

## Ministry Council: Periodic External Review Report

# Ripon College, Cuddesdon

**Conducted onsite, November 2023**

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## Glossary

APL	Accredited Prior Learning
ASE	Annual Self Evaluation
BMOG	Branding, Marketing & Outreach Group
CAMC	Common Awards Management Committee
CBP	Context-Based Pathway
FTP	Full-Time Pathway
CGH	Cuddesdon Gloucester & Hereford pathway
CMS	Church Mission Society
COO	Chief Operating Officer / Bursar
DCA	Durham Common Awards programmes
DDO	Diocesan Director of Ordinands
ILP	Independent Learning Project
IME1/2	Initial Ministerial Education Phase 1/2
Moodle	Online learning platform
OPTET	Oxford Partnership for Theological Education and Training
OU	Oxford University
PER	Periodic External Review
PP	Portsmouth Pathway
PTP(A)	Part-Time Pathway/(Accelerated)
RCC	Ripon College Cuddesdon
SLT	Senior Leadership Team
SpLD	Specific Learning Difference / Difficulty
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats
TEI	Theological Education Institution
UKME / GMH	UK Minority Ethnicity / Global Majority Heritage
ULO	University Liaison Officer
WEMTC	West of England Ministerial Training Course

## Reviewers

**Canon Dr Jocelyn Bryan**, Senior Reviewer; former Academic Dean and DThM programme director, Cranmer Hall, Durham

**Revd Sonia Barron**, Diocesan Director of Ordinands, Lincoln Diocese

**Sir Stephen Lander**, former Director General of MI5 and Chair of the Serious Organised Crime Agency

**Very Revd Dr Frances Ward**, writer, theologian, former Dean of St Edmundsbury

## 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 sometimes carry out their own academic quality assurance review in parallel with the church’s PER to inform the university’s decisions 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 Ripon College, Cuddesdon

### Introduction

#### Setting the Scene

Cuddesdon College was established in the village of Cuddesdon in 1854 and merged with Ripon Hall in 1975 to form Ripon College Cuddesdon (RCC). The site at Cuddesdon has continued to develop from its original listed main College Building and College House to currently comprise five other buildings and six residential properties, the latest additions being Harriet Monsell House and the Edward King Chapel both completed in 2012.

In its recent history RCC has evolved from a residential theological college to offer part-time and non-residential theological education through the development of several partnerships. The previously established St Albans and Oxford Ministry Course (SAOMC) became incorporated into RCC as the Oxford Ministry Course providing part-time non-residential training in 2006. This was followed in 2011 by the incorporation of the West of England Ministerial Training Course (WEMTC) delivering teaching in centres in Ludlow and Gloucester and a partnership with the Church Mission Society in 2014 (CMS) to deliver pioneer ministry training in Oxford. Later still, RCC entered partnership with the Diocese of Monmouth delivering the MA in Leadership (MAL) Programme designed to train senior incumbents for enhanced leadership. Finally, in 2015 the Diocese of Portsmouth joined RCC to establish the Portsmouth Pathway. Alongside this growth, RCC has offered a variety of courses ranging from ones targeted at those wishing to explore their vocation or beginning theological study to ones forming part of continuing ministerial development; it has developed overseas links and hosted a residential community of religious sisters. RCC aptly describes itself as ‘a community of communities’ and has sought in the past 6 years to deal with its institutional complexity and consolidate its partnerships in a manner that enables a sense of integration and belonging to what is now RCC.

Since the PER in February-March 2017 there have been several significant changes to create a cohesive RCC community and identity within its existing pathway structure. The previous Residential student community and the Oxford Ministry Course is now the Cuddesdon-based Full-Time Pathway (FTP) and Cuddesdon-based Part-Time Pathway (PTP), what was WEMTC has become Cuddesdon Gloucester & Hereford (CGH), and the Portsmouth Pathway - Portsmouth Pathway Cuddesdon (PP). A full time Context Based Pathway (CBP) has also been introduced with students studying at Cuddesdon from Monday to Wednesday followed by four days in their context including a day off. The Director of each Pathway is part of the Senior Leadership Team of RCC. This has established greater accountability, facilitated strategic planning, and improved the integration of the oversight of RCC as a whole. The Principal is to be commended for the sensitivity with which the necessary Pathway and oversight changes have taken place.

The integration of the RCC Pathways has been cemented further by the reorganisation of RCC based teaching since September 2021. Part-time students from the Cuddesdon based Part-Time Pathway (PTP), CGH, PP, and CMS are taught and worship together at the Cross Pathway Residential Weekends and Long Residentials. PTP and PTPA (Accelerated students) are also taught with FTP students and the CBP students on Tuesday evenings. PTPA additionally share teaching and worship with FTP on Wednesdays. These arrangements have allowed RCC to further embed its commitment ‘to comprehensive engagement across the scope of Anglican tradition’ which is enhanced by its various Pathways and partnerships. They enrich peer learning, deepen RCC students’ experience of the breadth of the Anglican tradition and are a more efficient use of lecturing resources by markedly reducing the duplication of module teaching.

### **RCC: Current Context**

Since the last PER in 2017, the partnership with the Diocese of Monmouth and its MAL Pathway has ceased and notification has been received from the Diocese of Portsmouth that the Portsmouth Pathway will close for financial reasons at the end of this academic year (July 2024). In Autumn 2020, the Cuddesdon Sisters from two Anglican religious orders – the Communities of St John Baptist and Jesus The Good Shepherd - sadly left Cuddesdon due to the pandemic. The Cuddesdon School of Theology and Ministry was closed at the end of the 2022/23 academic year.

At time of the PER, RCC was in a period of transition in the aftermath of considerable restructuring and reorganisation which had been implemented over summer 2023. This had taken place in response to a number of significant challenges faced by RCC, many of which are prevalent throughout the TEI sector. Therefore, the reviewers believe that it is important that these are seen in the wider context of challenges within the Church of England and in growing vocations in particular.

Across the TEI sector since 2010, there has been a reduction in the number of ordinands in training and a long-term decline in full-time training nationally. Both are important factors in determining how RCC continues to fulfil its vocation to form Christian disciples for public ministry. Its future strategy must necessarily be responsive to the strategic direction of ministerial formation coming from the Church of England at a national level. From a TEI’s perspective, this seems unclear, especially with regard to full time residential training. That said, recent changes in the funding arrangements and the Service Level Agreement have been positive and appreciated. The move towards a more collaborative and less competitive approach amongst TEIs is also viewed as a constructive way forward. However, it remains the case that reduced income from a lower number of ordinands and the need to maintain a considerable estate of buildings in the face of higher inflation has presented significant challenges to RCC and this does not reflect any particular problem at RCC per se.

Last year, RCC began a process of restructuring and reorganisation to address the financial difficulties it faced. A small group from the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) were tasked with putting forward a number of proposals and in October 2022 the Board of Governors gave permission for the Principal to consult widely on these proposals throughout the college.

The following changes have resulted from this process:



- The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) (see Paragraph 56) has changed and currently it comprises
  - The Principal
  - The Academic Dean
  - The Director of Formation
  - The Bursar
  - Local Pathway Directors
- There has been a reduction in Academic Staff from 12 staff (11.25fte) to 11 (9.9fte) with an accompanying reshaping of the academic staff structure and roles. All academic staff posts now include administration, teaching, and personal tutoring/pastoral care in the life of the community.
- Cuddesdon School of Theology and Ministry has been closed.
- The role of Vice Principal has been combined with that of Academic Dean.
- There have been significant changes in administration and support staff roles resulting in a reduction of posts and hours.
- A team focusing on hospitality and events has been created.

These changes have incurred several redundancies which were all effective by the end of July 2023.

There have also been additional significant changes in personnel outside of the restructuring process. In April 2023 the Director and the Deputy Director of CGH resigned. This in conjunction with other staff leaving has resulted in 5 academic staff departing from RCC during the academic year 2022/23. In addition, there have been changes in support staff. The Bursar moved to a new part-time role of College Accountant/Finance Manager and a new Bursar was appointed in July 2023. The Conference Manager also resigned during this time.

The changes in the Academic Staff Team based at RCC are considerable. The new appointees to the posts listed below, began at the beginning of the current academic year.

- Tutor in Theology (Doctrine and Preaching) with responsibility for SpLD and Disability (ft)
- Tutor in Theology (Global Mission, Ministry, Theological Reflection) with responsibility for Placements (ft)
- Tutor in Theology (Doctrine) (0.5fte)
- Tutor in Theology (Ethics and Research Methods) with responsibility for Postgraduate Programmes (0.4fte)

There was also one significant internal move. The Tutor for Pastoral Theology at the Cuddesdon site moved to become Director of CGH based in Gloucester. Just before the PER visit a new Ludlow Tutor (0.65fte) was appointed to take up their post in December 2023.

## **General Comments**

In introducing this report against this background of change, the PER reviewers consider the following points to be important:

### ***RCC Staff***

As can be understood from the above, the PER visit was conducted following a period of substantial change in both the academic staff and support staff of RCC. Many of the staff had been in post for less than three months and some existing staff had taken up new roles during this period. The reviewers experienced the new academic team as enthusiastic, and capable. They received positive comments regarding the appointments from students and the continuing academic staff.

The move by the Pastoral Studies Tutor at the Cuddesdon site to Director of the CGH Pathway was helpful in reducing the impact of the upheaval caused by the pathway losing both of its key members of academic staff. Stakeholders and students shared with the reviewers their confidence in the new Director and were encouraged by the manner in which she had taken up the role.

Overall, the present academic staff (including those in part time posts) listed on the RCC Website comprises the following:

- The Principal
- The Academic Dean & Lecturer in Church History
- The Director of Formation
- The Director of CGH Pathway
- The Director of PP
- Lecturer in Old Testament
- Lecturer in New Testament
- Lecturer in Christian Ethics (part time)
- 3 x Lecturer in Theology (2 full time, 1 part time)

There are also 17 Associate Tutors providing additional teaching in their areas of expertise.

### ***Student Numbers***

The pattern of decline in the number of ordinands (especially full time residential) is a considerable matter of concern for RCC (see table below) but it is important to note that it mirrors the national picture. The reviewers heard anxiety from several staff and members of the Governing Body regarding this matter. Increasing the number of ordinands on all pathways is a key focus of action identified in the RCC strategy document of May 2020. However, the reviewers were concerned that there was no evidence of a recruitment strategy or any change in its approach to recruitment beyond the termly Open Days and follow up visits. They consider that this should be addressed as matter of urgency along with a refreshing of RCC's strategy to grow the institution in the next 5 years (see **Recommendations 4 and 15**).

### Ordinand Number by Pathway

Pathway	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22
CFT	20	30	45
CBP	4	5	3
CPT	21	23	28
CMS	6	7	15
CGH	18	14	13
PP	7	13	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>115</b>

### ***Teaching and Learning***

Across its pathways RCC offers a wide range of awards in Theology, Ministry and Mission that are validated either by Oxford University (OU) or Durham Common Awards (DCA), with the provision also of offering the opportunity for D.Phil. study (see Paragraphs 79-82).

Delivering high quality teaching and being a centre for academic excellence is one of RCC’s strengths. Its close ties with Oxford University are important for its recruitment strategy, the ongoing academic development of its staff and its contribution to the wider church. The reviewers conclude that RCC needs to sustain and develop this aspect of its life and ensure that this is embedded in its public profile. We consider its theological scholarship and its role in the development of the church’s future theologians to be one of RCC’s significant contributions to the wider church.

### ***The Formational Context***

The reviewers were impressed by the way in which RCC has integrated its pathways to enhance its students’ formation. Students benefit from quality teaching both on the Cuddesdon site and at the sites local to CGH and PP. They experience the richness of the different life experiences, spiritualities, intellectual approaches and the breadth of the Anglican tradition as part of an affirming, hospitable, formational community. The reviewers were encouraged by the number of students who shared with them their very positive experiences of being part of the RCC community. We consider the model of pathway integration to be effective and well managed providing a fruitful formational context.

### ***Strategic Planning***

It was evident to the reviewers that the significant changes and challenges during the past 2 years require RCC to revisit and refresh its draft strategy document updated in 2022 (see also Paragraph 70 & **Recommendation 15**). The changing patterns in Theological Education mean that although full time

residential training will continue to be a RCC pathway, its portfolio will necessarily have to continue to be flexible and adapt to the evolving needs of the Church of England and other partners in serving the wider Church.

RCC holds to its vision of being a community of hospitality and welcome. It plans to continue to develop more business opportunities and partnerships with other theological institutions/seminaries in order to establish more income streams. The reviewers were pleased to note that it is already beginning to grow its income from external users and encourage RCC to be more proactive in exploring and assessing these opportunities (see Paragraph 74 and **Recommendation 17**).

