

## Ministry Council: Periodic External Review Report

# College of the Resurrection, Mirfield

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## Glossary

|        |  |
|--------|--|
| ABTAPL | Association of British Theological and Philosophical Libraries |
| ASE    | Annual Self Evaluation   |
| BAP    | Bishops' Advisory Panel  |
| CoR    | College of the Resurrection                                    |
| CR     | Community of the Resurrection                                  |
| DDO    | Diocesan Director of Ordinands                                 |
| DDV    | Diocesan Director of Vocations                                 |
| DSA    | Disabled Students' Allowance                                   |
| IME1/2 | Initial Ministerial Education Phase 1/2                        |
| LSP    | Learning Support Plan  |
| PER    | Periodic External Review                                       |
| TEI    | Theological Education Institution                              |
| YTEP   | Yorkshire Theological Education Partnership                    |

## Reviewers

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## 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.

Church PER teams are appointed by the national Ministry Development Team 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 will 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 the College of the Resurrection, Mirfield

### Introduction

The College of the Resurrection (CoR) is a theological college training ordinands for the Church of England. It was established in 1902 by the Community of the Resurrection (CR), an Anglican monastic order founded by Charles Gore in 1892. Until recently, the College was staffed predominantly by the Brethren, but it now has an entirely salaried staff. The present Principal, appointed in 2019, is the fourth not to be a member of CR and there are currently no CR brothers on the staff. However, the College retains close links with the community and shares in its pattern of worship, which provides a significant opportunity for integrating study and formation. As the College website states, ‘The College of the Resurrection is a unique place: the only theological college in the Anglican Communion that shares its life with a monastic community. It exists to help you discover and develop the vocation God has for you.’

CoR is located in a 22-acre parkland site in Mirfield, West Yorkshire that comprises the Community House and Retreat Centre as well as the College buildings. CoR is part of the Mirfield Centre, which is the ‘Community’s platform for jointly organised events between the partner institutions: onsite study days, workshops or residential conferences.’ The College shares its buildings with St Hild College, a non-residential course, who have offices in the building and who use the classrooms at evenings and weekends and use the Lower Church for worship. Due to the timetables of CoR and St Hild, there is little shared worship or learning apart from during Advent when students from the two programmes join together to plan and lead worship. In 2008, CoR also founded the Mirfield Liturgical Institute (MLI), as a centre of excellence in Liturgical Study that resources the wider church.

From its origins in the Oxford Movement, the CoR is Anglo-Catholic in foundation, but it is seeking to become attractive to a wider spectrum of ordinands. It welcomes female ordinands and married students, and the site offers married accommodation. CoR seeks to live out the Five Guiding Principles. As the Self-Evaluation document states: ‘The all-male Community of the Resurrection allows students to worship with them at the midday Mass if they are unable to be at the 8.00 celebration or feel unable to make their communion at the College Mass. This provision has the benefit of being on-site and not designed specifically in a fashion that might be divisive. Some “traditionalist” students make a point of being present at college liturgies when a woman is presiding and receive as much of their ministry as conscience allows.’

Student numbers are low and this presents a significant financial challenge to the College, which relies upon financial support from CR for its survival: CR is committed to the financial support of the college but also has an expectation that the college remains a ‘going concern’. CR owns and maintains the buildings and pays salaries. Despite the low numbers (19 at the time of the visit) the student body is diverse and the Self-evaluation Document records that ‘black ordinands have represented between 0 and 10% of our total. Over the same period, we have had varying proportions of married students representing up to 25%

of the College.’ There are currently no students with mobility impairments, but there are students with specific learning disabilities such as dyslexia.

Programmes at CoR were initially validated by the University of Leeds and latterly by the University of Sheffield. In 2020, the partnership was terminated by Sheffield, which could no longer sustain recruitment to its BA Theology programme, and so CoR joined the Yorkshire Theological Education Partnership (YTEP), working alongside St Hild’s College, the Church Army, Leeds School of Ministry and York School of Ministry. This gave CoR access to Common Awards, validated by the University of Durham, and it now offers BA (Hons) in Theology, Ministry and Mission; Diploma in Theology, Ministry and Mission; and MA (Hons) in Theology, Ministry and Mission and PGDip in Theology, Ministry and Mission.

At the time of the review, the College staff consisted of the Principal and academic staff Dean of Pastoral Studies, Academic Dean, Dean of Systematic Theology, the Dean of Chapel (in vacancy but covered by the Principal) and an interim Tutor in Liturgy. The College engages external tutors and speakers to provide lectures on their specialist subjects, as appropriate. There was also a College Secretary/PA to the Principal and a Librarian shared on a part-time basis with CR. The Bursar position is currently vacant and is covered on a part-time basis by the Bursar of CR.

With a newly validated programme, and a relatively new Principal and staff team, we conducted this review at a time of considerable transition for the College. We noted that these changes had had a positive impact on the life and work of the College, although the pandemic has limited the extent to which these changes have been embedded.

## PER Process

We are grateful to CoR staff for providing an extensive set of documents for our review, including the self-evaluation and scene-setting document, external reviews, module and programme documents, handbooks and policies, student feedback, staff CVs, and business and financial documents. We were also given access to the institution’s Moodle site, where learning materials are stored and where assessed work is submitted and marked. The review team conducted a virtual visit via zoom from 7-10 March 2022: the team had intended to visit in person but the event was moved online a few days before due to covid cases on the site. We are grateful to the staff for organizing this so quickly.

During the visit, we held meetings with academic staff, students and former students, trustees and members of the governing bodies. Meetings with students included meetings with Tutor Groups, where each reviewer met with a group of 6-8 students, a group of married and partnered students, and individual students who called in to timetabled zoom drop-in sessions. We sampled teaching, including sessions livestreamed from classrooms via zoom and sessions that were held entirely on zoom due to individuals needing to self-isolate. We watched worship via livestream, either via zoom or facebook.

However, it was felt by all concerned that it was important for reviewers to experience campus life, so two members of the team paid a short visit to the Mirfield site on 18<sup>th</sup> May: they were able to have a tour of the campus, share in meals, attend worship in the Lower Church and observe a lecture. One member of the



team stayed overnight in student accommodation. This visit also gave the opportunity for informal conversations with staff and students that had not been possible over zoom.

## General Observations

### Strengths

The strengths of CoR lie in:

1. Students have a life rooted in prayer, fed by a pattern of the daily Offices and Holy Communion. This pattern of prayer builds community and underpins all aspects of daily life.
2. Positive changes being made by the new Principal and new staff. While covid has delayed the implementation of these changes and although it will take time for these to become established, these represent a positive move.
3. The unique opportunity to study alongside a monastic community. The conceptualization of the College as a new monastic community offers a helpful and attractive way of understanding this relationship.
4. The positive dynamics of academic staff team
5. Honest and generous attempts to live out the Five Guiding Principles
6. Teaching that is accessible across a range of educational levels

### Areas for attention

The areas for attention are:

1. The urgent need to revise outdated Business and Governance documents
2. The need to address the financial situation of the College through careful planning and income diversification
3. The challenges of student recruitment
4. Staff and student workload, particularly through tasks generated by the attempt to live out a monastic way of life.

## 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.

| CRITERION                           | OUTCOME                        |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| A Formational Aims                  | Confidence with Qualifications |
| 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        |
| <b>Overall Outcome</b>  | <b>Confidence with Qualifications</b> |

The review team regards The College of the Resurrection as fit for purpose for preparing candidates for ordained ministry.

## Section A: Formational Aims

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

1. At the time of the review, the formational aims of CoR were being reformulated as the self-understanding of the College underwent development. Until the appointment of the present Principal, the College had been closely tied to CR, with at least one of the Brethren on the staff, and it has been one of the recognised institutions for training priests in the Anglo-Catholic tradition of the Church of England. The first reformulation was to draw on the 'new monastic' community promoted by the Archbishop of Canterbury to articulate an identity for the College as a temporary community that sits in parallel to and draws strength and stability from a monastic community. This is described in the self-evaluation document as follows:

*Today, the College is more inclined to see itself alongside such intentional bodies as the St Anselm Community in Lambeth. The College is an intentional community of single and partnered individuals who, for a defined period, take on some of the skills and practices of the monastic life in order to be further shaped as disciples for the demands of ordained ministry.*

2. This is a positive move and, in interview, students were keen to articulate the vision of the 'new monastic' community. Nonetheless, there are challenges in seeking to align a new concept aimed at those who have not taken religious vows with the ancient monastic influences that have shaped the College and whose impact is still felt on the community. For example, students noted that the monastic discipline of work and prayer could place a heavy burden on them, as will be discussed in Section B below.
3. For the second aim, the College seeks to retain its Catholic identity and sense of tradition, but for reasons of sustainability seeks to make itself attractive to students from a range of different church backgrounds who are drawn to the monastic life and sense of community. This decision has been based on the following analysis by CoR of trends within the Church of England:

*A lively and confident Evangelical constituency within the Church of England presently produces the majority of its ordinands, most of whom readily seek a training in that tradition. Without a corresponding growth in confidence among churches that produce ordinands who might more easily look to Mirfield, there may be insufficient students to sustain the College. We have, however, been pleased to find some evangelical ordinands who discern value in what the College has to offer.*

4. The College has produced new promotional material in booklet and audio/visual formats highlighting the benefits of living and studying within community alongside the traditional monastic community, and describing its identity as: 'We are "catholic" in that we seek to transcend our difference and celebrate our diversity within a single Christian community living a common life.' However, some students have commented that the prospectus is 'aspirational',

meaning that it seeks to attract students from a wider range of traditions than the College has recruited heretofore and that this does not completely reflect their experience and perceptions of the student body. This could potentially create a basis for tension between students of a Catholic persuasion and those from other traditions, and care needs to be taken to manage the expectations of students applying to the College.

