

Ministry Council: Periodic External Review Follow-up Report

South Central Theological Education Institution (SCTEI)

Conducted online, November 2020

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Senior Reviewer's Follow-up Report to the 2019 Periodic External Review of the South Central Theological Education

Introduction

The Periodic External Review of the South Central Theological Educational Institution (SCTEI) was published in December 2019. The institution then produced an Action Plan in March 2020 indicating the approach it was taking in responding to the report's recommendations. The covid-19 pandemic then interrupted the normal time-scale and momentum for the consideration and implementation of enhancements, and the follow up visit to consider the progress made. I met by video conference with the principals of each of the four constituent parts of the SCTEI in November 2020 to consider the progress made.

Context

The SCTEI is a successful, complex, organisation responding to a range of different needs. It is made up of four training centres: the Guildford Local Ministry Programme (LMP), the Oxford Local Ministry Programme, Sarum College, and Winchester School of Mission. When the PER took place the SCTEI was five years old; within that period new people have filled key roles, the Winchester School of Mission has developed and the wider context of the linked body the South Central Regional Training Partnership had continued to evolve. The PER spoke into that context, with a number of detailed recommendations for the enhancement of the learner experience in the four different constituent institutions, but perhaps more significantly with a number of recommendations surrounding the overall framework of the SCTEI itself. Five years into the SCTEI's life, it was an appropriate time to reflect on the significant successes of the SCTEI, while also noting areas for improvement or clarification.

The Covid-19 pandemic hit just as the Action Plan was completed. Correctly the main focus of the SCTEI during the pandemic was on maintaining the best possible experience for current and incoming students in very difficult circumstances. Similarly the attention of those involved in the governance and oversight of the SCTEI, principally the Dioceses of Guildford, Oxford, Salisbury and Winchester and the Trustees of Sarum College, was drawn elsewhere. As was indeed the focus of the Senior Reviewer. However, as this follow-up report demonstrates, significant progress has been made, which is particularly notable given the covid-19 context and deserves commendation. In particular, alongside many enhancements and clarifications within individual programmes, new governance arrangements have been established through the signing of a new deed of collaboration between the partners and the establishment of a new oversight board.

Recommendation 1

We recommend that a clear set of aims for the South Central TEI are produced which express positively in what way the united TEI contributes strongly to the formation of all within the centres.

Since the PER, significant thinking has taken place as to how the united TEI contributes to the centres, in particular as recommendations 12 and 22 have been taken forward and the new governance arrangements established. This was not straightforward since each centre has a distinctive context, aims and institutional arrangements. Wisely the formation of a written clear set of aims was scheduled to be taken forward by the new oversight body, once it came into operation. It is only that body which can 'own' the set of aims. Now that the oversight body has been formed, this is on its agenda.

Implementation being taken forward; no further action.

Recommendation 2

We recommend that Guildford LMP articulates more clearly and more succinctly the Course's formational aims.

The Guildford LMP's Course Handbook and Formation for Ministry Handbook have been modified to clarify the connection between academic and formational work to clarify the overall formal aims. This is highlighted to students in the VLE.

Recommendation implemented; no further action.

Recommendation 3

We recommend that Oxford LMP, as part of a wider strategy of developing and communicating its core identity more clearly, develops a clearly stated and prominent set of formational aims.

A new paper on the identity of the LMP has been approved by its oversight body. This is now being embedded in the LMP's publicity and course documentation, and being taken forward with diocesan personnel such as the communications and vocations teams. Inevitably implementation has been delayed by the covid-19 pandemic, yet clear progress has been made.

Recommendation implemented; no further action.

Recommendation 4

We recommend that the Winchester School of Mission fully develops and implements the plans to specifically address the formational needs of ordinands in the third or final year of the curriculum.

Plans were developed to ensure that there was sufficient teaching time on the distinctives of ordained ministry, and through the provision of practical information and one-to-one meetings ordinands were supported and given confidence in the transition into ordained ministry. This was implemented in part in summer 2020 and continues to be taken forward.

Recommendation implemented; no further action.

