutes and observation of the meeting of the Directors held on 15th March referred to above indicate that the governance body does work effectively. Feedback is generated from issues raised at one meeting which is shared at the following meeting (Minutes document this) reflecting good communication between the different bodies (students / staff / directors) and actions resulting therefrom. This impression was consolidated through discussions with both staff and students on different occasions throughout the visit.

Commendation 6

We wish to commend the way that feedback is generated and discussed relating to issues raised in different areas of ERMC's life, reflecting good communication between the different bodies (students / staff / directors) and actions resulting therefrom.

C3. Trustees are appropriately recruited, supported and developed.

56. As part of the review of this criterion request was made for sight of the CVs of the Trustees and also teaching staff. Verbal assurance was also gained through attendance at the meeting of the Directors on 15th March that the trustees and other members of the governing body have appropriate skills and also engage positively in their roles. This view was reinforced through discussions with both staff and students who spoke positively of the holistic approach of the TEI towards their welfare.
57. A safer recruiting policy would be a beneficial addition to the current policies and procedures which we reviewed. This could be applied throughout the TEI. Such a policy could refer to other policies such as those relating to Equal Opportunities and Safeguarding as well as a summary of the recruitment and selection process. A Person Specification along with additional information for Applicants including an Application form and guidance notes for its completion; a matrix for shortlisting; information regarding an individual's Right to Work in the UK and DBS identity checks would be useful components of such a policy and provide clarity for those involved in the recruitment process – both employer and applicant.

Recommendation 14

It is recommended that a safer recruiting policy should be added to the current policies.

C4. The TEI has effective business planning and fundraising.

58. Evidence was requested and obtained to satisfy the reviewers that the TEI does have a business and strategic plan which covers resources needed. In discussion we were able to seek clarification of potential commercial and financial threats as well as opportunities. Financial accounts were provided and discussed as were the budgets for this year and the next financial year; this reinforces the

reassurance given by the University's Treasurers' Department in April 2018 to those undertaking Durham University's validation visit that ERM is financially stable.

59. For **Norwich Diocese**, the strategic plan (which is derived from the ERM strategic plan) was discussed as were the means of risk management. A risk register which is returned annually to the Diocese shows an active determination to manage potential risks to the continued success of the delivery of Licensed Lay Ministry training in the Diocese. There is an annual budget which is drawn up and presented to the Diocese's Reader Training Reference Group. It is recognised that the number of students year by year is an unknown and therefore a potential risk, but steps are taken in the drafting of the budget to mitigate this.

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

60. As stated above we have had sight of the financial planning of the TEI through budgets and also audited accounts. The Agendas for business meetings also include financial matters in which the members present participate. In discussion we were able to confirm that the accounts were backed up on computers regularly. Financial reporting is completed in a timely fashion.
61. At one of the meetings we attended (Diocese of Norwich Reader Training Reference Group) there was a full discussion about risk management following the completion of an updated risk register. This document covered key risk areas, appropriately graded the risks to each area and stipulated timely plans to reduce the risk, specifying those persons/groups which would be responsible in each case.

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.