### ***The Portsmouth Pathway***

The reviewers considered it unnecessary to visit the Portsmouth site given that the Portsmouth Pathway will close in July 2024. However, they met with PP students on the Cross Pathway Weekend and heard their deep appreciation of the current Director and the sadness they felt regarding the decision to close. The students stated that the news of closure had been communicated sensitively and that both the Director and Principal had been very supportive.

### **Concluding Introductory Comments**

The reviewers were impressed and encouraged by the formational ‘community of communities’ that is RCC. Its model of pathway integration provides a context which is rich in diversity of experience, perspective, and tradition across a variety of training modes. We saw high quality teaching and learning and consider the seriousness with which RCC takes scholarship as something to be treasured and nurtured by the whole church.

The reviewers commend the way in which the breadth of the Anglican tradition is held within the community. We witnessed respect for difference amongst staff and students and students confident in their learning and formation.

RCC has been ably led by its Principal to navigate a difficult time of restructuring and reorganization. The changes were necessary, and courageous decisions have been made. We sensed energy and commitment amongst the staff team and above all, a student body who valued RCC as a supportive and inclusive community in which they were being formed for the vocation God had called them to.

The reviewers hope that this report is a source of encouragement and affirmation. We are clear that RCC is to be commended on the quality of its formational programmes. These are uncertain and difficult times and the reviewers’ recommendations are designed to support, assist, and encourage RCC to be even more successful in the years ahead.

### **PER Process**

The lead reviewer visited the Cuddesdon site in July 2022 and March 2023. She met with the Principal and Bursar on both occasions. These visits were necessary to inform the lead reviewer of RCC’s plans for

restructuring and their progress. The lead reviewer also held a zoom meeting with the Principal and newly appointed Bursar in early October to plan the final details of the PER Visit.

The reviewers visited the Cuddesdon site in early November 2023. They attended the Cross Pathway Weekend, lectures, a staff meeting, Board of Governors meeting, chapel worship, student prayer groups and college formation groups. Two of the reviewers had a conversation on zoom with the Chair of the Board of Governors during August 2023, before his sabbatical leave. During their visit, the reviewers held conversations with all members of the SLT, most academic staff and many of the support staff, the Directors of the Pathways, a variety of student groups and spouses and partners of ordinands in training. Online meetings were conducted with several stakeholders, associate tutors, and placement supervisors. One reviewer visited CMS and two reviewers visited CGH in Gloucester spending time with the Director and a group of students and observing teaching. In total the reviewers spent over 6 days with RCC. The reviewers were very appreciative of the hospitality and engagement with the PER process by both staff and students. They were thankful for the efforts made to ensure that all the documentation, access to online resources and any other requests for information were dealt with efficiently and securely.

All the supporting documentation was made available in good time. The reviewers had access to Moodle for the taught modules taking place during the PER Visit. Along with the RCC documentation, they also received views in writing from stakeholders including a sponsoring bishop, DDOs, placement supervisors and former students.

## Summary of Outcomes

The report is written in relation to the PER Criteria in force for 2023-24 and available via the Ministry Development Team’s quality assurance pages on the Church of England website.

<b>CRITERION</b>	<b>OUTCOME</b>
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 Ripon College, Cuddesdon as fit for purpose for preparing candidates for ordained and licensed lay ministry.

## Section A: Formational Aims

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

1. In RCC's public facing documents the formational aims are outlined in a number of ways. On the website under Ministerial Formation, RCC states that 'The aim of our training programmes is to prepare the whole person for mission and ministry in today's world. Courses in both mission and ministry help to develop an understanding of the mission of God and the tasks of ministry, and courses in human development and pastoral practice equip you to know what it means to live a fully human life and how pastoral care is responsibly exercised.'
2. In RCC's Prospectus the ethos, formational context and emphases are described under the following headings:
  - A kaleidoscope of traditions
  - Academic excellence in theology
  - Shaping your life in ministry
  - Developing gifts and skills for ministry and mission.
3. Under each of these headings is detailed the significance of these for formation. For example, Academic Excellence in Theology is expanded with 'We believe in excellence in teaching and learning theology. That's because we want you to become rooted and secure in Christ and discover a vision for your work in today's church and in the world it serves'. Likewise, Shaping Your Life in Ministry is followed by 'The heart of what we do is to encourage your spiritual formation. Worship and study, practice and reflection, prayer and the life of the community are all integrated to help shape and prepare you for your future ministry.'
4. Hence, both the Prospectus and Website outline RCC's aims and ethos as a formational 'community of communities' and are consistent with the aim of its foundation in 1854.
5. Regarding RCC's internal documentation the Strategy Document: *Growing Cuddesdon 2020 to 2025*, captures the ethos of the institution in the strapline – Faithful Worship, Eager Learning, Diverse Community: Formation for generous service in God's Church. This is underpinned by the values of:
  - Community – trust, joy, participation, generosity
  - Hospitality – receiving the stranger, the world and keeping boundaries open
  - Wisdom – learning, personal growth, holiness, truth, theological reflection and study
  - Integrity – of faith, life and ministry
  - Diversity – embracing all the riches of the Christian tradition, embracing difference and practising reconciliation
6. A different description is outlined in RCC's PER Overview document stating that its vision is to form ordinands and ministry students who are:
  - 'confident in their vocation and how they are equipped to be obedient to it'

- ‘instinctively and naturally collaborative’
  - ‘natural and instinctive theological reflectors’
  - ‘realistic and enthusiastic about the realities and opportunities of the 21st century mission context’
7. It was evident to the reviewers that while there are common themes in the various formational aims and the ethos of RCC expressed in both its policy and strategic documentation and the public facing website and prospectus, these are not clearly and consistently stated throughout the range of documentation pertaining to RCC.
  8. The reviewers recognised that in the life of its community and communities, the aims expressed in the documentation and on its website were owned and embodied. We encountered a diverse community, who received excellent teaching, who were being formed for their vocation to ordained ministry and who were enabled to develop the gifts and skills to fulfil their calling.
  9. Each pathway has a Ministerial Formational Handbook which describes Ministerial Formation under three headings of character, scholarship, and ministerial activities. The Handbook also contains information regarding personal tutors, spiritual discipline, formational assignments and qualities of ministerial formation, details of initial expectations for formation and the annual self-assessment. However, in conversation with some students, the reviewers found them to be unclear on the formational aims of their programme, and others pointed to the Qualities of Ministerial Formation and the Self-Assessment Form as their reference point.

### **Recommendation 1**

**The PER Team recommend that RCC produces a definitive document setting out its formational aims and that this is referred to consistently in both its internal and external facing documents and website.**

### **Recommendation 2**

**The PER Team recommend that the formational aims are reviewed on an annual basis by the Education Sub Committee.**

### **Recommendation 3**

**The PER Team recommend that the formational aims are referred to and discussed as part of student induction and integrated into the Ministerial Formation Handbooks. Furthermore, they are reviewed in tutorials and reference made to them in the student Self-Assessment Form.**



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

10. The reviewers consider that the formational aims of RCC are appropriate to the ministerial requirements of the Church of England. This is supported by the mapping documents submitted as part of the PER process and the integration of the qualities for ministerial formation in the student Self-Assessment process.
11. RCC's vision as stated in paragraph 6 demonstrates its engagement with the Church of England's thinking on the needs and aspirations of its ministers. The reviewers experienced a community and staff team that was respectful of its inherited ethos but at the same time was responsive to the changing contemporary context of ministry and seeking to meet the challenges of embracing diversity and difference. This was particularly evident in the Cross Pathway Weekend residential, where the richness of diversity is celebrated and peer learning from a range of traditions and backgrounds occurs in the classroom and through social interaction. Hence, RCC is clearly deeply committed to the task of ministerial formation which takes diversity seriously. It embodies this in the life of the community and communities which comprise RCC. It has met the challenge of managing a number of training modes and has enabled its different pathways to interact and benefit from one another in their sharing of teaching, worship and formation.
12. The reviewers are also satisfied that parish and community placements, the relationship with the CMS Ordained Pioneer Minister Pathway students and teaching on mission, enable their ordinands to develop as missionary disciples. Furthermore, the proposed new pathway for Children and Family Ministry headed up by the Director of CGH is indicative of RCC working with Dioceses to be responsive to the strategic emphases in the Church of England. This is also an area identified by the reviewers for development in the Cuddesdon pathways (see **Recommendation 25** and Paragraph 151) and they are hopeful that there will be some cross fertilization between this initiative and those training on their ordination pathways.
13. The reviewers were impressed by the way in which RCC's teaching and learning enables ordinands from a broad range of educational backgrounds to learn together. This was particularly evident at the Cross Pathway Weekend and during the week when the Full Time and Part Time students are taught and worship together. Students from all pathways spoke positively about the availability of study skills and learning support across a wide spectrum of diversity.

**Commendation 1**

**The PER Team commend RCC for its commitment to managing different training modes and enabling its students to realise the benefits of diversity in a variety of forms on the Cross Pathway Weekends and during the week in its Full Time and Part Time teaching programmes.**



## Commendation 2

**The PER Team commend RCC for its study skill provision and the learning support it offers students across all pathways.**

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

14. The reviewers heard overwhelmingly positive responses from receiving incumbents concerning the quality of RCC curates and their enthusiasm and openness to continued learning. Other stakeholders including DDOs and diocesan staff expressed their appreciation of the breadth and depth of its teaching and formation, its flexibility around pathways, good liturgical training and its accommodation of a wide range of students. A DDO commented that ordinands were 'well prepared for ministry at all levels'. Another stakeholder commended the 'quality of the supportive relationship with pathway directors so that any perceived problems are dealt with easily'. Overall, we discerned from both written responses and from our conversations with various stakeholders that they were positive and appreciative of the formational programmes delivered by RCC and the contribution it makes to the Church of England.
15. In their SWOT analysis RCC identifies Communication and Public Perception as one of its weaknesses. It cites recent student feedback as confirming to some extent that its external narrative is out of date and includes 'class exclusive attitudes and style'. The reviewers encourage RCC's Branding and Marketing and Outreach Group (BMOG) to consider ways of addressing this issue. This review comments further on RCC's SWOT analysis in paragraph 74.
16. Although the reviewers were aware of the BMOG they found no reference to its membership, or to a recruitment strategy except 'the need to increase student numbers'. We were also unable to identify the group's present activity. We consider that this lacuna requires addressing and that it should draw on expertise both from staff within RCC and its Governing Body.
17. As already indicated, throughout the PER visit the reviewers received many positive comments from students on all the pathways from a variety of backgrounds. We therefore encourage RCC to draw on its students as ambassadors to address any misconceptions regarding RCC and as part of its recruitment drive.
18. RCC's overview document concludes that RCC is discerning a paradigm shift, and that the concept of formation is 'needing broadening' and they will need to 'embrace a wider demographic and cross section of the Church and an increasing diversity of ministries'. The reviewers saw good evidence that RCC is already beginning to do this and consider that it needs to publicize this assertively to enhance its public profile.
19. The decline in student numbers and full-time students in residential training in particular is a matter of concern across the sector. Recruitment for RCC is mainly focused on Open Days and follow up

visits as requested. The Admissions Tutor organises these events which provide an opportunity to visit the Cuddesdon site during term time to have conversations with staff and students and gain a perception of the site and the community. We urge RCC to think more creatively about such events and their timing especially given the changes in the national discernment process. The close links between Gloucester and Hereford Dioceses and the CGH Pathways mean that recruitment to these pathways follows a different model and is less competitive in nature.

