

Ministry Council: Periodic External Review Report

Bristol Diocese LLM Formation Programme

Conducted onsite and online, November 2022

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Glossary

ALM	Adviser for Lay Ministry
ASE	Annual Self Evaluation
BCP	Book of Common Prayer
CMD	Continuing Ministerial Development
LLM	Licensed Lay Minister
PER	Periodic External Review
PTO	Permission to Officiate
RTP	Regional Training Partnership
TEI	Theological Education Institution
VLE	Virtual Learning Environment (online learning platform)

Reviewers

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Reverend Canon Jane Winter, Assistant Director of Formation and Ministry, Rochester Diocese

Ms Jackie Pontin, Deputy Diocesan Secretary, Southwark Diocese

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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. 'TEI' may also include stand-alone diocesan programmes for lay ministry training.

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 Bristol Diocese LLM Formation Programme

Introduction

The Diocese of Bristol has 166 parishes (in 99 benefices) and includes 203 churches. There are currently 176 active LLMs (including PTO). The last Periodic External Review was in 2016. Since then, there has been a pandemic and a considerable change in staff. After Rev Becky Waring left in 2016 there have been a number of people responsible for short periods and a time with no Adviser for Lay Ministry.

A considerable improvement has occurred with the appointment of Dr Stephanie Hayton as Adviser for Lay Ministry, who has brought energy and vision to the programme, giving it a new lease of life. The numbers being admitted and licensed are set out below.

Year	Number Admitted
20	7
21	3
22	11
23	5 (in the formation year)

The cohort sizes have been affected by Covid and there were periods when parts of the programme were suspended due to lack of experience of online learning.

There are three component parts to LLM training. First, it normally begins with people joining an Exploring Christianity group. This is offered as an open access course and is therefore not exclusively for LLM trainees, but for those who are subsequently discerned for LLM training it serves as their foundational programme and so is, for them, an integral part of their LLM training (alternative foundational routes can be offered). It covers six academic disciplines: Spirituality, New Testament, Doctrine / Creeds, the Church, Old Testament, and Ethics. It is believed that this was developed by Trinity College Bristol and at the last PER the diocese was running this in collaboration with a number of other dioceses. This collaboration is no longer happening, and the neighbouring Diocese, Bath and Wells, has recently ceased using the course. The course is run in small groups based geographically and funded by the candidates. The local tutors are volunteers and often have other jobs (many but not all clergy). LLM candidates have to do written assignments. They are discerned for ministry towards the end of the second year on the course. There is an Accreditation of Prior Learning exemption if other suitable courses have been completed.

The second component is a Formation Year. This is for LLM candidates only and covers knowledge and skills required to be an LLM. It includes skills such as preaching, leading worship, mission and evangelism. The emphasis is on formation. Then comes admission and licensing.

The third component is Formation Plus, a year of post licensing training, which is in the process of development. The formational years are delivered as evening classes mostly but not exclusively in the training rooms in the diocesan offices at Bristol. All the three components need to be reviewed together as the three parts cover the whole of LLM training.

Exploring Christianity is a paper-based distance learning programme. Assignments are submitted by email. The Formation Year uses Google Classroom as a VLE. Access has been gained to the online library of the central church institutions, but there are a certain number of technical difficulties of connecting this to Google Classroom which have yet to be solved. Zoom was used for some of the teaching and learning. It has been used this year as an option in Exploring Christianity.

PER Process

The reviewers were given complete access to Google Classroom and provided with further documentation, including the programme overview, handbook, teaching resources, staffing and governance details, annual self-evaluation and previous Ministry Division PER report. The Diocesan website was used for further information and there were some interviews with relevant parties and stakeholders by Zoom.

The reviewers visited Bristol on 11-12 November 2022. Their visit included the observation of teaching, discussions with present and former candidates, conversations with tutors, incumbents, and senior staff. We also held a significant conversation with the Adviser for Lay Ministry, whom we thank for setting up the meetings and the gracious and generous way she has helped our review.

Summary of Outcomes

This report is written in relation to the PER Criteria in force for 2022-23 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
Overall Outcome	Confidence with Qualifications

The review team regards Bristol Diocese’s LLM Training and Formation Course as fit for purpose for preparing candidates for Licensed Lay Ministry.

Section A: Formational Aims

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

1. The reviewers note that the programme's formational aims draw on the Central Readers Council's vision – teachers of the faith, enablers of mission, leaders – and that this is well supported in the course literature. There is a clear use of the formational outcomes through the formation year. They were not so clear in the 2 years of Exploring Christianity, although the mapping to the criteria provided for the reviewers includes this part of the training and formation.
2. The website leads the reader clearly through the stages of becoming an LLM. National criteria are mentioned on the website but not expanded or linked to. No relationship with diocesan strategy is mentioned. While we were assured that LLMs have a vital part in diocesan strategy it was noticeable there was a lack of any explicit reference to LLMs.
3. Diocesan statements lack any significant mention of LLMs' role in the diocesan ministry vision. It is thus difficult for the programme aims to be effectively aligned with the those of the diocese. We were assured of the important place of LLMs in the ministry of the diocese but there was some feeling by those who were LLMs and those entering it that it was not fully appreciated. This gap between two discourses suggests some work is to be done here.
4. We were confident however that a very positive vision of LLM ministry was provided by the training, reflecting some recovery since the pandemic and with the appointment of the new Advisor for Lay Ministry, and it was encouraging to see the enthusiasm of those in training and those who had just been licensed. It appears that there is some fluidity in Diocesan aims and that these may be developed, but the connection of the programme to Diocesan aims needs to be more explicit and the place of LLMs in diocesan strategy made more explicit.

Commendation 1

We commend the recovery of the programme post pandemic by the Adviser for Lay Ministry and the enthusiasm generated in the tutors and candidates.

Commendation 2

We commend the use of the new national lay formational criteria and their integration in the Formation Year.

Recommendation 1

We recommend the development of greater clarity of vision for LLM in diocesan strategy, and that this be made more explicit and integrated into the aims of the formation programme.