62. The PER Team met with three training ministers each of whom gave very positive assessments of the TEI's effectiveness in shaping the students' knowledge, skills and dispositions. Pre-visit documents included examples of student's critical engagement with biblical texts. The extent to which students become familiar with the whole canon of scripture and develop confidence in its interpretation and application was beyond the scope of the short visit, but would be good for the TEI to consider.
63. From numerous conversations, students and staff indicated their enjoyment and valuing of breadth and diversity of understanding and practice of the Christian faith represented in their relationships and in their various placements and course experiences. The sense of community was tangible and attractive, especially given the limited time the community spent gathered together physically. (One-week Summer School, six weekends, a weekly midweek evening for some, on-line for many). However, there remains a haunting question of the extent to which those with more traditional or conservative theological, ecclesiological, liturgical or ethical paradigms are enjoyed, respected and valued for their whole selves, or whether there is a tendency to sublimate views when divergent from the modal 'orthodoxy.' A number commented in private conversation that they 'kept quiet' about their views so as not to attract censure or to disturb the peace. A number shared, hesitantly, that their conservative views on sexuality, marriage, etc. could not be shared openly as they would not be accepted and would be likely to cause concern. The term 'divergent' here is important to note, indicating the existence of a community orthodoxy, roughly locatable in the region, where, as one comment that neatly encapsulates the question put it: 'we have everything from liberal catholic to open evangelical.' While this probably describes the modality of the community, and indeed of the Church of England and particularly her hierarchy, it does not describe the actual breadth and diversity either of the community, or of the Church of England.
64. In summary, while ERMC is undoubtedly an outwardly happy and harmonious community, this may have been won at the expense of those with broader views than the modal because the community has settled, perhaps unintentionally, on a theologically and ethically liberal paradigm as its orthodoxy. Our sense that there may be a cost in having done so comes from the conversation cited at paragraph 63 and, conversely, from the principal's observation to us that some students can still occasionally feel marginalised by things that others say. We would want to acknowledge ERMC's laudable efforts to keep a very diverse community in a degree of harmony. But might there be merit in a more structured process within the intentionally safe space of ERMC for exploring difficult and contested issues and looking to model 'good disagreement'? – as has been done, successfully, within other TEI communities. This could have clear value in preparation for handling conflicts well in a parish context, and we would urge consideration of that idea in the context of our **Recommendation 15**.
65. Evidence from sample assignments shows that theological reflection is being nurtured on the Course, and this was evident in some of the conversations around table, in small group work and in classes. Instinctive knowledge of models of theological reflection could not be said to be part of the natural informal discourse, but the practice of reflection was evident in conversation and in assignment examples we have seen.

Commendation 7

The Course leadership had produced an impressive community of people from a diverse range, with a notable depth of fellowship, friendship and mutual care and support.

Recommendation 15

In a Course seeking to provide non-residential and cost-effective training for all streams of the church in its region, we recommend that careful consideration be given to how comprehensive the welcome for and engagement with the actual diversity of the church on the street is.

D2. Students have a desire and ability to share in mission, evangelism and discipleship.

66. The range of backgrounds of the students we met was impressive, and they brought an equally impressive ability to use these backgrounds to exercise a clear world-facing ministry. Two reports from long placements exemplify this: 'In N's work setting N has used N's own knowledge to support our customers to consider their own spiritual needs as we seek to support them with their care needs and independence. This is one of the core aims of our Adult Social Care approach...N has used links with the church to raise awareness of our own mission and show the links in priorities and aims that allow us to work strongly together.' 'N is self-effacing. N could well shout about N's achievements and abilities. It is a measure of N's spiritual maturity and sense of self that N accommodates others with such grace. N could well choose to dominate as N has evident gifts. In pastoral meetings where serious ... consequences were raised, N showed appropriate restraint - given N's ... background - offering advice when solicited. N also showed awareness of self and others by appropriate body language; N was careful to position himself inconspicuously.'
67. Many conversations with students and staff demonstrated a genuine enthusiasm with being engaged in church, in the Course, in training for ministry, in the Course community. However, genuine prayerful enthusiasm for and experience of mission and particularly evangelism, either personal or organised was less evident both in ordinands in resident and in Reader/LLM students we met during diocesan visits. EMRC's principal assures us that much of this activity was contained more in the placement or home church context. We saw genuine commitment, imagination and practice in the careful organisation and enactment of a 'Café Church' style worship on the Saturday evening. This was not evident in other acts of worship which would have been inaccessible for people not well versed in the use of Common Worship and, granted that their context as acts of the regular worship of the Course community would not necessarily require such, we believe that students' formation should also have an orientation towards the use of Common Worship in a parish and hence public-facing context - hence our **Recommendation 9** above. Placement gives good opportunity for active involvement with mission, e.g. 'N stepped well beyond N's comfort zone for our engagement with the public at the local Tesco store, offering ashing and hot cross buns on Ash Wednesday and prayer on Maundy Thursday. N was prepared to challenge herself, and the congregation, as we undertook these missional activities.'
68. We consider that all the students we talked with over the weekend visit showed a good level of engagement in helping others to grow in faith. 'We have seen the benefits N has brought to very vulnerable adults in the community by linking them to faith organisations...N is committed to not only support the independence of individuals but also to empowering them to follow their faith.'

