

## Ministry Council: Periodic External Review Report

# Lindisfarne College of Theology

**Conducted onsite, January 2024**

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Church House, Great Smith Street, London SW1P 3AZ

Switchboard: +44(0)20 7898 1000 Email: [ministry@churchofengland.org](mailto:ministry@churchofengland.org)

Website: [www.churchofengland.org](http://www.churchofengland.org)

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## Glossary

AGM	Annual General Meeting
AI	Artificial Intelligence
ALMOW	Authorised Lay Minister of the Word (Durham diocese)
ASE	Annual Self Evaluation
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
EDI	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
IME1/2	Initial Ministerial Education Phase 1/2
LCT	Lindisfarne College of Theology
LLF	Living in Love and Faith
LLM	Licensed Lay Minister
MEV	Ministry Experience Volunteer
MFP	Ministerial Formation Portfolio
PER	Periodic External Review
RAG	Red, Amber, Green 'system for prioritising risk
RTP	Regional Training Partnership
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats
TEI	Theological Education Institution
TI	Training Incumbent

## Reviewers

**Dr Sally Buck**, Senior Reviewer; former Warden of Lay Ministry for Lincoln Diocese

**Canon Nigel Bacon**, chartered engineer and Reader, Lincoln Diocese

**Revd Sharon Quilter**, Associate Priest, Halstead Area Team Ministry and Racial Justice Officer, Chelmsford Diocese

**Revd Dr Tom Wilson**, Director, St Philip's Centre for inter-faith engagement, Leicester

## The Periodic External Review Framework

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

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

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

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

### Recommendations and Commendations

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

### Criterion-based judgements

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

#### **Confidence**

Overall outcome: commendations and a number of recommendations, none of which question the generally high standards found in the review.

Criterion level: aspects of an institution’s life which show good or best practice.

#### **Confidence with qualifications**

Overall outcome: likely to include commendations as well as a number of recommendations, including one or more of substance that questions the generally acceptable standards found in the review and which can be rectified or substantially addressed by the institution in the coming 12 months.

Criterion level: aspects of an institution's life which show either (a) at least satisfactory practice but with some parts which are not satisfactory or (b) some unsatisfactory practice but where the institution has the capacity to address the issues within 12 months.

**No confidence**

Overall outcome: A number of recommendations, including one or more of substance which raises significant questions about the standards found in the review and the capacity of the institution to rectify or substantially address these in the coming 12 months.

Criterion level: aspects of an institution's life which show either (a) generally not satisfactory practice or (b) some unsatisfactory practice where it is not evident that the institution can rectify the issues within the coming 12 months.

## Review of Lindisfarne College of Theology

### Introduction

Prior to their last PER in 2017-18, Lindisfarne College of Theology (LCT), at the time operating as Lindisfarne Regional Training Partnership, was appointed as the provider of part-time non-residential IME1 training for Ordinands and Readers for the Dioceses of Durham and Newcastle. This was in the first instance a 5-year contract with a review/break clause. It is seen by LCT staff, and affirmed by the latest (2024) review team, as evidence of the confidence that both Dioceses have in Lindisfarne, that the contracts were renewed in April 2022 without a break clause. This brings a sense of security in respect of LCT's future. LCT stated in their Formational Overview document that they "plan to deliver this contract to the highest standards, and to further develop our programmes to meet the emerging needs of the Dioceses and the students".

LCT offers Durham Common Awards validated modules for candidates for ordained and lay ministries from both Durham and Newcastle Dioceses. At the time of the PER visit there was a greater variety of lay ministry candidates from Durham diocese than from Newcastle, although meetings held during the visit assured us that the number of lay pathways from Newcastle is almost certain to increase over the next few years.

LCT partnered with Durham Diocese to develop a 6-month course for Lay Pastoral Ministers / Lay Chaplains which was first offered in 2018-19. It is now in its sixth consecutive year and has opened doors for some to discern a vocation to other ministries. More recently, in 2021-22, came the development of a one-year course for Authorised Lay Ministers of the Word (ALMOW). The first cohort of three completed the Foundation Award in Theology for Mission and Ministry.

As part of a working group in the Northern Province, LCT is considering its offering into The Northern Alternative Vocations initiative. This work is being sponsored by the Archbishop of York and is considering three new additional pathways: an access pathway focused on those with 'non-professional backgrounds' with vocations to both lay and ordained ministry, a formational pathway for ordination for those with 'non-professional backgrounds' which will enable them to retain 'their cultural capital' and a formational pathway for ordination for candidates in later life who are offering for locally deployable, self-supporting ministry. LCT's presentation of the ALMOW pathway as an Exploration pathway in two forms is now running with four candidates in the current cohort. Two are taking the Foundation Award and two – students whose learning preferences or needs are best suited to it – are taking the accessible pathway. This contextual, culturally specific, accessible ministerial formation is one of the great strengths observed by the review team and evidenced both in policy documents and in the many conversations held during the review visit.

LCT currently offers the following courses:

- Foundation Award in Theology, Ministry and Mission

- Certificate in Theology, Ministry and Mission
- Certificate (long) in Theology, Ministry and Mission
- Diploma in Theology, Ministry and Mission
- BA (Hons) Theology, Ministry and Mission
- Graduate certificate in Theology, Ministry and Mission
- Graduate diploma in Theology, Ministry and Mission
- MA Theology, Ministry and Mission
- Postgraduate certificate in Theology, Ministry and Mission

## PER Process

This team of reviewers representing the Church of England's national Ministry Development Team visited a residential and teaching weekend at the beginning of the second term of the 2023/2024 academic year. Ordinands were in residence from Friday evening until Sunday afternoon. Reader/LLM and other lay ministry candidates, Ministry Experience Volunteers and independent students attended formation groups online on Friday evening and the teaching day in person on Saturday. A member of the team observed the Board of Trustees AGM and a meeting of the Board of Trustees on the Monday morning was attended by all Ministry Team reviewers and representatives from the Common Awards team. Two Ministry Team reviewers continued the visit on the Monday as observers of the Common Awards team's review day.

The reviewers are grateful to LCT staff and students for the considerable amount of work involved in planning and taking part in a review at a time of transition for both LCT and the current Principal who is in his last academic year before retirement. Interviews for the post of Principal will be taking place shortly after the completion of this report. We are aware that the timing is both pertinent and challenging. We wish to extend particular thanks to David Bryan, the current Principal, for his care and attention to the review process and to ensuring the welcome of the team. We also wish to affirm the considerable progress made during his time in this role, with many people (students, staff and stakeholders from across the years) ensuring that we were made aware of David's contribution to the ethos and character of LCT as well as the hard work and energy he has invested over his years in post. Recommendations made in our report are intended to assist those considering the future direction of LCT as a new Principal takes up this important role and builds on the good work of the recent past.

Members of the team had conversations with core staff and current students in both formal and informal settings over the weekend. Meetings were held with Bishops from both dioceses, past students, Associate Tutors, Chaplains, Placement and home church Supervisors, Diocesan Officers and members of the Board. We attended worship and were welcomed at two of the Formation Groups; one ordinand group in person and one Reader/LLM group online. In addition we were able to observe two teaching sessions.



The reviewers received most of the documents required by the PER in extremely good time. Any additional documentation requested was always provided extremely quickly and efficiently thanks to the Academic Administrator whose work to make the visit run as smoothly as it did is to be commended.

This material included a formational scene setting document, annual self-evaluation documentation, module overviews, curriculum mapping documents, staff and student handbooks, statistical data, previous review and progress reports, Board meeting minutes, examples of student work and much more, all of which was easily accessible on the LCT Moodle site.

## General Observations and Summary of Outcomes

The Reviewers were pleased to find LCT generally in good heart although with the concerns of the impending retirement of the current Principal and the effect this will have on staff workload and the general nature of a small TEI. Due to its size and location, LCT necessarily works relationally both within the core staff team and with those in local church contexts who often fulfil the roles of Placement Supervisors and Associate Tutors.

These relationships are essential and the review team commends the work of LCTs staff. There are some areas of development that we identify in our report that run through all areas of LCT life; improving the effectiveness of LCT's governance, ensuring that all ministry students have equal formational opportunities and considering the suitability of the Emmaus Youth Village as a weekend venue are identified throughout. The main recommendation, though, is about a wider relationship opportunity; that of the relationship between LCT and a partner TEI - Cranmer Hall being the one with whom conversations have begun - into the next phase of ministerial formation development for this area of the North East. In what follows, the reviewers have not themselves made the judgement that joining forces with Cranmer is necessarily the way to go: that would be beyond the scope of their review. Other partnership options are theoretically possible. But the reviewers are clear that on current numbers and resources LCT does not appear viable long-term as a standalone TEI, and that key stakeholders do not believe it to be so; that some form of co-working would seem the clear way forward; and that a link with Cranmer is the option around which conversations are already taking place, with significant support.

To name the issues further: it was noted that LCT staff are working extremely hard; sometimes to the point of sickness induced by overwork. Granted, this is far from unusual in the TEI sector, but LCT names it as a risk area and we believe this issue supports the argument for exploring a different pattern of provision. At all levels of the TEI structures, from formational aims to the context of learning (particularly the contexts offered by Durham and Newcastle Dioceses parishes and placement opportunities) to the modes of learning, modules offered, student groups recruited, formational outcomes for those entering public ministry (lay and ordained) and the governance and leadership of the TEI, the review team is aware of the benefits of taking forward conversations about entering a larger partnership. At the same time it is acknowledged that it is important to maintain the highly valued distinctive characteristics and calling of a TEI offering deeply contextually rooted formation for ministry in this area. Many LCT ministry candidates are those whose vocations have grown out of the local church and who will be serving that local church in

many ministerial roles. We would encourage all concerned in decision making (both within the TEI and in the dioceses) to reflect on what it is that LCT offers that other training pathways cannot and to develop these areas of work as a priority. We would also encourage consideration of areas where arguable duplication with Cranmer may be sapping energy and limiting the depth of engagement with those LCT identifies as its main student catchment groups.

