

Ministry Council: Periodic External Review Report

Peterborough Diocese Lay Ministry Course (Reader/LLM)

Conducted onsite and online, February - March 2022

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Glossary

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| APL | Accredited Prior Learning |
| ASE | Annual Self Evaluation |
| BCP | Book of Common Prayer |
| CMD | Continuing Ministerial Development |
| CofE | Church of England |
| DDO | Diocesan Director of Ordinands |
| PER | Periodic External Review |
| QAE | Quality Assurance and Enhancement |
| SWOT | Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats |
| TEI | Theological Education Institution |
| UKME | UK Minority Ethnicity |

Reviewers

The Ven Dr Brian Russell, senior reviewer; formerly senior chaplain in Norway, Diocese of Europe; now with PTO for Coventry and Birmingham Dioceses.

Professor Helen King, Professor Emerita, Open University; authorised lay preacher in Oxford Diocese; member of General Synod.

Christine McMullen, Reader, Tutor and Chair of the House of Laity, Derby Diocese; member of the Quality and Formation Panel of the Church of England which oversees Periodic External Reviews.

Sue Waterston, Reader and Warden of Readers, Diocese of Nottingham and Southwell; social care and housing manager.

The Periodic External Review Framework

Periodic External Review (PER) is part of the Church of England’s quality assurance for its ministerial training institutions (‘Theological Education Institutions’ or TEIs), whereby the church conducts an external quality check of each TEI against national standards and expectations for ministerial training and formation.

On behalf of the church, review teams are asked to assess the TEI’s fitness for purpose in preparing candidates for ordained and licensed ministry and to make recommendations for the enhancement of its life and work. The reviewers’ report is made to the House of Bishops acting through the Ministry Council.

PER teams are appointed by the national Ministry Development Team (MDT) from a pool of reviewers nominated by bishops and TEIs.

For TEIs that offer Durham-validated Common Awards programmes, representatives of Durham University’s Common Awards team sometimes carry out their own academic quality assurance review in parallel with the church’s PER, to inform the university’s decision-making on: (i) renewal of the Common Awards partnerships with approved TEIs; and (ii) revalidation of Common Awards programmes that have been approved for delivery within TEIs.

Recommendations and Commendations

PER reports include Recommendations which are either developmental, naming issues that the reviewers consider the TEI needs to address, or encourage the enhancement of practice that is already good. They also include Commendations, naming instances of good practice that the reviewers wish to highlight. The reviewers’ assessment of the TEI is expressed as much through the balance of Recommendations and Commendations in their report as through its criterion-based judgements.

Criterion-based judgements

Reviewers use the following outcomes with regard to the overall report and individual criteria A-E:

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 raises 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.

Review of Peterborough Diocese Lay Ministry Course (Reader/LLM)

Introduction

The Diocese of Peterborough Lay Ministry Course began in its present form in 2009. The Course provides training for Readers and prepares them alongside a range of candidates for other lay ministries, such as pastoral ministers, evangelists and lay chaplains. Opportunity is given for ‘Ministry Explorers’ to join the whole Course, ‘explorers’ being those who may be considered for a future vocation to ordained ministry, as well as the opportunity for individuals to take specific practical modules. There is also training provision for worship leaders linked with the Course.

At the time of this Review, which commenced in February 2022, there were 53 students, spread fairly evenly over the three years of the curriculum, with a majority being women (39) and the majority aged over fifty (39). None were aged under thirty. Whilst the focus of this Periodic External Review is the training of students to be licensed Readers, the curriculum which is shared with candidates for other lay ministries for the first two years was also in view.

PER Process

The Review team found the Diocese of Peterborough Lay Ministry Course in good heart. We were grateful for the hospitality and welcome which we received from staff and students. In the timeframe for the Review, the Review team attended a residential weekend at Launde Abbey in February, a meeting of the Lay Ministry Forum (the Governing Body) and an evening of teaching in Northampton. Attendance in person at a study day in Kettering was prevented by extreme storm weather, but the day was observed on Zoom. In addition, a member of the team attended a study day in March and there were Zoom meetings with some Reader candidates in their third year of training. The senior Reviewer had also made a preliminary visit to meet the Principal of the Course.

The Review team had received the required documentation, including a helpful SWOT analysis, and some Course outlines and Annual Self-Evaluation forms (ASE). Along with the documentation, the Review Team also received views in writing from stakeholders including sponsoring bishops, DDOs, placement supervisors and former students. We record our appreciation of the unfailing patience of the staff in responding to our questions and requests for further information.

General Observations

The students we met were able and well-motivated, enthusiastic about the Course. They were clearly learning and growing in their faith, their understanding and their spiritual life. The Course is having a highly beneficial impact. The culture and ethos of the Course and the Diocese is intentionally and explicitly

relational and communal. This provides many benefits. However, the Reviewers consider that the learning outcomes could be even more effectively achieved and made more resilient to potential staffing changes if, in addition, there were clearer structures, arrangements and policies in certain regards. These matters are highlighted in the text of the Report and lead to a range of important recommendations.

Significant strides have been made in many areas since the last Periodic External Review and its Follow-Up Report of 2017. The previous Review highlighted the need for adequate staffing and for qualified theologians amongst the tutorial staff. The academic qualifications of many of the current tutorial staff are evident and the Course now gains from a dedicated full-time Principal and very professional administrative support. In addition, the Course operates as a far more integrated part of the Diocese with its vision and priorities for mission. This is impressive. It is a considerable compliment to the Course that it has been able to sustain its momentum, training of students and the selection of a strong entry of new students in September 2021; and all this despite the unprecedented and demanding impact of the Covid pandemic and the necessary revision of teaching to mostly on-line and ‘distance’ modes. The Course had begun to implement on-line learning before the first national “lockdown” and the provision for on-line learning is open to further development.

The Peterborough Lay Ministry Course, which provides the diocesan training for Readers alongside other lay ministries, is not linked into the Durham University’s Common Awards and is free-standing of any University accreditation. This self-chosen stance enjoys strong Episcopal support and confidence. There are understandable advantages to this very ‘in-house’ approach in terms of integrated educational provision with an emphasis on theological and biblical learning that aids and empowers mission and evangelism. It is also more affordable and realistic.

However, there are also inevitably some potential drawbacks in being so ‘in-house’. All Diocesan Courses which are training Readers are subject to Review by reference to the full range of the Criteria outlined for Periodic External Review (PER) in the Church of England. A University relationship or partnership would bring regular External advice and expertise to ensure high standards in the educational methods, in consistency and benchmarking of assessed student work and in academic attainment, and in the provision of resources for curriculum review and development. In the case of a Diocesan Course that is training for licensed lay ministry independently of any University link, all these matters must be provided by the Diocese in order to ensure its effective oversight and monitoring of all educational and formational practices. In the light of the positive learning outcomes found in the Peterborough Course, the Review team have considered carefully the arrangements currently operating in the Course and as a consequence we make a number of significant recommendations intended to further assist the Course in these aspects of education and formation.