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

5. Bristol lay ministry training has been involved in an Annual Self Evaluation (ASE) review process and this was evidenced with two ASE reports. The discontinuity with staff had led to less rigorous participation in annual self-evaluation according to national standards. It was good to see that this had been resumed. It was also possible to converse with the External Quality Adviser about the course, who has recently been appointed and has yet to complete participation in an ASE. These reviews covered Exploring Christianity and the Formation year. There is a similar review process that would also cover Formation Plus.
6. With regards to national strategy, we noted an active racial inclusivity agenda, although some better connections could be made with key people; but we find that other diversity aspects including learning differences and neurodiversity appear to have a lower profile in the course's aims and delivery. The forthcoming financial provision for neurodiversity assessment by the national church is an opportunity for improvement. There has been a substantial increase in Asian and Hong Kong people moving to the diocese and further thinking needs to be done with regard to these people. It was good to see that Rev Mark Nam had been appointed as Minority Ethnic Vocations Champion, which includes LLM vocations, there seemed to be another opportunity here. While there were some younger candidates, as with most dioceses more work needs to be done in this area and there are overall questions of how such people would best access training.

Commendation 3

We commend the restoration of Annual Self Evaluation and appointment of an External Quality Adviser.

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

7. The website is perhaps the most obvious public profile of the TEI. This is clear and concise. There was some debate by people we saw if this would be the starting point of many candidates. There was no awareness of other publicity although it was mentioned that Exploring Christianity had publicised on a deanery level. However, there was also a legacy of encouraging a thriving of unauthorised lay ministries which seemed to lead to some churches not seeing LLM as important. If you can be asked to preach by your vicar, why become an LLM? One candidate was there because of a warning that they needed proper licensing as an LLM to continue a ministry of preaching and teaching. Thus, we detected a change in approach. Bristol has not had a history of the proliferation of authorised ministries although some were emerging. The place of LLM in this changing context need affirmation and constant revisioning.
8. Connections to external partners were unclear. In the previous PER it was mentioned that Exploring Christianity was run in collaboration with several dioceses. This seems to have ceased.

In particular the fact that Bath and Wells had moved on to something different was mentioned a number of times. This potentially leaves Bristol diocese having to do all the work of module revision in isolation, potentially a large task, but it was apparent to tutors and students that some modules needed revision (ethics and Bible were mentioned). The previous PER talked of a collaborative relationship with the South Central RTP. Again, this seems to have fallen aside and there was a lack of clarity about whether this was still a live relationship. When asked about the Theological Educators Network and the Sarum Reader Trainers Conference, senior people were unaware of their existence. Tutors were also unaware of them and that they could participate therein. These are potentially places for revisioning and developing educational strategies.

9. Considerable effort has been made in getting the course running again, and big progress has been made. The areas of promotion and recruitment perhaps in that context sit in the background, and there is more to be done here.
10. Although this is about corporate identity and resourcing ministry as well as outreach, the candidates like very much the LLM 'uniform' for everyday wear when out and about.

Recommendation 2

We recommend the programme should review and develop its promoting and recruitment strategies.

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.

11. The LLM training programme had earlier links with Trinity College Bristol, which were noted throughout by the reviewers. Mention was also made of historic links with a broader partnership group with surrounding dioceses. However, it was also noted that these links have gradually faded. Exploring Christianity, previously a cooperative programme of the larger partnership group, now seems to be in the hands of the Diocese of Bristol alone. The Bishop of Swindon expressed a desire to remain independent of various external links, particularly Durham's validation scheme. Stronger links with other theological educators would benefit the programme, however, not only in provision for students' formation, but also in terms of resources available for tutors.
12. The TEI makes a clear effort to work with local churches in the training and placement of LLMs, and a number of incumbents noted the TEI's flexibility in understanding the variety of contexts and formational needs. As noted elsewhere in this report, a strengthening of the connection between the programme's vision for LLMs and that of the Diocese will help alleviate this disconnect. There could be opportunities to explore and develop links with other faith groups and community organisations further as the population in the area continues to diversify.

Recommendation 3

We recommend that the programme strengthens its connections with other theological educators and partnerships, and provides opportunities for staff and tutors to be involved in the wider context of LLM training and trainer training.

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

13. Evidence from the gathering of Formation and Formation Plus candidates during the visit pointed very clearly to a keen, well-motivated, and supportive community. Good relationships had been formed, and students demonstrated care and concern for one another. Candidates also expressed confidence in the level of support they received from tutors and the programme director, and similarly, tutors were highly motivated by the willingness of the students to engage in formation. Less evidence was available of the community's corporate life online, although candidates did commend the Zoom provision, and felt it a useful aspect of their training. The small size of the current cohort was noted as a concern, though the group clearly connected well. This could be an issue for the corporate life of the community, however.
14. Students felt that the programme was well-structured, planned, and organised, and the LLM Council had a clear sense of support and collaboration. Provision of documents for the reviewers demonstrates a commitment to welfare with regards to pastoral care and mentoring, and a

complaints procedure is laid out clearly. An explicit commitment to safeguarding as it pertains to LLM is less obvious, although it is noted elsewhere that safeguarding training and requirements fall under the umbrella of the wider Diocesan safeguarding programme.

Commendation 4

We commend the close and connected community of staff and students who clearly support and care for each other.

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

15. The LLM training programme uses a variety of venues, although some concern was expressed about the distance students occasionally had to travel. Numerous suggestions were made by both students and tutors about the developing use of online resources, which would be useful in light of this concern. Hillside House provides sufficient space for teaching and for the social life of the community, but seems less adequate as a worship space, being primarily a teaching room. The reviewers noted during the visit that Morning Prayer was said in between a busy period of preparation for the day, and a block of teaching, all in the same room. Simply moving to a different room in this instance would have helped to open up more space for worship. That said, we understand there were constraints on room availability – including the presence of reviewers – and that on other occasions a range of spaces is used.

Recommendation 4

We recommend the programme should continue to think about how the provision of spaces and locations can best serve a dispersed community, and continue to explore the use of online resources.

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

16. All the evidence supports a clear commitment to this aim, and a concerted effort to fulfil it. Each student is included on the worship rota, and they are encouraged to work together to deliver worship in a variety of styles and using a variety of resources, including the BCP. During the visit, it was clear that due attention was given to the range of traditions across the Church, and there was a particular focus on ensuring that students were given placements in traditions different from their own.