5. Furthermore, the changes of recent years have not been reflected in the College's governing documents and statements of purpose. The Governance Documents are out of date: they were last published in 2011 and were partially revised in 2019, so they precede CoR joining YTEP in 2020 and also the appointment of the new Principal. This limits the extent to which the aims and purpose are communicated to staff, trustees and other stakeholders. In particular, there is a lack of clarity about the current relationship between the monastic community and the College. See Section C below for further discussion and recommendations. **See Recommendation 9 below.**

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

6. CoR only offers training for ordination into the Church of England (not lay or pioneer) and the training provided is appropriate for this. The Module Mapping Document carefully relates the curriculum to the Church of England Formation Criteria, with a detailed discussion of how the content of each module contributes to this. An explanation of the Criteria is included in the Student Handbook and students are expected to write an annual self-assessment using these.
7. The changes of recent years show that CoR is willing to review and develop its aims, reshaping them according to new thinking within the Church of England. The recent change of organization from Sheffield to joining Common Awards and YTEP was a beneficial move. We also saw evidence of a willingness to review and improve provision at a meeting of the College Council observed during our visit and in interviews with the Principal and staff.
8. Students engage with new forms of church, such as church plants, through the placements. From discussions with staff, we learn that new forms of church are regularly referenced in classroom discussions. We saw evidence in essays of students being encouraged to engage with recent Church of England policy documents. We noted that students are encouraged to explore emerging areas of scholarship, such as Black Theology, though this was in a Theme Week at the end of the year rather than in the core modules. Staff showed a willingness to develop reading lists and library resources: for example, from interviews with the Librarian and academic staff we learned of plans to develop resources on Queer Theology, though we were told that this remains a work in progress.
9. The CoR has its roots in a distinctive and distinguished Anglican tradition of mission, evangelism and discipleship through its foundation by, and continuing connections to, the CR. In the Student Placement Handbook, the College's vision of priestly formation is explicit about seeking 'to meet

the challenge of the Incarnation in pastoral engagement with the world, encouraged by the Christian commitment to social justice of the founding brothers of the Community of the Resurrection'. The College Prospectus further states its aim is to 'prepare our women and men for generous, contemporary and creative mission'. A sponsoring bishop articulated their own high regard for the College 'because of its unwavering and wholehearted commitment to mission'. However, from interviews with past students, and reports from stakeholders including a DDO and a training incumbent, CoR ordinands sometimes seemed less prepared for mission than other ordinands, though Covid may have had an impact on recent graduates (see D1 and E2 below).

10. Training incumbents also reported that, whilst CoR graduates have a solid foundation rooted in a tradition of prayer, their rule of life whilst training may have made them less flexible and adaptive than graduates from other programmes.
11. From interviews with staff, we learned that care is being taken to work with students at different educational levels. Student interviews show satisfaction from students at different levels. Students on different pathways (BA, MA and Diploma) are able to work together productively.

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

12. CoR is aware of a public perception that it is exclusively Anglo-Catholic and, further, that it is not welcoming of female students. Recent publicity materials and videos have sought to address this with materials in a contemporary style that feature female ordinands and families, but as noted above, some students feel that this does not accurately represent the College as they experience it. Over the coming years, therefore, careful attention will need to be paid to developing an ethos and identity for the college that is both understood by the wider church and is owned and lived out by its students.

**Recommendation 1**

**We recommend that the College carefully reviews its ethos and identity in consultation with all stakeholders, formulating a Mission Statement that accurately reflects the identity of the College that is understood by staff, students and the wider church.**

**The review team has Confidence with Qualifications 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.**

13. The College's joining of YTEP in 2020 came with the advantage of an established link with the University of Durham and thus the ability to offer taught courses leading to Common Awards degrees and diplomas. There is evidence that this new arrangement has resulted in greater academic stability for the College.
14. Joining YTEP also provided the opportunity for the College to engage and collaborate with other TEIs and in particular, St Hild (a non-residential course) who use the College facilities every week and for residential weekends. Numerous external stakeholders, including a training incumbent, a former student and an IME-2 Director drew attention to the potential for developing collaboration with St Hild. For example, the IME-2 Director wanted to see 'the college work more closely with St Hild as we seek to grow leaders for a changing church alongside the new formation framework'. Several DDOs and DDVs made similar comments about wanting to see bridges built between the residential college and the local training course, with one adding 'the College has an opportunity to work with diocesan partners to offer IME2 and lay training.'
15. However, the academic and liturgical timetable for CoR ordinands currently prohibits significant engagement with students from St Hild, except for joint events, for example during Advent and there is some evidence of a lack of understanding by Mirfield ordinands towards those training on a course; stakeholder feedback highlights, as a priority, the need for flexibility and greater integration between the College and St Hild for the partnerships to flourish. That said, this new arrangement is in its infancy and the pandemic has clearly impacted on the degree of possible mutuality between the College and St Hild. The Principal sits on the St Hild College Council and on the YTEP Council and is beginning to actively develop ways to collaborate with YTEP, for example with the College providing a more Catholic perspective into developing Church Planting in the region.

### **Recommendation 2**

#### **We recommend that the College finds imaginative and flexible ways for residential and non-residential students to work together at the Mirfield site.**

16. All students have the opportunity to do at least one parish and at least one sector placement during term-time, plus at least one intensive summer placement over the vacation period. Placements are organised initially to reflect recommendations from a student's BAP report, providing the necessary opportunities for personal, spiritual, and ministerial growth. There is evidence that, notwithstanding the challenges of the pandemic, the College's range of placements continues to evolve and, with the new Dean of Pastoral studies in post, is growing further, together

with the forming of good relationships with placement supervisors. There is evidence from placement supervisors that Mirfield ordinands are open and receptive and generally good at reflecting, both theologically and creatively.

17. The term-time (one-week full time and Sundays) placement does appear at times to conflict with the life of the College, because of which the student may on occasion not receive a full or rounded understanding of a church community, particularly when there are substantial services/activities other than on a Sunday.
18. The pandemic had a significant impact on the range of placements offered to ordinands, with many opportunities being unavailable, such as engagement with schools, hospitals, and the emergency services. One student commented that during this period, they had the depth but not necessarily the breadth of placements.
19. The College has a history of forming relationships locally, regionally, and internationally across different traditions and cultures. There is evidence of a desire to renew and seek new opportunities, such as engaging with the local police, fire service, prison service and the Army. There are also new connections being made with local and regional madrassahs.

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

20. The core ministerial and teaching staff currently consists of four ordained tutors, including the Principal. There has been a significant change over time from a primarily monastic to salaried team and more recently the College has endured and been challenged by lengthy sick and sabbatical leave and staff absence, all of which had impacted on an institution the size of Mirfield. However, under the clear leadership of the current Principal and with the appointment of a new Dean of Pastoral Studies, together with an interim Tutor in Liturgy, there is evidence of a growing sense of collegiality. In interview, the Dean of Pastoral Studies and other staff spoke of working in a positive team, with mutual care and support.

**Commendation 1**

**We commend the positive dynamics of the staff team.**

21. Safeguarding responsibility is delegated to the College by its trustees (the Frere Educational Trust, see C1 below). The Principal, who has significant experience in this area, spoke in interview of his wish to normalise safeguarding as part and parcel of college life. Ordinands are required to complete Stage 1 Safeguarding Training before they begin training, and in interview, students were aware of the Safeguarding Policy and of the appropriate person to contact if there was a concern. On visiting the campus, we noted that the full Safeguarding Policy is pinned to a noticeboard alongside details of the appropriate person to contact, but the information in the

Student Handbook, while basically informative, does not expand into specifics relating to the College.

### **Recommendation 3**

#### **We recommend that the Safeguarding Document be reproduced within the Student Handbook.**

22. In conversation, students did remark that they felt it might be more appropriate if the Safeguarding Officer was an external person, rather than a member of staff, and preferably female, but we recognise that this may not be practicable or in line with national policy requirements.
23. Although the College has no control over visitors staying at the Community and the Retreat House, CoR is clear that 'Care is taken not to see all legitimate guests of the Community as *de facto* guests of the College too.' (ASE, 2021, Section 9). From our site visit, we noted that the College buildings are secure, with keypads at the entrances and a buzzer at the main Reception.
24. Central and fundamental to the life of the College is the recitation of the Daily Offices, which roots the community in prayer and contemplation. The College Prospectus speaks of the College as a 'new monastic' community: a concept that clearly has much appeal to those studying at the College and one that the Principal spoke of as a way of evolving, preserving and growing the monastic tradition for future generations. We encourage the College to reflect on this model, in order to ensure that it is developed and embedded in a way that is practicable and affirming for staff and students.
25. In discussion with students and staff, it is apparent that there is a strong sense of community. Students commented that it was at times hard, living in a quite insular environment, but that it was deeply formative learning to live together in a Christ-like manner. Students are required to undertake three kinds of duty in addition to their studies: welcoming visitors, liturgical duties and housekeeping. In interview, ordinands spoke of the difficulty of attempting to balance academic work, college responsibilities and the pattern of worship and one described it as at times being overwhelming.
26. In interview, students spoke positively of the change to Common Awards, but MA students commented that it had resulted in a level of academic work that created further tension in trying to maintain a healthy balance of life, work, and study.
27. There is student representation on both the College Council and YTEP and comment was made that their voice is generally heard in these forums. Common Room meetings and diary meetings are the principal forums for Ordinands, though some did remark that at times the Common Room meetings felt more like a PCC meeting than a place to share mutual concerns.
28. In discussion with students with spouses, comment was made that while the student body is mutually supportive, support from the College is often only forthcoming when the students themselves are pro-active. A concern was raised regarding the pressure placed on



married/partnered ordinands and a sense that a combination of academic studies, college responsibilities and sustaining a healthy ‘home’ life was on occasion hard to sustain. They also spoke of some discrepancy as to how the College treats and caters for those in various forms of committed relationships, although we understand that the sponsoring bishop’s consent may in some cases determine the College’s freedom to initiate accommodation proposals.

29. Students expressed the desire for consideration of the appointment of an external Chaplain for spouses and students, who would be able to offer confidential support and counsel and help families work out the balance between family life and college commitments. In interview, the Principal noted that this might be difficult to achieve given the current size of the student population and that any appointment would need to be voluntary and to be of a person who understood and appreciated the distinctiveness of the College. Notwithstanding these challenges, we recommend that the College keeps this in view.