Some of these recommendations emphasise those which were made in the last PER, as is set out in detail in this report. This ‘in-house’ feel and ethos of the Course has great benefits in terms of confident

‘ownership’ by the Diocese, the support for students in their personal development and common life on the Course. This is admirable. Nevertheless, the Review team consider that the Course needs to be enhanced by a number of External perspectives that could bring additional insight, expertise and guidance from those following comparable approaches to training. The Principal of the Course has developed a wide range of national links which is admirable and supportive. But these personal links would gain from being bolstered and embedded in the structures of the Course with regard to oversight and educational management. The Reviewers make some recommendations in this respect, bearing in mind that the Course trains Readers for a national and inter-diocesan ministry which is licenced under the Canons.

The geography of Peterborough Diocese provides both opportunities and constraints, being in the shape of an elongated diamond, with considerable distances north to south and a substantial west to east breadth. There is the need for the current number of regular teaching centres, at different locations. Even then, some students reported to us one hour journeys each way to attend sessions. Whilst there is no single obvious Diocesan partner for the Course, the Diocese is adjacent to a number of dioceses that might provide a range of partnerships to sustain the educational and formational work of the Course. This already happens in regard to the training of spiritual directors but could be extended to other particular matters.

The strengths of the Peterborough Lay Ministry Course lie in:

- the close fit of the Course with the Diocese and its approach to training for mission and evangelism
- its educational approach that assists students with limited prior educational experience and attainment to develop and gain skills and confidence; and also its help for those returning to training in later years, after a substantial time-gap since their initial studies or professional qualifications
- its well-organised administrative basis
- the calibre, gifts and motivation of its student body and their evident development for future ministries

The areas for attention are:

- enhanced arrangements for gaining from external perspectives that can further assist in the development of the Course, both at the level of the governance and in terms of educational management and provision
- a more structured educational process, with supportive policies and documents that can better underpin the learning outcomes of the students
- greater assistance and coordination of tutors and supervisors with regard to adult education and their task within the overall aims of the Course
- the establishment of common bench-marks for assessed student academic work and feedback to assist the students to develop

- greater coherence in the ministerial formation provided for students, especially those training for specific Reader ministry
- the formal and regular inclusion of student representatives in the governance of the Course.

Some of these areas for attention were highlighted in the last PER’s statement of matters needing further attention, including: the need for greater advice from those who can hold perspectives External to the Diocese and Course; formal and regular representation of students in the Governance of the Course; clearer measurements that show academic attainment reaches a benchmark of HE level 4; more explicit policy and course documentation; continuing ministerial development for licenced Readers who have completed the course; a programme of staff development for tutorial staff.

Summary of Outcomes

This report is written in relation to the PER Criteria in force for 2021-22 and available via the Ministry Development Team’s quality assurance pages on the Church of England website.

In summary, the Review team considers the Peterborough Diocesan Lay Ministry Course to be fit for the purpose for preparing candidates for Readers as a licensed lay ministry. In reaching this conclusion, the Review team has confidence with qualifications overall, making a wide range of recommendations which aim to assist the Course in its purposeful development in the next six-year period.

| CRITERION | OUTCOME |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| A Formational Aims | Confidence |
| B Formational Context and Community | Confidence with Qualifications |
| C Leadership and Management | Confidence with Qualifications |
| D Teaching and Learning | Confidence with Qualifications |
| E Ministerial Formation | Confidence with Qualifications |
| Overall Outcome | Confidence with Qualifications |

Section A: Formational Aims

A1 The TEI's formational aims are clearly stated, understood and owned within the TEI.

1. We found that the Course's formational aims are clearly stated, understood and owned within the Course community. The Bishop of Peterborough's foreword to the diocesan web-site entry for Lay Ministry states that 'lay people have gifts for ministry'. As part of their discipleship, the foreword states that 'every Christian has a ministry' and one expression of this is formally 'licensed lay ministry' in a variety of roles, encouraged and drawn out by the local Vicar and licensed under the authority of the Bishop.
2. The Diocesan Mission Statement amplifies this: 'All Christian disciples have a vocation to participate in God's mission in the world. In the Diocese of Peterborough, this finds its focus as we develop and nurture vibrant, growing Christian communities in every place. The ordained clergy share with the Bishop in overseeing, leading and facilitating the whole people of God as they engage in discipleship, transformation and ministry. Some lay people are also called to specific leadership or enabling roles, which will contribute to the growth of congregations both numerically and spiritually and to Christian service in local communities. The Lay Ministry Course exists to prepare lay people for and to sustain them in those roles'. There is therefore a close fit between the course and the Diocesan approach to mission and evangelism. This is conveyed through the meetings to recruit students.

Commendation 1

We commend the Course for sustaining its institutional momentum, educational and training programme, and recruitment of students, during the unprecedented and demanding Covid era.

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

3. The Course's 'Mapping document' demonstrates a close fit between the curriculum and the national criteria for Reader ministry. The Course's SWOT analysis, prepared for this Review, explains further: 'The diocesan vision for ministry and mission, which the Lay Ministry Course embodies, is for there to be a mixed ministry team of ordained and lay ministers in every benefice in the diocese, working collaboratively together in mission and drawing on the gifts of every church member, in order that churches may grow numerically and spiritually'. The SWOT analysis continues: 'This is very much in line with the agenda set out in the report Serving Together, Setting God's People Free and more recently Kingdom Calling, although the diocesan vision was being promoted by the Bishop before these reports appeared'.
4. The Lay Course Mission Statement further explains: 'This ground-up approach needs to be related to diocesan and national structures. Parochialism in lay ministry needs to be balanced with catholicity...A further balance needs to be struck between an emphasis on individual ministry and

a focus on local ministry teams'. The student inter-changes within the base groups which meet during their time in training help to assist in achieving this aim (see below).

5. These formational aims are to a good degree appropriate to the specific ministries for which the Course trains, though there would be a benefit if the arrangements for ministerial formation were strengthened (see Section B of this report). The common curriculum for the first two years has a variety of options which can be chosen by students with different ministerial outcomes in view, and this fluidity is useful. For example, a potential Reader can take a course in evangelism; a potential pastoral minister can take a course in leading worship to assist a future involvement at a funeral for someone for whom they have been the main pastoral visitor. The process of selection to specific ministries has become delayed until towards the end of the second year of the Course. The SWOT analysis explains: 'During recent years, it has become a marked feature of the Lay Ministry Course that discernment continues during training and a student's sense of calling may develop in unexpected directions', such that 'discernment continues throughout the students' time on the course and ministry pathways remain flexible'. This can allow scope for students to identify their own further potential and for growth in confidence with regard to both skills for ministry and potential for theological study.
6. Selection is currently completed by the end of the second year in training, in time for all students for specific ministries to be licenced in the Cathedral as diocesan lay ministers. By this time, it is also clear which students will continue for a further year of specific training to become Readers, at the conclusion of which they will be formally admitted to the office of Reader and first licensed as a Reader in their local benefice by a Bishop. This marks their distinctive ministry, which is described in terms of: 'routine preaching and taking funerals' as 'teachers of the faith, enablers of mission and leaders in church and society' (SWOT analysis) with Readers who 'preach, lead worship, lead teaching groups, and may take funerals and carry out pastoral work' (Course website).
7. We commend the flexibility of the programme that allows for and enables vocational development and exploration to continue after the students have commenced the first year of training.
8. However, the ASE for the year 2018-2019 indicates that the explicit policy of the Course has been the 'blurring of distinctions between different categories of lay ministers', relating specifically to wider choices of modules during training, but raising, for the Review team, some concerns about discernment for specific lay ministries. During the pandemic, the 2020-21 Course's ASE Reports and the Quality Nominee Reports confirm that the discernment of ministry was delayed, with all students beginning as 'ministry explorers', and notes that this delay may in future become the 'norm'. We read that there is a 'development conversation' with base group leaders at the end of the first year and a further 'development conversation' at the end of the second year with the Principal directly involved.
9. The Review team have some concerns about the Course's apparent uncertainty over how this flexibility operates in practice. If discernment is delayed by the Diocese until the end of year two,