Commendation 5

We commend the deep commitment to ensuring formation within the breadth of the Church and its traditions.

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

17. There is a deep commitment among the staff and tutors to their work, and they speak warmly and appreciatively of each other and note their ability to work together well. Their spirituality and faith commitments were clearly observed. Conversation with staff and tutors showed clear evidence of reflective practice. As noted elsewhere, although staff and tutors demonstrated a commitment to ongoing learning and development, they were in some cases unaware of the options available to them, and it would be useful to develop some further clarity with regards to what kind of training staff and tutors can and should pursue for their development.

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.

18. This report recognises that this is an ‘in-house’ course, run by the Advisor for Lay Ministry (ALM) with support from an administrative assistant.
19. The ALM is responsible for the development of theological education in the Diocese and, in particular, the Exploring Christianity course together with the formation of LLMs before and immediately after licensing. A key part of the ALM’s role is also the Warden of Readers and the role holder started work in April 2021 after a period of about three years when there was no one in this role. The ALM’s role is clearly stated in the job description from their recent recruitment, and it is part of the Ministry Development Team reporting to the Director of Ministry Development.
20. There is an administrator in place to support the ALM with the Exploring Christianity course, the LLM Formation year and Formation Plus. The timetable for the LLM Formation year training is clear and clearly published. There is a clear job description for this role.
21. The budget for Exploring Christianity, the LLM Formation year and Formation Plus is part of the budget for Ministry Development and the ALM does not have knowledge of the budget or control of the budget associated with these areas of the role. A clear budget for these areas would allow the ALM to plan the provision of activities and resources more effectively.
22. There is a complaints procedure which is well documented, clear and easy to follow.
23. There is a Licensed Lay Ministry Council (LLM Council) that has a purpose statement drawn up in 2011 and the Council is chaired by the Bishop of Swindon. From discussions with sub-wardens and others, it is clear that this is an effective forum for discussion and debate about the course on offer and about local support for LLMs and their ministry. Members of the Council (in particular the sub-wardens) felt listened to, and that their discussions had tangible outcomes (e.g. there were changes to the preaching element of Formation following feedback).
24. The LLM Council is ‘primarily, the sum of the work done by the sub-wardens’ supported by Diocesan staff on the Council. The LLM Council does not formally report into a Diocesan body such as the Bishop’s Council. A better and more formal integration of the LLM Council would increase the profile of LLMs in the Diocese and is likely to enhance their contribution to achieving the Diocesan strategy *Transforming Church Together*.

Commendation 6

We commend the clear desire, led by the Advisor for Lay Ministry, for ongoing evaluation and improvement of the preparation of individuals for licensed lay ministry as evidenced in conversation and by the SWOT analysis provided to the reviewers.

Commendation 7

We commend the combined ALM and Warden of Readers role which gives a coherence to the support for LLMs and has the potential to enhance the profile of LLMs in the Diocese.

Recommendation 5

We recommend that the ALM should have a clear budget for resources and activities to allow effective planning for Exploring Christianity and the formation of LLMs.

Recommendation 6

We recommend that the LLM Council's statement of purpose is updated to become clear terms of reference which include strategic responsibility for the LLM role, training and a more formal statement of the Council's relationship with the wider Diocesan governance structures.

C2 The TEI has effective team leadership.

25. There is a relatively small team (only four Formation tutors), but it was clear from discussions with staff, students and LLMs that there is effective teamwork between the tutors and the ALM.
26. The ALM and sub-wardens are represented on the LLM Council but, as discussed under section C1, the Council does not operate as a governing body but rather as a discussion forum supporting the training of LLMs and LLMs in parishes, and its leadership role could be enhanced by more discussion on the strategy for LLMs within the diocesan vision. See recommendation 7.
27. The ALM is developing a more strategic approach for the training and development of LLMs but is relatively early in role to have been able to progress this, especially given Covid.
28. All those interviewed (training incumbents and receiving parishes) were clear about their role in Formation and the usefulness of the placement in another parish. There is clear guidance in place for training incumbents and placement parishes.
29. It is clear from discussion with the Formation year and Formation Plus student that they feel motivated by the training they have received and opportunities to develop. This enthusiasm was less evident in the discussions with those on the Christianity Explored course who found the course could be disjointed and was disrupted by people joining different modules. Sessions on zoom are more accessible to those who, for example, have caring commitments but zoom sessions don't enable groups to develop and interact in the same way as those groups meeting in person.

Commendation 8

We commend the clear guidance for training incumbents and placement parishes which helps to ensure the placements are valuable learning experiences for those on the Formation year as well as for the receiving parishes.

Commendation 9

We commend the real, and infectious, enthusiasm for licensed lay ministry among those on the Formation Plus year and evidence that a supportive group had been developed which would enhance their ministry in future years.

C3 Trustees are appropriately recruited, supported and developed.

30. For the purpose of this report, we considered the members of the Licensed Lay Ministry Council to be ‘trustees’ but this is not strictly the case as they don’t have a governance role and the LLM Council has been covered earlier.
31. The members of the LLM Council are predominantly sub-wardens with a focus on the work of LLMs in their deaneries. They are experienced LLMs and in conversation with six sub-wardens, it was clear that they were enthusiastic about their role as sub-wardens, expressing the view that the LLM Council was a forum in which they could express honest opinions. They were broadly representative of the LLMs in their deaneries in terms of age and gender.
32. There is no training or development offered to members of the LLM Council but this is not a formal trustee body. The members all took an active interest in the LLM training offered by the Diocese.

Commendation 10

We commend the representation of the whole Diocese on the LLM Council by including a sub-warden from each deanery.

Recommendation 7

We recommend that the Council consider training and succession planning for the sub-wardens as this is a key role in LLM support (support which is also offered by the Warden of Readers).