69. There was plenty of evidence of students being actively engaged in helping others to grow in their Christian discipleship, which in some cases included encouragement to take up particular callings to act or lead in the life of their churches.

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

70. The PER Team had not sufficient time to be able to observe how this worked out in the fullness of the community's life, and in the lives of candidates for both lay and ordained ministries. However, the comments we did pick up indicated that there was an area of question here. For example, worship is a key indicator. The standard fare we observed, and have been told by students is standard across the year, is a straightforward reading of Common Worship Daily Offices; one leader who also leads intercession, one reader for both bible readings. We comment further on this at section B4 and **Recommendation 9**. We noted that the Eucharist is always called 'The Eucharist,' never 'Holy Communion', 'The Lord's Supper', or 'Mass,' as it is in the church, and with the exception of the latter, her authorised liturgies. A third-year student who aspired to a ministry in theological education said, 'It never occurred to me,' which suggested to us that this particular element of diversity had not been explored on the Course, although we are assured that a reflective practice module does in fact cover it. This is no simple issue to address, as comments following an attempt to hold a Charismatic Catholic liturgy saw it struggling for authenticity in a community which is modally neither Charismatic nor Anglo-Catholic. Vestments were colloquially referred to as 'tat', though admittedly this is fairly common among some church traditions and, to give due credit, this term was challenged at an open student meeting, so there is awareness of difference in approach.
71. We have commented above on the balance of Common Worship and other worship liturgies used at ERMCC weekends. Placements and ongoing involvement in the local church extend this experience, and there is good provision for reflection in the DMM Social Context Placement Report form 2018/19.
72. Most students on church placements are on the record as having engaged in leading public worship, with very concern from their supervisors, and a great deal of positive comment on their abilities and deliveries. A shining example: 'N was responsible for putting together an All Age Service on Good Friday to present the Easter story in a way that spoke to young children and their parents. The resulting script was fantastic – entertaining and interactive. N was ready to hear suggestions and take advice about wording and length and the service was a huge success.'
73. Numerous conversations with students revealed the growth in faith they were experiencing as a result of being with ERMCC. A particular report from a long placement summarises this finding neatly: 'N connected with residents quickly, helping them to feel safe and accepted within the group setting, providing a good basis for open discussion. N helped to bring the material in an accessible manner for people who had very varying theological understanding. N has a gift to be able to teach people, relating modern day experiences to biblical truths – and clearly has a good grasp of scripture. N used initiative well in knowing when to let discussions meander off-topic, and when to bring things back to the topic. People felt valued and accepted by her.' 'N is eminently teachable. Again, this flows from a place of deep security in N's identity in Christ.'

Recommendation 16

We recommend a review of worship throughout ERMC to ensure that the stated intention of diversity is being realized in practice.

D4. Students' personality, character and relationships.