this can in principle weaken the ministerial formation during year two for all students in their specific ministry, since their specific ministry would not yet be formally authorised by the diocese, as to whether it is pastoral, evangelistic or Reader. The Review team also consider that the ministerial formation of Reader candidates can be strengthened in years 2 and 3. For example, the SWOT analysis states that base groups have been a recent introduction in year 3 for the specific year of Reader training; and in section B we recommend a strengthening of the base groups as one of a number of recommendations that can further aid ministerial formation.

10. Whilst commending the flexibility provided in the first year of training, the Review team consider that discernment and selection for specific lay ministries should take place, wherever possible (i.e. allowing that some candidates may develop more cautiously), in the early stages of year two of the training. Students learn from individual modules and apply the insights derived from them partly in the light of their future intended ministry. For example, a doctrine course will be experienced differently by someone expecting to preach regularly compared to someone whose pastoral ministry may involve responding to the religious uncertainty of parishioners when meeting challenges in life.
11. In addition, the Review team appreciate that, in the case of a good number of first year students, they were able to explain to us that they themselves had already become clear in their own mind about their own intended future ministry during and by the end of the first year of training, realising that this was still subject to future diocesan approval. This leads the Review team to ask for the arrangements for discernment and selection to be clarified. Thus, to support the explicit ministerial formation of all students, we recommend that the ‘development conversation’ which currently happens with base group leaders at the end of the first year in training is strengthened and that the selection for specific lay ministries takes place wherever possible in the early stages of year two of the training.
12. In terms of a ministry which is to be missional, collaborative, flexible, adaptive and diverse (as national Church of England criteria urge), the Course’s web-site places emphasis on the training being ‘rooted in the call of lay ministers to focus on God’s mission in the world, according to the individual characteristics of their chosen ministry’. Placements and an optional module in chaplaincies are provided (see below at Sections B, D and E). The Lay Course Mission Statement continues: ‘Preparation and training for lay ministry at every level will stress the importance of teamwork and collaborative ministry’. The SWOT analysis concludes: ‘our students learn how to support and value fellow ministers, who are very different from themselves in almost every way. They become collaborative ministers, who are flexible and generous in their approach to ministry’. This fits with the Review team’s positive experience when meeting students currently in training.
13. In terms of diversity in its social context, Peterborough Diocese is significantly rural in terms of villages and market towns, but there are also mainly urban areas, including what may be called white churchgoers who have not had the chance to gain from a successful formal education at school level and in terms of higher education. The approach, methods and flexible assessment

provided by the Lay Ministry Course seems to provide a supportive pathway for such candidates which helps to develop their potential and confidence. For example, 38 of the current students have first or higher degrees, whereas 20 are non-graduates. Amongst the 27 candidates for Reader ministry, 8 out of 27 are non-graduates. In addition, we noted that some students are returning to formal education many years after completing an academic or professional qualification. This has particular challenges for them. The Review team consider that the Course is helpful in meeting diverse educational needs and provides wide access to training.

Commendation 2

We commend the flexibility of the programme that allows for and enables vocational development and exploration to continue after the students have commenced the first year in training.

Recommendation 1

We recommend that the selection for specific lay ministries takes place wherever possible in the early stages of year two in training.

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

14. We confirm that the Course and Diocese are seeking to promote the provision for lay ministry as part of the vision for mission across the diocese and, in doing so, to gain the understanding and support of a wider church audience. The diocesan website has been revised and re-launched in February 2022. The SWOT analysis notes that there are still some benefices which are not adopting this approach to mission. The explicit feedback from stakeholders was limited but positive. One reply encouraged the Course to continue to provide theological breadth in its teaching and ethos. This would fit a diocese which the Bishop described to the Review team as a diocese without a single dominant churchmanship and thus needing always to encompass a degree of diversity. Whilst the Course is not formally ecumenical, the SWOT analysis indicates that recent students have included two Methodists (one licenced as an Anglican lay minister) and one Baptist.
15. The Diocese has given more emphasis to finding UKME students since the time of the last Review. A champion has been appointed (a former student of the Course and base group leader); and 'the Course has become more intentional about promoting vocations amongst people from ethnic minorities' (SWOT analysis). There are now one or more UKME candidates currently in training in each cohort and they are visible. In the meetings observed by the Review team, the UKME students present played a full and confident part in plenary sessions.

The review team has Confidence with regard to Criterion A: Formational Aims.

Section B: Formational Context and Community

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

16. The students we met were able and well-motivated, enthusiastic about the Course. They were clearly learning and growing in their faith, understanding and their spiritual life. The cohort who entered training in September 2021 have ‘jelled’ well together and, despite the pandemic and its limiting impact, the two cohorts in years 2 and 3 of their training felt increasingly enabled by the Course. The three cohorts of students find the Course welcoming and helpful and were able to express in formal sessions how they had found new understanding.
17. We consider that further action is needed to develop more effective partnerships with theological educators in the region and local faith and community organisations so as to enhance training and formational opportunities for students. The Course is not linked into Durham University arrangements and is free-standing of any University accreditation. The educational implications of this are considered below at Section D. Whilst there is no single obvious Diocesan partner for the Course, the Diocese of Peterborough is adjacent to a number of dioceses that might provide a range of partnerships to sustain the formational work of the Course. This already happens with regard to the training of spiritual directors with Leicester diocese and this kind of partnership can be extended to other particular matters.
18. The Principal of the Course has developed a wide range of national links which is admirable and supportive. However, these personal links would gain from being bolstered and embedded in the structures of the Course with regard to oversight (Section C) and educational management (Section D). The newly appointed External Adviser within the ASE quality assurance process is from a Regional Course (ERMC) but this appointment is not part of any formally structured or organizational link with ERMC.
19. With regard to other world Faiths, the last Periodic External Review (2016) had encouraged consideration of a module in multi-faith issues. Subsequently, it was decided by the Course to integrate the issues into existing modules rather than develop a dedicated module (ASE 2018-2019). We did not have the opportunity to see examples of this approach during our visit, though we understand reference to these issues is included in courses like Christian Doctrine and Church History. While students are able to experience other traditions within the Church of England, there is less sense that they are aware of other world Faiths. Some students spoke to us about their experience of people of other world Faiths and of community organisations, in the vicinity of their local church. We saw little evidence of theological tutors or speakers from other Churches or other world Faiths.
20. The optional module on chaplaincy brings in perspectives on university life, Heath Service chaplaincy and prison chaplaincy; and the Pastoral Care module, which works in conjunction with

the Study Day on funerals, included discussion about visiting hospices and the importance of pastoral sensitivity to patients and bereaved families. However, these important elements do not constitute a robust set of links with civic or community organisations, such as would better promote the Course's own declared objective to be 'world facing' in engagement and mission.