Recommendation 5

We recommend that the South Central TEI produces an action plan to:

- **establish a benchmark for BAME students and teaching staff (whether employed or visiting speakers) and a process for the regular review against this benchmark;**
- **review the publicity materials from all four centres to ensure that those currently under-represented (whether on a social, educational, ethnic or age basis) see clearly that there are ‘people like them’ on the courses, and the support necessary for them to thrive is available;**
- **be proactive in working with diocesan vocations teams to address the imbalances in the student body.**

The SCTEI did not feel it could establish a benchmark for the inclusion of BAME students on the grounds that it has no choice over the ordinands it trains, rather it simply receives them from the sponsoring dioceses, and hence cannot control the make up of the student body. The situation for Sarum College is a little different in that it does directly advertise and selects students, but even there it can only do so from those selected for ministry from Dioceses within the region. There is a logic here. However, the PER looks for “evidence that the TEI *actively seeks to encourage applications* from a range of potential students including BAME enquirers”. Monitoring this at the SCTEI level, with an agreed benchmark, targets or even aspirations, would ensure that the SCTEI as an institution strongly plays its part, alongside the dioceses, helping hold the whole church to account. The SCTEI could have chosen to set a benchmark for teaching staff but has not done so. With the publication this year of the Church of England’s national report *From Lament to Action*, TEIs like others in the church are urged to keep this issue in focus.

However, there has been activity in the area of this recommendation. The SCTEI is consulting with the national BAME officer to take advice as to the possibilities of benchmarking. Curricula have been reviewed with a view to incorporating more diversity in scholarship. There has been an anti-racism study day and unconscious bias training. There is renewed energy behind BAME vocations at a regional level. Individual elements of the SCTEI have picked up different elements. For example, the Oxford LMP plans to work closely with a new appointment of a BAME officer in Oxford diocese on these issues. Sarum college has been more intentional about BAME teachers within its programme, and appointed a visiting scholar from a BAME background.

Publicity materials have been reviewed to show a full range of students, and working practices have been re-examined to ensure that all students received are able to thrive. The SCTEI committed that its vocational encouragement work will continue to be non-discriminatory.

This recommendation has not been fully implemented. We would encourage the SCTEI to grasp more strongly its calling as the key ordination and licensed ministry training provider in the region to be an agent of change in this area, using the significant influence it could have. However, we recognise that the issue is being taken seriously, some progress has been made, and we have confidence that the new oversight body will focus on further progressing this issue..

Recommendation 6

We recommend that the South Central TEI strengthens its processes for the intentional and systematic sharing of good practice with regards to education and formation between the Centres in the TEI.

The SCTEI 'Common Awards staff meeting' has been strengthened to give effect to this recommendation, with new terms of reference and clearer minuting of these meetings, increased focus on systematic sharing of good practice, and occasional SCTEI staff away days.

Recommendation implemented; no further action.

Recommendation 7

We recommend that, in the light of a number of new policy documents in education and formation, the Winchester School of Mission should establish a timetable for the regular review of all these policies, taking account of feedback from students, supervising clergy and those connected with fulfilling the policies.

A clear system for policy review has been established, with reviews taking place at the appropriate level in the management/oversight structure. There is clarity over the communication of policy.

Recommendation implemented; no further action.

Recommendation 8

We recommend that greater clarity is presented to Winchester students with regard to the respective roles of personal tutors, academic tutors, and other identified sources of pastoral, spiritual and educational support.

A new staff appointment has strengthened the team and thus allowed a clearer demarcation of different roles. These roles are being communicated to students in an updated Formation Handbook.

Recommendation implemented; no further action.

Recommendation 9

We recommend that Winchester School of Mission create greater opportunities for interaction between student year groups and pathways during weekends and residential times, so as to strengthen the community life in benefiting learning and formation.

Clear plans for this have been developed, based around time built into the residential weekends and new twice-termly fellowship groups explicitly formed across the different year cohorts.

Recommendation implemented; no further action.

Recommendation 10

We recommend that Sarum College fully implement the next stage of the College's devised action plan for improved arrangements for those people with disabilities, especially with regard to ground floor bedrooms, access to the chapel, and exit in the event of a fire.