In making our recommendations we are not questioning the value of the work being offered at the time of our visit. We are, though, questioning the sustainability of growth into more pathways for a wider variety of students (both ministry candidates and independent students) - while recognizing that these pathways arise in response to diocesan requests and that some have proved significant in deepening both lay and ordained ministry vocations. The tension here between range and sustainability is reflected in our first Commendation and Recommendation in Section A of this report. We are recommending a closer focus on core formational pathways for those students who LCT serves so well and from whom we heard many stories of encouragement, development (theological, spiritual and personal) and enthusiasm for study and ministry.

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
E Ministerial Formation	Confidence
<b>Overall Outcome</b>	<b>Confidence with Qualifications</b>

The review team regards Lindisfarne College of Theology 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. LCT's aims are clearly stated in their scene-setting document, as well as in a number of handbooks. LCT states that it aims "to be a learning praying community which forms people as disciples and ministers. Across the past five years, the following sums up our theological vision: With our commissioning partners, the Dioceses of Newcastle and Durham, we seek to help all learners to discover more fully the God who has made us, the God who freed us in Jesus Christ".
2. They go on to say: "we believe that God is calling the whole Church into new patterns of worship and service, and this will require ministers who are:
  - Attentive to God
  - Attentive to 'place' and 'context (in particular identifying the North East as a region where 'place and identity are intimately connected')
  - Attentive to others in the local team and context
  - Attentive to the urgency of our times (stating that the church in the North East finds itself in an uncomfortable 'liminal' place)
  - Attentive to our leading partners (identifying that work is already happening in parishes in the North East and that people training with LCT are often already in some kind of ministerial role. LCT articulate their formational aims as contributing "to the wider mission of the church through the development of rooted, resilient, reflective and collaborative leaders, who have strong sustaining relationships with people and place, and are able to bring fresh insights to their leaders."
  - Attentive to the 'self'
3. In addition, LCT handbooks and the scene-setting document state that "Alongside growing this 'godly attentiveness' in all our students, we have begun to complement the above with an intentional focus on the call of Micah 6:8 - 'Do Justice, Love Kindness and Walk humbly with your God'. For us this prophetic word relates to three contemporary and critical callings from God, namely to respect the diversity of God's people, to deconstruct racism in the Church, and live faithfully in the face of the environmental crisis facing our planet."
4. Reviewers were able to question past and present students and stakeholders, including local partners and members of the Board of Trustees about their understanding of LCT's aims and found that they are well communicated and received. In particular we gained a sense that attentiveness to place is a formational aim at the heart of all that LCT offers to ministry training in this area.

5. Thus, one of the inherent and clearly articulated strengths of LCT is its ability to train local people for local ministries. Readers and ordinands training alongside one another is identified by many as a strength, not only during training but into ministry as past students often work together in local ministry teams after licensing and ordination. LCT is to be commended for its attention to this aspect of its work.
6. This has led the reviewers to question the desire to grow and expand numerically – as well as potentially to enrich the learning culture - by recruiting more independent students. There are questions about the level to which independent students aims can be the same as those stated for the whole LCT community if there is no ministerial outcome in mind, although we recognize that appropriate differentiation is possible. Perhaps more significant is the resourcing challenge of how diverse an offer can sustainably be delivered by a small training institution.

### **Commendation 1**

**We commend LCT for its deep understanding of, care for, and attention to the needs of training people from a wide variety of backgrounds for ministry within dioceses and parishes of the North East.**

### **Recommendation 1**

**Alongside the commendation above, we recommend that LCT core staff and Trustees consider afresh how the aims of LCT are reflected in the pathways offered and whether any pathways might be more effectively offered by, or collaboratively with, a partner TEI in order to allow LCT to deepen its offering to those students it serves so well (i.e. those identified in the aims of attentiveness to place and to leading partners).**

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

7. The review team had access to LCT supporting documents which included Formation Criteria mapping for ordinands based on the new Formation Qualities. A great deal of work has taken place to align the course with these new qualities and while there is not yet an equivalent document relating to Reader/LLM training, all students for licensed ministries (lay and ordained) know that they are working towards these qualities and are regularly recording their development both in personal reflections and with support from Personal Tutors, Incumbents of home churches and Placement Supervisors.
8. Stakeholders report confidence in the appropriateness of LCT's formational aims to the specific ministries for which students are being formed. Reviewers heard many positive comments from students and Placement Supervisors as well as from bishops from both dioceses who were all determined that the bespoke nature of LCT training should be maintained and that whatever wider TEI links are formed in the future the Lindisfarne name must be retained as it has become

synonymous with a high standard of ministerial training for candidates from the North Eastern dioceses.

9. The ministerial formation scene setting document and the student handbook, as well as public facing information on website, make it clear that LCT aims to provide a high quality of training for those offering for ordained and lay ministries in the North East. This aim may not explicitly reflect the national church's desire for a younger and more diverse church but does build on local knowledge and the wisdom of those who train with the college as long-term members of local communities and churches. LCT notes that its learner community is in fact growing younger.
10. Where LCT's strength lies in relation to diversity is very much in its 'Mixed ecology' (as expressed in the formational scene setting document) of ordinands, LLM/Reader candidates, ALMOWs, Ministry Experience Volunteers and independent students all being part of the same learning community. However, with only a few students in some of these categories, there is a risk of students feeling isolated and being on the edges of the very strong community that forms amongst those in training for licensed ministries. These experiences were expressed by some younger students in the very small cohorts. That said, we note the appointment in autumn 2023 of LCT's 'tutor for the formation of independent students and MEVs' and understand she is taking steps to address these issues. We welcome this and look forward to learning of progress via LCT's action plan response to this report. We retain Recommendations 2 and 9 in their present form because they are true to the evidence we received especially from students on the PER visit, and because action is a work in progress. Hence, it is recommended that regular checks are put in place to ensure that the 'mixed ecology' is not leading to some small student groups being without a voice within the strong ministry training community.

## Recommendation 2

**We recommend that regular checks are put in place to ensure that the many benefits of a 'mixed ecology' are not negated by the experiences of some students whose cohorts have very small numbers and may be without a significant voice within the strong ministry training community.**

11. Reviewers noted that Cranmer Hall is referred to as a 'competitor' in the SWOT document. Some of the work of these two TEIs is replicated with LCT having some extremely small cohorts (in particular for the MEV and full-time contextual pathways). Conversations have begun, but been put on hold, which explore the possibility of a more formal relationship with Cranmer Hall. The review team would strongly recommend that these conversations are revisited and taken forward by a new Principal with immediate effect. We understand that major decisions may not be possible until all senior staff posts in both dioceses are filled, but planning conversations and moves towards greater unity are essential if LCT is to thrive in its area of formational expertise.

### Recommendation 3

**The review team would strongly recommend that conversations with Cranmer Hall are revisited and taken forward by a new Principal with immediate effect. We understand that major decisions may not be possible until all senior staff posts in both dioceses are filled, but planning conversations and moves towards greater unity are essential if LCT is to thrive in its area of formational expertise.**

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

12. The main route for accessing information about LCT is from the website and links from diocesan websites about training for ministry. Whilst some of the formational aims of LCT are expressed on the website it is recommended that the site be updated to give more detail of the aims that are in line with the formational qualities (e.g. those aims relating to attentiveness).

### Recommendation 4

**We recommend that LCT's website is updated to give more detail of the aims that are in line with the formational qualities (e.g. those aims relating to attentiveness) and to offer more information on the formational aspects of training for enquirers.**

13. External stakeholder comments indicated that the quality and character of the ministers is considered to be of a high standard and appropriate for the ministries being undertaken on licensing or ordination. LCT is to be commended for the support given to all involved in the formation process. Placement Supervisors and local Incumbents reported excellent levels of information and training to enable them to be part of the ongoing formation of students.

### Commendation 2

**We commend the level of information and training available to Placement Supervisors and Incumbents which enables them to own LCT's aims and to play a significant role in the ongoing formation of students.**

14. Publicity material clearly states the desire to recruit a more diverse cohort of students, particularly stating areas of concentration being around barriers to training due to class and educational background. However, a number of students and other stakeholders commented that the academic nature of the course makes it difficult for people from urban parishes to offer for ministry. We found that LCT's practical measures to support students with differing learning needs are in many ways good and receive positive feedback, as noted at paragraph 98 in Section D3, but these comments may still reflect an issue of perception from some of those outside the LCT community who may then be discouraged from offering for ministry discernment. We wonder for instance whether the website might do more to highlight the support available - granted the 'community' section includes a page on academic and pastoral support - perhaps via the addition of student testimonials?

15. Women are well represented in the student body and amongst staff, as are lay staff with significant roles. There was little opportunity to test LCT’s inclusion regarding UKME/GMH candidates as this diversity was not in evidence – although we note and commend LCT’s early and positive steps around an EDI policy and working group (paragraph 40, Commendation 8). LCT staff spoke of there being little racial diversity in the dioceses from which students come to study. It is important that the term ‘inclusion’ does not enter into a narrow usage meaning simply class and educational background but that regular attention is paid to publicity material and the culture of the TEI to ensure no-one is being inadvertently excluded.

**Recommendation 5**

**We recommend that care is taken to ensure that the term ‘inclusion’ does not enter into a narrow usage meaning simply class and educational background but that regular attention is paid to publicity material and the culture of the TEI to ensure no-one is being inadvertently excluded.**

16. LCTs aims as they are stated are well received and understood. However, some stakeholders perceive an overlap between LCT’s offer and that of Cranmer Hall – albeit this relates mainly to full-time contextual training, where the numbers for both TEIs are small and the two models are in practice somewhat different - and hence, rightly or wrongly, they also perceive a competitive relationship. Reviewers strongly recommend that, as part of exploring the future for LCT, the conversations relating to closer relationships with Cranmer should be given high priority. There is uncertainty about whether these conversations can take place in the near future or need to wait until all key posts have been filled in both dioceses but, based on meetings with stakeholders, the review team would encourage LCT to open conversations again as soon as possible to be establishing ways forward once all personnel are in place. It is the review team’s considered opinion that such talks could lead to stronger offering of all types of ministry training in the area, in particular allowing LCT to concentrate on its greatly valued local knowledge and training for local ministries alongside a development of lay ministry training on offer (see Recommendation 3).