Commendation 3

We commend the Course for its able and well-motivated students who are evidently learning and growing in readiness for future lay ministry.

Recommendation 2

We recommend that the Course strengthens its practical and educational links with civic and community organisations, to better promote the Course's own declared objectives to be 'world-facing' in engagement and mission.

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

21. The students interacted well during the residential and study times we attended, clearly enjoying the experience and valuing regular times of worship. The Course's Equal Opportunity policy, as given to us, is excellent on commitments and definitions such as to aid community welfare, but does not include clear procedures for how any complaints and grievances should actually be raised and the steps by which they will be handled. We recommend that the Course has a more intentional and structured approach with a range of policy documents (see also below, for example, with regard to a Staff Handbook, coursework deadlines, a policy on supervision in the home parish); we recommend policy documents are devised or revised and updated, with clear statements (in each case) outlining when the next revision is due to take place.
22. The 'base group' which we attended (with permission) engaged in reflection after a prayer walk which had just been undertaken. There was a high degree of trust and sharing on information and searching together. The base group leader was highly competent and picked up issues and pointed students to scripture as appropriate. The leader ensured everyone was able to contribute fully. A reference to an earlier safeguarding issue was well handled. Students in base groups are encouraged by the Course to contact each other through zoom for ongoing personal support. The role of the base groups in aiding the ministerial formation of the students can be made more explicit (see Section E1).
23. The staff, including the leaders of the base groups (who are all recent former students of the Course), are clearly approachable and valued by the students.
24. The Review team note that opportunities to serve as Course tutors are not currently advertised publicly. The Course relies on the Principal, in terms of his contacts and by informally seeking nominations and suggestions. Some kind of public invitation to serve should be considered by

which potential tutors might express an interest, albeit that this would be subject to subsequent interview and assessment. The Review team also notes that tutors who are lay and who are women remain significantly under-represented at the current time, bearing in mind especially that a majority of students are women and the Course trains for lay ministry. We recommend that future tutorial staff appointments be made in the light of this important under-representation.

25. In regard to safeguarding, we observed a well-informed discussion in the Governing Body (i.e. the Lay Ministry Forum) with regard to updating the procedures relating to students who might mention historic domestic abuse during their selection or time in training. This issue was raised by student representatives and gave evidence that students are able to have some influence on Course arrangements (see also Section C1).
26. There is currently no provision for the support of spouses and so we recommend that provision is made in the Course for occasions when spouses and families may have contact with the Course. This arises from the right emphasis on ministerial formation which can mean that, during the time in training, students on the Course may undergo considerable personal development and change.

Commendation 4

We commend the staff, including the leaders of the base groups, who are clearly approachable and valued by the students.

Recommendation 3

We recommend that the Course is more intentional and structured through a range of policy documents which are devised or revised with a clear statement (in each case) of when the next review of the policy is due to take place.

Recommendation 4

We recommend that future tutorial appointments are made in the light of the fact that tutors who are lay and who are women are significantly under-represented at the current time.

Recommendation 5

We recommend that provision is made in the Course for occasions when spouses and families have contact with the Course.

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

27. We found that the residential venue at Launde Abbey provided good teaching space and overnight accommodation along with excellent outside space. People with disabilities were catered for; the lecture room was used for worship, but it was decently set out for corporate worship and the Abbey Chapel was available at some times of the day. At Bouverie Court the accommodation is more compact. It has a useful library, small and larger meeting rooms, a coffee area, a lift and

good parking. Worship took place in teaching rooms but there was good space for worship because the groups were small.

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

28. On the residential we found a range of traditional worship, varying from Compline, through Wildgoose to a robed Common Worship service led by the Principal. The Principal rightly felt the need to explain in detail what the formal robes signified, realising that some students experience mostly informal worship in their parishes.
29. Students did not take any lead in worship during this residential, apart from one reading. Worship was led largely by the staff. At weeknight teaching sessions students prepare the closing prayer(s). We saw some short but carefully planned closing acts of worship after the sessions. On a Study Day, we observed some worship songs and a rousing hymn, moving on to Common Worship Daily Prayer, led very competently by a tutor. In our short visit, we did not see any use of the Book of Common Prayer (BCP); but a good number of students experience the BCP if living in a village or through their placement in a parish other than their own. Overall, the worship we joined was well- led, varied and inclusive, demonstrating a good rapport between students and teachers.

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

30. Most of the teaching we saw was acceptable and some was excellent (Section D). However, the student body includes many who are professionally trained and expect explicit learning outcomes to be announced and followed, supported by good methodology and communication skills. There were occasions when tutors or speakers struggled to connect well with the students, lacking the basic skills in adult education and the ability to reflect critically about their ministerial experience (rather than recount or describe). It was clear that the most effective teachers we saw were those who had an adult education qualification or good teaching experience.
31. Criterion B5 asks about the continued learning of the staff. There is less provision for continuing staff development than might be expected for a Course of this kind. We recommend that the Course arranges more substantial provision for staff development, based on clear job descriptions. This provision should include further training on adult education methods and assessment (see Section D). The leaders of the base groups, who provide effective reflection for the students, were less clear on their role in the base groups with regard to the ministerial formation of the students. In Section E we identify the need for the purposes of the base groups to be revised so as to give greater emphasis to their actual and potential contribution to the ministerial formation of the students.

Recommendation 6

We recommend that the Course arranges more substantial provision for staff development, based on clear job descriptions.

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

Section C: Leadership and Management

C1 The TEI has clear and effective governance structures.

32. The Course document provided for the Review explains the current position as regards governance in these words: ‘In 2020, the structure was radically simplified. The new Lay Ministry Forum was still presided over by the Diocesan Bishop but its permanent membership was reduced to five: the Bishop, the two Archdeaconry Wardens of Lay Ministry, the Principal of the Lay Ministry Course and the Bishop’s PA (who takes the notes). Other people, such as the Archdeaconry Lay Vocations Officers and others related to the Lay Ministry Course, are now invited to attend particular meetings of the Forum, when their expertise is required by items on the agenda. Following the Periodic External Review of 2016 and in response to one of its recommendations, student representatives from each cohort were invited to attend meetings, to be a student voice on that body. Unfortunately, the timings of the meetings reflected the constraints of the Bishop’s diary and so took place during the working day, making it impossible for student cohort representatives who work to attend. To ensure that the student voice is heard, the Principal has arranged separate meetings with cohort representatives each term, so that their concerns can be raised direct with him and referred to the Forum if necessary’.
33. The meeting of the Lay Ministry Forum which the Review team observed was well conducted and the discussion was well facilitated. Two of the three student representatives attended this meeting; both made wide-ranging contributions, drawing on their professional expertise, not only commenting on matters raised as a direct concern by the students. This was impressive.
34. However, the notes of previous and recent meetings confirm that this was not what regularly happens at meetings of the Forum; and, as a result, the Review team consider it necessary to make further recommendations that were included in the 2016 Review. The revised membership of the Lay Ministry Forum reflects and fosters the rather ‘in-house’ feel of the Course that has been noted by the Review team. All the full members are part of the internal staffing of the diocese. In order to promote and maintain the thoroughness and effectiveness of the Governance observed by the Review team, there is the need to benefit from wider perspectives from those working on similar issues of education, training and management, in comparable dioceses.
35. The Review team respect the fact that the Principal of the Course has personal involvement in a range of regional and national networks that afford insights and guidance from external perspectives. However, these valuable connections are personal links; there need to be, in addition, organised and formally structured links with external perspectives and experience. For example, the Review team note that there are dioceses, within geographical reach, whose lay training Courses similarly do not currently have any university link or validation. Therefore, we recommend that the Governance of the Course, carried out through the Lay Ministry Forum, includes at least one external representative from another diocese which has a comparable approach to training for licensed lay ministry.