74. There is understandably a wide variation in our observations of these characteristics, often depending on the stage students have reached in the programme. Third year ordinands knew the expectations and how to navigate, though balancing time demands (family, friends, work, home church etc.), remained very challenging for all we spoke with. First years were about two-thirds of their way through at the point of our review visit to the residential weekend. Some were still struggling painfully with balancing the demands of the course with their home and work lives, as were Reader/LLM candidates; particularly those who had not had the benefit of the awareness raised at Summer School.
75. While this struggle should produce resilience, for some it was reported as being debilitating. There would be great benefit in regularly drawing new students' attention to the simple overview frameworks of the Course contents, timelines and requirements for assignments, at both class and tutorial levels to enable new students of all learning abilities and styles to get up to speed. A system of 'Buddies' where an experienced third year is linked with a first year to help guide them through the complexity of the structure of the Course might be of benefit to help prevent students who struggle to own up to their difficulties falling through the holes in the net ERMC provides. A minor point to note is the lack of a live link on the 'Other Resources' section of the Induction page of the ERMC website for 'Bibliography.'
76. An example from placement reports demonstrates the awareness of the need to develop resilience in changing circumstances in formation: 'Despite the newness of the environment, the amount N needed to assimilate about people and worship here, and significant upheaval in N's own life, N navigated all of these elements of N's placement with grace and calm.'
77. Placement reports provided by ERMC give good evidence of the ways in which students work well with others, and engage constructively in the situations to which they are assigned. e.g. "N facilitated theological reflection with our small Lent groups. This is not easy with an unknown group, but N led them gently through the process and the group engaged well.'
78. As an example of forming healthy relationships: 'I thought the placement would only benefit N, but I found that through N's questions and different view point, I also received benefits from this time together which was encouraging and also surprising. If N were to formally volunteer with our charity, I would have no concerns whatsoever in placing N in any of our charity's many areas of work, confident that N would get on well with the other members of the team as well as the tasks set... I see N's heart is very much in helping and supporting those who need it.' As mentioned elsewhere, although life-work balance is addressed in training agreements, with staff mentors, local supervisors and at Summer School, some first-year students were evidently struggling with care of self against the demands of ERMC, home and work life. These would benefit from more attention to advising and guiding towards achieving this balance.
79. Student's ability to understand and work with professional boundaries in ministry and pastoral care is evidenced, for example in the comment 'N should be commended on N's ability to wear N's faith and

discuss N's faith with others in an appropriate way in a professional setting.' 'N presents as very professional. In this team and in the wider team it is paramount that people work in a multidisciplinary way and this is fundamental to N's way of working.'

Recommendation 17

We would recommend a system of 'Buddies' for all ERMC students – ordinands and Reader/LLM candidates to help guide new students through the complexity of the structure of the Course.

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

80. Many students come from roles in their lives that exercise a considerable level of leadership. Leadership roles in the ERMC community were evident across the weekend, in the small 'A-F' groups; in chapel; in Student Forum. There is good opportunity to include this aspect of formation in placements. Representative examples from placement reports: 'Throughout my placement, I experienced leadership roles in house groups, delivering home communions and limited youth and children engagement, a morning with the local non C of E primary school.' 'N preaches very well; N's sermon was well prepared, appropriate to our context and well delivered. N works well collaboratively and creates a safe space both in worship and in discussion.'
81. There is less evidence that Reader/LLM students have opportunities to consider issues of 'leadership from the second chair' which, given changes in both Central Readers Council and Ministry Division's working definitions of Reader/LLM ministry would be a beneficial element of lay ministry formation.
82. There was evidence of students' ability to share leadership by actively looking for the gifts of others as new officers were identified, chosen and commissioned for service in the Student body. One particular piece of evidence from placement reports says 'N worked with the Team Curate in the delivery of the service, offering encouragement and support to someone less comfortable with working with children and enabling all involved to give of their best.'
83. One reviewer's observation of one of the A-F groups in operation gave a glimpse of a very able and caring leader who involved the different members of the group well. A Student Forum meeting struggled a little in its informality, and while it worked in its context, the level of informality and lack of democratic accountability would do less well in the context of a PCC, particularly where the PCC was dominated by one or two powerful individuals. An excellent example of good practice is described in a long placement report: 'N was a very good co-facilitator, and an area that N could grow into would taking the lead facilitator role – keeping an eye on timings, and bringing a timely conclusion at the end of discussion. N grew in confidence over the weeks, and we have no doubt N could step into this if N was involved in another course.' We understand that Norwich Diocese's LLM formation programme includes material on leadership qualities and skills, and we recommend that ERMC should include equivalent provision within its LLM formation more generally.

Recommendation 18

We recommend, particularly with the new Central Readers Council and Ministry Division emphasis on Readers as leaders in church and society, that Reader/LLM formation contains elements of teaching on role-specific leadership qualities and skills.