Certain elements of the action plan were implemented before Covid-19, which is very positive. The action plan has also been further strengthened. Full implementation of the plan has inevitably been delayed by the pandemic. However, it is clear that Sarum College is fully committed to improving arrangements for people with disabilities.

Implemented being taken forward; no further action.

Recommendation 11

We recommend that:

- **the SCTEI produces guidance as to the appropriate provision of books, study leave and provision for attending conferences for all SCTEI core staff to ensure their continuing professional development as theological educators**

- **the four partners (the three DBFs and Sarum College) commit to implementing these terms as a minimum provision for their employees continuing to function as core staff within the SCTEI.**

There is evidence of some good continuing professional development among staff. There are also positive elements among the different partners (e.g. Sarum College clearly categorises tutors as 'academic staff' with particular support, in a way the DBF partners do not; Winchester School of Mission is strengthening its links to Winchester University).

However, the recommendation has not been implemented. The SCTEI has not produced such guidance, and the partners (the three DBFs and Sarum College) have not committed to implementing common minimum provisions for their employees to function as core staff within the SCTEI. Indeed we heard evidence of DBFs being 'very reluctant' (a) to engage meaningfully in discussion which recognised that certain of their employees, because of their work within the SCTEI and the nature of that work within Higher Education, may need some provision for continuing professional development and provision of books and conferences different to other DBF employees; (b) to recognise that quality standards within the SCTEI required some common SCTEI thinking on this issue.

The staff of the SCTEI can do no more to bring about the implementation of this recommendation. This recommendation can only be taken up by those with governance and oversight responsibilities, indeed the recommendation explicitly names the partners. The reluctance or inability of the governance structures to address this issue itself raises questions about the nature of the oversight of the SCTEI as an entity.

Not implemented. The new SCTEI overview body is strongly urged to recognise that only it can take forward this recommendation, grasp its importance for staff and for quality standards, and see this as a key piece of work as the overview body comes into existence.

Recommendation 12

We recommend that the SCTEI reviews its oversight structures to ensure that, following the many changes in the SCTEI over recent years, they are now best arranged to give clarity and to drive continuing increase in quality outcomes for learners. In particular to ensure:

- a) That there is clarity as to the interrelation between the SCRTP and the SCTEI;**
- b) That there is a body exercising regular oversight of SCTEI as a whole which includes 'independent voices' - people who are not on the staff of any of the four centres - and is chaired by one such 'independent' person;**

- c) That, while there are regular meetings of staff, these should be formalised, clarifying the remit with clear terms of reference, including for collaboration and quality enhancement beyond simply the requirements of Common Awards, and formal staff meeting procedures such as minutes and records keeping.**

Significant change has been brought forward in response to this recommendation. A review of governance was commissioned, which resulted in the formation of a new 'overview board' and the renewing of the Collaboration Deed which underlies the SCTEI. The overview board has clear terms of reference, is appropriately constituted with a balance of staff, representatives from the partners, and an external advisor. The role of Guildford DBF (as the lead party which enters into the Common Awards contract on behalf of the SCTEI) is appropriately expressed by it appointing the chair of the overview board. Its terms of reference indicate its responsibility for the operating of the Common Awards contract, considering likely future developments in ministerial training, considering the financial statements of and risks to the partners, and receiving reports from each of the principals on progress and projected risks. This overview board has now started to operate. This has been a major piece of work and the partners should be commended for their decisive action.

Clarity in respect of the SCRTP has been achieved by shifting the power to appoint the Chair of the Common Awards Management Committee (CAMC) from the SCRTP to the new SCTEI overview board. Thus the SCRTP is clearly distinguished from the SCTEI, and the SCTEI overview board has the key power to appoint and hold accountable the chair of the CAMC.

The implementation of the part of the recommendation about staff meetings has been noted under recommendation 6 above.

Recommendation implemented; no further action.