36. With regard to student involvement, the Review team observed that students can contribute more widely to governance than merely raising particular students concerns, valuable though this is. Often, Courses provide for a ‘common room meeting’ where students can meet, in the absence of staff, to consider what feedback to give. In the case of the Peterborough Course, the Review team realise that the current student representatives are consulting their cohort individually and electronically and, by these means, were well-briefed for the governance meeting. However, it is essential to good practice that the student representatives have ‘their own voice’ in the meeting and that this is not normally channelled via a third party.
37. Written feedback from the students would be of benefit; and, if unable to be present on a particular occasion, then a pre-arranged ‘zoom’ slot could be provided during the meeting for the student representative(s) to speak in person from off-site. However, by far the best solution is the one which was observed by the Review team, namely student representatives present in person and contributing across the full range of items on the agenda (when not part of necessarily confidential business), according to their own professional expertise and insights. In the circumstances, we recommend that the Governance of the Course includes the active presence of student representatives on a formal and regular basis.

Recommendation 7

We recommend that the Governance of the Course, carried out through the Lay Ministry Forum, includes at least one external representative from another diocese which has a comparable approach to training for licensed lay ministry.

Recommendation 8

We recommend that the Governance of the Course includes the active presence of student representatives on a formal and regular basis.

C2 The TEI has effective team leadership.

38. The Peterborough Course is necessarily reliant to a good degree on the Principal, to network a wide range of part-time staff, and the Course Administrator, who is a key link and an excellent point of interchange between the staff and between staff and students; and we commend the high quality and effectiveness of the administrative support for the Course. There is an affable quality to staff and governance relationships and a sense of being connected in a common enterprise. We refer further to governance in C1 and C3.
39. Nevertheless, there would be an important benefit in reconsidering the structural basis for the formal interaction of the staff of the Course. It was reported to us that the Principal of the Course is accountable to the Director for Ministerial Formation (who is also the DDO) and the Director provides line-management. The Principal of the Course is the line-manager for all the tutorial staff and placement supervisors. This seemed clear. However, it was also reported to us that other staff

serving the course, for example in administration, report for accountability to the Director of Ministerial Formation, not the Principal. This could, in practice, weaken decision-making and coherence. In addition, it was explained to us that the DDO is in fact moving to a different role in the diocese over the next few months. It is therefore timely to clarify the structures of decision-making and management to ensure effective team leadership. We recommend a diagram of staff oversight and accountability to give greater clarity with regard to decision-making.

Commendation 5

We commend the high quality and effectiveness of the administrative support for the Course.

Recommendation 9

We recommend that a structural diagram with commentary be drawn to identify the lines of responsibility and accountability amongst the staff team serving the Course.

C3 Trustees are appropriately recruited, supported and developed.

40. We welcome the plan for the Principal of the Course to have periodic meetings with the student representatives. In view of the need for induction of members of a governing body, these occasions can provide opportunity to brief the student representatives on issues of governance, on current challenges faced by the Course, and on their role and potential participation within the meetings of the Lay Ministry Forum. Similar briefing will need to be made available for a representative or representatives from other dioceses. With these measures in place, the Review team consider that those involved in Course governance will be appropriately recruited, supported and developed.

C4 The TEI has effective business planning, fundraising, risk management and reporting.

41. There are positive aspirations and aims for the Peterborough Course (Section A) and, inevitably for a single-diocesan Course, finances and practical arrangements are enmeshed into the workings and oversight of the Diocesan Board of Finance. The Course's own SWOT analysis gives an honest appraisal of risks and 'threats', not least with regard to continuing national considerations with regard to central church funding. The Course is certainly financially viable at the current time (due partly to reserves from previous years), even taking into account the recent increases in residential costs incurred due to the necessary move to Launde Abbey.

42. For all this, the Review team consider that it would significantly aid future viability for there to be more explicit assessment of the future risks if certain key Course personnel were to cease to hold their current posts (see Section C2). The Review team perceived heavy reliance for its operations on a few able and highly committed individuals, both academic and administrative staff. For this reason, we recommend that the Course carry out a review of its institutional resilience, as part of devising an appropriate and sustainable business plan for the post-covid era.

Recommendation 10

We recommend that the Course carry out a review of its institutional resilience.

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

Section D: Teaching and Learning

D1 The TEI offers programmes appropriate to the sponsoring church's ministerial training needs.

43. The Diocesan vision, strongly led by the Diocesan Bishop, is for a mixed ministry team of ordained and lay ministers working collaboratively in every benefice. To achieve this, the Course has developed a flexible programme which currently allows discernment for a particular lay ministry to continue during the first two years of training. In Section A, we recommend that the 'development conversation' which currently happens at the end of the first year is strengthened so that, wherever possible, discernment happens at an early stage in the second year in training. This recommendation is to better enable ministerial formation.
44. All students take a core foundational module comprising 6 whole-day and 2 residential weekends. Alongside this, during the first two years of training, all students undertake a total of six 'Living Faith' modules, covering an introduction to the Bible, pastoral care, the New Testament, ethics, doctrine and mission. Each such module involves 6 times 2 hour teaching sessions on weekday evenings, or on a series of Saturdays in some cases. Those whose vocation is by then discerned as being to Reader ministry proceed to a third year in which they study three further modules, namely Worship and the Sacraments, the Old Testament and Church History.
45. A range of practical modules on preaching, pastoral work, evangelism, chaplaincy and leading worship are also available, all students taking at least two of these, some taken during their third year. A further weekend on preaching and a study day on conducting funerals are held in year three, primarily for those following the Reader pathway, though, since 2020, these have also been open to other students. For example, a pastoral care student can helpfully attend the funeral day to prepare them for potentially giving a tribute as part of a funeral. Overall, students clearly value their time away as a group and also their meetings in base groups during residential.
46. We are asked if the programme is sufficiently world-engaging with opportunities to relate faith to life. We consider that this element can be strengthened; and we comment on this in and in relation to world Faiths in Section B1.

D2 The TEI's taught programmes are appropriately resourced, developed and quality assured.

47. Although the years 2019-20 and 2020-21 both showed financial surpluses on the budget, the Principal considers that resourcing is tight, not least because the move to Launde Abbey as a residential venue has led to an increase in costs. The modules are mostly on Moodle but, at the time of this Review, the 'Practical' modules were not included on Moodle due apparently to issues with limited storage space. Rather than using the Church of England Moodle site, the Course uses a site for which it pays separately (see below).