#### **Recommendation 4**

- a) The PER Team recommend that RCC reviews the working and composition of BMOG and considers including a member of the Board of Governors with appropriate experience and skills as a member of the group. The group should, as a matter of urgency, develop a recruitment and marketing strategy which enables it to enhance its public profile and publicize the following:**
- **the quality of its formation programmes**
  - **its academic excellence**
  - **the positive experience of its ordinands within the diversity of its community**
  - **the ongoing significance of its contribution to forming ordinands to enhance scholarship within the Church of England**
- b) The PER Team recommend that the roles and responsibilities for the implementation of the recruitment and advertising strategy should be clearly defined for both administrative support staff and the academic staff.**
- c) The PER Team recommend that the recruitment and advertising strategy and its implementation is regularly reviewed by the Education Sub Committee (see paragraph 56 for further comment on the Education Sub Committee) in the light of updates on recruitment events and recruitment data and discussed at the meetings of the Governing Body (see also Recommendation 12).**
- d) The PER Team recommend that RCC reviews and enhances its website to include video footage of students sharing their experience of formation and learning and teaching across all pathways.**

**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.**

20. RCC describes itself as a community of communities and this is indicative of the primary partnerships that make up RCC. In its last PER in 2017, it was recommended that *‘the Principal leads a thorough-going review of the range of partnerships and dispersed communities / pathways which form RCC’*.
21. In the Follow Up Report of 2018, it was noted that *‘The old identities have been replaced with a far clearer pattern: Cuddesdon Full-Time and Part-Time Pathways; and Cuddesdon Gloucester & Hereford and Portsmouth Pathway Cuddesdon. In the process the legacies of the competing identities lingering from the period of mergers and expansion have been sensitively but firmly dealt with’*.
22. This was also the case for the Oxford based modes of training, with the report noting that *‘What was previously the Residential Student Community and the Oxford Ministry Course has now become Ripon College Cuddesdon Full-time Pathway and Part-time Pathway.’*
23. The reviewers were impressed by the consolidation and integration of pathways which has taken place since 2017 and commend the Principal and SLT for implementing this so successfully.

### **Commendation 3**

#### **The PER Team commends RCC for the implementation of its model of collaboration and integration of learning in community across the pathways that make up RCC.**

24. The continuation of the close partnerships within the pathway structure characterises the community of RCC and affirms its commitment to diversity and collaboration. Currently RCC has Memoranda of Understanding with the dioceses of Gloucester, Hereford and (until the end of July 2024) Portsmouth. RCC also has a ‘close structural partnership with CMS’ likewise supported by a formal Memorandum of Understanding, which centres on RCC delivering training for pioneer ordinands through RCC’s Common Awards programmes. The reviewers believe that this partnership could be developed further to enable CMS’s considerable expertise in mission and pioneer ministry to be more available to the wider RCC learning community.
25. RCC states that it values the possibilities of local collaboration with the other Oxford based TEIs and ecumenical colleagues through OPTET (Oxford Partnership for Theological Education and Training) but the reviewers are unaware of how this is being pursued and what form it takes. However, the reviewers were encouraged by RCC’s negotiations with Oxford Diocese to develop training for Ordained Assistant Ministers on a pathway aimed at replacing the Local Ministry Pathway. The reviewers consider that RCC should continue to work with local partners and close

geographical dioceses to develop further streams of lay and ordained training to meet the current ministerial needs of the Church of England.

### **Recommendation 5**

- a) **The PER Team recommend that RCC continues to dialogue with its key and close geographical Diocesan Partners regarding the enhancement of its current pathways to meet the challenges of contemporary ministry. This should include the development of new courses and pathways for lay and ordained training.**
  - b) **The PER Team recommend that RCC and CMS continue to develop their collaboration to include drawing on the expertise in mission and pioneer ministry of CMS and the diversity within RCC.**
26. RCC has a number of international relationships with Anglican Training Institutions in the USA, Barbados, and Hong Kong. The reviewers suggest that RCC thinks creatively about how these relationships can be developed to enrich their students' experience of the world church, and develop RCC's academic scholarship by offering teaching exchange, research fellowships, scholarly collaboration and research leave opportunities at RCC.
27. The reviewers were impressed by the local partnerships across the pathways which have been established for student placement experience. These not only include over 80 parishes but also a wide range of secular institutions including charities, schools, funeral directors, care homes and prisons. The reviewers heard from a local headteacher of her keenness to develop the link with RCC and how positive the experience of hosting ordinands was for the school. In general, placement supervisors fed back to the reviewers their satisfaction with their experience of the processes for learning and reflection embedded in their role as placement supervisors. The reviewers note that there is a new member of staff with responsibility for overseeing placements who is from a non-Anglican background and encourage the development of more ecumenical and other faiths placement opportunities.

### **Recommendation 6**

**The PER Team recommend that RCC develops further its relationships with ecumenical partners and other faith communities to enhance its placement opportunities.**

- 28. RCC has a long-established and significant relationship with Oxford University which is underpinned by a written agreement which has recently been reviewed.
- 29. The relationship is important to the continuation of RCC's aim to be a place of academic excellence and in the recruitment of ordinands who have the potential to become theological scholars and educators attracted to study on Oxford University's BA, MTh or DPhil programmes. The reviewers appreciate the significance of the role of the current Academic Dean in this relationship and encourage both RCC established and new staff, to foster research links and to attend/contribute to the university seminar programmes as a means of further strengthening this

relationship, which the reviewers view as an important factor in RCC's contribution to the wider church.

### **Recommendation 7**

**The Review Team recommend that academic staff continue to foster links with Oxford University to enrich their scholarship and maintain academic excellence in the teaching and learning at RCC.**

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

30. The reviewers were impressed by the quality of the policies and their review processes in relation to welfare, equality and conduct. The Employee Handbook and Health and Safety Handbook contain the relevant policies with supporting information. Student policies are comprehensive and, when asked, students were confident about where to locate these (see also paragraph 60).
31. The reviewers found RCC's safeguarding procedures, training and practice to be exemplary. The Safeguarding Lead is part of the national team for Safeguarding in TEIs and the establishment of a commitment to a safer church culture was evident in the various ways safeguarding was being referenced and monitored.

### **Commendation 4**

**The PER Team commend RCC on its safeguarding procedures and practices and in particular for its practice of tracking each time safeguarding is referenced in lectures and assignments with appropriate follow up.**

32. Pastoral care of students is delivered in a number of ways. The Formation Handbook identifies the personal tutor, chaplain and the availability of a counsellor as providers of pastoral care. For those students on part time pathways or the context-based pathway, some pastoral care is also provided within their parish setting. The reviewers heard from several students of their appreciation of pastoral care offered by RCC particularly in cases where the student faced illness, bereavement, or other challenging personal circumstances. We were also aware of the mutual care and support offered by students within the RCC community.
33. Since the last PER Report, RCC has worked hard to build a positive formational community of communities. In bringing together the various part time pathways for the residential Cross Pathway Weekend and FTP and PTP for Tuesday and Wednesday teaching and worship, they have been able to establish a positive sense of community across the different modes of training. Our conversations with students throughout our time at RCC affirmed the value ascribed to this and the way it enriched students' training and formational experience.

## Commendation 5

**The PER Team commend Cuddesdon for the supportive, caring and positive sense of community established within and across all pathways.**

34. Recent staff changes have increased the diversity of the core staff team. It now comprises: 4 ordained men, 2 ordained women, 3 lay women and 2 lay men. Another ordained woman is joining the team in December as Lead Ludlow Tutor. Within this staff team, two are members of the URC church and another a Roman Catholic. There is a diverse age profile, and one member of staff is from an ethnic minority.
35. The reviewers are satisfied that the student voice is heard by RCC. The Hearing The Student Voice Policy Document sets out the various ways in which students on all pathways are listened to and enabled to contribute to the way in which RCC 'sets its priorities and shapes its activities'. Students are represented by student representatives from all pathways on the Common Awards Management Committee (CAMC), Board of Studies and College Council. There is also student representation on the Governing Body. Key issues are discussed at these meetings and for academic matters the Academic Affairs Committee develops any actions plans relating to the programmes. The College Council meets three times a year and provides a place for student representatives to have input into strategic issues. However, the reviewers encountered a number of students who were unaware of the College Council and its function and others who suggested that there was little feedback from these meetings to the student body.

## Recommendation 8

**The PER Team recommend that there is a process for feedback to the student body from the various committees and decision-making bodies in RCC. This may take the form of minutes being made available on Moodle or an obligation on Student Representatives to ensure they achieve this as part of their role.**

36. In its Prospectus RCC publicises its welcome and provision for families. Family accommodation was described by spouses and partners as spacious and there are plenty of safe outside areas for children to play. Some mentioned a problem with mould in their accommodation and we urge RCC to address this matter. The FTP Handbook includes College Rules For Parents and Children in and around College Buildings and Common Room. Reviewers heard from the Spouse and Partner group of FTP ordinands that they enjoyed a sense of belonging and were able to decide their level of involvement in community life. In the RCC Induction programme, they were encouraged to prepare for the journey that they faced as a couple or family and the issues that might arise. There is a nominated member of staff as a 'go to' person for spouses and partners and they can obtain pastoral care from the College Chaplain who was considered as a safe place. On a Monday evening the Spouses and Partner Group have exclusive use of the Common Room for a social gathering. Some stated that they would value more of an introduction to the Church of England and its ordained ministry as part of their orientation as spouse and partners. Others expressed interest in

the possibility of being linked to a member of the clergy to explore the future challenges and how to manage life in parish ministry. Overall, the reviewers concluded that RCC provides good facilities for families and enables them to feel valued within the life of the community.

37. Single ordinands (known as solos) on the FTP reported to the reviewers a positive experience of life in community at RCC. They enjoy the use of social space in the John Newell Common Room and the main Common Room and were positive about sharing this and other spaces with part time students on the Cross Pathway Residential Weekends and the PTP Students during the week.
38. Overall, the reviewers are satisfied that the RCC community caters well for families, spouses and singles in its Cuddesdon based community.

**B3 The provision of public social and private living accommodation is satisfactory [see also E3 for teaching accommodation].**

39. RCC cites as one of its strengths ‘the beautiful physical site in Cuddesdon that aids learning and promotes wider engagement with the community and church’. During 2022 RCC took a stock condition survey of the buildings on the main college site. A list of concerns was raised, and this has formed the basis of a plan for repairs and maintenance. There is a recognised need to update and renew bathrooms and kitchen facilities in several residential properties and address damp in the Vine Cottages. The Estates Strategy lays out a series of objectives to maintain the historic and other buildings to a good standard through a programme of internal redecoration, renewal of flooring and furnishings and maintenance complying with Health and Safety legislation.
40. In its Estates Strategy, RCC lists as an immediate priority actions ‘to improve energy conservation and environmental sustainability’. Clearly the age of some of the listed buildings on the site makes this challenging, but the planned replacement of the boilers in the main building recommended as part of the energy audit is underway, and the student community shares in a number of Eco-College initiatives as noted at paragraph 128. However, the reviewers are concerned that RCC demonstrates a more robust intentional response to the climate emergency, not only in its Estates Strategy but in the use of other resources and its approach to waste.

**Recommendation 9**

**The PER Team recommend that RCC produces an environmental strategy for its estates and models positive engagement with the climate emergency.**

41. As noted in the previous PER in 2017, RCC has many adaptations in place in response to mobility and other disabilities. There are adaptations for the partially sighted, automatic doors, and ramps. Access to the main library on the Cuddesdon site remains a problem for anyone with mobility issues, but RCC has put in place measures to circumvent problems with borrowing of books from the library for any student this might affect.



42. The Edward King Chapel is a delightful and versatile place for worship. It is a Cuddesdon gem. All pathways have good provision of worship space.
43. The reviewers visited the accommodation in Gloucester but not the centres at Ludlow and Portsmouth. For Gloucester students, teaching and worship takes place in St Mary de Crypt Church and Schoolrooms, rented from the charitable body established to administer the building and facility. The reviewers found this to be satisfactory. The Hereford students meet in rented space at the Mascall Centre in Ludlow. The Estates documentation comments that ‘This space offers a flexibility of different sizes of teaching space to accommodate years when we have varying numbers of students, especially in the second/third year group (as many of our students do a one-year course)’. There are library lending facilities at each centre.
44. The teaching for the Portsmouth Pathway takes place at St Luke’s Church Centre which is in central Portsmouth. From the description provided, this meets the needs of the pathway well, providing good facilities for a shared meal, worship and a variety of flexible teaching spaces. Overall, the reviewers conclude that the provision of public social, learning, teaching and private accommodation spaces is satisfactory.

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

45. All pathways have a Worship Handbook with full clear guidelines regarding roles, responsibilities, the shape of worship, expectations, music and a range of different rites. These are all commendable documents and ensure that the students on all pathways have an excellent resource to refer to.
46. There is a well embedded cycle of corporate worship in the life of the community - most notable at Cuddesdon which includes a Eucharistic service each weekday, morning prayer each day, evening prayer on all but Wednesday and Compline each evening led entirely by students. Wednesday at 11.45 is the main College Eucharist of the week at which PTPA students are present and there is often a visiting preacher.
47. The Worship Handbook for FT Students states ‘*The basis of our worship for most of the year for the morning office and eucharists is Common Worship (CW). The Book of Common Prayer (BCP) is used for evensong on Fridays and for communion on Thursdays. Monday evening is either evening prayer or alternative worship. On Tuesdays, evening worship takes place in chapel along with members of the Part-Time Pathway who lead the service*’.
48. The reviewers witnessed a rhythm of worship that grounds ordinands in the authorised traditional liturgical practices of the Church of England. This is evidently the perceived normal practice. These were led well by students from the different pathways, who participated in a number of different liturgical roles in the college chapel as part of their formation. Students receive feedback from tutors but the reviewers were not aware of any documentation of feedback by tutors which could



be used as evidence for report writing. We saw a variety of leaders modelling inclusivity with regard to gender, with both men and women presiding at the Eucharist and preaching the word.