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

33. We were not shown a clear business plan for Exploring Christianity or the formation of LLM, this is something that should be explored, developed and shared with staff.
34. The ALM does not hold a budget as this is held by Ministry Development.
35. There is no risk register or detailed analysis of risks associated with Exploring Christianity or the LLM Formation although work has started on this, as evidenced by the SWOT analysis seen by the team and which was discussed at the LLM Council. There is a Diocesan risk register, but this is at a higher organisational level and so does not include mention of any lay ministers including any LLMs. Risks can be articulated for the work under the ALM’s control and some work on this has already begun as evidenced by the SWOT analysis. A risk register for LLM formation would have a teaching and learning focus as there is no need to cover premises, IT, security etc as these are for the Diocesan risk register.

Commendation 11

We commend the work looking at the strengths, weaknesses etc of the LLM formation that is already underway.

Recommendation 8

We recommend that the ALM build on the recent SWOT analysis and conduct a risk assessment and develop of business plan for the course looking in particular at future staffing and numbers accessing the formation year.

Recommendation 9

We recommend that the risk analysis and business plan is further redeveloped and expanded to include Exploring Christianity.

Recommendation 10

We recommend that the ALM should have access to a better understanding of funds available to run the Formation year and that the LLM Council should understand cost per student for Exploring Christianity, Formation year and Formation Plus.

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.

36. Bristol works hard on Exploring Christianity and the Formation years. Considerable energy has been put in by the new ALM which has reenergised the courses. There seemed to be no clear plan as to the diocese's need in terms of the future of LLM. There is an exploration of diversity which LLM ministry can embrace. There was much positive feedback from the students and tutors on the courses, but the level of the programme needs consideration. Even if courses begin at a low level could there be some progression over the whole programme so that later years be all level 4 and some level 5? This is not a recommendation to be more 'academic', which was resisted in conversation, as higher levels can be achieved in knowledge and skill (one person used the term competencies) in project based work and various forms of work-based learning. This would require some attention to study skills each year to enable progression. For further commentary and recommendations see D4.

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

37. We were able to view the teaching rooms in the diocesan offices and the online VLE of Google classroom. The diocese had begun to use the online books provided by central services. As yet this was not used by the students, who would benefit from this resource, particularly in Exploring Christianity where participants pay for the course and are then recommended to buy textbooks for each module. We understand that the Adviser for Lay Ministry has already explored offering some access to nationally-available online books and found that the take-up was modest, the resources only moderately helpful (no bible commentaries) and that, as a matter of national policy, free access could not be given to students who are on exploring or discernment tracks, including LLM trainees during the earlier stage of their Exploring Christianity programme. Nonetheless on the basis that both the range of national resources and their availability are being extended we believe the question will be worth revisiting as part of wider endeavours to develop the use of online resources, hence Recommendation 12. As we underline in the introduction, Exploring Christianity is a key element of the LLM formation programme (while also serving a wider group), and should be seen and resourced accordingly.
38. Tutors' travel expenses were paid for but there seemed to be no consideration of the expense of getting books for the teaching or of the diocese paying for them to go on appropriate conferences to increase their knowledge and skills as theological educators. Tutors also should be given access to online resources from the central services of the church.

39. While Exploring Christianity has assessment criteria the grading of work is done by an external marker. It was not clear that there was feedback to the tutors to enhance teaching and learning. There appeared to be no process of peer review of teaching.
40. It is good that the programme uses the national church's annual self-evaluation process. There is an external quality adviser who has just begun the work, who is an experienced incumbent in the diocese and has been involved in various teaching and training in the diocese. It would be good practice to have someone completely outside the system, e.g., from a college or outside the diocese to give a wider perspective and wisdom.
41. The formation assignments were commented on by a reviewer and this was looked at a second time, but the comments were mostly of an encouraging nature and did not seem to ask how this might be improved. It was not clear as to why Exploring Christianity was graded in assessment the formation assignments were not. Could not one form of assessment be used for all the parts of the programme?

Recommendation 11

We recommend that clarity be given on resources available to staff and students.

Recommendation 12

We recommend that the programme develops its online learning resources and should if possible pursue again the case for the national church's online library to be made available to staff and students.

Recommendation 13

We recommend that a plan for staff development should be considered.

Recommendation 14

We recommend a review of the programme's quality assurance processes in teaching and learning.

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

42. The Christianity Explored course aims to be accessible to all and is not specifically designed only to support LLMs in training. This was seen as positive by one incumbent who feared a more academic course would cause the Diocese to lose 'rich teachers of the faith in their context'. Another incumbent disagreed as many ministers find themselves in an academic environment and felt that we need a range of approaches.
43. Although there are no selection criteria, the Christianity Explored course appears to have a 'book culture' focus and, from interviews, some students found this intimidating either because they had

been out of education for a while or because their needs as a dyslexic student were not fully catered for.

44. The ‘resources box’ available for Formation and Formation Plus students was, in effect a small library which will not be accessible to those who struggle with reading or who need to learn in other ways.

Commendation 12

We commend the provision of the Exploring Christianity course to a wide range of learners including those not in ministerial training or discernment, and its availability on zoom for those whose access is limited by geography or personal circumstances.

Recommendation 15

We recommend that consideration is given to how best to support students who are more comfortable with other styles of learning by offering, for example, videos.

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

45. The module portfolio includes the initial learning programme Exploring Christianity which is open to a wide range of people from across the diocese. It seeks to accommodate a breadth of learners which is to be commended. However, reviewers heard that tutors felt the materials needed to be rewritten and that they were keen to do so. Reviewers recognise that Exploring Christianity is aimed at a wide audience. This means the level of teaching and assessed learning is not as robust as it might be for those using the course as part of lay ministry formation. Reviewers commend the options offered for evidencing learning and suggest that all these should be at a level higher than 3 so student can demonstrate learning through a range of media at the same standardised level.
46. The programme of learning for those selected for Licensed Lay Ministry follows from the Exploring Christianity course. Reviewers found the programme to be well constructed. The teaching and learning they observed was good. A range of teaching styles is used, working to the strengths of the tutors. Team teaching works well. The students were engaged and participating. Students expressed joy in their learning. Students were able to identify their own learning progression, and this was supported in conversations with incumbents. Again, the reviewers were concerned that from the evidence the level of learning was lower than would be expected in line with the national church’s expectation that Readers/LLMs should develop skills suited to a ministry involving elements of faith communication, teaching and apologetics alongside the relational and pastoral qualities that are also needed, and hence that their training should reach at least the equivalent of HE level 4. (The Reviewers would want to argue for some level 5 but recognise that this is not a nationally-stated expectation for LLM ministry training.) Reviewers were not convinced that the programme included enough biblical teaching to support the potential breadth of licensed lay

ministry within the diocese and beyond. This was supported by some student comments. One way to address this could be to offer some master class styled sessions for greater depth in biblical exegesis, hermeneutics and application in preaching and teaching. We recognise that Bristol's CMD programme does offer such material and that the take up from serving LLMs is good.