48. With regard to the qualifications, resourcing and development of staff members for their roles, we have already recommended greater opportunities for staff development (Section B5). Tutors are almost all drawn from within the Diocese of Peterborough. They are recruited informally, often on the basis of recommendation, though occasionally a potential tutor may make contact with the Principal direct. The Bishop notes positively that the opportunities for tutoring on the Course can ‘feed’ clergy and balance their other ministerial work and engagements in parish ministry. We have noted that only a few tutors are lay people, which means that an opportunity to model good practice to lay students is being missed.
49. The CVs of current staff indicate that the experience of tutors as adult educators varies. This gives significant challenges for quality assurance and staff development. Although the 2016 PER asked for more training in adult education for those teaching on the programme, staff development remains limited, being provided at present in only an informal way. There is no formal co-mentoring between the tutors to support and inform each other in good practice; the Principal confirmed that he mentors new staff who do not have prior experience or formal training in teaching adults. We did not find very much training for the whole team in, for example, assessment practices. We found that the Principal moderates all marking apart from the module he teaches.
50. There is no Staff Handbook to cohere the work of the tutors. Tutors meet on ad-hoc basis. For example, they met before the pandemic in order to discuss how best to incorporate issues around other world Faiths into the module learning outcomes. The Course papers show that there had been no meeting subsequent to that. The Principal explained that he has one-to-one meetings with tutors. We comment further on moderation and marking under Section D3.
51. We found that there are no formal processes for curriculum review and development. One of the Living Faith modules (Pastoral Care) was revisited in 2018-19 after problems were raised by the cohort representatives and a new tutor was employed when a natural vacancy arose. The course ASE for 2019-20 shows that the anticipated improvement did not happen at first, though it worked better when delivered by Zoom last year. In 2018-19 the return rates for evaluation questionnaires were 90% but this declined to under 50% for some course components in the year 2020-21. The Course attributes this to lower rates of return for online questionnaires.
52. There is limited evidence of the curriculum changing in response to student feedback (apart from introduction of the third year base groups, see Section B). Formal engagement with the students is limited (Section C2). Cohort representatives consult their year group and then the Principal meets each cohort representative each term, but these meetings are not minuted. It appears that the curriculum is designed to meet the objectives and needs of the Diocese, with adjustments more often made due to tutor feedback rather than student feedback, as was probably the case with the revision of the pastoral care module.
53. The programme does not sit within the Common Awards framework and there are no connections with any university. We note that the Bishop expressed confidence in the theological approach of

the Course and as free-standing of Durham's Common Awards. Whilst the Annual Self-Evaluation documents are completed, it is not clear where QAE processes are formally situated within the structure. The only body which meets formally is now the Lay Ministry Forum (see Section C), with a core membership of only four people, and quality assurance and enhancement does not appear as a standard item on the agenda. Student feedback is routinely summarised by the Principal; and we saw no record of student input into the Annual Self-Evaluations. It is not clear how tutors are supported through this process.

54. The Course's own ASE documents indicate some confusion in the use of the terminology for the precise roles of the Quality Nominee and Quality Adviser, compared to the usage described in the national guidelines. In practice, the Principal has been acting as Quality Nominee, to lead the QA work. A university chaplain has acted as external Quality Adviser for the last three years. In 2022, this person joined the staff as a tutor; he relinquished his role as Quality Adviser, being succeeded by a member of the ERMC staff, who acts as an individual on behalf of the Peterborough Course. Whilst the Principal as an individual is connected with a number of external bodies and networks (see criteria A -C), there is no formal oversight of the Course which is independent of the Course and which is drawn from outside the Diocese.
55. Students have access to the Library at Bouverie Court, which is a very good resource and which was reordered in 2018-19. Footfall was however reduced due to the closure of the library in March 2020 because of the pandemic. It is not easily accessible for all students, given the geography of the Diocese. There is a small library at Launde Abbey, although this is not a lending library. The online resources offered in the Moodle Hub have become more significant. However, students report some difficulty in finding resources there. This would be solved if the Course changed their Moodle to the one run by the Church of England, which would give them access to the Resources Hub, especially for the third year students.
56. There is now a vocations champion for people with disabilities, we well as a UKME vocations champion.

D3 There is a good mix of teaching and learning styles and assessment methods, and students are engaged.

57. Varied approaches to teaching and learning are used. Consistent with its focus on collaborative ministry, the Course favours team teaching, which is the norm for study days and residentials, as well as the Living Faith modules. Students begin the Course with a wide range of previous academic experience (see Section A). Whilst the effect of the pandemic has been to encourage or 'force' the Course to use online platforms, the online platforms are not used as fully as they could be. There is evidence in the ASE 2019-20 that the Course only embraced online learning with reluctance due to its reservation about weakening the corporate life of the Course. The Course pages on Moodle give very few weblinks and asynchronous online discussion forums have in some cases very little participation. The ASE for 2020-21 shows that one module was postponed for a

year because the tutor was not willing to use Zoom and some students did not want to use only Moodle.

58. However, there is now the intention to continue with Zoom and Moodle, not least to mitigate the issue of travel to teaching sessions. Students report that the base groups use social media effectively to support their members and that their role as a discussion group has correspondingly been extended.
59. Some students raised with us the need for further help, especially in the initial stages of the course, with how to arrive at critical assessments in their written work, as distinct from recapitulating material and views found in the course notes and in their reading. There is a useful booklet now on Study Skills, but we recommend that further provision be made by the Course for training students in study skills in their first year of study.
60. On many modules, there is a good range of assessment options, so that options of submitting an audio or video presentation are available. This is valued by the students and we commend it. The Course is clearly accessible to students with a wide range of prior educational experience, helping them to grow in confidence and to explore their calling. However, the stated Learning Outcomes vary in their value. Whilst all modules including the practical ones have stated Learning Outcomes, we found that these are not always sufficiently specific and active, and not phrased in terms of what the student will be able to do at the end of the module. Nor are they all being measured in the assessments which are set. We also noted that some learning materials and reading lists would gain from being brought up to date. We therefore recommend the updating of learning outcomes, learning materials and reading lists.
61. Tutors give extensions on coursework deadlines; there is no evidence of a central policy to coordinate this (see Section B on written policies).
62. The Bishop encourages Readers with academic potential to receive more training (Section E8). It is not clear that all teaching is at level 4, a concern raised in the last Periodic External Review (2016). The SWOT prepared by the Course for this Review notes: 'It is generally counted as being at level 4 for APL purposes, when 'Ministry Explorers' from the diocese, who have done the course, have proceeded to other TEIs for their ordination training...but it is hard to gauge how our course compares with accredited courses elsewhere'. There is abundant evidence that the students enjoy the course. However, there was some evidence that they need to be stretched more and in particular to be introduced to a wider range of reading to underpin their learning. We therefore recommend that attention is given by the Course to provide elements of teaching which are more intellectually stretching, a point also recommended in the last External Periodic Review.
63. We are asked to consider whether students receive sufficient, timely and constructive feedback on their work, so as to support their learning. Some work is being marked using the six key areas identified on the marking criteria sheet, while other work only receives a paragraph of comments which do not relate directly to the marking criteria. The generic marking criteria only offer four

grades and, while some markers vary this by using ‘plus’ and ‘minus’, others do not. We were told that this is to simplify the marking. The current criteria allow a pass mark C even if ‘no evidence’ is present of additional reading and no attempt made at referencing. The same marking criteria are used in year 3, although we were told that they are applied more rigorously. Written feedback on marked work is not extensive and does not always make it clear how the grade could be improved. The 28 day timeframe for the return of marked work is now mostly met.