Recommendation 13

We recommend that the accountability and management arrangements for the Guildford LMP be reviewed in order to establish a clear oversight body for the pathway, in succession to the DVMC (such a body might reasonably have additional diocesan functions beyond those relating to the LMP):

- a) establishing clear line management and support for the Principal**
- b) providing a diocesan context within which the programme as a whole is nurtured and challenged**
- c) including in its membership a Director of the DBF as a representative of the trustees**
- d) having clear terms of reference and a formal, regular (annual) reporting mechanism to the DBF**

e) attending to the needs to appropriately recruit, train and support the members of the oversight body.

Guildford Diocese has developed clear plans in response to this recommendation. This has taken some time because of a broader significant restructuring within the DBF, and the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. Such plans focus on a termly meeting, with a strong representation of learner voices, including the Bishop with the Ministry portfolio representing the Bishop's Council and the Director of Mission, who is senior DBF figure with responsibility for the LMP. This seems to be an appropriate and positive development, and in particular strengthens the connections between the LMP and other elements of development and training within the Diocese. As it is taken forward we would hope that the link from the LMP to the DBF Trustees is clear and, while it is likely to always be limited, is meaningful.

Implemented being taken forward; no further action.

Recommendation 14

We recommend that Terms of Reference be produced for the [Winchester] LMT Advisory Group, including how members are appointed, and clarification of its relationship with the SCTEI and the Winchester DBF.

Clear terms of reference have been drawn up and approved.

Recommendation implemented; no further action.

Recommendation 15

We recommend that the SCTEI reviews the provision for the leadership of the TEI, to ensure that there is clear leadership for the TEI with sufficient authority and time to give to this task, as evidenced by capacity to carry forward the recommendations for the TEI in this report.

As the text of the review makes clear (paragraph 101), this recommendation concerned the provision of leadership for the SCTEI as an entity, as distinct to the four centres where there is clear leadership provided.

We have seen no evidence that any such review of the provision for the leadership of the TEI has taken place. Instead, the SCTEI has maintained that the existing situation, in which leadership is located in the four centres and the SCTEI role is more to ensure collaboration and coordination, is known to be the best way. We are somewhat surprised that there was no willingness even to review this. And we note that all the report recommendation relating to individual centres have been implemented, while the picture relating to recommendations made of the SCTEI is more mixed (see particularly recommendations 1, 5, 11, 15, 44 and to a degree condition 1). We see this as continuing

evidence that it would be wise for the SCTEI to review the provision of leadership for the SCTEI to ensure it is sufficient to the task.

However, significant strengthening and clarification of the role of the SCTEI has come about through the governance review and new overview board. We would hope that this will in time lead to further reflection on the provision of leadership for the SCTEI as a significant institution within the Church.

Recommendation not implemented.

Recommendation 16

We recommend that the Oxford LMP reviews the allocation of responsibility for LLM training and ordinand work between the Principal and Vice-principal and considers alternatives models that avoid the risk of modelling division between the two types of ministers.

Clear action has been taken to address this, both through the Principal and Vice-Principal being involved in both LLM and ordinand weekends, and more occasions when both cohorts come together for training. Further developments may emerge from a review of staffing in 2022 occasioned by staff retirements.

Recommendation implemented; no further action.

Recommendation 17

We recommend that Sarum College reviews its structures for delegation and staff oversight to reduce the high level of direct responsibility born by the Principal.

A full review has taken place, and changes have been implemented. This has included the updating of job descriptions and titles for all in the College Leadership Team. This has led to a reduction in the direct responsibility borne by the Principal.

Recommendation implemented; no further action.

Recommendation 18

We recommend that the Oversight Body for the Oxford LMP:

- a) regularly carries out 'skills audits' of the current membership so as to ensure that the co-opted members enable a richer, wider and ecumenical oversight;**
- b) considers including in its membership a Diocesan Director of Ordinands;**
- c) ensures that all students know that they have a student representative on the Diocesan Oversight Body, and who s/he is and how s/he may be contacted.**

Clear action has been taken to address this recommendation. The LMP terms of reference have been updated, which occasioned further reflection on membership which has incorporated this recommendation and in many ways gone further. Changes have also taken place to improve the communication between the students representatives and the wider student body (e.g. through the uploading of minutes to a dedicated Moodle space).

Recommendation implemented; no further action.