**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.**

17. LCT's place in the region as a provider of part time training has its roots in the RTP of a number of years ago. Bishops, past students and other stakeholders speak of the value of the type of training on offer now. There are, however, also some questions from stakeholders and the reviewers about the sustainability of a larger offering of modes of training without greater, more creative expressions of partnership with Cranmer Hall into the future. See Recommendation 3 and paragraph 16.
18. Placements are carefully planned and good relationships exist with local churches and those offering opportunities for sector placement. However, much of the work of organising placements and maintaining those relationships in the community has been carried out by the current principal. It is acknowledged in the PER scene setting document that one of the key concerns is that of 'burnout of the principal and UG director of studies'. Reviewers therefore commend the decision to create a separate post which will enable someone other than the Principal to concentrate on this work.

#### **Commendation 3**

**We commend the decision to create a separate post which will enable someone other than the Principal to concentrate on the important, and already excellent, work of organising long placements.**

19. The student handbook states that a 3-way meeting happens at the beginning of training between student, personal tutor and church supervisor. In conversation with past and present students, placement supervisors and training incumbents, the review team found that all placement processes are robust and greatly valued by all concerned.
20. Many students experience chaplaincy placements which are also greatly valued and evidence extremely strong working relationships between LCT and chaplaincy contexts in the area.
21. The greatest commendation from ordinands came in relation to Easter School. LCT has developed a tradition of taking ordinands on field trips to Holy Land, Corrymeela, and Auschwitz on a rolling programme for Easter School. These experiences are spoken of by many ordinands as the greatest formational experience of their training. The reflections following the trips evidence just how deeply these experiences influence students' future ministries.

#### **Commendation 4**

**We commend the creative use of Easter School for ordinands.**



22. However, the experiences were also reported to the review team, by both Reader candidates and ordinands, as having a dividing effect at a time when community has formed deep bonds – see further section E3 of this report. Reader candidates are able to attend Easter School at their own expense but only if sufficient places are available. The review team heard of Reader candidates helping to fund-raise to send their ordinand colleagues on Easter School. While we heard only expressions of generosity and a desire for ordinands to have valuable experiences, there was also hurt and confusion as to why such formational experiences are not as easily available to all. An underlying issue is that the national church does not resource ordained and lay ministry training tracks equally; nonetheless LCT’s Easter School offer makes this mismatch very visible. It is our recommendation that some work takes place to attempt to extend the Easter School experiences to all in training for licensed ministries (lay and ordained) by seeking funding, extending fund-raising and ensuring that Reader students are not excluded where they would wish to take part. One consequence of unequal access to formational opportunities may be a confusion about vocation and a tendency for those training for licensed lay ministries to seek selection and training for ordination in the belief that a deeper formational call must be related to ordination rather than to a deeper engagement with spirituality and formation as a lay person.
23. The review team therefore commends LCT for its creative use of Easter School for its ordinands and recommends that it seeks ways to open these experiences to all in training for significant, licensed, ministries.

### Recommendation 6

**in the light of the clear value of Easter School we recommend that LCT seeks ways to open these experiences to all in training for significant, licensed ministries (both lay and ordained), including making it known that modest grants may sometimes be available from college or diocesan sources.**

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

24. Policies and handbooks are in existence and are easily accessed via Moodle. Included in the handbooks is reference to the Safeguarding Policy. However, this policy cannot easily be accessed and there is no immediately available information about what to do if a safeguarding issue arises either in parish or LCT settings. When questioned, students and placement supervisors were all confident that they would be able to contact a personal tutor, chaplain or the Principal if a need arose. However, none of these people is the nominated safeguarding lead and, while their accessibility is commendable, they may not be able to respond in good time. It is important that this is remedied as soon as possible.
25. The Safeguarding Policy is full and accurate. However, the most helpful information for students finding themselves in a situation requiring safeguarding advice is on page 13 of the document. It is important that this information is more easily accessible.

### **Recommendation 7**

**We recommend that instructions about how to respond to a safeguarding issue and a number to contact are clearly placed on the home page of both the website and Moodle (one click is all that should be required) and that contact details are updated and given prominence in all other handbooks (in particular the student and placement handbooks).**

26. Many students, present and past, as well as other Stakeholders, drew a picture of LCT as a place that intentionally nurtures a sense of community and provides excellent individual support.
27. Weekend teaching and Formation Group content are in line with the formational qualities and encourage reflection on these with all students knowing which quality is being concentrated on at each event.

### **Commendation 5**

**We commend the way in which LCT staff and students together nurture a sense of community in a TEI with students from a wide geographical area who meet only once a week and for residential weekends.**

28. Students almost unanimously reported that the college listens to, and acts upon, feedback. LCT's SWOT document identifies reflection and response as being a strength and the review team heard reports of, and evidenced, the student voice being heard at all levels of the TEI's structures.

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

29. It was agreed by students and staff, and confirmed by our visit, that the teaching accommodation for evening sessions is good in Durham diocese. There have been some access and usage issues in the Newcastle diocesan offices which are being addressed but space is sufficient and appropriate for small group teaching.
30. The accommodation at the Emmaus Youth Village is now not adequate for residential weekends. It was reported to reviewers that there used to be three designated classrooms. There is now only one large teaching space with other teaching taking place in lounge spaces with no desks and insufficient room for small group work. It is also not possible to accommodate all ministry students for residential weekends at Emmaus. There are no private study spaces at Emmaus and insufficient seating when everyone is present for all to sit for meals at the same time. See Recommendation 28 in section D2 of the report.

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

31. Worship handbooks are full and offer clear guidance.

32. The review team experienced a number of acts of worship which were appropriately varied and, in general, well led.
33. The use of a teaching and social space as chapel/worship space at weekends is both an opportunity and a challenge. The transition between socialising and worship was not always made clear and reviewers consider this to be an opportunity for teaching and modelling - which was in evidence in the way the Eucharist at the end of the weekend was set up for and conducted. Maybe emptying the room while worship is set up and bringing the community back in to music or intentional silence would be one solution?

### **Recommendation 8**

**We recommend that time is taken for teaching about use of informal spaces for worship during residential weekends.**

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

34. LCT's formational scene-setting document states:
- "We have a small core teaching team of 3.5 FTE, supported by a 1.0 FTE Academic Administrator, 0.6 FTE Director of Business and Finance, two Chaplains, 17 Associate Tutors and 11 Personal Tutors. This brings depth and range, but also challenges for the development and maintenance of high standards. Our teaching staff and our personal tutors model:
- Active lay and ordained ministries embedded in local contexts. They are visibly available to the Church and are deeply integrated into the life of the NE and the Dioceses. A high quality of preaching and teaching, with attention to detail.
  - Participation in the prayer life of the Dioceses and communities.
  - The struggle of maintaining a healthy 'work-life' balance and managing the interface between vocation and public ministry.
  - Collaborative working and the enabling of others – evidenced through the development of Associate Tutors, support for local supervisors and the drawing in of Alumni. Associate tutors are drawn from a wide range of backgrounds (more details are available on the website). The model is relational, distributed leadership that honours and celebrates the gifts of all.
  - Chaplains, present during teaching periods and residential aspects of the training. They specifically model the giving and receiving of pastoral care, leading of community worship and good safeguarding practice, establishing appropriately bounded relationships."
35. Students and stakeholders affirmed that these aims are met and that staff are considered to model ministry in a way that prepares students for what is to come after licensing or ordination

while at the same time encouraging personal, spiritual and academic development in all students as they progress through the course.

36. The review team evidenced good, friendly interaction between staff and students. We would, however, encourage all members of the community to be aware that the close bonds formed between many may inadvertently lead to some feeling excluded. Some current students expressed this sense of exclusion, as stated earlier in this report. Whether by virtue of the ministry being prepared for, age or family circumstances the sense of exclusion from an extremely tight-knit community is clearly painful. Recognising at paragraph 10 that positive steps are already happening, we nonetheless make the following recommendation.

### Recommendation 9

**We recommend that, similar to Recommendation 2 in section A2 of the report, regular checks are made on the health of the community in core staff meetings concentrating particularly on ensuring no groups of students are feeling excluded and finding ways to enable those students' voices to be heard.**

37. Students gave evidence of support offered by Personal Tutors which, having been so well modelled, has led to personal practices in ministry relating to capacity and looking after themselves.

### Commendation 6

**We commend the personal tutor and student 'buddy' relationships for the way in which they build confidence and enable students to navigate more difficult times in their student experience as well as preparing them for public ministry.**

38. Despite pressures on time core staff model good working practice by taking extended study leave every five years. See Commendation 19 and Recommendation 27 in section D2 of this report.

**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.

39. At the operational level, documentation reviewed showed a clearly defined management structure, administrative and financial structures, and, through the course of the Review, it was evident that these were well understood and applied, both among the senior staff and within the supporting committee structure. At the time of the previous PER, co-leadership was exercised by the Dean (as the Principal's role was then titled) and Executive Lead. In 2020/1, after the previous PER, the Executive Lead position was replaced by a Director of Business and Finance reporting to the Principal, thereby removing the potential for inconsistent overall direction of the organisation.

#### Commendation 7

**We commend the action taken to remove the potential for inconsistent overall direction of the organisation by replacing the position of Executive Lead, exercising co-leadership with the Principal, with a Director of Business and Finance reporting to the Principal.**

40. LCT has shown itself to be responsive to emerging concerns for the Church and society by forming an Environmental Response Group (ERG), establishing a well-structured new Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) policy and the work in process to form an EDI working group.

#### Commendation 8

**We commend the formation of an Environmental Response Group, the new EDI policy and the work in process to form an EDI working group.**

41. As LCT is a charitable company, registered with both the Charity Commission and Companies House, the overall responsibility for its governance resides with its Board of Trustees, who are also the company's members and directors. During the course of the Review, it was found that revised Articles of Association, adopted by the LCT Board on 25<sup>th</sup> May 2017, had not been submitted to either Companies House or the Charity Commission. This was noted at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) held during the Review and a commitment made that the filings would be made following the meeting. At the time of drafting this section of the report the documents were not present on either the Charity Commission or Companies House websites. (This has since been put right.) Furthermore, the original Articles of Association had identified the company as Lindisfarne Regional Training Partnership, whereas the Articles adopted on 25<sup>th</sup> May 2017 referred to it under its now current name of Lindisfarne College of Theology Ltd. However, documentation filed at Companies House and referenced on the Charity Commission website shows that the name change was only approved by the Board on 28<sup>th</sup> June 2018.