64. In the light of these considerations, we recommend further staff training in the moderation and marking of student work is provided by the Course to ensure that standards are maintained and consistent.

Commendation 6

We commend the varied type and range of the assignments offered to the students for their assessed work.

Recommendation 11

We recommend that further provision be made by the Course for training students in study skills during their first year of study.

Recommendation 12

We recommend the updating of Learning Outcomes, learning materials and reading lists.

Recommendation 13

We recommend that attention is given by the Course to provide elements of teaching which are more intellectually stretching.

Recommendation 14

We recommend that further staff training in the moderation and marking of student work is provided by the Course to ensure that standards are maintained and consistent.

D4 There is provision for students’ progression and development over the course of the learning programmes.

65. Whilst we could identify enthusiastic learning taking place, we lacked the evidence to show progression in learning skills and critical thinking because the assessment criteria and benchmarks are not applied in a sufficiently consistent and systematic manner. Students receive extensive teaching ‘notes’ from tutors but there may be an over-reliance on this input. The flexibility of optional modules enables students to specialise for their intended future ministry, though we consider selection for this should take place earlier than at present (see Section A).

D5 Students are helped to integrate their academic learning and ministerial development.

66. The base groups play a part in students' integration of learning and ministerial formation, and we have recommended that their role be enhanced (Section E). Placements are also significant in achieving this objective. All students undertake a second-year placement in their home parish. The

The review team has Confidence with Qualifications with regard to Criterion D: Teaching and Learning.

supervisor writes a report on this. Students on the Reader pathway also have a placement in a different parish or benefice which contrasts with their home parish in at least one respect. This placement used to happen in the Summer before the third year commenced, but it is now being fitted in whenever Covid etc restrictions allow. Students speak positively about their experience of placements (Section E).

Section E: Ministerial Formation

E1 The TEI's programme of ministerial formation enables students to grow into the ministerial qualities and competencies sought by the sponsoring church.

67. Despite the constraints of the pandemic, staff and students had evidently worked hard to adapt. The staff found different ways of teaching and the students pursued their vocation seriously and grappled with issues of learning and formation. Papers provided for us by the staff indicated that some planned developments had, nonetheless, been delayed until the next cohort entered training.
68. We found good evidence that the ministerial formation enables students to grow into the ministerial qualities and competencies sought by the sponsoring churches. From the residential and study days we attended, we were impressed by how students had adapted to learning from Zoom. This has, however, been a challenge for the new entry whose first module (Ethics) was online, which some found initially daunting. They sensibly turned to their base group leader who attended the Ethics module with them and then helped them to reflect on the issues raised. From our observations, we were impressed by the ease with which the base group leaders enabled the group to grow in trust of each other and listen and contribute helpfully to each other. Students were open to share and learn, one commenting that what she was learning was helping her to see her own church congregation differently.
69. However, the base group leaders had not been guided to understand their role as being that of explicitly aiding the ministerial formation of the students. They seemed surprised when we raised this point with them. We note that, in the third year of specific training for the Readers, the SWOT report from the Course explained that: 'Students remain in the same Base Group for the first two years of training. Third-year students also have the option of participating in a voluntary Base Group if they wish, for fellowship or pastoral support, although it does not have any role in the teaching programme. The third year Base Group was introduced in response to requests from students, who were missing the fellowship of other students during the third year'.
70. The third-year meetings currently seemed to us less regular and formalised. The third year is key for the specific ministerial formation of Readers. We recommend that the statement of purposes for the Base Groups be revised so as to give greater emphasis to gaining maximum benefit for their actual and potential contribution to the ministerial formation of the students, and in addition that consideration be given to regular and planned third-year meetings for those selected for Reader ministry (see also Section A).

Recommendation 15

We recommend that the statement of purposes for the Base Groups be revised so as to give greater emphasis to gaining maximum benefit for the actual and potential ministerial formation of the

students, and in addition that consideration be given to regular and planned third year meetings for those selected for Reader ministry.

E2 Students have a desire and growing ability to share in mission, evangelism and discipleship.

71. We found some evidence that students have a desire and growing ability to share in mission, evangelism and discipleship. Students were certainly enthusiastic and well-motivated and keen to participate fully with the course and with each other. The placements were appreciated as good experiences for learning; and we heard much praise for the supervisors from the students we met (see Section B4). However, there was less emphasis on the Course's own objective about being 'world-facing' in engagement and mission. This reservation is also raised above at Section B1, hence the recommendation made in that section.

E3 Pioneer ministry training - not applicable

E4 Students are growing in personal spirituality and engagement with public worship.

72. Current students did not seem to be involved in sharing in the preparation of worship or leading worship in the residential and larger meetings on the Study Days. However, the first-year worship observation exercise in the home parish showed that supervisors were working effectively with students, helping them to notice how other people led worship or preached. The supervisors supported the students as they tried this for themselves. In the later placement in a parish different from their own, some students reported being amazed to see robed ministers in Sunday worship. Having said this, students accepted and were willingly to work with any formal requirements. Students spoke tellingly of the awe and privilege they felt when ministering to people in acts of public worship. One student said she now saw her own church 'through new eyes'.

73. We formed the impression, from conversations and from reading placement reports, that a majority of current students come from town churches where they enjoy either Anglo-Catholic worship or 'HTB style' worship where electronic sound systems and music is the norm. By contrast, students in rural areas were used to a more traditional mix of BCP/Common Worship and hymn books.

74. The students seemed to have engaged well with their placements. For example, one student who had moved from a town to live in a village sorely missed 'free worship'. Conversations with her Anglo-Catholic incumbent during the home placement helped her to appreciate different worship and a complementarity of approaches. Another student, whose home church is a single town benefice with a team of clergy and Readers, found a placement in a rural benefice of five villages with one incumbent 'different in every way'. This student gained confidence to preach through a phone and lead family worship in a tented field, so much so that they returned for a further,

voluntary month. Another said, ‘I learned to swing between free and set patterns whilst leading worship in my home church’. Students also became aware of the need, due to shortages, for their future Reader ministry to include possible service in rural areas.

75. With regard to growth in personal prayer and spirituality, we note that training for potential spiritual directors is shared with the Diocese of Leicester and that currently there is a limited pool of potential spiritual directors. Some students mentioned the need for help in this area. We recommend that more formal provision is made by the Course for students to have spiritual directors to aid their ministerial formation.

Recommendation 16

We recommend that more formal provision is made by the Course for students to have spiritual directors to aid their ministerial formation.

E5 Students’ personality, character and relationships.