Recommendation 19

We recommend that the interaction between the Oversight Body and the Oxford DBF is reviewed to ensure that the DBF trustees understand their duties in relation to the LMP, are aware of the formational aims of the Course and how these aims are put into practice and monitored by the Oversight Body, so they are enabled to exercise due oversight of the Course.

The Bishop of Dorchester carried out such a review. This did not result in structural change, but produced better understanding and communication.

Recommendation implemented; no further action.

Recommendation 20

We recommend that the Sarum Centre's process for the appointment of student representatives is clarified and their choice is mainly, if not wholly, determined by the student body itself.

Clear action has been taken to address this recommendation. The task specification for student representatives has been updated, including clarification of the method of appointment and specifying the importance of attending the Common Awards Management Committee.

Recommendation implemented; no further action.

Recommendation 21

We recommend that the Sarum College Trustees carefully consider including staff and student representatives in their meetings.

Staff and student representation is now in place.

Recommendation implemented; no further action.

Recommendation 22

We recommend that, once recommendations 12 and 15 (concerning the oversight and leadership of the SCTEI) are implemented, the SCTEI undertakes a review to:

- a) gather transparently in one document the legal and financial basis on which the SCTEI operates;**
- b) consider what plans and commitments need to be in place and taken forward to ensure that the SCTEI as an entity continues to flourish in the medium term and innovates and further develop its activities to the benefit of the Church.**

The process for the establishment of the new SCTEI Overview Board has produced the requested clarity and transparency in the legal and financial basis on which the SCTEI operates.

The terms of reference of the new SCTEI Overview Board give it the responsibility for the matters described in part (b) of this recommendation. While it will take time for the impact of this body to be felt, and as noted above recommendation 15 has not been implemented, the creation of this body with these matters in the terms of reference is an important step forward.

Recommendation implemented; no further action.

Recommendation 23

We recommend that the Guildford LMP undertake a strategic planning exercise, to sit within the Guildford DBF's strategic plan and also relating to any similar exercise for the TEI. The planning exercise need not be overly extensive but should consider how best to approach the particular opportunities and risks for the LMP that are expected to arise in the medium term, including those resulting from an internal restructuring of the DBF's operation.

Guildford diocese's 'Right Shape' Review clarified the place of the LMP with the Mission Team. The LMP has also begun sharing the delivery of content with the Lay Pastoral Assistants course. Further reflection on the place of the LMP within the wider training activities of the diocese has been hampered by the covid-19 pandemic.

Implementation being taken forward; no further action.

Recommendation 24

We recommend that, once Recommendations 12 and 15 (concerning the oversight and leadership of the SCTEI) are implemented, a risk register is produced for the SCTEI and consideration is given to the management of those risks.

The risk register has been produced, and the overview body has responsibility for the identification, reporting and managing of risk.

Recommendation implemented; no further action.

Recommendation 25

We recommend that the Oxford LMP take action to ensure that all individuals listed in the Risk Register to manage a particular risk are informed of their allocated responsibility.

This has been done.

Recommendation implemented; no further action.

Recommendation 26

We recommend that the presentation of accounts and budgets clarifies the financial arrangements for the different activities within Sarum College, so that there is transparency over how the money received Church of England for ordination training is spent.

Sarum College's Finance and General Purposes Committee addressed this issue to ensure that there is substantial clarity, particularly in relation to income, staff salaries, hospitality and student support. The review team has no view as to whether further developments to allocate central college overheads to different areas of activity would be appropriate or proportionate for the College.

Recommendation implemented; no further action.

Recommendation 27

We recommend that the presentation of accounts and budgets clarifies the financial arrangements for the different activities within the Winchester School of Mission, so that there is transparency over how the money received from the Church of England for ordination training is spent.

As noted in paragraph 139 of the report, the concern was in relation to the clarity of reporting, rather than seeking to imply that the underlying accounts were unclear. A new financial system has been implemented which provides a more detailed level of reporting.

Recommendation implemented; no further action.

Recommendation 28

We recommend that Guildford LMP's arrangements on Monday evenings are changed such that there is more intentional time for tutorial conversations between students and core tutors.