49. Although there is some space for creativity and different styles of worship, some students attending the Cross Pathway Weekend and others based at Cuddesdon expressed frustration that the basis of most of the worship at RCC is Common Worship expressed in its distinctive tradition. This perception raises a tension between RCC's intention to be a community that rejoices in its diversity and, as stated on its website, is committed to 'comprehensive engagement across the scope of Anglican tradition' and 'actively welcomes students from across the traditions, looking for the mutual enrichment that comes from generous and courageous engagement across 'party' lines and loyalties'. That said, the reviewers acknowledge that those students on PP and CGH Pathways have the opportunity to lead worship in their preferred traditions during their evening sessions. However, we encourage RCC to continue to reflect on its rhythm of worship within the broad scope of the Anglican Tradition.

#### **Recommendation 10**

**The PER Team encourage RCC to continue to increase the range of innovative rites, worship traditions and opportunities for creativity in college worship consistent with its formational aims and publicity material.**

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

50. Throughout the PER visit the team witnessed very good interaction between staff and students. We heard appreciation of support from the staff, the Principal and Directors of Pathways. Students shared with us an overall confidence in the staff team and an excitement concerning the gifts that new members of staff brought to the community. In the classroom, we saw enthusiasm for learning, respectful and positive engagement between staff and students and a supportive response to questions regarding assessment. Students commented positively about the accessibility of staff and their willingness to be responsive. In the social spaces we also found staff-student interaction to be appropriately easy, producing a sense of a well-integrated community committed to its shared life together. That said, we noted that there were some staff who were far more prominent in the life of the community than others and that the much-lauded soft contact with students was more available to students with some staff than with others.
51. The recent reduction and recruitment of new staff during the past four months has been part of a strategic move to include within each role an administrative responsibility. Newly recruited staff have taken up responsibility for Placements, SpLD and Disability Lead, and Postgraduate Programmes. The reduction in academic staff by 1.35fte has inevitably increased the workload on the overall staff team. Although the reviewers did not receive any negative comments concerning workload and commend the changes to the timetable to increase shared teaching across pathways, they remain concerned that staff have sufficient capacity to maintain their research

interests, publish their academic work and contribute to the aim of academic excellence and developing future theologians and theological educators for the wider Church of England. We were encouraged by the study leave policy as indicative of RCC's commitment to academic staff's ongoing learning and academic development and hope that the current three-year cycle can be maintained.

52. The reviewers witnessed an uneven presence of tutorial staff in worship and at other times. Whilst acknowledging that some staff are part time, we recommend that there are guidelines concerning expectations of staff being present on site, attending worship and how they model patterns of accountability, worship and spirituality to students.

### **Recommendation 11**

**The PER Team recommend that clear guidelines are set out for staff regarding attendance on the Cuddesdon site at worship and meals, and that the staff presence over vacation periods is negotiated and shared across the whole staff team.**

**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.

53. The Board of Governors takes overall responsibility for RCC. Its members are the Trustees of the charity and its objects are defined as to “provide, carry on and maintain a college or colleges for the training of candidates for Holy Orders in the Church of England and such other students of theology and other germane Christian studies as the Governors may permit.” In addition, its founding documents enable the Governors “to do all such things as are necessary or expedient for the proper and effective carrying out of the objects.” The Board thus has a wide discretion since the objects of the charity are broadly drawn and the powers available to deliver them are permissive.
54. The Board is large. It is at present chaired by the Bishop of Lichfield and currently comprises seventeen members. In addition to the College Principal, two members represent the Bishop of Oxford, two the General Synod and there are two elected members of staff and two elected students. The remaining members are co-optees with a range of, predominantly clerical, backgrounds. None is from an ethnic minority. The attendance record of members has been variable, and the reviewers were surprised that no Governor chose to attend the chapel service after the November 2023 meeting, nor the dinner with the students. The Board meets each term to an agenda with some standard features including a report from the Principal, one from each of the Board’s sub committees, and updates on Safeguarding and Health & Safety. These provide a sound structure for Board meetings.
55. In 2021, efforts were made to revise the shape of meetings “to enable more focus on strategic decisions rather than simply information sharing”. This was timely given the pace of change required of RCC since then and the importance of Board engagement with the choices being made. Despite the size of the Board, which might risk stifling debate, Board minutes and the reviewers’ observations show a good level of engagement from the floor and some useful discussions, for example, in February 2022 on the strategy to be adopted in the changed circumstances post the pandemic and in October 2022 on the need for, and approach to, staff restructuring.
56. The Board is supported both by the SLT of RCC and by three, Board-member chaired, sub committees for Finance, Estates & Personnel and Education. It is these committees, rather than the Board itself, that are key to carrying forward the governance of RCC, and the Finance and Estates Committees appear to be operating both diligently and effectively. The Education Committee, which was reconfigured in late 2021, however, has not met since October 2022 following the resignation as a Governor of its chair. It is notable that the other two committees both enjoy some delegation of responsibility for decisions from the Board, but the Education Committee does not. Given the changing requirements in the wider Church, it would be propitious

for RCC to strengthen this Committee, under the Governor who has recently agreed to take on its chairmanship, through the addition of further Board members whose responsibilities elsewhere include delivering the ministry needs of today. Its remit should be extended to provide assurance to the Board as a whole and thence other stakeholders that those needs are being addressed by the education provided by RCC.

### **Recommendation 12**

**The PER Team recommend that RCC should press on with its plans to revive its Education Committee under its new chair and with additional membership from the Board of Governors. Its remit should be extended to include providing assurance to the Board and thence to other stakeholders that the education provided meets the ministry needs of today’s Church.**

57. RCC is unusual as a TEI in that, besides its traditional full and part time training, it supports and validates two further “remote” pathways for Gloucester/Hereford, and, currently, Portsmouth dioceses, and another for CMS students. The two diocesan pathways pose organisational and governance challenges with students training part time near home and also coming to Cuddesdon itself for Cross Pathway Weekends. Both depend critically on the personal qualities, energy and commitment of their pathway Director. At the present they are well served in this regard and the reviewers commend the contribution made by those two members of staff. The situation, however, poses potential single points of failure if either was unavailable. Accordingly, RCC should make sure it has in place contingency plans against that eventuality.

### **Commendation 6**

**The PER Team commend the contribution of the Directors of the two diocesan pathways.**

### **Recommendation 13**

**The PER Team recommend that RCC should develop contingency plans against the possibility of either of its diocesan pathway Directors being unavailable.**

58. RCC’s governance structures described here are well established and well understood within RCC and the reviewers saw some evidence of external satisfaction with the arrangements. To these structures was added in 2020 a College Council designed to improve consultation with all those students on ministerial training pathways. It meets termly and has been judged a success by management. Its minutes show informed discussions between senior staff and student representatives and an open but courteous sharing of student concerns. While the reviewers were left uncertain whether all feedback reached every student and pathway, it was clear that students on most, but not all, pathways appreciated the arrangement as well as the Principal’s regularly circulated “Jottings” designed to keep students up to date with news and developments at RCC (see **Recommendation 8**).

59. Churn in Board membership and among the staff recently has put pressure on both governance and management. The Education Committee apart, the robustness of College structures has, however, been demonstrated by the delivery of a cost saving and properly consulted, if painful, staff restructuring, and the preparation of, and agreement to, new finance and estates strategies designed to be better fitted to current circumstances.
60. Good governance is supported by effective, published, policies that regulate the way an institution operates. RCC is sensibly placed here with a comprehensive set of published policies and procedures. It has, for example, an Employee Handbook, most recently updated in July 2023, and various student guides covering formation, ethics, placements and the like. In addition, there are published policies on finance, data protection, conflicts of interest, disability, the environment, equal opportunities, health and safety, no smoking, recruitment, meetings & events, Prevent and Safeguarding. Most have been updated recently and none is in a version more than three years old. The students are, for the most part, aware of their guides and consult them as needed (see also paragraph 30).
61. According to the Equality Act 2010, it is against the law for a school or other educational provider to treat disabled students unfavourably. Thus, an education provider has a duty to make “reasonable adjustments” to make sure that disabled students are not discriminated against, for example by making changes to physical features to allow access to facilities or employing extra equipment or staffing for those with a disability. As an educational charity these provisions must apply to RCC, and on a site with listed buildings, some with multiple floor levels, it is in a difficult position in relation to students lacking mobility. Whether or not it would be reasonable to expect RCC to make new adjustments is a matter of judgment. Accordingly, it would be advisable for management to have prepared and available details of what “reasonable” changes it has already made over the years and, if that is the case, why further changes are not considered practical.
62. That said, the reviewers did not see any evidence that disability was a bar to studying successfully at RCC; indeed they wish to commend RCC for the ringing endorsement from many of those with learning, hearing and other disabilities of the assistance and support they have received. In one minor regard, however, some better communication between the diocesan pathways and RCC’s Disability and Learning Support Tutor would ensure that the small number of students with dyslexia who are appropriately assisted in their local work secure the same support in their sessions at Cuddesdon. Details of what ‘reasonable’ changes it has already made are set out in paragraph 41.

## **Commendation 7**

**The PER Team commend RCC for their support and assistance to those with learning, hearing and other disabilities.**

## C2 The TEI has effective team leadership.

63. The SLT, as stated in the Introduction, now comprises the Principal, the Academic Dean, the Director of Formation, the Cuddesdon, Gloucester and Hereford (CGH) Director and, for the time being, the Portsmouth Director, supported by the Bursar (COO) and the Deputy Bursar as secretary. It is responsible for the day-to-day management of RCC and meets fortnightly during term. At its meetings stock is taken of issues of importance, College business is progressed and subjects for Board or Board committee discussion are identified. Minutes of SLT meetings give a business-like impression of a team who know each other well and are comfortable in their respective roles. The reviewers saw no evidence of tension in the top team, nor with subordinate staff, nor with the governance committees overseeing RCC.
64. The fall in ordinand numbers in recent years and the consequent need for some retrenchment in staffing and other costs has made the period since the pandemic a difficult one. Further, the loss of experience as staff have retired, moved on to other posts or through redundancy has added to leadership pressures. In these circumstances, management accepts that RCC has fallen short in aspects of communication with stakeholders, including potential students and DDOs, and in having the management capacity and capability to identify and successfully deliver a wider range of educational offerings in addition to its traditional full and part time patterns of formation. This Review comments further on this issue later.
65. Moreover, while many at RCC, including on its Board, are justly proud of its 170-year history, its academic rigour, its broad churchmanship and its particular ethos, those distinctive features are not only an important strength, but may also be in some respects a hindrance to student recruitment. On the one hand they provide a shared perspective of what is valuable and distinctive about RCC, but on the other it is accepted they can be off-putting for certain students, potential students and other interlocutors. It may be, therefore, that some greater diversification of styles according to audience would be beneficial in recruiting a wider range of students and, perhaps, other potential users of the facilities. This might be something that could be picked up when staff are planning RCC's next marketing campaign (see also paragraph 19 and **Recommendation 4**).

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

66. Co-opted governors are recruited following agreement between the Chair of the Board of Governors and the Principal about who should be approached. There is no advertising for members and those making new appointments are probably better informed about possible clerical candidates than those with other backgrounds. Further, there is ambiguity in the position of a number of members as to whether they are first and foremost representatives of stakeholders of RCC or trustees overseeing its affairs. There is a particular tension here for the elected staff and student members who quite naturally bring to the Board the interests and concerns of their constituents. The Governor Induction Pack provided to incoming Governors contains all the key documents a trustee would need, including the Charity Commission guidance on the role, but the

reviewers were unable to determine whether or not this was widely read and understood in the light of some apparent lack of familiarity with its existence. The Principal should take a particular interest in ensuring the student members understand and learn from their membership.