#### **Recommendation 4**

**We recommend that the College considers appointing a Chaplain on a voluntary basis to cater for the spiritual and pastoral needs of ordinands, their spouses, partners and families.**

30. The ‘Spouses Handbook’ was produced eight years ago and, although revised in 2019, it needs updating because, as we learned from our meeting with partnered students, it does not reflect the current pattern of life in the College community. Spouses are encouraged to take as full a part in the life of the College as they are able, including attending Thursday evening guest nights. However, being part of the worshipping community, when a family has young children does appear to be more complicated and comment was made that the Upper Church was impractical for them to join for worship.

#### **Recommendation 5**

**We recommend that the Spouses’ Handbook is updated to include, among other considerations, the diversity of committed relationships.**

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

31. From the campus tour, we noted that the public social spaces of the College are spacious and comfortable. These include a Common Room, with a bar run by students open on Thursdays, a large and airy Dining Room, and a small Reading Room with sofas and tea-making facilities. The college buildings are set in a large rural site, with spaces for walking, recreation and reflection.
32. Although it was not clear from the documentation provided, we learned from a tour of the campus that there are accessible routes around the site. These routes are not signposted, however, and a visitor with accessibility needs would not be able to find their way around without guidance.

## Recommendation 6

**We recommend that details of accessible routes should be clearly signposted around the campus.**

33. In discussion with single and married ordinands, there is a measure of satisfaction with the accommodation, which was described as comfortable and well maintained. Single students are provided with a single study bedroom with en-suite facilities, while those who are married live in houses on site or nearby, with a study provided within the College buildings. From our site visit, we noted that this accommodation is both comfortable and convenient.
34. Working towards carbon neutrality is a priority of the CR (who own the college buildings). There is a working party in place to oversee this, with representation from the student body.

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

35. Following the monastic pattern of worship, the college community gathers each day in the Lower Church for Morning Prayer and the daily Eucharist. They join CR in the Upper Church for Evensong and for the Eucharist on Sundays and principal feast days. The ordinands also have the use of the Oratory chapel, where the Blessed Sacrament is reserved for private prayer and meditation. The College Mass is celebrated in the Lower Church on Thursday evenings: this makes use of a variety of musical styles, including worship songs and liturgical music usable in a parish setting.
36. Through observation and discussion in interview, there is strong evidence from students and staff that the worship of God is at the core of their common life. Ordinands spoke of the uniqueness of the College, which worships alongside and with the monastic community and it is the rhythm of prayer that sustains and prepares them for future ministry. Students spoke of the holistic nature of a day shaped by prayer and a shared common life.
37. Common Worship is used for the offices and the daily Eucharist, reflecting the desire to inhabit a common liturgy. The BCP is used for the evening office every other week, with voluntary attendance and there is good engagement with Choral Evensong. BCP is also experienced on placements and tuition is given on celebrating BCP Holy Communion. However, in interview, staff commented that there was work to be done in making the BCP more available. In interview, it was apparent that the stability of worship found at Mirfield was appreciated by students and deeply formative for future ministry. However, as will be discussed further in E4, below, there were some challenges around experiencing diversity in worship styles though staff also commented that there were opportunities provided away from the College for students to experience a range of differing liturgical styles, for example informal and children's worship.

## Commendation 2

**We commend the quality of a life rooted in prayer, the daily offices and Holy Communion.**

38. In discussion with both staff and students it was apparent that as a community they together seek to inhabit and live out the Five Guiding Principles. Moments of pain do exist (see also E18 below), but the modelling by staff of how to live with difference has been key to the current atmosphere of mutual respect and where the maximum degree of communion is actively sought. In interview, students commented on the importance of building relationships across division, and of honest dialogue. One female ordinand spoke of how those who hold a ‘traditionalist’ view, do so with such grace that good relationships emerge. Staff commented that while the balance of tradition changes with each new intake and conflict can occur in some small groups, the Community does seek to live with diversity. Attendance at the daily Eucharist is voluntary for students and there is a rota for celebrants drawn from the ordained staff. Staff commented that while ‘traditionalist’ ordinands are free to attend the daily Mass celebrated at CR by one of the Brethren, these ordinands usually are present when a female priest celebrates at CoR and in doing so, seeking the fullest degree of communion that their consciences allow.

### **Commendation 3**

**We commend the care taken by the College in modelling and living out the Five Guiding Principles.**

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

39. In interview, staff spoke of the importance of teaching and modelling appropriate boundaries with students, in preparing them to sustain healthy personal and professional relationships in future ministry. Staff talked of the positive nature that the structure of life and communal worship the College provided and the mutual care and support between the team. However, they also highlighted that the current pattern of working hours (a remnant of when staff were all part of the monastic community), with its long days during term-time, is hard to sustain in the College’s current context. As most staff live off-site, this presents a particular challenge. One member of staff commented that this pattern was unsustainable and that for staff to grow and thrive there would need to be some renegotiation of working practices with the College Council.

### **Recommendation 7**

**We recommend that the College should liaise with the College Council to renegotiate working practices for staff. These could include setting up a rota for evening duties and protected time for scholarship and study.**

**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.

40. The governance structure of CoR is complex and we note at the outset that the current Governance Manual outlining the management, administrative and financial structures is historic and requires updating. Dated 2011 with a revision started in 2019, it precedes the arrival of the Principal in 2019 and CoR joining YTEP in 2020.
41. As a Centre within YTEP, CoR has its own governance structure but also participates within the overall YTEP structure. CoR has both staff and student representatives on YTEP committees: these relate predominantly to the interface with Durham University under the Common Awards scheme. However, this relationship is still embryonic and has been impacted by the pandemic: the ASE admits that CoR representatives have yet to ‘find our full and appropriate representation on every committee.’ [2021 ASE 7b] This is partly because of the constraints placed on staff availability and student timetables by the daily rhythm and pattern of life at Mirfield. Nonetheless, we noted from interviews and the Self-Evaluation document that there is a desire and willingness towards full participation.
42. CoR is essentially owned and operated by the Frere Educational Trust, a charitable trust whose principal activity is to run CoR. The Frere Educational Trust is a wholly owned subsidiary of CR which also owns and manages all the buildings used by the College and employs all CoR staff. The Director and Trustees are made up of the Superior of CR and other elected members, including some drawn from the Home Chapter of the Community.
43. The three key governance bodies of the College are the Trustees, College Council and Management Team.
44. The Trust has delegated responsibility for running the College to the College Council, which exists with the objective of governing the CoR and providing oversight to College management whose structure is determined by the Council; development of the work of the College; appointment of the management team; and appointment of standing committees with particular responsibility for areas such as finance and general purposes, staffing, formation, and nominations (terms of reference of which are included in the Governance Manual). The College Council is chaired by a serving Diocesan Bishop (appointed by the Trustees) with the quorum consisting of at least seven members including two CR Brethren, one of whom must be a trustee. Members have a range of skills and represent a range of positions including two student representatives and a member of General Synod (source: 2019 draft revision of Governance Manual). Currently two members of the Council are from YTEP: the Chair of YTEP and a member of the Common Awards Management Committee. YTEP representation is not covered in the Governance Manual.

45. The Management Team is charged with the day-to-day work of CoR. It is chaired by the Principal (appointed by the College Council in conjunction with the Trustees) or nominated representative, and it consists of the Dean of Pastoral Studies, Academic Dean, Dean of Systematic Theology and Dean of Chapel. These are all employed by the Trust, as are all academic and administrative staff. At the time of the visit, the Principal was covering the duties of the Dean of Chapel, as the member of staff was on extended sick leave and left the College during the time of the review.
46. The Administrative staff of CoR consists of the College Secretary/PA to the Principal, Bursar and Administrative Assistant (as set out in the Governance Manual). At the time of the review, the Bursar position had been vacant since September 2021, with interim arrangements in place for assistance from the CR Business Manager on a part-time basis for a limited period while the Bursar role is re-evaluated. The role of Academic Registrar (not covered in the manual) serves both CoR and YTEP and is undertaken by a single post-holder. The only other administrative position is that of the Librarian shared on a part time basis between CoR and CR. It was not clear whether anyone is undertaking the role of Administrative Assistant as outlined in the manual.
47. The purpose of the Governance Manual is to set out the accountabilities and responsibilities of the respective components of the governance structure, particularly the trustees. However, these responsibilities are not always fully reflected in the documentation. For example, we noted in a discussion of Safeguarding at a meeting of the College Council that trustees are clear that they hold ultimate responsibility but that the College Council is responsible for the day-to-day management of safeguarding and disciplinary matters, but this is not reflected in the governance documentation.
48. From a trustee perspective there is an expectation that the College Council owns the Governance Manual including the current and all future revisions, and that the Council becomes the key governance body. This is not clear in the current version nor was there an indication of this expectation during the College Council meeting observed. It is therefore imperative that the Governance Manual is revised.

### **Recommendation 8**

**We recommend that the Governance Manual is revised, setting out clearly the respective roles and responsibilities, including matters delegated from one body to another, and subsequently agreed and approved by the Trustees and College Council.**

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

49. The recent changes to the membership of the College team, as described in the Introduction (above), have ensured that CoR has effective leadership. It is a testimony to the strength of the new leadership that CoR managed to continue operating during the pandemic with all the challenges that ensued.

**See also Commendation 1.**

50. Working relationships and interactions between the Principal and senior staff appear collaborative, evidenced through minutes of past staff meetings, online staff interviews and informal conversations during the campus visit. We were informed in staff interviews that there are weekly, minuted staff meetings during which ‘collective problem solving’ is undertaken as necessary.
51. Interaction between the Principal and senior staff with the governing body is predominantly two-fold; through the College Council (that meets once per term) and through the Principal’s relationship with the Chair of the Trustees. Observation of the College Council meeting (7th March 2022) evidenced a good working relationship across the board covering key aspects of both college life and student recruitment; finances; governance matters; safeguarding matters; and student input. There was evidence that issues raised in previous meetings were being covered, and there was evidence that input from the student representatives was sought and encouraged.
52. It is clear from interviews with staff, trustees and students that CoR has an aspiration towards excellence. However, the change to Durham Common Awards has impacted the motivational climate for both students and lecturers in terms of the workload, adapting to different requirements and the resultant impact on work/life balance. There is a clear sense of wanting to succeed with the change for the opportunities and benefits it brings in terms of a wider and more flexible academic offering. The timing however, at the start of and during the pandemic, means the challenges of transition will effectively take longer than anticipated.