47. The post licensing programme, Formation Plus, has the potential to offer students opportunities for deeper learning – a mandatory training day on handling conflict was cited as an example. Reviewers did not however see wider evidence that such opportunities were taken by tutors or students, although we are assured that this does happen. The majority of those interviewed expressed a resistance to 'academic' learning. Given students' enjoyment of learning more broadly (para 47), the reviewers felt this was a resistance to writing essays not to academic learning per se. Reviewers would like to encourage a more portfolio-based strategy for assessment allowing students to demonstrate learning through a range of media appropriate to ministry and to work at agreed levels demonstrating progression of deep learning through the whole formation programme. The Adviser for Lay Ministry made it clear to the reviewers that she is aware of changes needed to Formation Plus and that these are included in her work plan.
48. The reviewers were pleased to meet with students who clearly enjoyed their learning. They could evidence growth and formation in a number of ways including growth in knowledge, vocation, spiritual depth and ministerial practice. Students were very open to what God might be calling them into. Reviewers were pleased to hear students talk of ministry beyond the liturgical and pastoral life of the church. Reviewers were not strongly convinced that the curriculum provided sufficiently for the potential of deep theological learning for each student because the assignments did not reflect level 4. They heard tutors describe themselves as not academically gifted, learning as much from the students as they taught. Tutors described their broad role encompassing teacher, critical friend, discernment accompanier, facilitator. This breadth may be a reason why depth of study has less focus within the programme. Reviewers noted the tool kit of study aids but in conversation with students found they were not using it to benefit their learning.
49. Tutors were able to identify formation in the students but did not talk about this in terms of deep learning or the acquisition of knowledge. Their approach appeared to be more holistic and pastorally intentional. This was mirrored in the conversations with training incumbents. Reviewers were left feeling that there is greater potential among the student body than is perhaps being realised at the moment. They suggest that some relatively easy changes be made to curriculum design and delivery allowing more opportunities for critical engagement and research within the modules.

Commendation 13

We commend the way the Adviser has addressed immediate needs creating space now to address more long-term development

Recommendation 16

We recommend re-writing the course material for Exploring Christianity to update the course in content and in use of a wider range of resources.

Recommendation 17

We recommend using a standardised set of criteria for making assignments at the appropriate level, consistent feedback to students in line with the criteria, and that the levels and criteria should be clearly explained to students and referenced in module outlines reviewing how learning is evidenced and assessed to demonstrate progression and depth of both knowledge and experience in line with national expectations for Licensed Lay Ministry.

Recommendation 18

We recommend introducing sessions on study skills, so students are better able to evidence deep learning.

Recommendation 19

We recommend the programme should consider including portfolio-based assignment projects requiring evidence of independent research and critical reflection on practice, theology and theory.

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

50. The programme is divided into two parts, Exploring Christianity and Formation. This potentially leads to a divide between the 'academic' and ministerial development. When questioned about how learning from Exploring Christianity is used in the theological reflections of the Formation there was no clear connection in the minds of students or staff. There needs to be some more explicit interconnection. The main model of theological reflection used was the pastoral cycle, although we are assured there is variety in the use made of this. An alternative model is also introduced at the end of the second term of the formation year. It might be that further ways of making the connections of the two parts of the programme more explicit should be looked at.

Recommendation 20

We recommend that the programme should more actively integrate the learning from Exploring Christianity into the Formation year.

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

Section E: Ministerial Formation

E1 Students are enabled to grow in their love for God.

51. There is no doubt in the minds of the reviewers that the students grow in their love for God through the formation programme. This is evidenced in the way they speak of their own formation as a result of the programme, and in the feedback offered by training and placement incumbents. Tutors are able to speak of how students have grown through the formation year and continue to develop through formation plus. There is some recorded evidence of deep personal growth in the students' journal writing which is a direct result of teaching and learning. It is particularly strong in placement reflections.
52. There is less available evidence to indicate how an infectious faith is realised through engagement with contemporary issues and diverse voices. Reviewers heard evidence of some diversity awareness but examples were limited to race and ethnicity. The reviewers found evidence in the course handbook that the formation course provides opportunities for connecting scripture and faith with contemporary issues. This was supported in conversation with students and in observing student participation in teaching sessions. Reviewers expect that it is covered in workshop sessions such as chaplaincy.

Commendation 14

We commend the holistic and person-centred nature of the formation programme which provides a nurturing environment for growth in relationship with God.

Recommendation 21

We recommend that more overt reference should be made in the teaching programme between specific module/workshop content, scripture and contemporary issues.

E2 Students are enabled to grow in their calling to ministry.

53. All students spoke of their own distinctive ministries emerging as a result of the formation programme. Some spoke openly of the cost of ministry and the need for support, others responding in agreement and highlighting where support had been most valuable. Sometimes that support came from tutors and sometimes from people beyond the course or local church community. There is clear evidence that some Licensed Lay Ministers are called to equip disciples through their teaching on one of the formation programmes. Others indicated calls to evangelism, children's ministry, workplace ministry and pastoral care.
54. Local Learning Groups supporting the student provide very good opportunities for the student to test out a call to ministry in different ways drawing on the seven qualities of discernment, and practicing skills of collaboration, facilitation and leadership. Some incumbents commented on having no idea of these skills sets until an opportunity arose to perceive them in action. Home

incumbents speak of the value of these groups creating safe places for students to receive critical feedback and as intentional places of learning. They noted that it is far easier to offer feedback conversationally than in written form.