67. With a mixture of ex officio, elected, representative and co-opted governors, the Board has a mixed membership. It is, against this background, particularly important that all appreciate their duties as trustees of a charity with an annual turnover of nearly £2m. All are responsible in law for its solvency, the conduct of its business and the welfare of its students and staff. Attendance at meetings, engagement with and support for the employees, on whose goodwill RCC depends, and attention to issues affecting its business in a timely manner should be seen as essential commitments. This should be made clear when new members are inducted and the requirement should be re-emphasised annually by the Chair. Further, it would be particularly helpful if those organisations nominating individuals for membership could identify people who bring relevant skills. It would, for example, be particularly beneficial if at least one of the Synod representatives could have experience of the work of Ministry Council.
68. The last PER in 2017 noted that the Board of Governors contained “very few representatives of the lay community or of skilled practitioners from business who could offer their expertise”. It recommended that “the skills gaps in the current Governing Body are identified and new appointments are made explicitly to fill those gaps”. The Follow Up on that recommendation in November 2018 recorded that the “Board of Governors has attended to the question of skills gaps and expertise”. Whatever may have happened in the interim, the circumstances that gave rise to the 2017 recommendation appear similar to the position today with no obvious increase in those with business or commercial experience. While there is certainly no shortage of other knowledge and talent on the Board, the requirement for wider experience must arguably be even greater today than it was in 2017 given the pressing need to diversify the services it offers and the sources of income it enjoys. Accordingly, it must be right to repeat the 2017 recommendation and propose that RCC should again make efforts to recruit more lay members to fill skills and experience gaps on its Board, using its two vacant co-opted member positions to do so in the first instance. The opportunity should also be taken to seek to increase ethnic minority and female representation on the Board.

#### **Recommendation 14**

**The PER Team recommend that RCC should address diversity issues on its Board, should recruit more lay Governors so as to fill skills and knowledge gaps in its membership, and should look to those who nominate representatives to it to identify individuals with appropriate experience. All members should be reminded annually by the Chair about the nature and extent of their trustee responsibilities.**



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

69. RCC has discussed, prepared or revised a number of business planning documents over the last two years which reflect the reality in the RCC context of factors affecting all TEIs - the reduction in ordinand numbers and requirement for residential training, changes in the way ordinands are selected nationally, financial pressures in the Church at large, the impact of the pandemic and, of course, high inflation. A Cuddesdon-wide strategy entitled “Growing Cuddesdon 2020-25” was written in the middle of the pandemic and now appears largely overtaken by events. The main strategic plans now in operation, therefore, are
- i. A Finance Strategy 2023-28; and
  - ii. An Estates Strategy 2022-27.
70. These are both purposeful documents properly owned by the Board of Governors and the relevant sub-committee with some sensible objectives which are regularly reviewed. In addition, the Board considered a draft strategy document entitled “Moving Cuddesdon Forward 2022-27” at its meeting in February 2022 and that consideration provided Board endorsement at that time for the direction of travel envisaged by RCC leadership. A small staff Strategy Implementation Group provided a follow up paper for the Education Committee in March 2022 and a short update in May 2022, but no new College-wide strategy has emerged from this work. A new effort to refresh and complete a strategy with associated objectives and performance measures would allow the leadership and the Board together the opportunity to reflect on and, as necessary, adjust their perceptions of the way forward for the next period in the light of the significant developments that have taken place since early 2022, and the prospects and challenges likely in the years ahead (see also the Introduction).

**Recommendation 15**

**The PER Team recommend that RCC should refresh the RCC strategy prepared in draft in early 2022, taking into account the various developments since then and looking forward to the challenges ahead.**

71. The key features of all this strategy making since the pandemic may be summarised as requiring continuing efforts to broaden the use of the facilities by developing new educational offerings and finding more financially worthwhile “external” users of the buildings, while making every effort to, at least, maintain ordinand numbers on existing pathways. They have required retrenchment in an effort to bring the books into balance involving a 15% reduction in full time equivalent staffing and plans to dispose of some residential property. It remains to be seen if this carefully thought through downsizing will enable RCC to meet the challenging financial targets that the Finance Committee has felt it necessary and proper to set for the years ahead. For that reason, RCC should set out clearly in the new strategy recommended above how it would respond to further financial difficulties. In short, there should be the outlines of a Plan B already available, considered by the Finance Committee and shared with, and endorsed by, the Board of Governors. This should



articulate RCC's key selling points and how they can best be marketed, and should identify options for future development. Further guidance on this is provided in **Recommendation 4**.

72. Behind these strategy documents lie a Risk Register reviewed annually by the Finance Committee and the Board and a SWOT analysis prepared during the summer of 2023 in preparation for this Review. The Risk Register provides a well-designed and straightforward account of the risks RCC faces with clearly assigned responsibilities for individual risks. Thought has clearly gone into the judgments made, and the reviewers commend its clarity and coverage. To an outside reader some of the scores and comments tabulated for risk mitigation when last reviewed (for example on the large overseas loan) look over optimistic, but the Register demonstrates that RCC leadership is focused on key issues and active in seeking to manage them.
73. That said, there are two risks that do not feature which might usefully be included. The first is the risk relating to the availability of the diocesan pathway Directors mentioned above, while the second is the risk arising to RCC from allegations against staff. RCC may believe that such allegations are unlikely, but it, nevertheless, has a duty to protect its staff, students and itself against the possibility. Mitigation here might include guidance to staff on solo occasions with students. Finally, in another area, disaster recovery, some further work would be advisable. The Risk Register addresses this risk and the Finance Committee is presumably right in judging that the likelihood of a major incident affecting RCC is low. The impact of such an incident could be very serious indeed. Accordingly, it would be prudent for RCC to prepare (and keep up to date) a short Disaster Recovery Plan, setting out how an accident or incident affecting RCC would be managed. Such a plan might detail responsibilities in the event of an incident; propose where students would go if accommodation was damaged; what would be done if staff or students' papers were destroyed; and what insurance cover is available and how that cover would be brought into play promptly if needed.

### **Commendation 8**

**The PER Team commend RCC for the clarity and coverage of its Risk Register.**

### **Recommendation 16**

**The PER Team recommend that RCC should add risks concerning the diocesan Pathway Directors and of allegations against staff to its Risk Register and should prepare (and keep up to date) a Disaster Recovery Plan.**

74. A SWOT analysis can provide a good opportunity for fresh introspection and fresh exploration of the environment in which an institution operates, and the RCC document provides useful and perceptive insights at a difficult time. Such analysis is probably most useful, however, when it distinguishes more obviously than the RCC one does between internal examination (strengths and weaknesses) and external focus (opportunities and threats). The "Opportunities" section, for example, while identifying actions that could usefully be explored within RCC, is thin on any fresh

examination of the market externally for the services it can provide. While some efforts have already been made in this regard over a number of years and with some good results, a renewed and wider appreciation of the market for various forms of religious education and for residential awaydays, conferences, retreats, summer schools and the like, and of different approaches to fundraising, might open up opportunities for RCC to make a step change in income diversification as envisaged in its strategic plans. There is no shortage of thought here, rather a need to be more ambitious and exploratory in examination of the markets within which RCC does and could operate. This should include thinking whether academic staff and students should have a greater role to play in marketing RCC, since they are likely to be impressive ambassadors for what it has to offer (see **Recommendation 4**). With a new bursar and recent changes in the staffing of other key positions it might be judged unreasonable to expect RCC to press ahead energetically with such an outward facing exploration at the present time when consolidation of business and staffing structures internally needs to be the priority. Time, however, may be short, so as soon as those staffing changes have bedded down a renewed focus here, with the help of Governing Board members with relevant experience, including any new members recruited as recommended above, would be important.

#### **Recommendation 17**

**The PER Team recommend that once recent staffing changes have settled down, RCC should undertake a fresh examination of the market externally for the services it can provide, drawing on such experience and expertise as Board members can offer.**

75. By comparison with many public facing charities, the sums raised by RCC in gifts, donations and legacies are modest, and the resulting amount at about 2.5% of total income in 2022 was barely material to the accounts. RCC, of course, is not a public facing charity, nor is its business the raising of funds for disbursement externally, and it is operating in a Church with significant financial pressures of its own. The Board has understandably decided not to employ a Development Director or other professional fundraiser, presumably on the grounds of the costs that would be incurred and the real uncertainty about what might be achieved for this institution in this sector and at this time. RCC has already introduced in 2018 an imaginative scheme, called “The Cuddesdon 500”, to raise £5 per month from 500 alumni, students, staff and friends of RCC and that now accounts for about 50% of all donations.
76. It may be that when there is sufficient management bandwidth for the new external scoping work recommended above, exploration of the way others in this sector raise funds might offer approaches that RCC could emulate. The conclusion to be drawn from past evidence, however, is that while fundraising remains worthwhile and can make a useful contribution to the funding of occasional one-off projects or at the margins to support students in need, without the appearance of a donor offering a large endowment, it is probably never likely to make a significant ongoing contribution towards RCC running costs.

77. RCC enjoys a robust financial control framework and detailed published financial procedures which are reviewed annually and most recently by the Finance Committee in October 2023. The former is overseen by the Finance Committee which reports annually to the Governing Board on proposed budgets and end year outturns, and termly on income and expenditure against budget. Control over expenditure is exercised through individual budget holders and the provision of management accounts. These provide a clear view of the financial state of play as the year progresses. Annual accounts are prepared according to the requirements of the Charity Commission with the Finance Committee acting as the Audit Committee for RCC.
78. The financial procedures include some strong features including double signatures for cheques or BACs payments over £2,000, a requirement to requote at regular intervals for work where a single supplier is earning more than £3,000 a year from RCC, special arrangements for changes in pay for SLT, Finance Committee and Finance Team members, and different credit card payment limits for each office holder. No fraud or other financial irregularity has been detected in the memory of any existing senior member of staff, although RCC has been the target of (effectively resisted) fraud scams. RCC secures insurance cover as part of an Oxford University Consortium and this enables it to do so at a price that it probably could not secure alone. The reviewers were pleased to note that cover includes the provision of three years' working capital (as opposed to two or less) in the event of a major insured event.

**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.**

79. RCC offers the following awards in Theology that are validated by Oxford University (OU) and Durham Common Awards (DCA), with the provision also of offering the opportunity for D.Phil. study if required:
- Certificate of Higher Education in Theology, Ministry and Mission (DCA)
  - Certificate of Higher Education in Christian Ministry and Mission (DCA)
  - Diploma of Higher Education in Theology, Ministry and Mission (DCA)
  - BA in Theology, Ministry and Mission (DCA)
  - Graduate Certificate in Theology, Ministry and Mission (DCA)
  - Graduate Diploma in Theology, Ministry and Mission (DCA)
  - Postgraduate Certificate in Theology, Ministry and Mission (DCA)
  - Postgraduate Diploma in Theology, Ministry and Mission (DCA)
  - MA in Theology, Ministry and Mission (DCA)
  - Foundation Award in Theology, Ministry and Mission (DCA)
  - Bachelor of Arts (OU)
  - Master of Theology (OU)
80. All RCC's awards in Theology are approved pathways for ordination training by the Ministry Development Team, and the reviewers were impressed by the TEI's formational intentionality and implementation of a curriculum designed to meet the church's ministerial training requirements across complex pathways of delivery.
81. The awards are currently delivered on five sites – Cuddesdon, CMS Oxford, Gloucester and Ludlow, and Portsmouth, of which the reviewers visited the first three. The Portsmouth Pathway is to cease in July 2024. Oxford Diocese is in the process of developing an Ordained Assistant Course, based in part at Cuddesdon, which will commence in the foreseeable future (see Introduction for further comment).
82. Students follow different pathways:
- a. If full time, either:
    - residentially at Cuddesdon for two or three years depending on prior learning
    - context-based, which is part residential and part context based, for two or three years
    - ordained pioneer ministry, which is non-residential context-based, shared between CMS and RCC part time pathway for two or three years

- b. if part time, either:
- non residential for two or three years
  - accelerated part time, non residential, with an additional day with the FTP, to achieve training in two years
  - at Cuddesdon Gloucester and Hereford, non-residential training for two or three years at Gloucester or Ludlow
  - at Portsmouth Pathway Cuddesdon which is non-residential for two or three years at Portsmouth.

83. The Cuddesdon Study Centre offers a programme of summer schools, short courses and lectures, research and consultancy, and given its excellence as a theological base of national value to the Church, the reviewers recommend a greater strategic development of this Centre, to reach different groups and ‘markets’, e.g. Bishops, diocesan and ecumenical groups, and others.

#### **Recommendation 18**

**The PER Team recommend that RCC strategically develops the Cuddesdon Study Centre, drawing on the theological experience and expertise of the staff, to enhance theological scholarship nationally and internationally.**

84. CMS Oxford are to be commended for their wide engagement with the Global Church and Diaspora Mission within a Post-Christian Britain, bringing a depth and breadth as partners with the TEI, and a cross-fertilization of culture and approach to the ‘institutional’ Church, characterized as the ‘gift of not fitting in’, reaching into the spaces where the Church is struggling.
85. The training that students on Pioneer Pathways receive includes a strong formation in resilience and working without support, ‘on the edge’. The reviewers commend the insights and experience of CMS in forming ministers with energy and resilience to take forward mission in a Post-Christian Britain.