42. It is further noted that the list of Trustees on the Charity Commission website had not been kept up to date (but it is correct now).
43. The current Articles of Association require Directors to “hold office for three years from the date of (their) appointment at the end of which (they) shall be eligible for re-appointment for one further term of three years but having served their maximum term of office of six consecutive years shall not be eligible for re-appointment until one year after their retirement”. The Companies House website shows one of the Directors as holding office continuously since 2009, though the current Articles are silent as to whether service prior to their 2017 adoption is to be taken into consideration in this regard. In the cases of both that Trustee and three other current Trustees for which the provision would apply, the Review found no evidence within Board of Trustees meeting minutes to indicate that the process of re-appointment after three years had been followed. The Review also notes that there is one Trustee who, having been appointed in 2018, will complete the maximum six years of service as a Trustee in June of this year.

#### **Recommendation 10**

**We recommend that the Trustees review how best to resolve the issues arising from the Articles of Association stipulations on Trustees’ length of service and their re-appointment.**

44. The foregoing points to a need to ensure decisions taken by the Trustees, and the fulfilment of their legal reporting obligations, are implemented correctly and are timely. Minutes of AGMs and Board of Trustees meetings do show the decisions made, and agendas include “Matters Arising” following approval of previous meeting minutes. The documentation of agreed actions, in terms of what was to be done, by when and by whom could be improved so that they are more clearly and consistently stated. The creation and maintenance of action trackers, in tabular form, with action, actionee(s) and due dates entered for each action agreed, would assist Trustees in later confirming that agreed actions had been satisfactorily completed. Review of the action tracker should be included as a standard agenda item and items being removed from the tracker once confirmed as completed. Trustees should consider also including a “RAG” (Red/Amber/Green) traffic light rating against key on-going actions to provide an indication of whether they were proceeding to plan (green), subject to recovery (amber) or off-course (red).

#### **Recommendation 11**

**We recommend that AGMs and Board of Trustees meetings are both supported by the use of tabular-form action trackers.**

45. Trustees engaged in high quality discussion at both the AGM and the Board of Trustees meetings witnessed during the Review.

### **Commendation 9**

**We commend the quality of discussion observed at both the AGM and the Board of Trustees meetings.**

46. Student representatives attend both Trustee and Board of Studies meetings. During this Review they were observed engaging in discussions with good effect and with their contributions being well received.

### **Commendation 10**

**We commend the effectiveness of student representatives' engagement in Trustee and Board of Studies meetings, and the way their contributions were received.**

47. LCT's operation is supported by a structure of appropriately delineated internal meetings including Board of Studies, Tutors' Business, Senior Staff, Student Community and the already referenced ERG meetings. Outward-engaging meetings are held annually with the Bishops of Newcastle and Durham (or their delegates), twice-yearly with the Newcastle and Durham Directors of Discipleship, Ministry & Mission (or their equivalents) and periodically with the Newcastle and Durham DDOs and Reader/LLM Wardens. Except for the latter (for which it would be inappropriate) all these are minuted. The ERG does include a form of action tracker in its minutes, but is the only body within LCT that does so. Clarity of agreed actions and their tracking through to correct and timely completion would be improved if all minuted internal and external meetings were supported by an action tracker.

### **Recommendation 12**

**We recommend that action trackers, in a similar format to that advocated in Recommendation 11, be established and maintained for all regular and periodic internal and external meetings with the exception of the periodic reviews held with DDOs & Reader/LLM Wardens.**

48. Notwithstanding the bishops' annual meeting with LCT and most of the current Trustees being clergy serving in their dioceses (two trustees are lay and one is a URC minister), the review team questions whether the bishops from Newcastle and Durham, as the predominant customers for LCT's services, have adequate voice in the strategic direction of LCT. The reviewers are also concerned that Trustees appeared not to adequately recognise the scale of the financial challenge for LCT and other TEIs, and that there has been insufficient traction in progressing discussions with Cranmer Hall regarding closer collaboration and potential partnering.
49. The 2017 change to the Articles of Association removed all former rights of the Bishops of Newcastle and Durham and their respective DBFs to nominate up to six of the then possible 12 trustees. Whilst this change had the advantage of establishing LCT's independence and sense of self-accountability for its future, it took it to an extreme in entirely excluding formal representation



by the bodies on whom LCT's business model depends. Such is the depth of that dependency that a minority representation of the two dioceses on the LCT Board of Trustees would be appropriate.

### **Recommendation 13**

**We recommend the LCT Board of Trustees invites the Bishops of Newcastle and Durham, in consultation with their respective DBFs, to each nominate one person to join the Board as their representatives.**

50. From its meetings with senior stakeholders and staff the Review team noted a positive attitude towards exploring future cross-TEI co-operation and the building of good relationships.
51. Work had been undertaken in 2022 by LCT and St John's College/Cranmer Hall senior staff to explore how they might partner together in some way to the benefit of their students, the dioceses they serve and the two organisations themselves. The discussion paper "Theological Training in the North-East – Towards a United Approach" of September 2022 shows good clarity of thought, and has a positive approach to identifying viable routes forward.

### **Commendation 11**

**We commend the clarity of thought and positive approach towards partnering of LCT with St John's College/Cranmer Hall of the paper "Theological Training in the North-East – Towards a United Approach".**

52. We understand this work was followed up at an LCT trustees' awayday, resulting in the college's reflections - in terms of its theological training offer in the NE region - that were shared by the co-chairs with the bishops' teams of both dioceses and well received, and that informed the role description for the appointment of LCT's new principal. Discussions of partnership options have been paused more recently, largely due to changes in key personnel; but with new lead people in post we urge their resumption as soon as is practicable. The Review was greatly encouraged to hear LCT Core Staff speak positively of the relationships they enjoyed with faculty members of Cranmer Hall and their recognition of the importance for LCT of closer partnering with Cranmer.

### **Commendation 12**

**We commend the positive attitude of LCT Core Staff towards closer partnering with Cranmer Hall.**

53. In discussion with the Trustees the review team noted some disappointment at the pause in the 2022 discussions. The Trustees had welcomed a suggestion from the Bishop of Newcastle of convening a "Big Tent" discussion to progress relational bridge-building and the exploration of partnering. However, they and LCT senior staff considered that this might be something to pursue after the appointment of both its new Principal and the successor to the current Bishop of Durham. By contrast, and picking up on views from wider stakeholders, the Review Team would urge that the conversation should start now.



## **Recommendation 14**

**We recommend that the co-chairs of the LCT Board of Trustees meet with the Bishop of Newcastle, the Acting Bishop of Durham (as appointed upon the retirement of the current Bishop of Durham), the Principal of St John’s College and the Warden of Cranmer Hall to agree how to initiate and progress the suggested “Big Tent” discussion.**

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

54. There is strong, widespread regard and respect for the current Principal from both within and beyond LCT, and hence great loyalty towards him.

## **Commendation 13**

**We commend the way in which the current Principal has undertaken his role, justifiably earning high and widespread regard.**

55. The Review noted that this was, for some with whom conversations were held, so strong that they wanted his successor to be just like him in all respects, rather than looking through to discern the attributes most appropriate to leading LCT through the next phase of its life. The Review heard from several sources that the academic team had been overstretched, and to which Trustees had responded despite the financial pressures LCT faces.

## **Commendation 14**

**We commend the strengthening of LCT’s core staff through, inter alia, the recent recruitment of a Postgraduate Director of Studies.**

56. Besides easing the resourcing pressure, this addition will bring fresh insights into LCT’s decision making processes. There is a good sense of teaming amongst the core staff, and the Review saw evidence of both directive and collaborative leadership being appropriately exercised. There is a tangible commitment to excellence and a positive motivational climate.
57. As the core staff know one another well, with several having worked together for many years (granted there are also some new appointees), there is a danger of group-think. The Review noted a willingness by at least one well established core staff member to offer constructive criticism and all responded positively to areas of concern that became apparent during the Review.
58. While the day-to-day dynamics within the core staff team and in their working relationship with the Trustees are good, the Review found that the LCT Business Plan (which had been prepared by the Director of Business and Finance in liaison with the Principal, with its content informed by a mid-2023 vision setting meeting of the Trustees) had not been shared with either the Directors of Studies, or the Trustees. While it may be appropriate for LCT staff to prepare this document, it is essential that such a foundational document for the direction of the organisation be owned and approved by the Board of Trustees and then used as a basis for reviewing progress in its

implementation. The SWOT analysis had been similarly prepared and, whilst it also had not been shared with the Board of Trustees, it had been discussed to some extent with senior staff. When asked about actions being taken to follow-up on the identified opportunities, those not involved in its drafting advised that none had yet been taken. The Review was further informed that the last time the SWOT had been examined was in preparation for the previous PER.

### **Recommendation 15**

**We recommend that all key management documents such as the Business Plan and SWOT analysis, and strategic action plans arising from them, are owned and approved by the Board of Trustees, used by the Board in exercising oversight of LCT and, unless there are over-riding reasons against, shared with the LCT senior leadership team.**

59. The Board of Trustees is operating with two co-chairs, where-as the Articles of Association require there to be one chair and a vice-chair. Whilst the Review observed the two co-chairs working very effectively together, this structure may struggle to give the clarity and consistency of direction necessary to address the governance-related recommendations identified within this Review.

### **Recommendation 16**

**We recommend that the Board of Trustees operates with a single chair, supported by a vice-chair, at least until the governance-related recommendations of this Review are addressed. If it subsequently wishes to operate with two co-chairs, the Articles of Association must be revised to allow for this.**

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

60. Both in their words and behaviour Trustees demonstrated genuine interest in LCT and a commitment to its success. As concerns emerged during the review they showed an exemplary, open willingness to their exercise of governance.