55. Placement incumbents reported how the placement can be a time of revelation as ministries emerge for the students. They praise the open approach to Licensed Lay Ministry, not attempting to make potential ministers fit a particular ministry shape or mould, but being open to the work of the Holy Spirit.
56. Students are very proud of their uniform: polo shirts and hoodies, which identify them in role and provide a distinctive visual identity for Licensed Lay Ministry which is appreciated especially when working outside of a congregational setting. There were some lovely stories of moments when wearing the uniform made them think twice about how they might respond in a situation, for example how they were driving!
57. Students spoke of their public ministry. They were not all convinced that this was valued within the diocesan structures. This is a very real perception which the reviewers heard on more than one occasion. They also heard affirmation for the value of lay ministry from senior members of the training department and diocesan staff. It would appear that these messages are not being heard across parties and work may need to be done in order to recognise the valuing of lay ministers and lay ministry in overt tangible ways so that perceptions of undervaluing can be addressed. For example there could be more overt recognition of lay ministry through diocesan communications and ensuring there is good representation of Licensed Lay Ministry at every level of diocesan decision making.
58. Students in the formation plus group spoke openly about the need for support, encouraging one another to seek a mentor or spiritual accompanier external to their ministry context. Those who had this support spoke warmly of the value it brings to their ministry and personal wellbeing. Students spoke of the value of reflection in discerning and developing their call to ministry.

Commendation 15

We commend the open approach to discerning and supporting different lay ministries emerging among students.

Recommendation 22

We recommend addressing the perceived undervaluing of Lay Ministry with tangible resources and support and regular acknowledgement that lay Ministry is valued at parish and diocesan level.

E3 Students are equipped to grow in their love for people.

59. The Licensed Lay Minister has a working agreement agreed with the incumbent. This evidences potential opportunities for a range of ministries as suit the gifting and availability of the Licensed Lay Minister. It includes an acknowledgement of family life balance.

60. Those training for Licensed Lay Ministry complete a confidential declaration form. The reviewers did not see evidence of expected or realised safeguarding requirements for ministry although this is clearly stated in the ASE.
61. Students spoke of training to understand and address racism within the church. Other aspects of cultural awareness and bias are also addressed, for instance in a session on worship.
62. Students offered examples of how their ministry engages with issues of peace and reconciliation. These emerged from the parish context not from teaching and learning sessions. For example one student spoke of preparing the different talks for Remembrance Day addressing three different congregations. It was heartening to hear from students in secular employment how they recognised their ministry in the workplace. One student spoke of how their training had helped them to bring reconciliation in workplace situations. It was also noted that more could be made of workplace ministry in the working agreement to acknowledge this sphere of ministry for the LLM. The bishop indicated there is potential to incorporate Licensed Lay Ministers into the Workplace Wayfarers programme supporting workplace ministry.
63. Tutors have a very close relationship with those on the formation and formation plus programmes. Each student has a personal tutor who takes a holistic approach to their formation. This includes being aware of the student's needs and encouraging self-care as part of the practice of ministry. As per our commendation at B2, the programme clearly offers a caring and supportive learning environment. Home incumbents identified the missional focus within the formation programme as a key strength.

Commendation 16

We commend the recognition of the place of the Licensed Lay Minister in the workplace not just in the church context.

E4 Students are helped to grow in wisdom.

64. The reviewers heard that students had taken different amounts of time to complete Exploring Christianity and the Lay Formation Programme. They were pleased to hear this diversity which reflected a person-centred approach to lifelong learning. The Diocese is committed to Exploring Christianity being an open access course and this is to be commended. Those wishing to candidate to Licensed Lay Ministry are expected to complete formal essays as part of the course. The reviewers question how open access this requirement is to those who may find more formal writing an inhibitor to demonstrating learning and thus limit those who might otherwise candidate. The reviewers recognise that balancing individualised learning pathways within a generic programme is not always easy. There is much evidence to indicate the impact and application of learning on the students' life experiences.

65. Students and placement incumbents spoke of developing leadership. They recognised care was taken in deciding appropriate placement churches. A number of students agreed that the placement was a seminal experience for them. ‘The congregation see you as a Licensed Lay Minister, this was a big realisation for me.’ Another recognised a calling to be ‘among the people, people are willing to talk to us because we are not seen to be on a pedestal as clergy might be.’ ‘I went as a Licensed Lay Ministry candidate, I was treated as a Licensed Lay Minister, I came back different.’ Students also spoke of the significance of the placement for the home church. Having the gap of time prepared the home church to receive the person back in a new role as a Licensed Lay Minister.
66. Many students spoke of the impact of the bible study assignment which included a non-Christian. This piece of work had a lasting impact in understanding mission and evangelism. It was evidenced in conversation and in written work the reviewers saw.
67. Students spoke of the five marks of mission and how they were included in the formation programme. There was less formal evidence of this in the teaching materials so reviewers wondered how explicit teaching is in these areas. This maybe because of the strong emphasis on preaching. Workshops clearly provided opportunities to engage with missional learning. Students appeared to be able to contextualise learning in order to contribute to mission and recognise God at work in their various situations of church and work.
68. Some students spoke openly of their vulnerabilities in learning and in growing in ministry. The feedback reviewers saw was varied across the Exploring Christianity and formational programmes. Students did spoke of good relationships with tutors and tutors spoke of conversations with students to address learning arising out of feedback.

Commendation 17

We commend the flexibility of the learning programmes to accommodate individual needs and situations of students.

E5 Students are helped to grow in the quality of fruitfulness.

69. The students the reviewers met with mainly came from two urban settings of Bristol and Swindon, plus some rural, and hence reasonably well reflect the demographic of the diocese as a whole. The cohort groups’ socio-economic mix is similarly representative of the region. In conversation with the Advisor for Lay Ministry it was clear that identifying potential Lay Ministers lies with incumbents, those who are supportive encourage new ministries, others cannot or chose not to engage. The Adviser also spoke of a lack of support for and awareness of lay ministry because resources to promote lay ministry are not available reflecting choices about spending.
70. Reviewers were aware that the theological perspectives of students appear to be very similar. They wondered how a diverse approach to the breadth of theology was addressed through the tutors, visiting contributors and the student body. One tutor spoke of sharing student’s written work with

another tutor where there was a theological difference between tutor and student. In conversations and in written work reviewers were not aware of how theological disagreement would be handled among students and tutors.