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

84. The calling to ministry was very evident in conversations with both ordinands and lay ministry students, on the Course. There is a widespread sense of being drawn in to something beyond involvement with church affairs at a congregational, small group leadership level, and into a wider leadership role. Building church was clearly what students had a sense of being called to.
85. Breadth and diversity have already been discussed in D1 above. Some examples of awareness and engagement in these issues by students include: 'I found my placement at X with Fr N very challenging in the context of coming from a very small rural church setting into a large parish and larger congregations...' 'N shows a strong interest in the diverse beliefs of the team.' 'N was quick to see areas of difference with N's home parish and previous experience. N was at ease talking about what things N had found personally enjoyable, moving or difficult and why that might have been. N was also very open to what had been different in terms of seeing new and surprisingly affecting aspects of liturgy that N hadn't experienced before.'
86. Willingness to be accountable and obedient during training is evident in the sample of Placement Reports where both students and supervisors record this willingness.
87. A number of conversations with students over the weekend, and in diocesan visits, confirms that students have a clear understanding of the nature and scope of public ministry, and the boundaries within which this must be exercised. The wide and often experienced background of students working in secular roles helps this understanding. None of the placement reports notes any concerns in this area. One particular placement report describes the value of the student's understanding from their secular employment, and how able this student was in sharing faith appropriately and helpfully in the placement context.

D7. Pioneer ministry training.

88. There are currently no Pioneer students enrolled at ERM, although there have been in the recent past, and there is a new planned pathway which ERM will deliver in-house.

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

89. Although we did not see copies of final reports, we were able to see sufficient evidence of ongoing assessment, from assignment marking to placement and training supervisors' reports, drawing on core staff and external supervisor input, to be assured that ongoing, and end of training, assessment is robustly carried out.

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.

90. A number of conversations with students revealed the care with which the staff put together training plans designed for each student. One particular conversation left us impressed with the care in which this was carried out for a student with a complex and experienced background, leaving the student feeling cared for, supported, inspired, and resourced for their upcoming training.

Commendation 8

Reviewers commend the way in which ERMC staff work with students to establish personal training plans.

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

91. Students meet in small groups ('A-F') during the residential components of the programme, each with a member of staff, but led by one of the students. There is a Student forum held during each residential; and a 'Community Matters' session during each residential. Teaching is continued weekly in term time either in small local groups, or via the 'Big Blue Button' video conferencing suite. In each of these, students have the opportunity to contribute the TEI's understanding of their achievements: staff can pick up and record such achievements.
92. Placement and ministry supervisor reports also add to the feedback loop.
93. We would note again, in line with a number of previous recommendations, that Reader/LLM students who have no access to Summer School and weekends are disadvantaged in this area.

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

SECTION E: PARTNERSHIP WITH UNIVERSITY

Sections E and F were substantially assessed during the separate visit by Common Awards team on 18th April 2018 as part of the process of validating ERMIC as a TEI in its own right as it separated from the Cambridge Federation. Since, subject to recommendations, Durham colleagues were satisfied that ERMIC should receive TEI validation, our involvement in these criteria has been limited to any additional observations made at the time of our visit.

E1. The quality control and assurance procedures governing the partnership are robust

94. In addition to quality control procedures observed in relation to Common Awards, we observed meetings of ERMIC management committee as well as Ely and Norwich Reader bodies which assure us that quality control and assurance is taken very seriously in all cases. Paragraphs 40-43 of the Common Awards Validation Report confirm this to have been Durham's finding too.

E2. The overall provision for academic and pastoral support and guidance is adequate.

95. In addition to observations made by the Common Awards validation team in their report, we would like to reiterate our previous commendation of the pastoral support offered by the chaplains.

96. We would also like to highlight the substantial work in the area of academic support offered by Nick Moir and Charles Read to their diocese's Reader/LLM candidates.

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

97. Ministry Division reviewers would like to add to the Common Awards validation report by noting the appointment of a member of staff with responsibility for oversight of the Wisbech learning centre and acknowledging the benefits that this appointment will bring.

98. We would also like to re-state our concerns about the physical environment in which ERMIC's own library is housed, whilst at the same time agreeing with the Common Awards team (paragraph 70 of their report) in their positive assessment of the library facilities open to ERMIC students. In addition, we note the fulfillment of condition 4 of the Common Awards team's report ensuring continued access to these facilities now that ERMIC is no longer part of the Federation.