A new process for student feedback has been devised for the Monday evenings, including termly gatherings of students and their representatives, and a staff/student forum, with senior diocesan figures present, at which responses to the student feedback are given and the feedback loop closed.

Recommendation implemented; no further action.

Recommendation 29

We recommend that the setting of Guildford LMP's formational goals with actions be recorded in a document at the beginning of the academic year, and that this is shared with the incumbents. The student's progress in meeting these goals should be monitored throughout the year and recorded in the end of year report.

The LMP has a clear process for the setting and monitoring of formational goals through its Formation for Ministry handbook, and the 'Formation for Growth in Ministry' checklist. However, the goals are not formally shared with incumbents at the beginning of the year, only the report at the end of year. We would still urge Guildford LMP to consider sharing these goals, so the incumbent can more intentionally support them. However, we recognise that there are different approaches to such matters.

Recommendation partially implemented; no further action.

Recommendation 30

We recommend that there is a more robust process of feedback between the student representatives, Guildford LMP local committee, CAMC and the student body and that this should be documented in student handbooks.

Improvements to feedback processes within the Guildford LMP have been reported under recommendation 28 above. Travel times always made student representation at the CAMC more difficult, though it remains important. The covid-19 pandemic has meant that these have been swapped to virtual meetings, which has improved student representative attendance at the CAMC. This is most welcome and we hope that video meetings will continue to allow enhanced student representation at key meetings.

Recommendation implemented; no further action.

Recommendation 31

We recommend Guildford LMP core staff implement a process whereby responses to the module feedback forms are communicated to the student body. This might take the form of a tutor's response form posted on the VLE or via email.

The system for the communication of the responses to module feedback forms has been improved and clarified.

Recommendation implemented; no further action.

Recommendation 32

We recommend that the Oxford LMP programme leader ensures that there is greater parity between tutors with regard to the module delivery and content in the various delivery centres.

Significant action has been taken in relation to this recommendation, with fewer delivery centres for some modules, more robust tutor training, closer working between tutors in different centres and team teaching. Furthermore the covid-19 pandemic forced teaching online, which fundamentally changed the dynamic of needing to run multiple versions of the modules each with their own tutor in distinct groups. It is clear that the LMP is reflecting carefully on what has been learnt and gained by this.

Recommendation implemented; no further action.

Recommendation 33

We recommend that Oxford LMP include more detail in both Ordinands' and LLM formational handbooks on the process by which formational goals are set and how a student's progress in identified areas of formation is monitored both during and at the end of initial training.

This has been done.

Recommendation implemented; no further action.

Recommendation 34

We recommend

- (a) that there are better communication processes within Oxford LMP to ensure that all students are aware of their student representatives and**
- (b) that feedback from relevant meetings including CAMC is communicated in a formal reporting process so that all students are aware of actions and responses to student issues and concerns.**

The process for student feedback and response to be included in student handbooks.

This has been done (see comment under recommendation 18).

Recommendation implemented; no further action.

Recommendation 35

We recommend that ways of promoting and deepening the Sarum Centre's Rural Pathway are developed.

There has been significant further strengthening of this excellent pathway, including engagement with dioceses, development of curriculum, and student recruitment. It was commended by the external examiner.

Recommendation implemented; no further action.

Recommendation 36

We recommend that, because the course is relatively new, the Winchester School of Mission establish a clear programme of peer review of teaching to embed and support good practice.

This has been done.

Recommendation implemented; no further action.

Recommendation 37

We recommend that the Winchester School of Mission's Personal tutors are given some responsibility for helping new students find a work/life balance, and that more emphasis is given to this issue in the induction of new students.

Changes have been made to the system of Formational Tutors to give greater emphasis, induction has been updated, and some good practice has been implemented from the Guildford LMP.

Recommendation implemented; no further action.

Recommendation 38

We recommend that the good practice set out in the Winchester School of Mission Handbooks regarding a buddy system and local support groups is implemented as soon as feasible and that new students are inducted in good time.

This has been done.

Recommendation implemented; no further action.

Recommendation 39

The review recommends that the TEI continues to develop opportunities to share good practice across the centres of the TEI.