### **Commendation 15**

**We commend trustees 'passionate and deeply caring support of LCT and their open willingness to improve their exercise of governance.**

61. The composition of the Board has good gender-balance and includes Global Majority representation. It is heavily biased towards those in Holy Orders (five of the seven) with strong knowledge and/or experience of theological education and training for ministry. The Trustees all, in one way or another, have a close association with LCT, and none brings a totally independent perspective. The absence of representation on direct behalf of the Bishops of Newcastle and Durham has already been noted (Recommendation 13). In the course of the Review, and in line with Commendation 14, Trustees recognised that they lack someone with strong business experience and that this is an important gap to fill.

62. Despite the financial loss reported for 2022/3, and the deficit budget set for 2023/4, there was no sense of financial urgency from Trustees in the AGM and Board of Trustees meetings witnessed by the Review. This contrasted with an earlier statement to the Review by the Director of Business and Finance that there were just three years in which to return LCT to financial break-even operation.

#### **Recommendation 17**

**We recommend that the Board of Trustees is enhanced through the addition of someone with strong business skills and experience.**

63. In implementing Recommendations 13 and 17, it is important that the Board of Trustees does not grow so large that it loses effectiveness and engagement with LCT. The current Articles of Association stipulate a maximum of nine Trustees.

#### **Recommendation 18**

**We recommend that the Board of Trustees reflects carefully on whether the current limit on the number of Trustees should be raised (and the Articles of Association revised accordingly) or, to accommodate the additions of Recommendations 13 and 17, that one or more of the current Trustees steps down.**

64. The “Governance Structure and Personnel” document provided to the Review included the statement “LCT is alert to the need for Trustees to engage in their own development as a Board”. The co-chairs identified to the Review Unconscious Bias and Safeguarding as examples of training that had been undertaken by Trustees, though also observed that any such training was normally reactive in nature and that there was a reliance on the experience Trustees brought from other trusteeships that they held. The Risk Register includes “skills register to be reviewed annually” as a mitigation action against the risk of “impact of changing Board Membership” on governance. However, Board of Trustees and AGM minutes provided to the Review show no evidence that this has been done, and the Review was advised that the skills register had not been reviewed in the last four years or so. The Review was further advised that there was no structured induction process for new Trustees.

#### **Recommendation 19**

**We recommend that the Board of Trustees establishes and implements a structured induction process for new Trustees.**

#### **Recommendation 20**

**We recommend that Board of Trustees reviews and updates the skills register and implements a cycle of annual reviews.**

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

65. Whilst a three-year Business Plan had been prepared for the Review, it suffers from various shortcomings, some of which have already been referenced in this report. The following further observations are made:

- The document has been constructed for the Review and is set very much in LCT’s current context rather than giving the sense of being a key management document that charts the strategic course for the coming years. The “Key Values” identified in the 2022/23 ASE and repeated in the “Formational Scene Setting Overview” paper, could helpfully have been included as they would have provided a forward-looking strategic framework.
- 63% of the document (by word-count) is descriptive of LCT’s current structure, operation and context. The balance is a loosely worded description of “short”, “medium” and “long” term strategic goals. Missing from it is the translation of the goals into a clear and measurable annualised plan with defined accountabilities, against which the goals could be placed.
- The document does not include a statement of LCT’s Formational Aims for the ordinands and Readers/LLMs that it trains. These Aims are key determinants in shaping how LCT needs to operate and which the Business Plan must support.
- The document is not clearly linked to the separately prepared SWOT analysis. It is consequently unclear how fully LCT’s strengths are to be drawn upon, weaknesses addressed, opportunities exploited, and threats countered.
- There is a brief descriptive financial section, but no financial projections linked to achievement of the goals, and hence no assurance that the Business Plan will enable LCT to return to at least break-even operation.
- The document lacks any consideration of the action that would have to be taken if LCT continues to run at a loss.
- LCT’s income, though not exclusively linked to the training it undertakes for the dioceses of Newcastle and Durham, is heavily dependent on them and sustained shortfall in the number of their ordinands coming to LCT would be financially ruinous. Despite being an independent charitable organisation, LCT consequently needs to view the two dioceses as its key partners. However, the Review was informed that the dioceses had no direct input into the drafting of the Business Plan, nor was the draft reviewed with them to confirm their support for the direction being taken.

66. With the various concerns identified, it is concluded that the Business Plan is not fit for purpose and needs to be redrafted.

## **Recommendation 21**

**We recommend that the Board of Trustees, with support from senior LCT staff, addresses the concerns identified in this report regarding the Business Plan by redrafting and then formally approving it.**

67. The Review confirmed that independently examined annual accounts are being properly submitted to both Companies House and the Charities Commission, and that appropriately structured management accounts are provided to Trustees.
68. A Risk Register is maintained by the Director of Business and Finance and presented at Board of Trustees meetings, with active discussion of items of particular concern. Risks are colour coded Red/Amber/Green based on the combination of their Impact and Probability assessments. Currently there are no Red risks.
69. The 27 Apr 2023 Board of Trustees meeting minutes state that the Register had been updated “to include annual schools” but this does not currently appear. The “End of Year Review 2021/22 – LCT Response” document states that the Risk Register will be “be revised to include sections on extreme weather/major incidents”, yet this too does not currently appear.
70. Most items listed as “Threats” within the SWOT analysis are not included on the Risk Register.
71. “Health and Safety” is not one of the recognised risk categories, and, other than staff sickness, there are no identified health and safety risks. “Reputation” is combined with “Operation” as a risk category, yet reputational harm is not necessarily linked with failure in some operational aspect of LCT, and the consequences are such that it is worth considering as a category in its own right.
72. Of the 26 risks included on the Register, two show review dates of Sep-20, one a date of 31.12.23, and one is undated. The other 19 are all shown as “Ongoing”. The addition to the Register of target risk levels would allow Trustees to recognise when adequate mitigation action was in place, and hence formally accept the risk. Accepted risks should be kept on file by being moved to a separate section of the Risk Register. For those risks that remain active on the Register, actual review dates should be identified and adhered to rather than being listed as “Ongoing”.

## **Recommendation 22**

**We recommend that the Risk Register is updated, taking into account the observations made within this report.**

73. Underlying the above observations, notwithstanding LCT’s assurance that the Risk Register is reviewed at each Board meeting and was amended at one recent meeting after senior staff and trustee input, is a concern that active management of the Risk Register is being left in large part to the Director of Business and Finance.

### **Recommendation 23**

**We recommend that a Risk Review meeting of senior staff is held at least quarterly, and that the meeting minutes are provided to Trustees.**

74. The Principal had himself recognised a need to improve the management of policy documents and had recently assigned sole accountability for these documents to the Director of Business and Finance and with the objective of ensuring there is a structured, time-bound process for review and update. As this is now work in progress, it is only noted here that, on the LCT website, the Safeguarding Policy does not have either a date of issue or next review date, there is both an out-of-date Privacy Policy and a current Data Protection Policy covering identical matters, and a Health and Safety Policy is not included.

### **Commendation 16**

**We commend the assignation to the Director of Business and Finance of sole accountability for the management of policy documents.**

75. In conclusion, the serious nature of some of the issues and consequential recommendations identified in this section of the Review means a “no confidence” outcome has had to be considered. In mitigation, the Review has noted the determination expressed by Trustees and Senior Staff to respond positively to the findings and raise the standard of governance and leadership within LCT to an acceptable level. With that attitude, it should be possible to implement all the recommendations within a year, and thus a “Confidence with Qualifications” outcome is given for this section of the Review.

**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.**

76. Lindisfarne College of Theology provides learning opportunities for adults from the Tees to the Tweed. They offer courses that prepare Ordinands to serve as assistant ministers and potential incumbents, and Readers for missional, pastoral and leadership roles in the local church, as well as locally approved pathways. They provide training for Durham and Newcastle Dioceses, as well as for independent students. LCT works to align themselves closely with the emerging strategies of the Dioceses, whilst remaining focused on the requirements of the Ministry Development Team and Common Awards as regulators. The annual self-evaluation process is used to good effect.
77. Durham Diocese has recently changed their procedures for training LLMs – we understand that Newcastle diocese did not at that stage wish to change its own LLM training pathway. Durham LLMs are now licensed after two years of training, and continue studying part time for a further two years. Those training in this way speak highly of the shift, but from an LCT perspective it does mean they are delivering two different ways of training LLMs.

#### **Recommendation 24**

**We recommend that LCT discusses with Newcastle Diocese whether they would adopt the same LLM training model as Durham.**

78. LCT offers the following courses:
- Foundation Award in Theology, Ministry and Mission
  - Certificate in Theology, Ministry and Mission
  - Certificate (long) in Theology, Ministry and Mission
  - Diploma in Theology, Ministry and Mission
  - BA (Hons) Theology, Ministry and Mission
  - Graduate certificate in Theology, Ministry and Mission
  - Graduate diploma in Theology, Ministry and Mission
  - MA Theology, Ministry and Mission
  - Postgraduate certificate in Theology, Ministry and Mission
79. The range of courses has expanded considerably since the last PER. Core staff are confident this expansion has not created an unmanageable workload but that it provides the necessary flexibility to ensure LCT can respond to students' personal circumstances. This does mean some cohorts are



very small; only one student per year in the full-time contextual ordination pathway for example. The sole student on one full time pathway expressed concern about isolation and the lack of a peer group. See further paragraph 10 and Recommendations 2 and 9.

### **Recommendation 25**

**We recommend that LCT reviews course provision annually to ensure all courses are functioning well and are viable.**

80. LCT’s student breakdown at the time of the review was as follows:

For potential to exercise ministry as an incumbent	7
For assistant ministry	8
For OLM/local ministry	0
For Reader ministry	26
For authorised lay ministry of the Word	4
For Pastoral ministry	6
For Ministerial Experience Volunteers	4
<b>Total training for Anglican ministry</b>	<b>55</b>
Independent students	24

81. Students are offered flexibility to receive credit for prior learning. This is carried out on a case-by-case basis, and shows concern for individual needs. It is noticeable that those who trained as readers often return to train for ordination. LCT is also used by dioceses to provide courses for those who have conditional recommendations for training. This prior learning is taken into account if candidates are successfully cleared for training.