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

99. We have nothing to add to the Common Awards team's report, paragraphs 79-85, except to note that the provision of staff development available through the link with the Federation is still well established and available to all teaching staff.

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

100. We saw nothing in our visit to contradict the Common Awards team's findings recorded in paragraphs 86 and 87 of their report.

The review team has Confidence with regard to Criterion E: Partnership with University

SECTION F: TAUGHT PROGRAMMES

See headnote to Section E.

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

101. Paragraphs 93-96 of the Common Awards team's report are summed up in the final paragraph which states 'These figures appear to be realistic from discussions with ERM. The visit team was satisfied that the programmes were viable in terms of market and likely numbers of entrants.' We have no concerns that this statement is no longer accurate.

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

102. This information was predominantly outside the scope of our review given the already positive findings, subject to some recommendations, of the Common Awards review team as expressed in paragraphs 99-108 of their report.

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.

103. Given the Common Awards team's conclusion that they were 'satisfied that the methods of teaching, learning and assessment would enable the learning outcomes to be achieved and that achievement to be measured, subject to the matters highlighted in this report being addressed as a condition of approval' and our assurance that these matters have now been addressed, we have nothing to add to this criterion.

F4. There are appropriate arrangements for placements.

104. No issues of concern were raised in paragraphs 115-119 of the Common Awards team's report. Our own conversations with students and supervisors highlighted the advantage of working with a number of partner dioceses (offering a wider range of placements than would otherwise be available to a local training course) when looking to place students in new and stretching environments.

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

105. Paragraphs 120-122 of the Common Awards review team's report state that the team was satisfied that this criterion was met.

F6. The programme is subject to appropriate processes for curriculum review, including mechanisms for student representation and engagement.

106. Curriculum review was spoken about in the management committee meeting attended by reviewers. This is taken seriously and given extended meeting time.

107. Student representatives are part of the newly established board of studies. In addition, the student forum at residential weekends allows the student voice of the ordinands to be heard. We have already

made the recommendation that Reader/LLM student voices should be found a way to be heard more effectively than they are at present.

108. Module/teaching session feedback is requested but evidence shows that very low percentages of these are returned. We would recommend that consideration is given to ways in which feedback might be more successfully gathered and then shared with those whose practice it refers to.

Recommendation 19

We recommend that consideration is given to ways in which feedback relating to teaching sessions and overall modules is gathered in order to raise return rates and thereby increase the effectiveness of the feedback and any staff support that might be offered as a consequence.

The review team has **Confidence** with regard to **Criterion F: Taught Programmes**.

CONCLUSION

Overall outcome:

The review team has **Confidence** with **Qualifications in the Eastern Region Ministry Course** in preparing candidates for ordained ministry, and in its provision for Reader training in the Dioceses of Ely and Norwich.

LIST OF COMMENDATIONS

Commendation 1

We commend ERMC for a clear, coherent, and energising Formational vision and set of aims, which are widely stated, understood and owned within the TEI.

Commendation 2

ERMC provides an extremely supportive learning community framework which gives students considerable freedom to use their skills and previous experiences to support one another, in particular through alphabet groups and the student forum. We commend this community ethos, both in the gathered and dispersed settings of ERMC's learning community.

Commendation 3 (Norwich)

The reviewers commend the integrated way in which Reader training is viewed in line with other diocesan policy topics in the Diocese of Norwich. We saw evidence of financial commitment which allows Norwich Reader candidates access to Summer School and a residential weekend each year. In turn this allows Reader candidates to fully participate in alphabet groups and worship preparation.

Commendation 4

The reviewers commend the work of the chaplains; in particular their commitment to working as a team and acknowledging their different backgrounds and skills. The value added by their presence is, we believe, greatly in excess of the financial cost incurred.

Commendation 5

The reviewers commend the strength of leadership and business management in the organisation and the way in which structures and communication have been improved recently.

Commendation 6

We wish to commend the way that feedback is generated and discussed relating to issues raised in different areas of ERMC's life, reflecting good communication between the different bodies (students / staff / directors) and actions resulting therefrom.