76. We found that students from all educational backgrounds showed a high quality of teachability. Their personal development is supported well by the Pastoral Care modules. We were aware that the Course had felt the need to review the teaching in Pastoral Care in the last two years. The new module content covers a good range of approaches to the subject and is based on a wide and up-to-date literature. The module has sufficient content for students to work at their own speed between teaching sessions; the assignments had helpful suggestions about how to tackle the topic chosen.
77. We also attended a parallel session on the Practical Pastoral Care which linked with the more theoretical module and was designed to pick up pastoral issues (such as visiting people with dementia, sitting with the dying or supporting the bereaved). It seemed to work well. For example, one student shared their view on how their hospice visiting had progressed since reflecting on the content of the module. The whole group entered into a good intuitive conversation about being with the dying. The tutor seemed to note the students who had honed their skills. Links were made with learning listening skills and with the Study Day on ‘Taking a Funeral’ which it supplemented.
78. We also noted that students are able to transfer skills from their professional life to their future lay ministry. They could be analytic and self-critical. For example, one student with an educational and publishing background noted the absence of Learning Outcomes for a particular module. These were subsequently provided by the Course. Even now, we noticed that what are called by the Course ‘Learning Outcomes’ are more likely a summary of module content (see Section D3).

E6 Students are developing in the dispositions and skills of leadership, collaboration and ability to work in community.

79. Former students, who are now leaders of the base groups, certainly offered examples of the dispositions and skills of leadership, collaboration and ability to work in community. Participation

in the base groups seems to assist students to develop further these qualities. We observed group work and group presentations on different approaches to spiritual life, which confirmed this collaboration. We saw, from the outline of the residential weekend about team-working that the weekend covered the basics of team-working in an accessible way which was well suited for, and well handled, by taking place during a residential. The ASE for 2019-20 encourages all students to work together and expressed the hope that by 2020 all students should be working within ministry teams in their own parish or benefice while on the Course, though it is acknowledged that this still needs to be promoted.

E7 Students' sense of calling to ministry within the sponsoring church is growing, realistic and informed.

80. We comment in section A on the developing sense of vocation amongst students in their first two years. For the first-year students we met, it is early in their vocational confirmation, but they had reflected on their lives after working alongside others with different approaches to belief and worship. They reflected well on the impact of the prayer walk and beginning to lead acts of worship. With regard to candidates for explicitly Reader ministry, the final year students had learned many profound insights in their placements (see above) and several felt confirmed in their calling to be Readers.
81. We asked about the choice of supervisors for particular students as this is germane to the vocational development of a student. It seems to be assumed that this will be their local incumbent. We ask that careful consideration be given in each instance to the appropriate choice of a supervisor for individual student, bearing in mind that the current incumbent might not be best equipped to provide supervision, that there might be a vacancy in the parish, and there could in principle be a potential issue of maintaining appropriate 'boundaries' if the incumbent were to be related to the student. We anticipate that flexibility can be shown but we consider that this should be part of the policy set out by the Course. In the light of these considerations, and in keeping with Recommendation 3 at Section B, we make the following further recommendation.

Recommendation 17

We recommend that the Course devise a clearer policy for the choice of placement supervisors.

E8 The TEI has sound procedures for the interim and end-of-training assessment of students' knowledge, skills and dispositions, reporting on their achievement and identifying further learning needs for the next stages of training and ministry.

82. The documents provided by the Course highlight the Diocesan Bishop's concern to promote a continuing learning culture for all serving ministers. The admissions policy for the course asks all students to 'commit to training and life-long learning beyond the Course'. This is set to become a condition of re-licensing by 2023, albeit further reading and attendance at training or study courses would suffice for this. The Principal confirmed to us that there is already willingness

amongst those recently trained to undertake further theological study. We recommend the further development of the CMD provision by the Course and Diocese for those in the early years of licensed ministry as Readers so as to match the current episcopally-led promotion of greater involvement in further training and the enhancement of a learning culture for all ministers in the diocese.

83. We were unable to see many final reports. However, what was made available to us seemed to reflect well on the character and learning of the student as well as pointing to future learning possibilities. Reports from placement supervisors confirmed that high levels of learning were taking place. Further academic exploration was often suggested in a student final report.

Recommendation 18

We recommend the further development of the CMD provision by the Course and the Diocese for those in the early years of licensed ministry as Readers.

The review team has Confidence with Qualifications with regard to Criterion E: Ministerial Formation.

Conclusion

The review team has Confidence with Qualifications in the Peterborough Diocesan Lay Ministry Course in preparing students for LLM/Reader Ministry in the Church of England.

Summary of Commendations

Commendation 1

We commend the Course for sustaining its institutional momentum, educational and training programme, and recruitment of students, during the unprecedented and demanding Covid era.

Commendation 2

We commend the flexibility of the programme that enables vocational development and exploration for students after they have commenced the first year in training.

Commendation 3

We commend the Course for its able and well-motivated students who are evidently learning and growing in readiness for future lay ministry. They find the Course welcoming and helpful and were able to express in formal sessions how they had found new understanding.

Commendation 4

We commend the staff, including the leaders of the base groups, who are clearly approachable and valued by the students.

Commendation 5

We commend the high quality and effectiveness of the administrative support for the Course.

Commendation 6

We commend the varied type and range of the assignments offered to the students for their assessed work.

Summary of Recommendations

Recommendation 1

We recommend that the selection for specific lay ministries takes place wherever possible in the early stages of year two in training.

Recommendation 2

We recommend that the Course strengthens its practical and educational links with civic and community organisations, to better promote the Course's own declared objectives to be 'world-facing' in engagement and mission.

Recommendation 3

We recommend that a range of policy documents are revised and updated, including the complaints and grievance procedures, with clear statements (in each case) outlining when the next revision is due to take place.

Recommendation 4

We recommend that future tutorial staff appointments be made in the light of the fact that tutors who are lay and who are women remain significantly under-represented at the current time.

Recommendation 5

We recommend that provision is made in the Course for occasions when spouses and families have contact with the Course.

Recommendation 6

We recommend that the Course provides more substantial provision for staff development, based on clear job descriptions.

Recommendation 7

We recommend that the Governance of the Course, carried out by means of the Lay Ministry Forum, include at least one external representative from another Diocese which has a comparable approach to training for licenced lay ministry.

Recommendation 8

We recommend that the Governance of the Course directly includes the active presence of student representatives on a formal and regular basis.

Recommendation 9

We recommend that a structural diagram with commentary be drawn to identify the lines of responsibility and accountability amongst the staff team serving the Course.

Recommendation 10

We recommend that the Course carry out a review of its institutional resilience.

Recommendation 11

We recommend that further provision be made by the Course for training students in study skills during their first year of study.

Recommendation 12

We recommend the updating of Learning Outcomes, learning materials and reading lists.

Recommendation 13

We recommend that attention is given by the Course to provide elements of teaching which are more intellectually stretching.

Recommendation 14

We recommend that further staff training in the moderation and marking of student work is provided by the Course to ensure that standards are maintained and consistent.

Recommendation 15

We recommend that the statement of purposes for the Base Groups be revised so as to give greater emphasis to gaining maximum benefit for the actual and potential ministerial formation of the students, and in addition that consideration be given to regular and planned third year meetings for those selected for Reader ministry.

Recommendation 16

We recommend that more formal provision is made by the Course for students to have the opportunity for spiritual directors to aid their ministerial formation.

Recommendation 17

We recommend that the Course devise a clearer policy for the choice of placement supervisors.

Recommendation 18

We recommend the further development of CMD provision by the Course and Diocese for those in the early years of licensed ministry as Readers.