82. Detailed module handbooks provide an overview of each course. Due care and attention are given to ensuring courses are world-engaging, have appropriate depth, enable theological learning and relate faith to life. Students speak highly of the education they receive, and value the formational and academic nature of the teaching. They describe teaching staff as well informed, sharing their knowledge and depth of learning in an accessible and engaging manner. A minority of students (primarily those with recent academic experience) questioned whether the pace of modules was initially too slow, but others suggested the pace was appropriate.

83. External stakeholders reported that students emerge grounded and pragmatic. It was suggested by many stakeholders that part time training facilitates the development of these attributes.

84. The recently appointed postgraduate director of studies is currently exploring opportunities to develop short courses and modules that could offer CPD opportunities for those currently active in ministry. LCT recently ran a highly successful module on environmental theology, although many attendees audited the course rather than studying for credit.



### **Commendation 17**

**We commend LCT for its innovative approach to providing CPD opportunities for those in active ministry.**

### **Recommendation 26**

**We recommend that LCT conduct more market research to assess the size of any potential market for an MA, including opportunities for bursaries.**

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

85. LCT is well served by a mix of full-time and part-time staff as well as module specific tutors. Staff CVs indicate that they are appropriately qualified, have relevant teaching experience and publications and are at a range of career stages. This is important for allowing aspirational students to imagine that they too might have the potential to become theological educators.
86. The core staff recognises that there is regular turnover of associate tutors, many of whom are PhD students or early career academics. This model has the advantage of ensuring training materials make best use of up-to-date scholarship and provides professional development for the associate tutors. But it also creates uncertainty about who teaches which courses. Core staff manage this uncertainty well.

### **Commendation 18**

**We commend LCT's provision of career development for theological educators.**

87. Core academic staff are eligible for a twelve-week sabbatical every five years, as well as a book allowance and funding to attend one major academic conference and a two-day retreat every year. Core administrative staff are also eligible for the conference and retreat opportunities. There is evidence that staff make good use of these opportunities.

### **Commendation 19**

**We commend LCT for investing in staff continual professional development.**

88. Staff work incredibly hard; reference was made by core staff to overwork at times.

### **Recommendation 27**

**We recommend that these CPD opportunities are discussed as part of the annual appraisal process to ensure all staff take advantage of the CPD and well-being offer.**

89. There is a well developed system of ensuring appropriate feedback is given to tutors for each module. Associate tutors meet with a member of core staff to debrief each module. All staff are given the opportunity to respond to student feedback, and develop constructive responses to

issues that are raised. For a minority of modules there are suggestions that content was pitched inappropriately highly, but tutors recognize this and have taken corrective action for subsequent years. Conversation with current and former students indicated their feedback has been heard and acted upon. Students are confident in raising issues if they find courses difficult, both individually with tutors as well as through formal mechanisms, such as representation on the board of trustees and board of studies. LCT engage well with the rigorous process of quality assurance by the Durham University Common Awards team.

### **Commendation 20**

**We commend LCT's rigorous approach to collecting and responding to feedback.**

90. The two week-night teaching venues are equipped to a high standard, including facilities for remote participation if required. The Emmaus Youth Village (used for some residential) is basic and not really adequate as a venue both in terms of facilities for teaching and also providing adequate space for the whole student body to gather. It was noted in recent principal's reports that LCT will move to using Ushaw College for at least some residential. Staff are aware of the limitations of Emmaus, which has decreased in quality as a venue over time.

### **Recommendation 28**

**We recommend that Emmaus should only be used if there are adequate teaching facilities, that is three usable classrooms, and that they therefore continue to explore options for alternative venues, ideally without increasing expenditure.**

91. Students were very positive about the Resource Centres at the Diocesan Offices but raised concerns about lack of access to Durham university library facilities, notably the tardiness with which campus cards were issued. Those studying at levels six and seven struggled to access appropriate books. Personal circumstances of these students often preclude them from accessing library facilities during the day. LCT's self-evaluation notes issues in providing access to core texts for some modules. (It is recognized that a TEI's Common Awards validation does not automatically entail full online as well as onsite access to Durham resources on a par with Durham University students.)

### **Recommendation 29**

**We recommend that LCT ensures all students have access to appropriate libraries and academic resources.**

92. Students speak very positively about how academic staff take account of their personal circumstances and make appropriate adjustments to teaching and learning. The most striking example of this is the efforts made to ensure a blind student was able to participate in learning but many other students also gave examples, including explaining how they had been supported to

continue studying when they were on the verge of quitting. Those with additional learning needs are appropriately catered for.

### **Commendation 21**

**We commend LCT’s proactive approach to responding to individual students’ needs whilst maintaining appropriate academic rigour.**

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

93. Students receive appropriate induction to their courses. There is a peer mentor system in place whereby second years support first year students. A minority of students did not feel sufficiently prepared for study; one referred to the “tidal wave” of beginning training. Ministry Experience Volunteers (MEVs) reported feeling excluded and isolated from the rest of the student community. They also reported a lack of clarity about their program. Although it is outside the scope of PER, and so not a formal recommendation, we believe it would be good for LCT to establish a clearer understanding of the MEV study program including the type of placement expected.

### **Recommendation 30**

**We recommend that LCT utilises formal and informal mechanisms for hearing student feedback on the effectiveness of the induction process.**

94. Stakeholders and students report that teaching is of good quality. The “flipped classroom” model is used to good effect, resulting in an engaging seminar approach to in person sessions. Students confirmed that their capacity for independent study increases over time. Those completing independent learning projects and dissertations report being appropriately supported and supervised. Staff are flexible in responding to student needs but also maintain high standards of academic rigour. Teaching invariably has an eye toward formation and tutors work hard at making learning fun.
95. A minority of stakeholder and student feedback indicated that teaching is felt to be too theoretical and book based, not embracing the practical situations that students will face once they are authorised for ministry. Some suggested a need to address classism, diversity/creativity in worship, biblical literacy, and a liberal orthodoxy that excludes some and values ‘reason’ above ‘scripture’, as well as more theological depth on engaging faith with world & culture. Not all stakeholders agreed with these comments.

### **Commendation 22**

**We commend LCT for the quality of its teaching.**

96. A range of assessment methods are used, majoring on written assignments, but also including videos of individual preaching, portfolios, group work, assessed conversations, and individual

reflections. There is perhaps an over-reliance on written assignments, evidenced for example by one student commenting “there’s always an essay.” This must be balanced with the fact that at least two recent students were assessed primarily through the assessed conversations route.

### **Recommendation 31**

**We recommend that LCT consider more extensive use of assessed conversations and other approaches to assessment.**

97. As with most academic institutions, over-reliance on written assignments is vulnerable to student use of generative AI software such as ChatGPT. Conversation with core staff indicates they are aware of the risks posed by generative AI. They have followed the lead from Common Awards, and warned students that use of generative AI is a form of plagiarism.

### **Commendation 23**

**We commend LCT’s proactive response to the emerging issue of generative AI.**

### **Recommendation 32**

**While recognising the commendable work already taking place (Commendation 23), we recommend that LCT needs to remain alert to opportunities and risks of generative AI and develop appropriate strategies in response to future developments, including considering how AI can be used to reduce staff workload as well as more use of assessment methods other than essays.**

98. Feedback given to written essays was pitched appropriately, and there is evidence of tutors helping those who are unfamiliar with academic standards, for example around referencing. Past and current students confirmed they had received appropriate help and support in developing their academic abilities. Staff are very responsive to queries. A minority of students suggested feedback on formative assessments was not always sufficiently timely to be useful for summative assessments. Those currently studying preaching are also being trained in giving feedback. Some students and associate tutors questioned whether the input on study skills was appropriately timed. (We appreciate that views on the issue of timing will often be mixed, and that Lindisfarne have considered it before and made changes in response to feedback.)

### **Recommendation 33**

**We recommend that LCT should consider whether providing input on study skills later in term one might be more effective, at a point when all students have written at least one essay.**

### **Recommendation 34**

**We recommend that LCT check that feedback from formative assessment is always timely enough for students to complete their summative assessment.**

99. There is inconsistency as to whether students are able to access weeknight teaching via Zoom. Some students reported attending in this way, while others reported tutors declined to allow them to attend remotely. We understand that LCT's policy is to permit, but not require, tutors to accommodate student requests for online attendance if they (the tutors) wish to, but that does lead to a perceived inconsistency in practice. This is a particular issue for students who, due to family commitments, chose to study with LCT on the basis that remote learning was offered.

### **Recommendation 35**

**We recommend that LCT should develop and implement a consistent approach to remote access to weeknight teaching.**

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

100. Students are clear as to the learning objectives and assessment methods of each module. Example answers are sometimes provided as a further guide to students. Module tutors are accessible and supportive if students have queries about assignments.

### **Commendation 24**

**We commend LCT for its supportive approach to assignments.**

101. Written feedback from some stakeholders included a 'wish list' of topics that could be covered, including conflict management training, personal capacity/resilience training, more emphasis on children's & youth work, and on pioneering/planting. Some also wished for more on LLF/diverse theological perspectives, eco-theology, and racial justice. There was also a suggestion of LCT using more lay ministers in tutoring (in fact, almost half the module tutors are lay).
102. Core and associate teaching staff indicated that some of these topics are covered, either as stand-alone courses or are integrated within modules. These include conflict management, eco-theology and racial justice. Others are not included, primarily because of limited capacity, either space in the curriculum or staff expertise. These include children and youth work and pioneering and church planting.
103. The review team recognise the considerable resource constraints that LCT faces as an institution. We do not therefore expect all of these wishes to be catered for.

### **Recommendation 36**

**We recommend that requests to incorporate teaching on children and youth work and pioneering and church planting are considered seriously by staff and trustees, and where possible that they are accommodated and integrated into existing programs.**

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

104. LCT has a well-developed system of personal tutors, who have been given their own continual professional development in understanding the new qualities for those training for ordained ministry. There is an appropriate balance of specialists within the pool of personal tutors and a good mix of those who are full-time with LCT and those who are either retired or work elsewhere. Personal and associate tutors, placement supervisors, training incumbents and others say they were well prepared for their work and that core staff are highly responsive to any questions.