Commendation 7

The Course leadership had produced an impressive community of people from a diverse range, with a notable depth of fellowship, friendship and mutual care and support.

Commendation 8

Reviewers commend the way in which ERMC staff work with students to establish personal training plans.

LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1

While recognising the existing formational focus on flexibility, adaptability, and collaboration, we recommend a refocusing of some of the Formational Aims around the dispositions, knowledge and skills needed for proactive / entrepreneurial mission and evangelism in the Future Church, across all modes of ministry, not least in 'making new disciples'.

Recommendation 2

We recommend that ERMC review its publicity material with a view towards encouraging applications from a wider demographic including those of BAME heritage.

Recommendation 3

We recommend a continuation and development of the process of formalising links with partner diocese in relation to Reader/LLM training to ensure these links are embedded in the institutional policies rather than relying on individuals to maintain relationships.

Recommendation 4

We recommend that ERMC formulates a clear and simple method of communicating with placement supervisors which enables them to be more effectively part of the overall training pathway for supervises. This may take the form of short training sessions, a short handbook with key tasks and expectations clearly articulated and/or a more clearly communicated and realistic reporting process.

Recommendation 5 (LLM/Reader partner dioceses)

We would recommend all partner dioceses to consider ways in which Reader/LLM candidates might more fully access ERMC's formational components to training; particular Summer School participation which would provide an even playing field for students' understanding of the practicalities of studying with Durham and a more integrated role in ERMC's community life.

Recommendation 6

We would recommend a review of the way in which Reader/LLM students are referred to by, and given equal opportunities to participate in, the student community as a whole.

Recommendation 7

The reviewers would recommend that serious consideration is given to improving the way in which the library is housed (e.g. Simply putting blinds at windows would make a significant difference)

Recommendation 8

It is recommended that the possibility of outgrowing Belsey Bridge should be addressed openly and objectively so that a possible future for larger student numbers participating in residential components of training can be articulated before it needs to be handled as an urgent and immediate problem.

Recommendation 9

We recommend that ERMC should review the handling of Common Worship liturgy within its community, with a view to extending its range of use and mindful of its status as public worship as well as being the worshipping practice of the community.

Recommendation 10

We would recommend ERMC to expand its worship handbook to include not only the worship at residential weekends, but also the evening worship before local tutorial sessions in order that all worship offered by ERMC students (ordinands and Reader/LLM candidates) is being located within the same ethos and practical guidelines in a way that articulates clearly what Norwich Tuesday evening worship is already putting into practice.

Recommendation 11

We recommend that, with the support of ERMC as needed, Ely and Norwich dioceses review the staffing of their LLM training function with a view to the sustainability of that training.

Recommendation 12

Having commended the work of the chaplains, we would recommend ERMC to consider the level of supervision offered as part of the chaplaincy contract. The work is exacting, emotionally and spiritually, and supervision is essential if chaplains are to model “appropriate patterns of spirituality, continued learning and reflection on practice”.

Recommendation 13

Likewise, we recommend a review of the formal structures in place for staff supervision, professional review and opportunities for CPD which for academic staff should include personal research/study time.

Recommendation 14

It is recommended that a safer recruiting policy should be added to the current policies

Recommendation 15

In a Course seeking to provide non-residential and cost-effective training for all streams of the church in its region, we recommend that careful consideration be given to how comprehensive the welcome for and engagement with the actual diversity of the church on the street.

Recommendation 16

We recommend a review of worship throughout ERMC to ensure that the stated intention of diversity is being realized in practice

Recommendation 17

We would recommend a system of ‘Buddies’ for all ERMC students – ordinands and Reader/LLM candidates to help guide new students through the complexity of the structure of the Course.

Recommendation 18

We recommend, particularly with the new Central Readers Council and Ministry Division emphasis on Readers as leaders in church and society, that Reader/LLM formation contains elements of teaching on role-specific leadership qualities and skills.

Recommendation 19

We recommend that consideration is given to ways in which feedback relating to teaching sessions and overall modules is gathered in order to raise return rates and thereby increase the effectiveness of the feedback and any staff support that might be offered as a consequence.