71. The formation plus group spoke warmly of their residentials, all agreeing that they had bonded really well, from which the reviewers inferred that disagreement had not arisen.
72. Students were grateful for plans to include teaching sessions addressing children's ministry, and for existing sessions which enabled them to help adults engage with their own faith development.
73. Reviewers saw some teaching with the formation group about leading worship. This included theory and practice. By the end of the session students had a clear understanding of the theological principles of leading worship and some practical awareness of how to apply them. The resources in the book box were limited, but students were also encouraged to draw on those available online. Students could speak of the impact of worship evidencing their own growth in learning and beginning to see how their congregations grow through worship in order to be equipped for mission.
74. Students discussed their own faith growth as a result of the formation and formation plus programmes. It was also evident to reviewers that Exploring Christianity enables faith development. Some contributions to discussions evidenced a desire for this programme to grow, one student suggesting every congregation should engage with it in order to grow in confidence of sharing the gospel. It was seen as a programme that had the potential to encourage everyday faith.
75. It would be fair to say that while students have learning agreements with their incumbents it was too early in the life of the newly licensed lay ministers to determine how effective these were. Most of those recently licensed were still working out their life balance incorporating their ministry.
76. Placement and home incumbents speak warmly of the programme in providing space for wisdom to develop through the dynamic of taught and practical learning opportunities.

Commendation 18

We commend the ability of students to reflect on their own growth in fruitfulness as a result of the formation programmes.

Recommendation 23

We recommend that the course seek to increase the diversity of theological viewpoints offered within the programme.

E6 Students are equipped to continue to develop their potential.

77. There is clear evidence that students continue to develop potential post selection through the formation programmes. This growth is evidenced through generic module content and the student's response to it. More work could be done to discern a wider breadth of Lay Ministry supporting the diocesan strategy for example in Workplace Wayfarers, or in new missional contexts Diversity of ministries was raised at a meeting with the bishop who spoke of a move away from a more traditional role so that Licensed Lay Ministers can be engaged missionally in areas where clergy are not involved. There is recognition that there still needs to be work in this area to bring about acceptance of truly collaborative ministry. This should become clearer as the emerging Diocesan strategy is implemented
78. Students and lay ministers spoke of feeling undervalued, yet it was clear they received thanks from the diocese. The bishop emphasised a diversification of ministry way from clericalism that resulted in a body of ministers with theological knowledge and who reflected the 'proper Bristol salt of the earth' through the system. It wasn't clear whether this was aspirational or a realised strategic ambition. One way to address a sense of undervaluing would be to point students to learning which would support their distinctive emerging ministry and where appropriate to enable that to flourish through a clear leadership role, focal ministry would be an example, chaplaincy another. The formation and formation plus programmes flow from one to another. There could be opportunities in formation plus, which would be the equivalent to IME2 for greater depth of learning in support of distinct ministry. The reviewers are very aware that the programmes of learning are currently being reviewed by the newly appointed Lay Ministry Adviser and would encourage this opportunity for considering learning at greater depth. There was no evidence that students do continue learning beyond the formation plus year. In terms of provision for Licensed lay Ministers to receive financial support for CMD, we understand the diocesan expenses policy for both LLMs and clergy includes reasonable costs for books and training.
79. There is clearly much potential for a diversification of Christian communities within the diocese. Licensed lay Ministers were aware of these and some were keen to be involved. Further consideration of these opportunities could release potential lying dormant in those who are keen to serve in new missional contexts.

Commendation 19

We commend the aspiration for a rich diversity of ministries reflecting and meeting the needs of Bristol cultures and recognise there is work to do to realise this aspiration, acknowledging that Licensed Lay Ministry is one key resource (see E7 below).

Recommendation 24

We recommend developing the formational programmes to allow for greater depth of learning, and in support of distinctive ministries where appropriate.

E7 Students are able to demonstrate trustworthiness.

80. Students are encouraged to be honest with their personal tutors. They speak of tutors creating safe places for open conversations. Students spoke of how tutors had supported them in honest conversations increasing trust and confidence. Students are encouraged to have a well-balanced pattern of spiritual discipline including prayer, engaging with scripture, practicing silence and creating intentional times for reflection. All of the students the reviewers met acknowledged the value of a spiritual discipline in sustaining them in ministry, they also acknowledged it is not easy to keep in place. Some were still honing a discipline to support their particular life situation.
81. When speaking about how Licensed lay Ministry contributed to the strategy of the diocese those involved with the conversations were very unsure. This included students, tutors and diocesan staff. Students were clear that they had much to offer and wanted to be seen as a potential source able to contribute to the strategy. For example the sharing and deployment of Licensed Lay Ministers across a geographical area. Lay Ministry Council members acknowledged that Lay Ministry needs to be better aligned with the strategic vision.
82. It was clear from conversation that accountability strategies are in place. The reviewers did not see a paper trail to support this. Students are required to complete the Church of England confidential declaration form. The formation handbook states that: ‘failure to undergo further training (particularly Formation Plus and safeguarding) could cause an LLM’s licence to be suspended.’ The ASE section 9 clearly states the requirements for competing the different levels of national safeguarding training modules. It is not clear to the reviewers how this expectation is conveyed to the students.

Commendation 20

We commend the safe environment created by tutors which enables students to grow in trustworthiness sustained by a deep spiritual practice.

Recommendation 25

We recommend that Licensed Lay Ministry is identified as a distinctive missional resource within the diocesan strategy and deployed as such.

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.

83. Students are assessed against the national qualities for ministry. There is a helpful grid evidencing how this assessment is ongoing through the formational period and reflected prior to licensing. A final assessment document is completed prior to licensing. The form indicates on a scale of 1-5 where a candidate is perceived to sit against each of the seven discernment qualities. Space is provided on the form for comment. Reviewers understood that students as well as incumbents,

tutors, placement tutors and the ALM contribute to the assessment process. However, we were unclear how the form and any other material correlated.