**Commendation 25**

**We commend LCT’s training and support of associate and personal tutors, placement supervisors and training incumbents.**

105. The relevant handbooks set out expectations in a clear and accessible format and the provided sample of reflective essays indicate that students are supported in developing skills at pastoral and theological reflection.
106. Students speak highly of their placements. Great care and attention are taken to ensure all placements have the greatest possible learning potential, and that students experience a context different to that of their home churches. Students are well supported in the initial stages of that placement, and note that any issues which are raised are soon dealt with.

**Commendation 26**

**We commend LCT for the quality of its placement provision.**

107. A recent pilgrimage to the Holy Land during Holy Week 2023 was seen as a particular highlight in the formational journey of students who attended. The ordinands’ Easter School is a big highlight of many ordinands’ time at LCT. A past Easter School visited Auschwitz. This year they are visiting Corrymeela. We discuss earlier in this report both the value of this part of the programme and the risk of some exclusion: see Commendation 4 and Recommendation 6 at section B1.

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

## Section E: Ministerial Formation

108. A significant amount of evidence in this section was gathered from student portfolios and from observation of a formation group, worship, preaching and through interviews and conversations with staff, stakeholders and students. Here we provide some background information on the Ministerial Formation Portfolio (MFP) and the Discipleship and Formation Portfolio manuals. The former is for ordinands, Reader/LLM and ALMOW students. The latter is for independent students.
109. Revised for the 2023/2024 academic year (previous version not seen), the Ministerial Formation Portfolio manual and the Discipleship and Formation Portfolio manual, are comprehensive guides to students covering their journey of formation and LCT's requirements for building the portfolio.
110. Whilst specific to each category of student, the manuals provide the context of the formation journey, alongside the skills, competencies and dispositions relevant to the ministry for which the student is being trained, and the LCT values of "Growing in Attentiveness". The MFP includes details and make-up of the student Formation groups; the residential timetable for the meetings and the qualities for discernment to be discussed as well as the details of each quality; guidance of the specific pathways and the LCT expectations of the amount and frequency of relevant activities; theological reflective models for use and the type of reflections required throughout the year, e.g. on prayer, preaching, leading worship and mission, etc. Forms to enable students to record these reflections in a structured way are also provided. However, students are encouraged to keep both a separate reflective journal and a learning journal, in addition to the reflections in their portfolios.
111. Other areas covered in the manuals include the spilt of responsibility between student, supervisor, mentor and personal tutor; relationships with the college in general and with personal tutors; support available from the college; and the end of year review process.
112. The Discipleship and Formation Portfolio manual is similar in content i.e. covers theological reflection, reflective journals, and "Growing in Attentiveness", but without the detailed information on the formational qualities for discernment for licensed lay or ordained ministry.
- E1 The TEI's programme of ministerial formation enables students to grow in their love for God.**
113. In conversations with students (both ordinands and LLMs-in-training), we gained a clear sense of how their love for God features in everyday life, work and study. Conversations were 'infectious' in the sense of sharing experiences and how students saw God guiding them to where they are now and where they are likely to be in the future.
114. During the ordinand formation group observed, students reflected on how scripture and what they have learnt from Jesus' example related to their lived experiences, challenges and opportunities.



There was a clear impression of non-judgemental reflecting from the heart, showing vulnerability and welcoming feedback and suggestions from others on the group.

115. A review of a selection of portfolios provided evidence of reflections both in the format required through the Ministerial Formation Portfolio manual and in personal reflective journals. Use of the Daily Offices was evident in the reflections, as was a variety of styles including contemplative prayer; praying with and through nature; prayer through music; prayer apps, e.g. Lectio 365; and liturgies, e.g. Celtic prayer.
116. Some students expressed challenges in either developing a pattern of prayer or changing their pattern of prayer. But growth in prayer was evident in a few of the reflections.
- One student said they had started using the Daily Prayer app in addition to their regular pattern of contemplative prayer. The student also commented on how challenging they found adding time for the Daily Offices was to their routine.
  - In one student’s reflection for the 2022/2023 period, compared with their 2023/2024 reflection on prayer, there was evidence of how they have grown in developing a pattern that they found sustaining. They stated the numerous resources and ways of praying they were engaging with including using Lectio 365 for families; praying at work and with the ministry team. They were still very critical of their prayer life, stating that they felt they didn’t pray enough.
117. During the worship sessions (Morning, Evening, Night prayer and Eucharist) we observed both set and free-format prayers. During ‘Evening Worship (free style)’, students’ use of prayer resources throughout the service was commendable. The use of candles, images, and responses (Iona style) was engaging and supported the reflective style of worship the students intended.
118. In other sessions, students made use of the intercessions for the season of Epiphany. However, there was a feeling that these were ‘read’ rather than ‘prayed’. During Morning Prayer on the last day of the residential, there was no space allowed during each section of the intercessions allowing worshippers time to absorb the intercession itself. This added to the feeling of being ‘read’ rather than ‘prayed’ and felt rushed.
119. The programme for the residential weekend includes ‘A note about saying the Offices’. This mentions the Lindisfarne ‘house style’ and gives direction on saying the Psalms antiphonally and to ‘pause at the marker in the psalms’ which though ‘this can feel stilted to begin with’...’helps the psalms to flow.’

### **Recommendation 37**

**We recommend that similar guidance to that included in the residential weekend program entitled ‘A note about saying the Offices’ be given to students in using structured or formulaic prayers, to help the prayers flow and to enable fellow worshippers to be prayerfully more engaged.**



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

120. Students' reflections, supervisors' reports and comments from graduates indicate the placements are a huge source of opportunities for growth. The placements enable students to experience ministry in a different context being immersed in a variety of settings. This also enables students to experience the diversity and varying traditions across the Church of England, and the communities in which the students will expect to minister. Additionally, where issues do arise in any placement context, feedback is that LCT is good at providing pastoral care to its students.
- Students felt their long placements enabled them to identify gaps in their learning / formation and provided ways to work out what was needed to fill those gaps. Placement report and student reflections evidenced this.
  - One student reflected on how being exposed to different styles of worship whilst on placement was a formative experience. Whilst another found experimenting with different reflective models beneficial enabling them to work through a fairly challenging placement situation.
  - In a plenary session with current students, many commented on the support received from personal tutors and the college generally, which was hugely appreciated.

### **Commendation 27**

**We commend the diverse and numerous placement opportunities provided for students, and especially the long placements valued by the students.**

### **Commendation 28**

**We commend the level of pastoral support and care given to the students.**

121. The training of ordinands and Reader/LLM students alongside each other provides opportunities to engage in getting an understanding of the nature of these different ministries. Students commented how much they valued training alongside each other and the benefits derived from the communities formed at LCT. One stakeholder felt this prepared students *“well for future ministry alongside each other”*.
122. An LLM graduate felt the *“tailored...study plan and work agreement...”* taught them to meet people *“at their point of need, meaning we accept them for who they are and we let God make the changes in their lives.”*
123. One ex-student stakeholder considered it a strength that *“all pathways (are) taught together as part of the same community allowing for sharing of ideas and vocation.”*
124. The feedback students receive on placement and during the residentials helps with their understanding of their own growth in their respective ministry, alongside their own reflections.

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

125. A review of a selection of portfolios provided evidence of reflections on students' experience particularly on placement where building relationships and working with ministry teams is paramount. This is also echoed in supervisors' feedback/assessments.
126. The range of placements offered including chaplaincy of various forms has been cited by students as places where their skills have been honed and tested, but are also places of mission.
127. The Spring/Easter School offering is highly valued by those who attend for the enrichment and formative experiences gained. Visits to the Holy Land, Auschwitz and the Corrymeela Community happen in environments that facilitate an appreciation of the many challenges in the world today within which the Church operates and ministers, and it was good to hear that modest grants may be available from college or diocesan sources to enable more students to attend, although apparently there is not much take-up. As discussed earlier, we note that some tension is created between the category of students who are able to attend and those not able to have the opportunity. One past student talked about the change in relationships following a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. They described how those on the trip had developed a closer bond during their time together that effectively, on their return, shut out the rest of the cohort who were left behind. Additionally, those who did not attend were unable to share in the discussions, memories and learning gained from the trip, creating a 'them and us' situation. See Commendation 4 and Recommendation 6 in section B1.
128. Unconscious Bias / Anti-racism training was completed in November 2023 during a weekend residential. This consisted of viewing the film *'After the Flood: The Church, Slavery, and Reconciliation'* followed by facilitated discussions in plenary and in formation groups. The session was supplemented by a review of case studies and a sermon for Racial Justice Sunday prepared by one of the teaching staff.
129. The range of student feedback (examples below) indicates that there is still much to do in raising awareness of racism and discrimination of all kinds. But also in equipping future ministers to not only engage personally with the issue but in how to enable others to do so confidently and effectively.
- *"I am not sure I fully understand how we can talk about anyone who isn't white in order that I don't cause offence."*
  - *"There is a lot of emphasis on black/white racism. Anti-Semitism is also a form of racism."*
  - *"A 'black' voice would be useful in our formation groups. A hands-on approach to our 'fixing everything' without listening is and could be dangerous."*
  - *"No voices here that weren't really white middle class – lacked diversity"*

130. We noted that the demographic of the college, whilst diverse in gender, and socio-economic backgrounds, is all white, bar one tutor of Global Majority Heritage. However, as stated in feedback, students would welcome coverage of other areas of prejudice and discrimination:

- *“We should challenge... issues (not just about racism)”*
- *“Keep it on the agenda. Link it with other unconscious bias areas – gender, class, diversity”*

131. The above points also relate to how students are equipped to engage in mission. Reflections contained in the sample of portfolios reviewed, showed how students engaged with the module on Developing Mission and Ministry through project work and participating in the Easter School and Black History Month activities.

- One student’s reflection on their visit to Auschwitz, was indicative of wider thought and application of experiences, in helping them to reconcile the struggles they encountered dealing with issues between two differing confirmation groups.
- Another student following the Holy Land Pilgrimage came back wanting to pray more for peace in the Holy Land.
- One student in reflecting on leading a school assembly during Black History Month commented on a feeling of tokenism talking about Jesus as potentially being from a Global Majority heritage background during Black History Month.
- Reflecting on their interaction with a parishioner with learning and communication difficulties, one student commented on their awareness of not being immune to prejudice, and how this fed into their prayer life. In a separate reflection, this student stated an awareness of growing and naturally falling in love with God’s people.