#### **Recommendation 19**

**The PER Team recommends that the CMS experience in forming pioneer ministers with resilience, responsibility for self and positive energy be shared more proactively across the wider TEI.**

86. CMS trains about 100 students over 3-5 years on a variety of pathways, including ordinands, of whom the reviewers met with two, one training as a distinctive deacon, the other as a pioneer priest. Both were extremely positive about their experience of training, saying ‘the whole experience reflects very well on the Church of England today’. They appreciated their exposure to the breadth of the Church through their teaching and formation at RCC, calling their experience ‘transformative, intense, humbling, full of energy’.
87. CMS ordinands valued the exposure to the power of the Anglican liturgy and formation received at residential weekends and were very positive about the synergy with their own Pioneer Pathway.

88. The reviewers explored with CMS staff what can be perceived as a polarizing tendency between ‘modal’ and ‘sodal’ understandings of ‘church’. They consider that the partnership with CMS provides an opportunity, within both the teaching programme and other formational aspects of their pathways, to explore this issue and reflect on how pioneer ministry and the institutional church can work creatively together.

### Recommendation 20

**The PER Team recommends that the RCC staff consider in greater depth the place of pioneer ministry within the Church and integrate this into its pathway teaching, in order to enable students to reflect on a way of being church that embodies an imagination for the wholeness of the Body of Christ, where ‘pioneer’ and ‘institutional’ work together in creative tension.**

89. Across all pathways, students were confident to use Moodle, and knew where to go with any questions or when requiring support, and tutors used Moodle to upload supporting materials. A CGH student wanted greater consistency across PowerPoint Presentations, and timing of material being uploaded to Moodle for reference.
90. CMS Oxford reported with some frustration that students were encouraged to produce assignments that reflected a creative approach to learning, but one which was not always easy to assess as required by DCA. It emerged from reviewers’ conversations with staff that such hard-to-assess assignments took significantly extra time to process by the Academic Registrar. The reviewers would like to see greater discussion and negotiation between staff at the different centres over this issue, with the DCA ULO in attendance, and they recommend a review of the financial arrangement between RCC and CMS to ensure fairness.

### Recommendation 21

**The PER Team recommend that, in the context of cross-centre discussions of assignments and assessment, the extra time required to process ‘hard-to-assess’ assignments by the Academic Registrar is reviewed, to ensure the financial arrangement between RCC and CMS is fair.**

91. Staff and timetable changes have enabled further planned integration of teaching across the pathways which has minimized replication, freed staff time and consolidates cohort number viability enriching the educational experience.
92. The reviewers were impressed by RCC’s formational intentionality and implementation of a curriculum designed to meet the church’s ministerial training requirements across complex pathways of delivery. We caught a strong sense of theological excitement and engagement with learning across the student body on all pathways, and were impressed by the depth of study, the contextuality of modules, the reflective practice and theological study embedded in placement and context. This theological excitement was remarked upon by the Training Incumbents who have received curates, indicating that good habits of theological reflection have been established into the future.

## Commendation 9

**The PER Team commends the excellence of theological teaching, evidenced by the contextuality of modules, the student enjoyment and engagement in learning, the models of reflective practice embedded in local placement and global context, that permeates the depth and breadth of delivery across all pathways, resulting in a strong sense of theological excitement that was evidently sustained into curacy.**

93. The reviewers were impressed by the breadth of the curriculum, which showed strong evidence of attention to diversity of culture and methodology reflecting global contexts.
94. The reviewers experienced the Black Theology module taught on the Cross Pathways Weekend, with its Womanist perspectives and methods of engagement. They also heard of the international engagement of CMS's commitment to global theologies, and of weekend modules on environmental ethics and theology, and the rural ministry week, to name but a few examples of a broad and engaging curriculum, which engages well with the five marks of mission in ways that are practical and contextual.

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

95. Recent staff changes have entailed significant 'churn' resulting in a strong team into the future, with four new appointments in September 2023 bringing a range of excellent theological resource to join an already strong team. One former tutor has been appointed director of CGH, providing continuity and experience (see Introduction for further comment).
96. Well into their first term, the new members of staff have been well inducted, with ongoing monitoring and appraisal in place, alongside longer standing staff. The reviewers heard that all the mechanisms for peer review, mentoring, professional development were in place.
97. The reviewers attended a staff meeting, meeting with the Principal, the Academic Dean, the Director of Formation and other staff members and the directors across the different centres, and were assured that, with the use of associate tutors, the curriculum was fully covered.
98. Observance of teaching at Gloucester, and at CMS Oxford assured the reviewers of the high standard of the Associate Tutors in terms of content and delivery both in the classroom, on line, and in hybrid ways.
99. The Associate Tutors all had contracts, reviewed annually, were peer reviewed, and supported in their teaching. The reviewers noted that there were technical issues during the weekend Black Theology module and insufficient support available to ensure that the teaching began on time.
100. The Academic Dean has been in post for a number of years, previously as Vice Principal, and currently oversees the Academic Registrar and university liaison (Durham and Oxford), bringing a



wealth of experience and continuity. The reviewers encourage RCC to begin planning for his succession and take into consideration his close relationship with the University of Oxford in doing so.

## **Recommendation 22**

**The PER Team recommend that greater support is offered to all Weekend Associate Tutors, particularly technically, as required.**

101. The reviewers were very impressed, across the different centres of delivery, by the quality of training in study skills and support for a wide range of students with diverse needs, from neurodiversity to physical disability, and heard very positive reports from students who felt their anxieties were addressed promptly and appropriately, such that all felt able to learn in a good facilitating environment.
102. RCC takes student feedback very seriously, acting promptly as required, although actions were not always reported to the student body. (See paragraph 35 and **Recommendation 8** for further comment.)
103. At CGH students reported some disquiet about a previous experience that meant they were unsure whether negative feedback would result in their receiving lower marks. The reviewers were uncertain as to whether this only pertained to one centre and were confident that when the issue was raised by students the new Director would address this matter.
104. The reviewers encourage RCC to review its module feedback processes to ensure student anonymity and reinstate student confidence in the process.
105. The reviewers noted that the Education Committee of the Board of Governors has failed to meet over the last year (see **Recommendation 12**).
106. The reviewers saw the DCA ASE and external examiner's reports of 2021, 2022 (the current ASE 2023 was completed but still in draft) and RCC's responses, which all reported high satisfaction with regard to quality assurance.
107. The relationship with Oxford University is long-standing, with RCC staff teaching and students considered to make a valued contribution by the University, and RCC ordinands often achieving the highest degrees and prizes.

## **Commendation 10**

**The PER Team commend the excellence of response to student feedback and need in terms of the study skills and support offered across a wide range of ability and disability.**



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

108. The reviewers observed a variety of teaching and learning, including lecture, seminar and small group work, with good use of blended learning, and supporting material at RCC over the Cross Pathways Weekend, for FTP, PTP and CBP students, ordinands and readers, at Cuddesdon, Gloucester and CMS Oxford.
109. RCC is to be commended on the excellent morale amongst Associate Tutors who universally expressed their enjoyment at the positive experience of teaching the students – ‘it’s my favourite place to teach; the students are very engaged and always the discussions are highly explorative.’
110. The reviewers observed a teaching session at CGH where the Associate Tutor introduced the Bible to a group of Readers and Ordinands in training and were extremely impressed with the careful ways in which complex ideas were introduced, using a variety of interactive and highly engaging methods, which reassured the reviewers that RCC is able creatively to teach a very wide range of students from all educational backgrounds to very good effect.
111. RCC demonstrated the capacity to educate students with a formation that is appropriate to those undertaking the Oxford University BA and MTh, and DCA degrees, at all levels, including postgraduate D.Phil., and so the TEI is commended as a place where future theological educators are nurtured alongside a broad range of educational experience.
112. The reviewers received evidence from external stakeholders and also noted from the academic achievements of its ordinands that RCC produces students of high calibre, able to respond to the needs of the Church and world as educators, missionaries and ministers, in the widest variety of contexts. They encourage RCC to promote further its contribution to the National Church as a place of theological excellence where future theological educators and senior leaders are nurtured (see **Recommendations 4** and **17**).

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

113. The reviewers were impressed by the staff oversight of the pathways that individual students travelled over their training, ensuring that gaps were filled and students were enabled to study in depth, including through supervised Independent Learning Projects.
114. The reviewers heard that supervision records of both ILPs and Dissertations are not regulated. Hence, they were not completely satisfied that students were supervised consistently across all the pathways and that there were filed, agreed records of the supervision meetings. The reviewers encourage RCC to implement a consistent and greater regulated process to track and moderate supervisions.

115. Previous experience was appropriately recognized by the use of APL, but student feedback indicated that many were happy not to have their education shortened and valued highly the opportunity to study and develop critical thinking and study skills. One student said, ‘Very happy to give an overwhelmingly positive review of the college ... it’s been a really good training ground and spiritual home for me.’

### **Recommendation 23**

**The PER Team recommend that RCC reviews its supervision processes for ILPs and Dissertations across all pathways ensuring that supervision records are kept, agreed by both supervisor and student and monitored and filed appropriately by the academic administrators.**

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

116. Reviewers saw how study and learning was embedded in formational processes so students understood their vocation included body, mind, soul and strength. The introductory sessions on ‘formation’ were well delivered and remembered.
117. Throughout the course work the reviewers saw evidence of a missional impetus and methods of reflective practice and theological reflection, which was clearly articulated by staff and students.
118. Students receive a Formation Handbook which comprehensively outlines all aspects of their formative journey, and they begin the year by drawing up a training and formation agreement with their personal tutors and completing a ‘quiz’ which indicates the expectation that students will integrate their study and growing self-understanding during training. The quiz includes questions such as:
- *Are there aspects of my character that I need to work on to support areas of ministry (drawn from the Ordinal)?*
  - *Are there particular areas of the curriculum that I need to focus on to support these areas of ministry?*
119. Students volunteered stories of how important ‘journaling’ was to them; how they completed portfolios to capture placement learning, and of how different methods of theological reflection had engaged them in their vocational journey and training.
120. Staff meetings included discussion of four students – different each time – using the qualities of ministerial formation, in which their learning was included as an essential part of their formation as a minister who would continue to be excited by theological study and reflection.
121. Placement learning is captured in a number of handbooks designed with the different pathways in mind, with these words of introduction: *Practical placements provide one of the most powerful overall learning experiences in the course of theological education. They are an essential part of formation, enabling a deeper understanding of Christian ministry through observation, reflection*

*and active participation. The crucial aspect of every placement experience, whether formal or informal, is the critical theological reflection which stimulates authentic integration.*

122. Students typically undertake placements in a community context, and in a parochial context, and the reviewers were confident that all students completed all requirements. The reviewers are confident that placements fulfil an important role in integrating learning and formation. However, the reviewers have concerns regarding the setting up and monitoring of placement learning and feedback (see Section E4 and **Recommendation 24**).

**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 in their love for God.**

123. The programmes offered by RCC are outlined in detail in Section D Teaching and Learning (see paragraphs 79-82). These programmes provide a framework around which other aspects of formation take place including placements, residentials, and corporate worship and prayer life. Students are encouraged to use their time in training to develop a balance between the rhythm of personal prayer and their work and studying. Their personal tutors check how they are managing this balance and their personal time with God, and whether they are making time to see their spiritual director, which students are encouraged to have, as well as attending regular acts of worship.
124. The reviewers are aware that not all tutors attend morning prayer and so may not know if their FTP tutees attend this act of worship regularly. In conversation with student formation groups some students expressed difficulty with structured prayer life on their own; whilst one student commented that being part of a worshipping community as a residential student has helped him develop his personal prayer life and that he could see this sustaining him when he finds himself alone in the parish.
125. The reviewers experienced the rhythm of the Daily Offices and Eucharist alongside students, and were able to observe how students engaged with this and tried creative and innovative ways of leading these times of worship. The use of musical talent within the student body is encompassed, enabling all to use their God-given gifts in worship. Some families of FTP students brought their children to Evening Prayer which added a different dimension to this time of worship and demonstrates the desire to be inclusive. At the four communal acts of worship at residentials students take responsibility for planning and working with others, with opportunities to act as sacristan and liturgical deacon to further develop their theological understanding.
126. The Director of Formation takes the lead in organising and planning the shape of liturgy at the Eucharist and has to date alternated between traditional and contemporary liturgies. He has come to recognise that a more integrated approach would provide a more beneficial and holistic experience of worship for students. The reviewers experienced this and recommend this approach (see also paragraphs 48-49).
127. As already noted students follow a number of different pathways and they value the various opportunities that RCC provides for them to share in teaching, worship, prayer groups and social time. They experience this as positive, allowing good conversations and providing opportunities to disagree well and learn from each other. The reviewers encountered a diverse student community who valued the variety of traditions and spiritualities within it. This was especially evident at the Cross Pathway Weekends. Furthermore, associate tutors, and tutorial staff also provide a range of

different perspectives from both different church traditions and denominations which also enriches the RCC community.