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

53. The trustees have three key functions: legal ownership of the CoR and custodianship of all its assets; care and oversight of the finances; and appointment of the Principal jointly with the College Council. The College Council must include at least three trustees.
54. There appears to be little in the way of trustee initial and ongoing training and development. The current Governance Manual (see C1 above), states that the trustee induction process comprises the provision of a ‘copy of the Memorandum and Articles of Association of the Trust, the most recent accounts, this Terms of Reference document and the following Charity Commission guidance:
  - CC3a - The Essential Trustee: An introduction  
[www.charitycommission.gov.uk/library/guidance/cc3\(a\)text.pdf](http://www.charitycommission.gov.uk/library/guidance/cc3(a)text.pdf)
  - Charities and Public Benefit: Summary Guidance for Charity Trustees  
[www.charitycommission.gov.uk/Library/guidance/pbsummarytext.pdf](http://www.charitycommission.gov.uk/Library/guidance/pbsummarytext.pdf)

55. From an interview with the Chair of the Trustees, we heard that trustee training is ‘aspirational’ and that there was also a need for training for the CoR Trustees.
56. Whilst it was clear that the trustees take an active and supportive interest in the College and its learning community through the College Council, it was unclear whether mentoring and development for trustees is on offer. We did not see any documentation that indicated the skills and experience each trustee brought to the role other than the positions they currently hold, or areas they cover on the College Council (source: membership and emails 2021-22 v2 document).
57. The current Governance Manual also states under Recruitment that the trustees will ‘regularly review the membership of the board of Trustees to ensure that the appropriate skills are adequately represented’. However, the frequency of review is not stated. Whilst this is not a requirement under Charity Commission rules, it would be in line with the length of service requirements for the College Council stated in the Governance Manual. It would also be indicative of proactively refreshing the trustees’ knowledge, skills and experience to the benefit of the College in what is currently a fast and ever moving educational landscape.

### **Recommendation 9**

**We recommend that greater clarity on trustee recruitment and training is established and published in the Governance Manual.**

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

58. At the time of the review, CoR was without a fully developed business and strategic plan. In the absence of this, the strategic direction appears to revolve around student recruitment to stabilise the financial viability of the college, including a move to recruiting students from a wider range of traditions and publicity that draws on the concept of the ‘new monastic’ community as promoted by the Archbishop of Canterbury. Recruitment is being addressed through the production of new promotional material in booklet and audio/visual formats highlighting the benefits of living and studying within community alongside the traditional monastic community. However, as discussed in A1 above, some care needs to be taken in managing expectations of applicants. Also issues of diversity and inclusion still need to be addressed, e.g. through a Disability Policy covering learning disabilities and also providing clear information on accessibility of the site for potential students with mobility concerns, as these will have a bearing on student recruitment. See **Recommendation 7** and **Recommendation 14**.
59. A five-year forecast budget document was produced in 2019 during the process of recruitment for the new Principal. Whilst this document covers income and expenditure including academic costs, it was predicated on a plan to increase student numbers to 35 over the five-year period and on the accommodation properties being fully let. However, there is no commentary supporting the rationale behind any of the numbers or performance measures for monitoring. Additionally, due to the Covid Pandemic, student recruitment has not materialised as expected.

60. From observation of the College Council and interviews with key members, we learned that reserves at the end of February were at 10 weeks, which is below the minimum threshold of 20 weeks recommended by the Frere Educational Trust. The trustees are clear that a robust plan is needed to bring reserves back to the required level. Ways of managing expenditure whilst student numbers are lower than expected are being explored, including reviewing library spending, with judicious use of online resources, and a re-evaluation of the role of Bursar. Diversification into alternative income generation streams was also discussed and failure to diversify was considered a risk to the financial stability of the college. Formal year-end accounts are for those of the Frere Educational Trust whose financial year-end is August.
61. From the Team interview with the Principal, fundraising strategies are in their infancy outside of student recruitment. This is one of the challenges the College faces as the buildings and facilities used by CoR are owned and managed by the CR and therefore considered not within the purview of the College to utilise outside of term time. From an interview with the Chair of the Trustees, we learn that the College is considering whether to include in the Business Plan the possibility of recruiting non-ordinands as students on Common Awards as a potential alternative source of income. Another potential area of diversification of income is the development of an MA in Liturgy and Worship, which would enable CoR to provide Continuing Ministerial Development. Durham University have given permission to the Mirfield Liturgical Institute (MLI) permission to develop this programme.
62. From interviews with the Principal, the Chair of Trustees and the Bursar, we note that they are in agreement that CoR requires a proper business plan that is separate from that of CR and that the Bursar is working on this. However, given the nature of the relationship between the two, the business plans for both entities, whilst having separate ownership, will have an element of interdependence and will need to be compatible. CR is committed to the financial support of the college but also has an expectation that the college remains a 'going concern'. Based on this expectation, the bursar feels a more flexible budget with a 'worst case scenario' built in is required, particularly whilst student numbers are below expectation. However, developing a realistic budget will be a challenge without a well thought through business plan outlining not only the strategic aims and objectives of the college, but also the actions to achieve those aims and the measures to monitor how they are being achieved. Such a plan is highly recommended to include lessons learned from the pandemic experience and reflecting the interdependency of and required compatibility with the plans of the Community.
63. The Frere Educational Trust has a Risk Register in place last revised in October 2021 and reviewed at Trustee level in December 2020. The register covers key risk areas of compliance, governance, operational and financial risks. There is also a section on fundraising risks stipulating that the Trust does not undertake general fundraising; that the fundraising strategy should be reviewed; and that a fundraising policy should be considered. There are no timescales for any of these actions or for any action within the register. Based on the projected deficit of £230k in the CR



reserves, the Bursar believes that in addition to managing expenditure, alternative fundraising is the way to bridge the gap. On this basis there needs to be clarity on what fundraising activities are allowed and the extent to which CoR has the freedom to undertake these activities. The risk register should be updated with clear ownership of risks as well as actions, timescales for completing actions, and reviews at a trustee level at least annually. This will assist the Trust and the College to better evidence management of the risks and in particular, the financial risks that are currently a major cause of concern.

**Recommendation 10**

**We recommend that CoR should produce an entirely new Business and Strategic Plan, budget and risk register through discussions between CR and CoR.**

**Recommendation 11**

**We recommend that CoR explores new forms of income generation.**

**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.**

64. CoR offers programmes within the Curriculum Framework of Common Awards, validated by the University of Durham: BA (Hons) in Theology, Ministry and Mission; Diploma in Theology, Ministry and Mission; and MA (Hons) in Theology, Ministry and Mission, and PGDip in Theology, Ministry and Mission. The Module Mapping documents offer detailed explanations of how the modules develop students in accordance with the Church of England Formation Criteria.
65. Students are encouraged to relate faith to their daily life at Mirfield: for example, the module overview table explains how students are encouraged to draw links between the Biblical modules and their experience of scripture through liturgy, and to draw links between a module on Leadership and Collaboration and their experience of teamwork in college duties. The document also explains how modules on doctrine seek to relate doctrine to 'experience and practice of Christian ministry in a range of settings' including placements and sector contexts. In our observations of teaching, we saw students being encouraged to make connections between theology and everyday life: for example, in the Spirituality module there was a discussion of the relationship between spirituality and politics using practical examples, and students in a seminar on Reflective Practice were encouraged to apply theology to context.
66. CoR seeks to be world-engaging, for example through its links with L'Arche and the Corrymeela Community. There is a module on Missional Theology in Global Context which places 'detailed analysis of contemporary approaches to mission in global contexts', emphasising 'theological reflection on mission in the learner's own context'. There is also a module on Islam and Christian Muslim Engagement: this includes contributions from guest speakers and we learned from interviews with staff that links are being built with a local madrassah.
67. However, we identified areas where further work may be done to equip ordinands for ministry in the world, including leadership, children's work, bereavement ministry and work with people with addictions (see E1 below). One training incumbent noted that 'students would benefit from more practical experience/learning about mission and evangelism' (see also E2). We note this comment referred to students trained before the suite of BA and MA programmes and before the modules described above were created. We recognise therefore that the College's teaching on mission may well have responded to some of these criticisms already, but nonetheless recommend that the College reviews its syllabus further, especially with regard to evangelism.

### **Recommendation 12**

**We recommend that the College reviews its syllabus in order to fully embed mission and evangelism into the modules.**

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

68. Staff CVs give evidence of the TEI's ability to recruit highly qualified teaching staff members and also its capacity to engage external tutors to teach modules in their specialist areas. All core staff members are white but, as the self-evaluation document demonstrates, they come from a variety of different backgrounds and are able to offer a broad range of perspectives: 'Four core staff have non-Anglican elements to their personal history including Roman Catholicism, the Swiss Reformed tradition and Presbyterianism. Two are women, one is single, four are married and one is civilly partnered. Half have been incumbents or held parochial responsibility; half have held university appointments.' From staff CVs, we also note that staff members have experience of working with Church of England at a national level on a range of policies including: Safeguarding; Living in Love and Faith; ministry to New Housing; and support for Refugees.
69. From a meeting with the Academic Dean we learn that strategies for staff training and induction are being developed with the aim of improving the consistency of approach, including guidance on Moodle content, teaching methods and marking. In meetings with members of academic staff, we heard examples of having received induction and training, and we saw peer review of teaching taking place during the classes we observed.
70. CoR students have access to the College Library of c. 20,000 volumes, curated by a professional Librarian shared with CR on a part-time basis. In an interview with her, we learned that she is working with the lecturing staff to develop official reading-lists for each module in order to ensure that all the recommended works are either in the library or accessible online via Moodle. The Library benefits from its association with ABTAPL which is described on its website as 'an organisation formed to help those working in libraries containing theological, philosophical and related materials by sharing information and experience. ABTAPL provides for its members an informal network for consultation, advice and support in both individual and continuing professional problems.' CoR students also have access to the CR Library which holds c. 60,000 volumes: while much of this collection is more dated than the College library and is not tailored to the programmes of study, we learn from students that it has often proved helpful for individual research projects such as dissertations.
71. The Librarian is committed to expanding online resources. Furthermore, through CoR's membership of YTEP, students have access to a range of online reading and resources beyond that which can be provided by the College, including Common Awards resources. From interviews with students, we understand that they find the library and IT resources suitable for their purposes and they attest that the Librarian is willing, on request, to source materials that are not available in the Library.
72. From our site visit, we observed that the College has comfortable, well-lit and well-ventilated classrooms that are of a suitable size for the cohort and that these rooms are well-equipped with

PCs, interactive whiteboards and projectors, as well as manual whiteboards and flipcharts. From observing classes remotely via zoom, we can also confirm that the rooms are equipped for interactive livestreaming of classes.