The greater clarity surrounding the CA staff meeting (see recommendation 6 above) contributes positive towards this agenda. Several examples of sharing good practice in the period since the review have been shared, which are particularly to be commended given the pressures of the covid-19 pandemic.

Recommendation implemented; no further action.

Condition 1

The review team requires that:

- a) a SCTEI Business Plan and Risk Register be developed;**
- b) that these documents be developed in consultation with all constituent centres;**
- c) that these documents are subject to regular review in order to effectively monitor and manage any potential risks related to the Common Awards programmes and partnership.**

The risk element of this has been completed as described under recommendation 12 and 24 above, including provision for annual review.

The phrase 'SCTEI business plan' has been controversial, since the primary unit for financial oversight and management is the centre, each of which are an integrated part of a larger unit (the three DBFs and Sarum College). However, the terms of reference of the new Overview Board do include reviewing the financial statements of the partners, and more broadly provide a clear setting for the overall health of the SCTEI to be monitored.

Thus this condition is fulfilled. We would urge the SCTEI to continue to develop its practices for ensuring that attention is given to the overall viability, development and calling of the SCTEI, as well as the four centres. This connects to recommendation 1 above, which is still in the process of being implemented.

Recommendation implemented; no further action.

Recommendation 40

The review team recommends that the TEI keeps under review student attendance and engagement at the Common Awards Management Committee and explores the use of virtual engagement to facilitate student involvement.

This has been done, and virtual engagement has increased student involvement.

Recommendation implemented; no further action.

Recommendation 41

The review team recommends that the TEI reviews the opportunities to share resources, and practice, across the TEI to ensure that all students have access to ongoing study skills support, and that these are clearly signposted as such to students.

Increased study skills support at the SCTEI level has been implemented, and better coordination and centralisation has made it more accessible to all students.

Recommendation implemented; no further action.

Recommendation 42

The review team requires that the TEI liaise with the Common Awards Team regarding the current attendance policy to clarify how and where it applies, the rationale for differing practice across centres and its links with the University's Core Regulations.

These requirements have been satisfactorily clarified with the Common Awards Team.

Recommendation implemented; no further action.

Recommendation 43

The review team recommends that the TEI keeps under review student satisfaction with the provision of learning resources.

The wording of the student satisfaction survey has been re-written to provide clearer and more useful responses regarding the provision of learning resources. The provision is kept under review in the annual self-evaluation exercise.

Recommendation implemented; no further action.

Recommendation 44

The review team recommends that the TEI negotiates clarity with the dioceses around the expectations of providing sufficient opportunities for staff development in all centres of the TEI.

As noted under recommendation 11 this has not taken place. It is clear that the staff of the four centres do not have the power to carry out this negotiation effectively with their employers. This has to fall to the SCTEI itself and the partners, and as noted under recommendation 11, we urge them to engage with this recommendation.

Not implemented.

Recommendation 45

The review team recommends that the TEI reviews the provision and timeliness of feedback to ensure that this enables students to improve in future assessments.

Considerable energy has been put into improving the timeliness of feedback, and clarifying appropriate expectations. We recognise that this is a complex area, involving the balancing of a range of different factors. While the SCTEI reports that this is a work in progress, we are satisfied that much has been achieved.

Recommendation implemented; no further action.

Conclusion

I commend the SCTEI, its constituent partners and centres, for the action which has been taken in response to the PER report despite the significant disruption of the covid-19 pandemic. I would also want to draw attention to the fact that the original report also listed 22 separate commendations of good practice. These are not revisited in this follow-up report, but they should not be forgotten.

There are a number of recommendations which have not been fully implemented, particularly 1, 5, 11 and 15. However, I recognise that, to a large degree, progress on these was dependent on the signing of the new collaboration deed, and establishment of the Overview Board. That has now taken place, and required significant energy from the partners, made more difficult by the covid-19 pandemic. Thus I want to commend what has been done, and while highlighting what is still to be addressed, I am content that these issues are and will be taken seriously as the SCTEI continues to develop. Thus this follow-up report does not indicate any further action to be taken.

Revd Professor Jeremy Duff, Senior Reviewer

June 2021