128. The variety of placements offered to students gives them the opportunity for integration and reflection on contemporary issues. For example, all students are required to have a Community or non-parish placement and this enables students to learn and reflect on ministry in a variety of settings including schools, funeral directors, prisons and hospitals. There are also some initiatives within RCC that demonstrate students' concern for their environment including the Allotment working party which meets for an hour on Sunday for gardening. RCC was awarded an Eco-College Silver Award in 2022.
129. In addition to their daily pattern of prayer and Bible study, all students are encouraged to keep a learning journal and make an entry at least once a week, meet with their spiritual director once a term, and during the ministerial placement to meet with the incumbent to discuss progress and identify opportunities for development of ministerial skills in the parish context. The annual self-assessment, based on the formational qualities, provides further options for students to review and reflect on their formation and grow in their love for God.

## **E2 Students are enabled to grow in their calling to ministry**

130. The reviewers were given access to Moodle which enabled them to view details and learning support documentation for the modules being taught whilst the PER visit took place, including the compulsory module on Reflective Practice and others which explore specialist aspects of ministry and vocation. The Prospectus states: 'Our taught courses in mission and ministry help you understand the mission of God and the tasks of ministry today. They are supported by courses in human development and pastoral practice which examine what it means to live a fully human life and how pastoral care is responsibly exercised'. This was reinforced in the reviewers' conversation with training incumbents who spoke of receiving curates "who are well-trained, very engaged, well prepared, enthusiastic and with an appropriate amount of confidence."
131. The reviewers met with the Cuddesdon based Tutor in Theology and Global Mission who is also lead for placements for students on FTP, PTP and PTPA, and whilst only having been in post for 3 months, had begun to develop a system for placements building on and expanding what already existed. FTP students are required to undertake a weekly Church placement and a weekly community placement (or equivalent block). The Church placement is in a local context "significantly different from their own context and provides opportunities to practice ministerial skills, reflect on future ministry, and discern strengths and weaknesses in ministerial practice." The placement also provides an opportunity to reflect theologically on servant leadership in a context of collaborative working and through listening to the world, others, self and God. It includes exploring a variety of different social contexts and/or Church traditions. All other RCC students (PTP, PTPA, PP and CGH) are embedded in their home parish context which provides a significant basis for formation, reflection and learning. They are also required to undertake one

parish and one non-parish placement (each of 35-40 hours) during their training. This takes place in a context which is different from their home parish and enables them to explore further the nature of their calling and enhance their understanding of the breadth of ministry within the Church of England.

132. Through our observation of lectures, the reviewers found that tutors routinely related how their teaching is applied practically to public and representative ministry and included opportunities for student discussion and questions. For example, the lecture on Sacramental Theology provided excellent guidance on the content of Common Worship and the Book of Common Prayer, with particular reference to the Eucharist and rooted this in some sophisticated theological reflection.
133. Paragraphs 55 and 88 refer to the provision for those with disabilities and the reviewers had conversations with several students who attested to this being excellent. One student commented “RCC is very good on disability and accessibility.... staff, students and the structures are all very supportive of those with disability” and contrasted his experience here with the discrimination he had met as a schoolteacher. The disability group which the Principal attends is very proactive in trying to predict where needs might arise (see **Commendation 7**).

### **E3 Students are equipped to grow in their love for people**

134. Reviewers observed a session on Introduction to Aspects of Pastoral Care. The tutor was engaging and emphasised the importance of laying foundations for self-understanding in order to be able to listen, support and understand others. The student discussion and questions showed their engagement with the topic as they shared their own experiences and insights for ministry which they had gained from it.
135. This module introduces students to major issues relating to pastoral care, giving them an understanding of the place of pastoral care within the life and worship of the Christian community.
136. Students of UKME/GMH background were positive in their comments of how they felt supported by the tutors and students alike. Two students (both on the Part-Time Pathway) saw this as an important provision allowing access to all to train for ordained ministry.

### **Commendation 11**

**The PER Team commend the “healthy and positive environment” which values diversity and students attested to across the various pathways of RCC.**

### **E4 Students are helped to grow in wisdom**

137. Every student negotiates a training and formation agreement with their personal tutor at the start of their training. This includes attendance at lectures and seminars with 100% attendance expected for mandatory lectures and seminars. The Leadership, Ministry and Mission module covers a variety of aspects of leadership including self-care, conflict, trust, diversity, safeguarding

etc. The module states that it aims to enable students to appropriately apply theological disciplines to church leadership and to integrate biblical, theological, pastoral, ethical and liturgical approaches to leadership.

138. The Ministerial Placement is specifically designed to give students opportunities to develop and reflect on their gifts of leadership and collaboration. Working with the supervisor, students are required to preach at least once (but preferably twice) during this placement and are given feedback.
139. There is good training provided for learning and formational opportunities for all students through the different placements, with each seeking to build on the previous one and fill gaps in learning and experience.
140. Students on all pathways engage in an initial conversation with the member of staff responsible for placements, exploring and reflecting on their previous experience and placement learning in order to identify the appropriate context for further ministerial development. After identifying a number of options, either the student or member of staff liaises with the possible placement supervisor to set the placement up.
141. One stakeholder felt more attention should be paid to placements and commented “these seem to be arranged by students and .....I have found myself sorting these out for some students and I am not clear on the guidelines for part-time students...” The reviewers also heard from students of different patterns for the arrangement of placements and some uncertainty as to whose responsibility this was. The reviewers urge RCC to provide clarity of responsibility regarding setting up placements and liaising with supervisors.
142. The reviewers were made aware of some disparity in how and when placement reports were written and received. Some students’ supervisors completed the report with the student while others did not and students did not always have sight of the report.
143. The reviewers recognise that placements are crucial to formation. It is therefore important that placement reports are received and followed up with the students as much student learning and development is captured from these reports. Students are expected to theologically reflect on their placements and encouraged to keep a journal which enables them to chart progress and change as well as the self-evaluation this engenders.

#### **Recommendation 24**

**The College should develop a more systematic approach to placement learning, ensuring that the process for the setting up of placements is clarified, supervisors are liaised with, the placement experience monitored in tutorials, and all students receive feedback in a timely way. In instances where a report is mandatory, the RCC should provide supervisors with the relevant documentation at the beginning of the placements. The documentation should set out expectations clearly,**



**highlighting deadlines for receiving the student report and emphasising that reports are to be written in conjunction with the students.**

144. Whilst the reviewers are aware that FTP students are allocated to a college formation group these groups appeared to be for support/bible study and, although groups are encouraged to provide a leader by rotation, they believe that this could be enhanced to provide an opportunity for student leadership development in an informal setting. There are two staff members in each group and both staff and students participate in Bible Study which students understand to be the main purpose of these groups with some tutors leaving 15 minutes before the end to allow students time together. The reviewers suggest the pattern of rotational student leadership becomes established and the staff present give well evidenced feedback to the student leader.
145. The second- and third-year FTP students pointed to places where leadership development opportunities are available:
- The daily offices of Morning and Evening Prayer
  - College roles such as worship co-ordinator, president (although the number of such roles is limited given the size of the student population)
  - Placements
146. Feedback is offered to students for their leadership of worship and in their placement context.
147. RCC has a system of self-assessment and reflection after modules. Students are expected to spend time on these and to learn from them. They discuss these with their personal tutor. The feedback from placement reports is formational and should be prioritised as they are placed on the student file which informs the College reports.

**Commendation 12**

**The PER Team commend the variety of placements which provide multiple opportunities for students to grow in self-awareness and become formed through involvement with others and working in sometimes unfamiliar and uncomfortable situations.**

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

148. One of the strengths of RCC is the variety of theological views represented in the student body. As mentioned above in paragraph 126 (see also **Recommendation 10**) the Director of Formation has tried to include different forms of worship at the Eucharist and up until now has done so alternating the different styles. Going forward he is seeking to include a synthesis within the one Eucharist.
149. There are a variety of placement contexts and diverse traditions within the student body enabling engagement with different theological views. Students on the CBP have more opportunity to help others grow in faith within their home parish context as do those on the CGH and PP pathways. However, the formation groups for FTP students and peer interaction more generally across the

various pathways facilitates mutual support in discipleship and the growth of confidence in ministerial giftings.

150. The PER Overview document of November 2023, states, “Within our own student and staff community we will seek and expect to reflect that diversity in a range of aspects: social, ethnic, academic, ecclesial.” The reviewers saw this reflected throughout the RCC community and also in the variety of placement contexts on offer to the students.
151. The Non-Church and Church Placements and home parish context provide myriad opportunities for students to communicate and help others grow in faith. Whilst the Church Placement requires students to preach and lead worship, enabling adults to grow in faith, there do not always seem to be the same opportunities to engage with children. This would seem to be dependent on the placement contexts and RCC should consider how this might be developed – perhaps making connections with the Church of England’s Growing Faith Foundation which exists to put children, young people and families at the heart of the mission and ministry of the Church.

### **Recommendation 25**

**The PER Team recommend that RCC increases the opportunities for students to lead worship and engage in ministry involving both children and young people, ensuring that all students have experience of this ministry before ordination.**

152. Students spoke appreciatively of the role of the chaplain who has supported them at difficult times – individually and as a wider student body – and has been a good listener. They appreciate the pastoral care provided through both casual conversations as well as those scheduled and her offering the sacrament of confession. During the pandemic creative ways had to be found to support students which the chaplain did well. More recently she has helped both students and staff navigate the changes within the college and her support extends to mediation when needed. The reviewers are mindful that she only has two days a week and is paid an honorarium, but she gives herself fully when she is on site (and students do have her contact details should they need her urgently outside of her allocated days).

### **Commendation 13**

**The PER Team commend the contribution of the part-time chaplain to the life and worship of the College. Particular appreciation has been expressed for her creative support of students and staff, especially during a period of upheaval and change over the past two years.**

### **E6 Students are equipped to continue to develop their potential.**

153. The reviewers recognised that for both residential and non-residential students there is a need to balance work, family, placements and academic commitments. This will provide a good foundation for them as they prepare for the rigours of parish ministry. The reviewers heard that

this is monitored in tutorials but the intensity of teaching from Monday to Wednesday for FTP students has caused some students to struggle with a sense of imbalance during the week.

154. The reviewers heard of one student who had struggled trying to juggle what seemed an unmanageable academic workload alongside a difficult family situation. It highlighted the importance of helping and supporting students as they learn self-care and self-discipline. RCC provides a counselling service and the support of the part time chaplain (See paragraph 152 and **Commendation 13**) both of which are appreciated by students and available to spouses and partners. However, one stakeholder expressed concern regarding the assessment process for counselling support, the lack of process by which the form of counselling which might be most appropriate is determined, and liaison with dioceses.
155. The reviewers therefore suggest that RCC reviews its process of referral to its counselling support service and consults/liases with DDOs regarding ordinands requiring this support.
156. Most part-time students have paid employment and show huge commitment to their studies in travelling long distances from Hereford, Gloucester and Portsmouth dioceses. One student we spoke with had over an hour's drive home after the evening session and another with disability has overnight accommodation in the college as she recognises the strain for her of travelling both ways in a single day. Overall the reviewers heard from students that RCC is responsive to the travelling and time demands on students studying on its part time pathways.
157. The flexibility provided in the different pathways offered and the programmes of study facilitate the development of a variety of skills, of different ministries and of understanding of theology and practice. The reviewers heard from a Pathway Director that most of the students were on an individually tailored programme and consider this as indicative of RCC's willingness to be flexible and enable students from a variety of backgrounds and circumstance to study and engage in ministerial formation.
158. The pastoral care that the staff provide is itself a good example of leadership and is inspirational for students in the development of their own leadership and in their recognition of how this can encompass pastoral care. The variety of modes of study offers shared learning opportunities at an informal as well as at a formal level. The placement contexts offer a chance for further development in engaging with difference and learning effective time management, as well as giving some insight into the sacrificial nature of ordained ministry.