73. From observing classes, both online and on site, we noted that the furniture is flexible and that staff made use of different configurations to suit groups of different sizes and sessions with different purposes (e.g. rows for larger groups with a visiting speaker, horseshoe format for seminar discussion). We also observed an exercise on contemplative prayer as part of the Spirituality module that was held in the more informal setting of the Reading Room.
74. As noted in C1 (above), students have the opportunity to give feedback on library, IT resources and teaching accommodation via Student representatives on the College Council and the YTEP Committee. However, we note that these representatives are recruited on a voluntary basis and there did not seem to be targeted attempts to solicit feedback from particular cohorts of students. So, for example, we learned from our meeting with married and partnered students that these students face challenges with their work-life balance, but they do not have a particular representative for presenting their feedback as a group.
75. At the time of our visit, the College's provision for students with specific learning disabilities such as dyslexia was not clearly established. As was noted in the Durham University Report of Partnership Change (2020), CoR students would lose the support for students with additional needs that had been provided by Sheffield University, as this would not be replicated with Durham: this included, for instance, the routine testing for dyslexia (p.22). From the documents we have seen, as well as interviews with and communications from students (including those with disabilities), lecturing staff and the librarian, we learn that there is as yet no Disabled Students Policy and no structured attempt to prepare and implement Learning Support Plans (LSPs). We learned that the Librarian is willing to provide tutorials for students with dyslexia, but that students need to self-identify and to seek out this support for themselves. We also learned that CoR students are not eligible to claim Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA).
76. We were heartened to learn from an interview with the relatively new Dean of Pastoral Studies (appointed 2021), that a policy and guidance for students with disabilities are being drafted, and that advice on sources of funding for them has been sought. However, support will be needed from all College staff in order to put these plans into action at the earliest opportunity and all staff, including visiting lecturers, should be fully briefed on the policy and on provision for disabled students.

### **Recommendation 13**

**We recommend that CoR creates and adopts a Disabled Students' Policy and that all staff are briefed on it and given training on putting it into action.**

77. CoR has effective processes for curriculum review and development, as evidenced by the recent move to adopt Common Awards and to validate a new programme. We were provided with copies of the ASE and Quality Assurance documents from Durham University including the Report of Partnership Change (2020). We noted from minutes of the College Council and our observation of a College Council meeting that the curriculum is kept under review and that future developments were discussed. Students have the opportunity to give feedback on their modules through Module Evaluation Questionnaires, and the sample we were sent suggested a high level of student satisfaction. It would have been useful to see evidence of how staff responded to feedback: for example the Module Handbooks could include a reflection on previous feedback and any changes made in response to it.

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

78. With a small student body, most teaching takes place in very small groups of 2-6 students and we learned from interviews with staff that one-to-one teaching is not unknown. While the small groups are good for student support and individualized learning, they limit opportunities for wider discussion and the inclusion of a range of examples, views and voices. The CoR admit that this is a problem in the self-evaluation document, and it was also commented upon by students, former students and a DDO. However, we note from interviews with staff that tutors reflected carefully on these challenges, and the reviewers were confident that they would cultivate a good learning environment.
79. We note that students are taught in larger groups for the Themed Weeks, currently comprising Black Theology, Death and Dying, and Leadership, where all students at the College study together. These take place at the end of the academic year which is, for some, within weeks of ordination. These sessions often involve guest speakers and whilst this brings the benefit of exposing students to new voices and perspectives, and expertise and professional experience in particular areas, the sessions did not seem to be fully integrated into the curriculum or the course assessment. Greater involvement from College staff in contextualizing the sessions and some assessed element (e.g. a group presentation or a reflective commentary) would have helped students integrate these more fully into their overall learning. (See also Recommendation 21.)

**Recommendation 14**

**We recommend that ways are found to integrate the content of the Themed Weeks more fully into the core curriculum and its assessment.**

80. From interviews with students and from our observation of sessions, we noted variety in the learning and teaching techniques employed. Seminars for the modules tend to be 2 hours long, with the first hour being used for presentation of the topic, often by a member of staff and

sometimes by a student who had prepared a presentation to a brief. The second hour is often used creatively and students spoke of using drama and roleplay and having debates and discussions.

81. Most sessions take place on campus. During our visit, zoom was used as there had been an outbreak of covid, but we understand that this was unusual and the sessions performed replicated what would have happened in class. We also notice from module handbooks and from Moodle that independent study is mainly geared towards preparation for class and that Moodle is mainly used as a repository for lecture handouts and powerpoints. It would be beneficial if the College could do more to harness the potential of online learning by using a range of Moodle tools (e.g. forums, wikis, quizzes) and using Moodle or other platforms to facilitate collaborative learning outside of contact time. This could also have the benefit of creating more independence for students and reducing pressure on staff time.

### **Recommendation 15**

**We recommend that teaching staff explore the potential of online learning tools in order to facilitate collaborative and independent learning outside of contact time.**

82. From consulting the module handbooks and from interviews with students and teaching staff, we noted that, although a range of assessment methods was used (including portfolios; liturgical design; oral presentations; case studies; and theological reflections), the assessment was heavily weighted towards written assignments, particularly essays. Staff recognize that it would be useful to vary methods, especially for students with less of an academic background. This is particularly important given that the Church of England seeks a wide range of gifts and dispositions in ministry beyond the purely academic.
83. A further opportunity for developing alternative forms of assessment would be for a small amount of credit (on a Pass/Fail basis) within a module to be given for College duties.

### **Recommendation 16**

**We recommend that teaching staff review the assessment programme and introduce greater variety of assessment methods.**

See also **Recommendation 21**.

84. The College admits students with a range of educational backgrounds, including those with no previous experience of higher education. Some among the latter group admitted to finding some organised discussion groups difficult to take part in during their first year, due to the terminology and jargon used. They nonetheless managed to identify and meet with other students feeling similarly excluded, and reflect together on theological matters and convictions at their own level. Another student, who had had to leave a previous degree, warmly attested to being well-supported in their studies and learning at the College.

#### **Commendation 4**

##### **We commend teaching that is accessible across a range of educational levels.**

85. From observing seminars, we noted that students had ample opportunities for informal feedback on their progress. For example, two of the classes observed included student presentations prepared according to a brief. The students were given space to present their work and take questions from students and staff members, leading on to wider discussions. The quality of the presentations was high and feedback was presented in a supportive and encouraging way.
86. From reading samples of marked assignments (submitted and marked via the Turnitin system on Moodle), we saw evidence of constructive and supportive feedback. Tutors wrote detailed summary feedback that was helpfully organized into clear headings relating to marking criteria, thereby explaining the mark and advising the students on how to improve their work. Second Marker comments were included for one of the modules, which was good for transparency in giving students an insight to how the marks were determined. In-text comments were plentiful and demonstrated deep engagement with the students' ideas. Some essays had rather a lot of in-text comments: this practice runs the risks that students will not read all the comments or will feel overwhelmed by the amount of feedback being given. To address this, markers might consider using the 'strikethrough' and 'text' functions of Turnitin to denote textual corrections, reserving the Comments function for discussion of ideas and general feedback.
87. From interviews with students, we learned that the College advertises a 3-week turnaround time for marking: this is usually met and any delays are explained to students' satisfaction.
88. Students and training incumbents expressed some concerns about the effectiveness of end-of-training reports (see E8 below).

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

89. The curriculum is designed to provide changes in the balance of teaching and learning over the duration of the programme, from an emphasis on tutor input to greater student participation and seminar discussion, through to independent projects in the final year. The dissertation gives students the opportunity to specialize in a particular area, developing their ideas through seminar discussions and importantly through individual supervision. This enables students progressively to develop their study skills, critical thinking, and research skills. This progression was also evidenced in the samples of student work, which demonstrated increased sophistication over the years on the programme, as well as in the feedback given, which likewise showed increasing levels of complexity and challenge. Students were able to articulate that the first-year courses are introductory and the later modules offer the chance for exploration and specialization and they were able to reflect on their development and growth as learners.

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

90. As described in D1 above, the Module Mapping documents demonstrate that students are encouraged to make connections between their academic learning and their ministerial development. Another example of this is the Christian Liturgy module, which is described thus: ‘Church of England ordinands who do not already possess adequate evidence of previous and sufficiently equivalent liturgical study (and thus in practice by almost everyone), explores the full range of authorised and commended Church of England liturgical resources in historical, theological, pastoral and practical perspective.’ The assessment for this module, incorporating an essay and an exercise in constructing liturgy, encourages both academic and practical attention to the topic.
91. Theological reflection is emphasized in the programmes. The CoR Student Handbook includes pro-formas for theological reflection and for specific reflection on placement. We observed a seminar on Theological Reflection that included an exercise where students were encouraged to use models of theological reflection to process their experiences on a recent placement. We noted that this teaching was both student-centred and affirmative. The seminar included the encouragement for students to practise journaling. We also observed a session on Spirituality, the second half of which was a prayer exercise that included time for journaling.
92. As described in B1 above, all students have the opportunity to do at least one parish and at least one sector placement during term-time, plus at least one intensive summer placement over the vacation period. The placements afford particular opportunities for theological reflection. From our interview with placement supervisors, we learned how students are encouraged to relate theory to practice by being given ample opportunities for reflection and feedback, for example in regular meetings with their supervisor. We noted that supervisors are keen to offer their time for meeting and reflecting and there is a pro-forma in the Placement Handbook for recording supervisions. The placement offered an opportunity to reflect on different traditions, for example we heard of students discussing the practice of communion in sector ministry and its relevance to the context. One supervisor (a sector chaplain) commented that Mirfield students live a life rooted in prayer and this is valuable for the placement situation, for example when clients ask students to pray with them.
93. We met with supervisors from both parish and sector ministries, including: a vicar of a rural benefice and a minister from a church plant; a prison chaplain and a chaplain from centre for the homeless. We learned that in parish placements, care is taken to provide students with practical training, with opportunities to observe practice and to gain practical experience, including opportunities to preach and to receive feedback on sermons. We learned that there is a specific induction course for prison chaplaincy.