84. Ongoing formational assessment continues post licensing through formation plus. This would appear to be quite soft with the onus on the lay minister to make formational connections with teaching and learning. This was evidenced in a teaching session on vocation. Tracking formational development in the tutor/student and incumbent/student meetings would be a way of ensuring formational development is recorded and not missed.
85. Tracking student progress through the formational programmes clearly happened in that tutors were able to talk about holistic progress of each student. There was no paper trail to support the conversations.

Commendation 21

We commend the pre-licensing assessment which allows space to identify further formational needs and expectations.

Recommendation 26

We recommend a stronger tracking for formational development in line with emerging and realised ministries for Licensed Lay Ministers in order that provision can be made to meet ongoing formational development.

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

Conclusion

The review team has Confidence with Qualifications in the Bristol Diocesan Lay Ministry Training and Formation Course in preparing students for Licensed Lay Ministry in the Church of England.

Summary of Commendations

Commendation 1

We commend the recovery of the programme post pandemic by the Adviser for Lay Ministry and the enthusiasm generated in the tutors and candidates.

Commendation 2

We commend the use of the new national lay formational criteria and their integration in the Formation Year.

Commendation 3

We commend the restoration of Annual Self Evaluation and appointment of an External Quality Adviser.

Commendation 4

We commend the close and connected community of staff and students who clearly support and care for each other.

Commendation 5

We commend the deep commitment to ensuring formation within the breadth of the Church and its traditions.

Commendation 6

We commend the clear desire, led by the Advisor for Lay Ministry, for ongoing evaluation and improvement of the preparation of individuals for licensed lay ministry as evidenced in conversation and by the SWOT analysis provided to the reviewers.

Commendation 7

We commend the combined ALM and Warden of Readers role which gives a coherence to the support for LLMs and has the potential to enhance the profile of LLMs in the Diocese.

Commendation 8

We commend the clear guidance for training incumbents and placement parishes which helps to ensure the placements are valuable learning experiences for those on the Formation year as well as for the receiving parishes.

Commendation 9

We commend the real, and infectious, enthusiasm for licensed lay ministry among those on the Formation Plus year and evidence that a supportive group had been developed which would enhance their ministry in future years.

Commendation 10

We commend the representation of the whole Diocese on the LLM Council by including a sub-warden from each deanery.

Commendation 11

We commend the work looking at the strengths, weaknesses etc of the LLM formation that is already underway.

Commendation 12

We commend the provision of the Exploring Christianity course to a wide range of learners including those not in ministerial training or discernment, and its availability on zoom for those whose access is limited by geography or personal circumstances.

Commendation 13

We commend the way the Adviser has addressed immediate needs creating space now to address more long-term development

Commendation 14

We commend the holistic and person-centred nature of the formation programme which provides a nurturing environment for growth in relationship with God.

Commendation 15

We commend the open approach to discerning and supporting different lay ministries emerging among students.

Commendation 16

We commend the recognition of the place of the Licensed Lay Minister in the workplace not just in the church context.

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We commend the ability of students to reflect on their own growth in fruitfulness as a result of the formation programmes.

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We commend the aspiration for a rich diversity of ministries reflecting and meeting the needs of Bristol cultures and recognise there is work to do to realise this aspiration, acknowledging that Licensed Lay Ministry is one key resource (see E7 below).

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We commend the safe environment created by tutors which enables students to grow in trustworthiness sustained by a deep spiritual practice.

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We commend the pre-licensing assessment which allows space to identify further formational needs and expectations.

Summary of Recommendations

Recommendation 1

We recommend the development of greater clarity of vision for LLM in diocesan strategy, and that this be made more explicit and integrated into the aims of the formation programme.

Recommendation 2

We recommend the programme should review and develop its promoting and recruitment strategies.

Recommendation 3

We recommend that the programme strengthens its connections with other theological educators and partnerships, and provides opportunities for staff and tutors to be involved in the wider context of LLM training and trainer training.

Recommendation 4

We recommend the programme should continue to think about how the provision of spaces and locations can best serve a dispersed community, and continue to explore the use of online resources.

Recommendation 5

We recommend that the ALM should have a clear budget for resources and activities to allow effective planning for Exploring Christianity and the formation of LLMs.

Recommendation 6

We recommend that the LLM Council's statement of purpose is updated to become clear terms of reference which include strategic responsibility for the LLM role, training and a more formal statement of the Council's relationship with the wider Diocesan governance structures.

Recommendation 7

We recommend that the Council consider training and succession planning for the sub-wardens as this is a key role in LLM support (support which is also offered by the Warden of Readers).

Recommendation 8

We recommend that the ALM build on the recent SWOT analysis and conduct a risk assessment and develop of business plan for the course looking in particular at future staffing and numbers accessing the formation year.

Recommendation 9

We recommend that the risk analysis and business plan is further redeveloped and expanded to include Exploring Christianity.

Recommendation 10

We recommend that the ALM should have access to a better understanding of funds available to run the Formation year and that the LLM Council should understand cost per student for Exploring Christianity, Formation year and Formation Plus.

Recommendation 11

We recommend that clarity be given on resources available to staff and students.

Recommendation 12

We recommend that the programme develops its online learning resources and should if possible pursue again the case for the national church's online library to be made available to staff and students.

Recommendation 13

We recommend that a plan for staff development should be considered.

Recommendation 14

We recommend a review of the programme's quality assurance processes in teaching and learning.

Recommendation 15

We recommend that consideration is given to how best to support students who are more comfortable with other styles of learning by offering, for example, videos.

Recommendation 16

We recommend re-writing the course material for Exploring Christianity to update the course in content and in use of a wider range of resources.

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We recommend addressing the perceived undervaluing of Lay Ministry with tangible resources and support and regular acknowledgement that lay Ministry is valued at parish and diocesan level.

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We recommend developing the formational programmes to allow for greater depth of learning, and in support of distinctive ministries where appropriate.

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We recommend that Licensed Lay Ministry is identified as a distinctive missional resource within the diocesan strategy and deployed as such.

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We recommend a stronger tracking for formational development in line with emerging and realised ministries for Licensed Lay Ministers in order that provision can be made to meet ongoing formational development.