## **E7 Students are able to demonstrate trustworthiness.**

159. The student Formation Handbooks emphasise that "a disciple is someone who is being formed and co-operates with the process of engaging in discipleship", and the reviewers saw this demonstrated in the commitment to the regular pattern of prayer of RCC. There are Quiet days usually in the Michaelmas and Spring terms. The Holy Week residential occurs every other year and is mandatory for FTP and CBP students, so they will experience it at least once during their

time at RCC. It runs from Wednesday of Holy week till dawn on Sunday ending with breakfast together.

160. RCC encourages pilgrimage as an important spiritual discipline. As such, it offers a number of opportunities for Cuddesdon based students to experience pilgrimages as part of its programme of spiritual formation. These include:
- Induction pilgrimage
  - Intentional pilgrimage for leavers
  - Ridgeway pilgrimage (optional for 5 days)
161. The reviewers were impressed by this focus on spiritual development and consider RCC to offer a rich variety of opportunities for students to experience the breadth within Christian spirituality and deepen their devotional life.
162. Students are strongly recommended to have a spiritual director to help support, establish and encourage good spiritual habits leading to spiritual growth. They are also asked to keep a spiritual journal. As noted above in paragraph 147, self-assessment and reflection are integral to spiritual development and RCC reflects this in its formational processes.
163. As previously referred to, every student has a personal tutor for the duration of their time of study whose role the handbook describes “assisting the ordinand in reflecting on his/her vocation and ministry and challenges experienced during training – academic, personal, liturgical, ministerial and spiritual formation”. The student is therefore accountable to the personal tutor who makes an evaluative assessment on behalf of RCC. There is a training and formation agreement with the personal tutor.
164. The reviewers met with Year 2/3 FTP students who indicated that their experience of personal tutors varied – some met with their personal tutor once a term while others met twice. This was also reflected in conversations with students on other pathways. The reviewers consider it important that there is parity for all students with respect to contact time with personal tutors.

### Recommendation 26

**The PER Team recommend that the College make provision for all students to meet with their personal tutors for up to an hour twice per term, ensuring there are notes made as an aide memoire (not for the student file). This will provide a formal space for discussion and enable tutors to get to know their tutees in greater depth in a formal and structured way in addition to ‘soft’ contact. It will also enable more attention to be given to any formational needs as well as providing more robust development planning, monitoring, and reporting.**

165. Each student on a Cuddesdon Based Pathway is reviewed once a year at the weekly staff meeting and other students are brought to the attention of the meeting if their tutor deems it appropriate. Although this system ensures all students are reviewed systematically by the staff team, some students are reviewed early in the academic year and others much later.

### Recommendation 27

**The PER Team recommend that staff should formally review every Cuddesdon Based Pathway student's progress at the end of each term to ensure that any formational or other issues are raised, so that personal tutors will be able to discuss these with their tutees at the beginning of the following term. This end of term student review will provide evidence for report writing and give opportunities for any concerns to be expressed so that personal tutors can follow these up.**

166. The Directors and Ludlow Lead Tutor of the CGH Pathway and Portsmouth Pathway are the personal tutors for the students on those pathways. The reviewers were concerned that this is a demanding commitment in a role which carries with it many responsibilities. Furthermore, they are concerned that there is parity between students regarding tutorial contact and that for some students having the Director as tutor may potentially be a barrier to a student expressing concerns both personal and regarding the course. We therefore recommend that this is addressed by employing associate personal tutors to cover this role.

### Recommendation 28

**The PER Team recommend that the CGH Pathway seeks to employ a number of associate personal tutors to meet with students twice a term for an hour and meet with the Director at the end of each term for a student review meeting. These tutors should have significant input into the reporting process.**

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

167. All students are made aware of the role of ongoing self-assessment from the outset in the Student Handbook. The reviewers were satisfied that there are systems in place for reporting the progress of students' academic learning and formation. IME1 reports are comprehensive and gather evidence from a variety of internal and external sources showing the students' academic and formational growth and ongoing training needs, and provide a formal assessment to the sponsoring bishop through the Penultimate and final reports. However, the review team were concerned that the lack of parity regarding placement reports, tutorial contact and tutor presence on site suggests the quality of evidence for this assessment is variable.
168. The reviewers consider it important that RCC enhances its tutorial provision as stated in **Recommendations 26-28**. They consider that this will also give an opportunity for more attention to be given to identifying and planning to meet the formational needs of their students, more attentive monitoring of students' development and greater substantiative evidence for assessment and report writing.

169. Self-assessments, input from personal tutors, external reports from placement supervisors as well as assessed work inform these reports.

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

## Conclusion

**The review team has Confidence with Qualifications in Ripon College, Cuddesdon in preparing students for Ordained and Licensed Lay Ministries in the Church of England.**

## Summary of Commendations

### **Commendation 1**

The PER Team commend RCC for its commitment to managing different training modes and enabling its students to realise the benefits of diversity in a variety of forms on the Cross Pathway Weekends and during the week in its Full Time and Part Time teaching programmes.

### **Commendation 2**

The PER Team commend RCC for its study skill provision and the learning support it offers students across all pathways.

### **Commendation 3**

The PER Team commends RCC for the implementation of its model of collaboration and integration of learning in community across the pathways that make up RCC.

### **Commendation 4**

The PER Team commend RCC on its safeguarding procedures and practices and in particular for its practice of tracking each time safeguarding is referenced in lectures and assignments with appropriate follow up.

### **Commendation 5**

The PER Team commend Cuddesdon for the supportive, caring and positive sense of community established within and across all pathways.

### **Commendation 6**

The PER Team commend the contribution of the Directors of the two diocesan pathways.

### **Commendation 7**

The PER Team commend RCC for their support and assistance to those with learning, hearing and other disabilities.

### **Commendation 8**

The PER Team commend RCC for the clarity and coverage of its Risk Register.

### **Commendation 9**

The PER Team commends the excellence of theological teaching, evidenced by the contextuality of modules, the student enjoyment and engagement in learning, the models of reflective practice embedded in local placement and global context, that permeates the depth and breadth of delivery across all pathways, resulting in a strong sense of theological excitement that was evidently sustained into curacy.



### **Commendation 10**

The PER Team commend the excellence of response to student feedback and need in terms of the study skills and support offered across a wide range of ability and disability.

### **Commendation 11**

The PER Team commend the “healthy and positive environment” which values diversity and students attested to across the various pathways of RCC.

### **Commendation 12**

The PER Team commend the variety of placements which provide multiple opportunities for students to grow in self-awareness and become formed through involvement with others and working in sometimes unfamiliar and uncomfortable situations.

### **Commendation 13**

The PER Team commend the contribution of the part-time chaplain to the life and worship of the College. Particular appreciation has been expressed for her creative support of students and staff, especially during a period of upheaval and change over the past two years.

## Summary of Recommendations

### Recommendation 1

The PER Team recommend that RCC produces a definitive document setting out its formational aims and that this is referred to consistently in both its internal and external facing documents and website.

### Recommendation 2

The PER Team recommend that the formational aims are reviewed on an annual basis by the Education Sub Committee.

### Recommendation 3

The PER Team recommend that the formational aims are referred to and discussed as part of student induction and integrated into the Ministerial Formation Handbooks. Furthermore, they are reviewed in tutorials and reference made to them in the student Self-Assessment Form.

### Recommendation 4

- a) The PER Team recommend that RCC reviews the working and composition of BMOG and considers including a member of the Board of Governors with appropriate experience and skills as a member of the group. The group should, as a matter of urgency, develop a recruitment and marketing strategy which enables it to enhance its public profile and publicize the following:
  - the quality of its formation programmes.
  - its academic excellence
  - the positive experience of its ordinands within the diversity of its community.
  - the ongoing significance of its contribution to forming ordinands to enhance scholarship within the Church of England.
- b) The PER Team recommend that the roles and responsibilities for the implementation of the recruitment and advertising strategy should be clearly defined for both administrative support staff and the academic staff.
- c) The PER Team recommend that the recruitment and advertising strategy and its implementation is regularly reviewed by the Education Sub Committee (see paragraph 56 for further comment on the Education Sub Committee) in the light of updates on recruitment events and recruitment data and discussed at the meetings of the Governing Body (see also Recommendation 12).
- d) The PER Team recommend that RCC reviews and enhances its website to include video footage of students sharing their experience of formation and learning and teaching across all pathways.

### **Recommendation 5**

- a) The PER Team recommend that RCC continues to dialogue with its key and close geographical Diocesan Partners regarding the enhancement of its current pathways to meet the challenges of contemporary ministry. This should include the development of new courses and pathways for lay and ordained training.
- b) The PER Team recommend that RCC and CMS continue to develop their collaboration to include drawing on the expertise in mission and pioneer ministry of CMS and the diversity within RCC.

### **Recommendation 6**

The PER Team recommend that RCC develops further its relationships with ecumenical partners and other faith communities to enhance its placement opportunities.

### **Recommendation 7**

The Review Team recommend that academic staff continue to foster links with Oxford University to enrich their scholarship and maintain academic excellence in the teaching and learning at RCC.

### **Recommendation 8**

The PER Team recommend that there is a process for feedback to the student body from the various committees and decision-making bodies in RCC. This may take the form of minutes being made available on Moodle or an obligation on Student Representatives to ensure they achieve this as part of their role.

### **Recommendation 9**

The PER Team recommend that RCC produces an environmental strategy for its estates and models positive engagement with the climate emergency.

### **Recommendation 10**

The PER Team encourage RCC to continue to increase the range of innovative rites, worship traditions and opportunities for creativity in college worship consistent with its formational aims and publicity material.

### **Recommendation 11**

The PER Team recommend that clear guidelines are set out for staff regarding attendance on the Cuddesdon site at worship and meals, and that the staff presence over vacation periods is negotiated and shared across the whole staff team.

### **Recommendation 12**

The PER Team recommend that RCC should press on with its plans to revive its Education Committee under its new chair and with additional membership from the Board of Governors. Its remit should be extended to include providing assurance to the Board and thence to other stakeholders that the education provided meets the ministry needs of today's Church.

### **Recommendation 13**

The PER Team recommend that RCC should develop contingency plans against the possibility of either of its diocesan pathway Directors being unavailable.

### **Recommendation 14**

The PER Team recommend that RCC should address diversity issues on its Board, should recruit more lay Governors so as to fill skills and knowledge gaps in its membership, and should look to those who nominate representatives to it to identify individuals with appropriate experience. All members should be reminded annually by the Chair about the nature and extent of their trustee responsibilities.

### **Recommendation 15**

The PER Team recommend that RCC should refresh the RCC strategy prepared in draft in early 2022, taking into account the various developments since then and looking forward to the challenges ahead.

### **Recommendation 16**

The PER Team recommend that RCC should add risks concerning the diocesan Pathway Directors and of allegations against staff to its Risk Register and should prepare (and keep up to date) a Disaster Recovery Plan.

### **Recommendation 17**

The PER Team recommend that once recent staffing changes have settled down, RCC should undertake a fresh examination of the market externally for the services it can provide, drawing on such experience and expertise as Board members can offer.

### **Recommendation 18**

The PER Team recommend that RCC strategically develops the Cuddesdon Study Centre, drawing on the theological experience and expertise of the staff, to enhance theological scholarship nationally and internationally.

### **Recommendation 19**

The PER Team recommends that the CMS experience in forming pioneer ministers with resilience, responsibility for self and positive energy be shared more proactively across the wider TEI.

### **Recommendation 20**

The PER Team recommends that the RCC staff consider in greater depth the place of pioneer ministry within the Church and integrate this into its pathway teaching, in order to enable students to reflect on a way of being church that embodies an imagination for the wholeness of the Body of Christ, where ‘pioneer’ and ‘institutional’ work together in creative tension.

### **Recommendation 21**

The PER Team recommend that, in the context of cross-centre discussions of assignments and assessment, the extra time required to process ‘hard-to-assess’ assignments by the Academic Registrar is reviewed, to ensure the financial arrangement between RCC and CMS is fair.

### **Recommendation 22**

The PER Team recommend that greater support is offered to all Weekend Associate Tutors, particularly technically, as required.

### **Recommendation 23**

The PER Team recommend that RCC reviews its supervision processes for ILPs and Dissertations across all pathways ensuring that supervision records are kept, agreed by both supervisor and student and monitored and filed appropriately by the academic administrators.

### **Recommendation 24**

The College should develop a more systematic approach to placement learning, ensuring that the process for the setting up of placements is clarified, supervisors are liaised with, the placement experience monitored in tutorials, and all students receive feedback in a timely way. In instances where a report is mandatory, the RCC should provide supervisors with the relevant documentation at the beginning of the placements. The documentation should set out expectations clearly, highlighting deadlines for receiving the student report and emphasising that reports are to be written in conjunction with the students.

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