94. CoR evidently has good, close links with a wide range of placement providers and there is careful oversight of the placement process. The choice of placement is determined with reference to the student’s BAP report, mindful of areas of experience they need to develop. Once a placement is found for a student, the supervisor has a pre-meeting with Dean of Pastoral Studies and then with the student. Students and their supervisors fill in a form to agree their mutual expectations. The Director of Pastoral Studies is available for supervisors to contact throughout the placement, but this has rarely been needed (the only recent example being a student suffering a health crisis).
95. Placement Handbooks are detailed and informative. One supervisor commented that these had expanded over time and that there is now too much information and that the volume of written comment they were asked to provide was excessive.
96. CoR currently places great emphasis on theological reflection: the self-evaluation document states that, at CoR, Theological Reflection is ‘a way of life as much as a theological device or discipline.’ This has been further enhanced by the adoption of Common Awards and the appointment of a Dean of Pastoral Studies who has been responsible for teaching Reflective Practice modules. We saw that reflection was built into diverse settings. As stated in the Student Handbook, students are encouraged to reflect in three different settings: with their tutor; with themselves; and in the Tutor Groups, which provide a space for students to reflect on their experiences, studies and duties with a stable group of peers. We observed students developing their habits and skills in using Reflective Practice in classroom contexts, and in conversation. In our meeting with students, we found that they were especially willing to reflect on the theology of living in an intentional community, often using theologically sophisticated vocabulary. We also noted how, at the College Council, the Chair asked the student representative to reflect theologically on his experiences. We note that theological reflection is built into the assessment of a number of modules.

**Commendation 5**

**We commend the integration of theological reflection into all aspects of College life.**

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

## 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.**

97. The programme of ministerial formation at the College, combining a distinctive communal life of prayer and worship, individual study, and team tasks, in addition to external placement experiences, enables students to develop as relational, collaborative and adaptive future ministers.
98. Former students spoke warmly of the balance of prayer, rest and work the College formed them in, and recognised this 'laying a foundation' for their public ministry. All considered themselves 'prepared well' for the challenge of relating to others and the allocation of time to different tasks in ministry. They commonly attributed this to what they had learned from the routine and structure in community life, even as they had needed to create new and flexible structures for themselves in parish ministry. Several current students shared experiences from parish, hospital and other placements which had demanded that they adapt quickly to different circumstances and scenarios. Several evidently developed their relational skills through these experiences, even as many acknowledged the 'very immersive experience' of community life was a strong influence in their forming and sustaining healthy relationships.
99. Some students admitted that some modules of study did not seem especially oriented to 'ministry in the world', particularly for the nature of 'leadership in our current context'. When asked, the areas that alumni felt 'less well prepared' were mission, children's work, and dealing with more acute pastoral challenges such as addiction and grief.
100. The range of modules taught in the new Common Awards degree programmes enable students to grow in their learning and knowledge of Christian tradition, faith and life. We observed students in several learning settings sharing how they were challenged to learn from the Christian tradition, including spiritual and theological traditions previously unfamiliar to them. Several students reflected on their personal growth in knowledge and faith through their studies and articulated how their faith had been enriched by theological study. A student training in a different tradition from their church background described the College as 'great for learning about alternative perspectives and reflecting on my own assumptions and beliefs'.
101. The College maintains its longstanding identity and association with the Anglo-Catholic tradition of the Church of England, even as it receives, trains and forms students with diverse Anglican backgrounds. In discussion with the Principal, we heard him speak engagingly about the College's commitment to building community as the primary means of living with differences in theological opinion and practice. In his experience, the bonds of affection in life together helped see beyond such differences. A sponsoring bishop acknowledged that there had been a time in the recent past

when the College had a reputation as ‘a haven for traditionalists’, but they asserted that ‘the student body is now much more mixed and the approach of staff excellent.’

102. We encountered divergent evidence of students’ respect for the breadth and diversity of belief and practice within the Church of England. Students from ‘Central’ and Catholic backgrounds articulated to us a generous respect for much of what they encountered on placement in local Charismatic or evangelical parishes, or other placements out of tradition. A student with an Evangelical background likewise reflected generously on differences in belief and practice, and what they were learning. By contrast, the way a minority of Catholic students shared their views on the styles of worship that they were passionate about, and the feelings evoked when their regular worship space was shared with students from St Hild College, appeared not to demonstrate generous respect. The recollections of one former student confirm that these views are not limited to the current cohort of ordinands: ‘I found the combination of disinterest and lazy, unquestioned superiority (even disdain) in the attitude of many Mirfield students towards St Hild students a troubling manifestation of the Mirfield “bubble”, despite the occasions when Mirfield students took courses with St Hild students’.
103. We observed a small proportion of students openly acknowledging their personal difficulty engaging with more Charismatic or evangelical Christian traditions, or styles of worship more informal and less sacramental than those parts of the Christian faith and tradition that they professed, in their words, to ‘hold dearest’ or were ‘most passionate about’. While some students admitted to feeling that they were ‘not able to fully interact with them as [they] might have need to’, we would have liked to see more evidence of how the College intentionally constructs ongoing opportunities for students to develop such interactions. We were made aware of a scheme for groups of students from CoR and St Hild to plan and lead worship together only during Advent. (See also A2 and A3 and **Recommendation 2**.)

### **Recommendation 17**

**We recommend that the TEI takes active steps to ensure that every student is given sufficient opportunities to develop their personal experience, understanding and respect for the breadth and diversity of belief and practice within the Church of England.**

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

104. Students, recent alumni and external stakeholders were predominantly positive in their view of the world-facing ministry opportunities offered in placements. A wide choice of placements is available within the region and beyond, and there is consultation with students to identify opportunities for them to broaden and diversify their previous church experience (though a clearer framework for how all students engage with less familiar traditions of the church appears to be needed – see E7 below). Students can also explore chaplaincy contexts, including schools, the

police, and prisons. The reflective practice tutor spoke compellingly of his belief in placements being where ordinands ‘take the theology of the college and make it real; they turn it into a lived reality’. A DDO valued the balance that the College struck between residential community life and ‘an outward facing positive emphasis on placements. The people I know who have trained at CoR have struck me as well grounded in their spiritual lives as well as being practical in ministry’. In addition, a placement supervisor from the evangelical tradition likewise gave a very positive account of their Mirfield student’s engagement with a wide range of missional initiatives, all of them world facing, including: ‘helping out at a community larder, [and], joining a local chaplain at a drug and alcohol rehab centre.’

105. Current students at the College of the Resurrection reflected enthusiastically on the missional aspects of their parish placements, their eagerness to teach and learn about faith, and desire to see and help others grow as Christians. We observed an inspiring discussion between two students as one reflected on their learning from leading a Pilgrim discipleship course in a parish placement. Other students shared how challenging and inspiring they had found engaging in ‘practical mission’, including work with a foodbank and homeless drop-in centre. A student whose placement experience in a Church of England school was affected by the pandemic nonetheless reflected on what the experience had taught them about mission: ‘This helped me to see the importance of the place of a community in this work and in growing disciples. The school context also gave me an insight into how I communicate the Gospel message appropriately in different situations.’
106. One student expressed a desire to engage the faith of ‘younger Christians’, but still considered themselves ill-equipped to do this, lacking experience in children’s and youth work or in a school context. They earnestly wanted to acquire the necessary skills to ‘talk faith’ with them, but were unsure whether they would gain adequate opportunities while at the College. ‘Children’s work’ was also an area which several alumni felt ‘less well prepared’ for. See **Recommendation 25**.
107. Students at CoR include a number who, on grounds of theological conviction, are unable to receive the ministry of women bishops or priests. These students train alongside women with vocations to ordained ministry and are taught by ordained women priests. Some external stakeholders and alumni voiced historic and relatively recent concerns that the College still had some work to do to model ‘mutual flourishing’ for both groups, according to the commitments of the Five Guiding Principles. One recent graduate from the College judged there to be ‘a definite issue’ with ‘the relationship between a fairly vocal group of traditionalist students and others in the college’. We also noted from conversations with current staff and students that divergent positions on women’s ministry remains a source of tension within the College.
108. Nonetheless it is clear from other submissions that the approach taken by the current Principal has been well-received: students appreciated the way that he had ‘not tiptoed around the issue dividing the student body’ but created opportunities for talking face-to-face and had ‘gently and firmly’ made clear ‘the college was there for everyone’. (See also B4 and **Commendation 1**.)

## Commendation 6

**We commend the Principal for his efforts to shape a College culture which enables students to discuss their divergent views while ensuring openness and inclusion.**

109. The College community clearly continues to live out the complexities of nurturing the diverse vocations of others to Christian life and ministry in a context with divergent views on women's ordination. At times, we were concerned that so much consideration being granted to this single form of diversity in ministry might be to the detriment of attention to many others. College students have nonetheless recently engaged with Living and Love and Faith, and a theme-week on Black Theology was introduced in May 2022.
110. An IME2 Director felt that there was more that the College could do to train its students to nurture lay vocations: 'As the role of the ordained develops from being pastors of settled congregations to leaders in mission, the college could offer more input on oversight ministry including supervision and the enabling of others in their vocations. Similarly growing teaching on the development of new congregations would be useful.' We recognise this comment as a valuable contribution to the College's future thinking on how it shapes ordained ministers to nurture the diverse vocations of others to Christian life and ministry.

### **E3 Pioneer ministry training - not applicable**

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

111. Almost every student past and present chose to comment on their appreciation for the training in preparing and leading worship, as well as preaching, that they received at the College. This was likewise considered an area of excellence among many external stakeholders, including training incumbents and a Diocesan Director of Ministry. Current students spoke of being supported to adapt their prayer and corporate worship to what they referred to as "the Mirfield way", especially naming the liturgical formation offered through corporate celebration of Holy Week. We observed students involved in numerous roles in worship, including serving, leading intercessions and singing, all with competence and confidence. The vision document for Liturgical Formation is thorough and thoughtful.

## Commendation 7

**We commend the College for its high standard of training in preparing and leading worship in the Catholic tradition, including public prayer and preaching.**

112. Some students nevertheless disclosed misgivings around the focus which certain students gave to 'liturgical correctness' generating an atmosphere of criticism affecting the confidence of those peers told they were getting things wrong, without constructive feedback. This was concerning to hear, and the College should take steps to ensure that all students understand it is the role of

trained staff to give feedback to develop worship leading, as the Liturgical Formation document states.

### **Recommendation 18**

**We recommend that the College take steps to ensure peer feedback is constructive and conducted within a framework properly held by the staff.**

- 113. Students reported growing in their ‘passion for preaching’ as well as confidence through the opportunities offered on placements and at the daily offices: for example, we observed an ordinand preaching professionally and convincingly during Morning Prayer.
- 114. The Dean of Pastoral Studies shared the view that the opportunities for creative experiment in worship are limited by the College’s monastic pattern and setting, and so placements are the obvious place for students to do this. The College’s document on Liturgical Formation similarly recognises placement and attachment parishes as contexts giving ‘valuable experience of planning and presenting liturgy drawing on the resources of different traditions and styles from within and beyond the Church of England’. The Dean of Pastoral Studies intends to make more of these opportunities, though this will require negotiation with placement contexts, and represent something of a change in placement culture for the College. It may well require more time in placements, including potentially midweek or longer on Sundays which will have a knock-on effect on the College timetable. The implications for the College timetable need to be carefully thought through, perhaps with a re-imagining of the ‘monastic’ charism of the College that preserves the principle of routine and structure while recognising the need for flexibility.

### **Recommendation 19**

**We recommend giving students more timetabled time in parish placements, especially during the week, and extending their attachments in term time, to broaden opportunities for engagement with public worship.**

- 115. As described in B4 (above), corporate worship is a formational strength of the College, but we also found evidence of how this strengthened the personal spirituality of students. Many students spoke and wrote effusively on how the rhythm of worship and prayer built into Mirfield life strengthened and sustained them in their studies and ministry experience in placements. This was affirmed by several DDOs and training incumbents and it was seen as a distinctive attribute of CoR ordinands. Students and former students repeatedly commended the proximity of the CR as a precious resource for their prayer lives. We further observed good teaching on spiritual traditions which combined student and tutor contributions, engaged discussion among students, and a practical exercise in contemplative prayer.

## Commendation 8

**We commend the College for the formation it offers students in bringing discipline and depth to their prayer lives.**

### **E5 Students' personality, character and relationships.**

116. Residential training at the College of the Resurrection is designed to ensure students develop their personal resilience and prepare to face pressures in public ministry. The demands made on students to combine study, participation in prayer and worship, extensive communal tasks, and wider responsibilities (such as within their families), create a pressured environment. Students entering the community to train after leaving very different careers, or those preparing to leave the community for parish ministry, also have to respond to changing circumstances. Current and former students each confirmed that the demands of this particular structure of residential training had built resilience and was a preparation for pressure outside the community. This was affirmed by external stakeholders, including a sponsoring bishop observing that the College 'does a very good job indeed in preparing priests with spiritual discipline, resilience and commitment to prayer'.
117. A small number of external stakeholders submitted comments encouraging the College to do more to help students explore how they might navigate the demands of constantly switching roles in ministry, as well as navigate the adjustment from residential community to the new community of the local parish. We observed students in learning contexts, as well as in conversation over meals and in social time, who were teachable and resilient, very much alert to the ways that they face pressure and changing circumstances.
118. We observed students demonstrating the ability to respect and learn from others and reflect critically and honestly on themselves, both in classes and in informal conversations. In the annual self-assessments supplied, there was also good evidence of students reflecting critically and honestly on themselves, including their weaknesses and vulnerabilities. A training incumbent observed that their Curate had benefited from the way community life made them 'aware of others' foibles as well as his own, tolerant of those foibles and embracing of difference'.
119. However, as detailed above, some students disclosed misgivings around a tendency of others to give peer-to-peer criticism when mistakes were made during community worship. We further noted that one DDO was an outlier in being strongly critical in this area, expressing concern about how 'a more vulnerable or inexperienced ordinand of either gender' might cope at CoR. Whilst we note that the College is making positive changes, it is important for staff to be attuned to these issues and take appropriate steps to remedy them.
120. The communal setting and structure of the CoR makes significant demands on students to form and sustain healthy relationships and to balance care for themselves with care for others, so that the community can function. One past student spoke for several in emphasising how their time at

the College ‘helped me develop my interpersonal and communication skills significantly’. These came from ‘the challenges of living closely in community with others, including those very different from myself’. Current students were also forthcoming in commenting on the effects of college life on forming and sustaining relationships and improving their own self-care. Some acknowledged early difficulties when first adjusting to community life but credited the College with ensuring that they learned to have the more ‘difficult’ and challenging conversations with others with whom they disagreed.

121. Many current students and several external stakeholders voiced concern that the demands made on a relatively small cohort of students to balance their extensive College jobs and duties with their academic studies were having a detrimental effect on wider relationships, especially families. A training incumbent questioned whether meeting these expectations was growing the right attitude to self-care and a healthy balance between ministry and other commitments. In addition, both former and current married students considered there to be ‘real challenges about the place of spouses’, with one admitting that their spouse ‘found it extremely difficult and painful trying to work out how to relate meaningfully to such a close knit and exclusive community’.

## **Recommendation 20**

**We recommended that the College re-examine the in-term commitments it makes on students, and particularly test whether these are unhelpful to those who are married and/or with families.**

122. We understand the current Principal, who has considerable expertise in Safeguarding, has paid focused attention to the question of professional boundaries in ministry and pastoral care, putting in place new measures through which professional boundaries in ministry are modelled and overseen within the College. Placement supervisors commented approvingly on students’ willingness to balance such boundaries and appropriate pastoral care.

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

123. The system of College responsibilities that students perform within defined individual roles and teams, especially relating to liturgy, refectory and general hospitality, are a key way in which students’ leadership capacity and a collaborative disposition are shaped. Current and recent students repeatedly spoke of how the ‘college structures allow students to exercise leadership’, as they are not only ‘given responsibility’ with certain tasks to perform, but also required to ‘respect others in their roles’. This generated ‘natural collaboration in the community’, and essentially required Ordinands to be ‘teamworking all the time’ for the College to function. In addition, the same structure required the ‘recognising of people’s skills within the community’, developing a readiness to share leadership by actively looking for and recognising the gifts of others. One training incumbent noted the ‘humility and confidence’ that their Curate brought to their role – gifts which they sense ‘the College experience strengthened and focused’.



124. Other external stakeholders and alumni nonetheless sounded a note of caution around leadership experience being regulated by established college customs and roles. More than one questioned whether students were appropriately prepared to face parish situations requiring greater informality or flexibility. Former students acknowledged there could be a misplaced competitiveness between some ordinands to hold certain roles, especially Sacristan. This could work against recognising gifts in others, despite, we understand, most College offices being allocated on the basis of a variety of factors, most often to encourage a student's development. An IME-2 Director further believed the College could do more to focus on 'developing collaborative understandings of ministry that are rooted in the catholic tradition but which avoid clericalism.' Likewise, a former student called for 'further liturgical training that is geared towards future clergy equipping the laity to be confident in the liturgy'.
125. We recognise that students are further enabled and encouraged to develop their leadership skills through placements (both parish and sector), though some recent opportunities for growth as leaders have unfortunately been limited by Covid lockdowns. One student nonetheless reflected insightfully on learning to work with others in a parish context during the pandemic, and the challenges of collaboration with those wanting control or anxious about details.
126. Students develop their understanding of issues of authority, responsibility, power and group dynamics through their lived experience of community at the College and a module on Conflict Transformation. Recent former students drew attention to how community life requires Ordinands to 'work through your differences' with others, and means you 'can't avoid people you don't get on with'. Students recognised that conflicts will naturally arise, particularly around people's perfectionism or insecurity, but they considered one benefit of the size of the community is it forces you to reflect and work out how you will get on with someone.
127. Current and former students as well as external stakeholders all suggested improvements could be made to the formal teaching curriculum in this area, in addition to the current Conflict Transformation training. A training incumbent identified a need for better 'management training, including inspiring and managing volunteers'. Others identified training in 'listening skills' – especially 'attentive listening' – as well as wider interpersonal skills for working in groups as areas for improvement. Several students articulated a frustration that their learning and leadership gained from College roles was neither supported by nor formally incorporated into the Common Awards scheme through a Leadership module based on reflective practice. (See also D3.)

### **Commendation 9**

**We commend the College for its module on Conflict Transformation.**

### **Recommendation 21**

**We recommend formal teaching on Leadership is expanded beyond its current position as an end-of-term study week, to incorporate and support learning from College roles and responsibilities as well**

**as placement experiences, with formative and summative assessments as a Common Awards reflective practice module.**

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

128. Current students and recent alumni each articulated how the shape of their calling to ministry had been influenced by life and study in the College and through placement experiences. A recent student spoke compellingly of how the College 'provided a space to meet with God in worship' and a training in making 'the space to discern God's voice more clearly'. Their sense of calling had distinctly 'settled' while training, 'and become a deeper part of me'. A current student 'felt my calling both grow and be helpfully challenged ... by realistically reflecting on the current challenges faced by the Church'. Another evidently appreciated a month-long placement as a hospital chaplain, finding the experience inspiring and profound even as they continued to feel called to parish ministry. Alumni compared training at Mirfield as 'like being given a tool box', which informs what they find themselves doing in parish ministry, even though they are 'not always sure when it will do that and in what way'.

**Commendation 10**

**We commend the College for providing a formational context where students are enabled to deepen their sense of vocation through life and study.**

129. As with E1 above, we encountered divergent evidence of student willingness to serve within the breadth and diversity of the Church of England's traditions. Several students with prior experience of other traditions shared how the College helped them feel 'more comfortable in working across traditions to benefit one another'. In the College prospectus, a current student with an evangelical background acknowledges how they have been 'challenged and rewarded by gaining more understanding and experience of the monastic and Anglo-Catholic traditions and worship, which, ... will equip and prepare me for ministry in the full breadth and richness'. We heard of several examples of how out-of-tradition placements helped broaden experience and instil openness in students, including Catholic students being placed at a new urban resourcing church in the Charismatic tradition, and Evangelical students being placed in Catholic settings.
130. It was nonetheless clear to us in conversation that a further proportion of students remain defensive around their own Catholic tradition, and did not demonstrate willingness to serve within the breadth and diversity of Anglican traditions. These observations chimed with a submission from a stakeholder comment suggesting the level of readiness to work with others was 'variable' among clergy trained at the College. We further noted an IME-2 Director questioned 'the breadth of training for liturgical practice bearing in mind the breadth of Church of England tradition and new forms of worship'. They would encourage the College 'to consider how it helps students collaborate with others of different traditions, especially as we think of the future of ordained ministry needing to cover a wide variety of styles'.

131. From discussions with staff, we learn that the College requires all students to take at least one term-time or vacation placement out of tradition, unless they can evidence suitable breadth of prior experience, although the pandemic has limited some opportunities in this area. We see greater partnership with St Hild College as a further potential means of increasing knowledge and experience, giving students from the respective colleges greater opportunities to collaborate and share their different perspectives. Forms of ‘joint placement’ with St Hild contextual ordinands should be explored, perhaps learning from the Cambridge Theological Federation’s scheme for joint Ridley-Westcott placements.

See also **Recommendation 2.**

132. Students develop their understanding of the nature, scope and demands of public ministry within the Church of England through varied placement experiences and the module Preparing for Public Ministry. The module is designed to help students to understand and articulate the particular ministry to which they have been called within the whole people of God. Students study the ordination liturgies and are also made aware of the legal and regulatory frameworks for ordained ministry. Students are further taught to understand the varying authorities and safeguarding frameworks to which they must be willing to be obedient and accountable in the Church of England.
133. Students grow in their understanding the Church of England’s role and opportunities for Christian ministry and mission in a range of public settings, agencies and faith communities, through reflection on parish placements and other attachments, including in schools and chaplaincy contexts such as hospitals, hospices, police and prisons. We noted a training incumbent thought the College could still offer further training around opportunities in schools, giving ‘focused attention on relationships with schools - taking assemblies etc.’

## **Recommendation 22**

**We recommend the College considers how it offers every student the opportunity to explore the Church’s relationships with schools, whether on placement or by other means.**

**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.**

134. The Student Handbook communicates to arriving students the role of ongoing self-assessment and the structures used by the College to provide a formal written assessment to sponsoring bishops at the end of each year of formation. Areas of formation are linked to specific learning outcomes and the College articulates its commitment to an integrated programme of formation which focuses on the development of the whole person. A handbook appendix further makes students aware of the key questions the College asks relating to IME-1 formation criteria, the Five

Guiding Principles, assessed work, and ongoing training needs, to provide a clear and evidenced report to their bishop.

135. The College's procedures include written self-assessment towards the end of each academic year, as a way of mapping growth towards readiness to begin ordained ministry. From samples of self-assessment, we observed students setting their own targets for future growth and study against the standard, church-wide formation criteria. From discussion with students and tutors, we were made aware of procedures to set student learning goals in response to BAP reports, although we were not shown formal personal learning plans. We were informed of established procedures for dealing with student's unsatisfactory progress, including on-going monitoring and a standing item on the staff meeting agenda for considering formational/academic progress.
136. College Academic Staff draft annual reports using information from self-assessments, assessed work, and wider input as personal tutors as well as external reports provided by placement supervisors (though we were made aware that some supervisors felt the documentation provided by the College was too long and over-prescriptive). Students receive their end of year report to read an hour before a formal meeting with the Principal. We understand this procedure to be a pragmatic attempt to balance time between students receiving the content of the report and the Principal contextualising any comments or conclusions that may be a cause of concern or anxiety.
137. We saw some positive feedback on procedures for end-of-training assessment, though some staff and external stakeholders felt that it could be improved. For example, we noted that one DDO judged College reports to be 'somewhat thin in comparison with those of other TEIs'. A member of staff further voiced concern that current procedures for reports were not clear or robust enough for a scenario where a student could not be recommended for training. There was a need to build more of a 'structured conversation' approach to both the interim and end-of-training review process. Even in cases where students were developing well, the same member of staff felt the current reporting process was under-used as an opportunity to encourage students.
138. While we are content that the TEI has sufficiently sound procedures for the interim and end-of-training assessment of students' knowledge, skills and dispositions, we recommend that the College reviews its procedures in light of best practice at other TEIs and in the wider education sector. The College should aim to develop its formal reporting structure for the benefit of both students and the staff involved, seeking to reduce the anxiety of both sides, and providing greater encouragement and clarity around learning goals and expectations.

### **Recommendation 23**

**We recommend that the College reviews its interim and end-of-training assessment procedures and seeks to develop these in line with best practice at other TEIs and in the wider education sector.**

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

## Conclusion

**The review team has Confidence with Qualifications in the College of the Resurrection, Mirfield in preparing students for Ordained Ministry in the Church of England.**

## Summary of Commendations

### **Commendation 1**

We commend the positive dynamics of the staff team.

### **Commendation 2**

We commend the quality of a life rooted in prayer, the daily offices and Holy Communion.

### **Commendation 3**

We commend the care taken by the College in modelling and living out the Five Guiding Principles.

### **Commendation 4**

We commend teaching that is accessible across a range of educational levels.

### **Commendation 5**

We commend the integration of theological reflection into all aspects of College life.

### **Commendation 6**

We commend the Principal for his efforts to shape a College culture which enables students to discuss their divergent views while ensuring openness and inclusion.

### **Commendation 7**

We commend the College for its high standard of training in preparing and leading worship in the Catholic tradition, including public prayer and preaching.

### **Commendation 8**

We commend the College for the formation it offers students in bringing discipline and depth to their prayer lives.

### **Commendation 9**

We commend the College for its module on Conflict Transformation.

### **Commendation 10**

We commend the College for providing a formational context where students are enabled to deepen their sense of vocation through life and study.

## Summary of Recommendations

### **Recommendation 1**

We recommend that the College carefully reviews its ethos and identity in consultation with all stakeholders, formulating a Mission Statement that accurately reflects the identity of the College that is understood by staff, students and the wider church.

### **Recommendation 2**

We recommend that the College finds imaginative and flexible ways for residential and non-residential students to work together at the Mirfield site.

### **Recommendation 3**

We recommend that the Safeguarding Document be reproduced within the Student Handbook.

### **Recommendation 4**

We recommend that the College considers appointing a Chaplain on a voluntary basis to cater for the spiritual and pastoral needs of ordinands, their spouses, partners and families.

### **Recommendation 5**

We recommend that the Spouses' Handbook is updated to include, among other considerations, the diversity of committed relationships.

### **Recommendation 6**

We recommend that details of accessible routes should be clearly signposted around the campus.

### **Recommendation 7**

We recommend that the College should liaise with the College Council to renegotiate working practices for staff. These could include setting up a rota for evening duties and protected time for scholarship and study.

### **Recommendation 8**

We recommend that the Governance Manual is revised, setting out clearly the respective roles and responsibilities, including matters delegated from one body to another, and subsequently agreed and approved by the Trustees and College Council.

### **Recommendation 9**

We recommend that greater clarity on trustee recruitment and training is established and published in the Governance Manual.

### **Recommendation 10**

We recommend that CoR should produce an entirely new Business and Strategic Plan, budget and risk register through discussions between CR and CoR.

### **Recommendation 11**

We recommend that CoR explores new forms of income generation.

### **Recommendation 12**

We recommend that the College reviews its syllabus in order to fully embed mission and evangelism into the modules.

### **Recommendation 13**

We recommend that CoR creates and adopts a Disabled Students' Policy and that all staff are briefed on it and given training on putting it into action.

### **Recommendation 14**

We recommend that ways are found to integrate the content of the Themed Weeks more fully into the core curriculum and its assessment.

### **Recommendation 15**

We recommend that teaching staff explore the potential of online learning tools in order to facilitate collaborative and independent learning outside of contact time.

### **Recommendation 16**

We recommend that teaching staff review the assessment programme and introduce greater variety of assessment methods.

### **Recommendation 17**

We recommend that the TEI takes active steps to ensure that every student is given sufficient opportunities to develop their personal experience, understanding and respect for the breadth and diversity of belief and practice within the Church of England.

### **Recommendation 18**

We recommend that the College take steps to ensure peer feedback is constructive and conducted within a framework properly held by the staff.



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We recommend giving students more timetabled time in parish placements, especially during the week, and extending their attachments in term time, to broaden opportunities for engagement with public worship.

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We recommended that the College re-examine the in-term commitments it makes on students, and particularly test whether these are unhelpful to those who are married and/or with families.

### **Recommendation 21**

We recommend formal teaching on Leadership is expanded beyond its current position as an end-of-term study week, to incorporate and support learning from College roles and responsibilities as well as placement experiences, with formative and summative assessments as a Common Awards reflective practice module.

### **Recommendation 22**

We recommend the College considers how it offers every student the opportunity to explore the Church's relationships with schools, whether on placement or by other means.

### **Recommendation 23**

We recommend that the College reviews its interim and end-of-training assessment procedures and seeks to develop these in line with best practice at other TEIs and in the wider education sector.