### **Commendation 29**

**We commend LCT for undertaking unconscious bias training with a focus on racism and prejudice in the Church.**

### **Recommendation 38**

**Building on the work already undertaken and acknowledged in Commendation 29, we recommend that LCT acts on the student feedback and seeks to find ways to build on the annual unconscious bias training undertaken by introducing specific anti-racism activities/training, acknowledging the intersectionality of racism and prejudice across more than just colour, and the need for a variety of voices and experiences in the debate.**

132. When asked what they considered to be the biggest challenge to their formation, work/study/family life balance was the resounding feedback from students. One group even commented that *“part time feels more like full time.”* Stakeholder feedback from a curate also highlighted that they

found their time at LCT, *“immensely challenging when trying to balance full time work, part time study, active participation in a church and family life...”*

133. However, another curate commented that the college *“has a real understanding of the demands and challenges of training in this way, and is a very supportive and flexible community.”* And another said they felt LCT prioritised wellbeing.
134. A further comment though was made that LCT spent *“little time and effort preparing families”* with regard to matters of transitioning to clergy/curacy housing, and the time curate would spend particularly in evening engagements and budgeting. It is unclear how much of this is the responsibility of LCT or the diocese/IME2/Training Incumbent.

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

135. Students’ reflections, pre-licensing reports and supervisor feedback provides evidence of students’ level of self-awareness, desire to learn and ability to assess the intersections between theoretical learning and experience.
136. One stakeholder commented that they found their time at LCT *“a rich learning environment, which has provided me with a solid foundation for further, life-long learning.”*
137. Students own self-assessment in the portfolios reviewed showed a determination to forge ahead in activities and tasks with which the student was unfamiliar or on which they had received feedback, say in the previous year’s report. This was clear in the Praxis and Reflection forms completed from one year to the next.
138. The desire to learn from experiences, particularly challenges in the work context, was observed during the Formation Group meeting during the residential. One student showed a high level of self-awareness in relation to the situation they faced with a work colleague, reflecting on the difficulty of controlling their emotions in the face of negative and uncooperative behaviour. The student also demonstrated their ability to step back and reflect on the situation, consider what help and assistance was available from other colleagues. They also reflected theologically on the situation and was appreciative of the feedback provided during the session from fellow students.

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

139. Evidence in this section was gathered through informal conversations, interviews, observation of worship leading and preaching during the residential, review of portfolios and feedback provided.
140. Students are on a rota to preach and lead worship during the weekday teaching sessions and at the weekend residentials. We have seen examples of worship rotas with a mix of students and staff leading, preaching and reading the appointed Old and New Testament passages. Students are

also encouraged to preach and lead services in their context parishes and we have seen both reflections and supervisor feedback on this.

141. Students who delivered homilies observed during the residential weekend, demonstrated both putting their faith into action, reflecting on their experiences and journey of faith to date, and linked to their training. Some were confident enough to share words of challenge and encouragement.
142. However we noted that feedback on preaching at the residential was almost exclusively provided by the principal. We feel students will benefit from a variety of voices and perspectives by other staff providing feedback, including peer-to-peer feedback from fellow students (as suggested by a student). Looking outside the residentials, we note that LCT's ministerial formation portfolio guidance encourages students to seek feedback more widely from peers, supervisors and church members, which is good; but nonetheless we also urge LCT to a change in the feedback practice at its residentials.

### Recommendation 39

**We recommend that students on residential receive feedback from a variety of people including their fellow students, thus providing different perspectives and inputs to their growth in ministry.**

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

143. The requirement to reflect on all aspects of training, prayer life, ministry in context, as well as experiences outside of the college, are clearly stated in the Ministerial Formation Portfolio manual. Alongside the LCT values and aims for the training of future ministers, both lay and ordained, who are "Attentive", provides the opportunity for students to see God at work in all aspects of their lives and to reflect on how that may shape them and their ministry. There was also a clear correlation in how students are able to relate their lived experiences, learning and training through the placements they undertake, thus "*being able to embrace and enable folk from all kinds of background and ages respond to God's call together.*" We were impressed by the students' level of reflection.
144. Conversations and the review of students' portfolios evidenced a deep and searching level of reflection and self-awareness in this area. This was echoed in the pre-licensing reports and feedback from supervisors.
145. Portfolios showed how students reflected on previous experiences and how these contributed to work in their current contexts and where gaps may appear and how the gaps may be filled, as in what might work or be experimented with should the situation occur in the future.
146. Journal entries also showed evidence of students looking back on tasks, activities and experiences and working forwards on how this will help them to grow in their ministry. There were also

reflections of their response to challenging and unexpected situations; those God moments that caught them unawares, especially in relation to their interaction with other people.

147. Stakeholder feedback from one past LLM student stated how they believed the college encouraged students to cope with change. They felt that in planning worship together LCT “has...engendered a respect for the traditions of all trainees” and that “Through the use of alternative parish and chaplaincy placements, trainees are equipped to deal with opportunities which may be very different to what they experience in their own parishes.”
148. One stakeholder in interview commented on how LCT was “student-centred”, and this is reflected in the “diversity of pathways and categories of ministries” for which the college offers training, as stated in LCT’s 2022/2023 Annual Self Evaluation. As is the way the Ministerial Formation Portfolio manual has been revised with specific charts created for each formational pathway.

### Commendation 30

**We commend LCT on the quality of the Ministerial Formation Portfolio manual for ordinands and Reader/LLM students and the separate Discipleship and Formation Portfolio manual for independent students.**

149. We have seen evidence where students have experienced challenges in danger of completely disrupting their training and call to ministry. In the instances reviewed through reflections and pre-licensing reports, it is clear that LCT has provided a huge amount of support to the students concerned – hence our Commendation 28 at section E2 – and particularly in coping with difficult and challenging situations. And given the size of the college, and the ratio of personal tutors to students, it is easy for this support to be intensive, prolonged and almost ‘parental’. Clearly there is always a need to balance this quality of support alongside equipping students for the reality and challenges of ministry outside the training context, and the majority of stakeholders’ evidence is that LCT holds this balance well.

### E7 Students are able to demonstrate trustworthiness.

150. In interview, both current and past students said they were comfortable they knew who to turn to both at college and in parish if they had a safeguarding issue. However, none were able to confidently name the LCT Safeguarding Officer.
151. Feedback from Readers/LLM graduates was that they felt the training received “sharpened” them and provided scenarios “not previously appreciated but that have been seen since” in their ministry. They also felt the training has equipped them to act as parish Safeguarding officers.
152. Of the portfolios reviewed, one contained a reflection of safeguarding training (undated) in which the student stated how helpful and challenging they found the training. Students’ reflections and

comments in pre-licensing reports also evidenced an awareness of the importance of safeguarding particularly on long placements (hospital and prison chaplaincy in particular).

153. Safeguarding training undertaken along with the date and name of trainer is included in each of the interim, penultimate and final year reports reviewed. See Recommendation 7 in section B2 re accessibility of the Safeguarding Policy.
154. Students' reflection on ministerial practice in context, along with supervisors' reports, evidences how students manage with working within the discipline of the church.
155. Some frank views were exchanged by curates and TIs interviewed in how relationships in ministry are important as are ways of dealing with potential conflicts, difference in traditions, or ways of working. All felt LCT facilitated this well, enabling students to give voice to relationship issues whilst being willing to learn from each other.
156. A section of the pre-licensing reports includes the students' suitability to proceed to ordination or licensing.

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

157. Stakeholder feedback indicates the LCT reports are "...best of any of the colleges...clear and upfront about any issues...". A receiving incumbent commented that "reporting is quite clear" as are the instructions on conducting supervision with the curate.
158. Whilst one stakeholder commented that "LCT curates and ministers seem to me to be robust and rooted. So, for example, we have to move very few from their initial training posts", we received some mixed - but mainly positive - messages from others at interview.
  - Some felt LCT are timely in raising concerns about students whilst taking into account their life/domestic circumstances and the need of the students to adapt and be flexible.
  - One interviewee commented that they had experienced pastoral boundary issues with an LCT curate that they felt was formational in nature. The curate was struggling with moving from the status of an employee to that of an office holder with a particular duty of care.
  - The same interviewee mentioned their experience of LCT graduates "giving up", likening this to "roots not having taken place", with this at all levels from curacy to first incumbency. We did not find wider evidence to support this, but we note the point as a minority view.
  - Conversely, one former student said they felt equipped with "balancing life once in post" through their training at LCT.



159. A review of interim, penultimate and final year reports showed evidence of students, supervisors and LCT staff covering growth and development from year to year, including areas for development based on the formational qualities, and where applicable, the formational criteria.
160. Reports based on the criteria (interim and penultimate for 20221/2022), have a specific 'areas for development' after each criteria making it easy to identify the student's development needs.
161. Reports based on the qualities (from 2023 onwards) do not have this section in the changed format of the report, meaning one has to read through the entire text of each quality to identify the areas for development. That said, development areas are included and there were examples of where development areas highlighted in the student's BAP report have been covered.
162. We saw no evidence of student disclaimers or written objections in any of the reports reviewed.

### **Commendation 31**

**We commend LCT on the depth and clarity of its pre-licensing reports on students.**

### **Recommendation 40**

**We recommend that LCT reintroduces the section 'Areas for Development' in the current version of interim, penultimate and final reports.**

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

## **Conclusion**

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



## Summary of Commendations

### **Commendation 1**

We commend LCT for its deep understanding of, care for, and attention to the needs of training people from a wide variety of backgrounds for ministry within dioceses and parishes of the North East.

### **Commendation 2**

We commend the level of information and training available to Placement Supervisors and Incumbents which enables them to own LCT's aims and to play a significant role in the ongoing formation of students.

### **Commendation 3**

We commend the decision to create a separate post which will enable someone other than the Principal to concentrate on the important, and already excellent, work of organising long placements.

### **Commendation 4**

We commend the creative use of Easter School for ordinands.

### **Commendation 5**

We commend the way in which LCT staff and students together nurture a sense of community in a TEI with students from a wide geographical area who meet only once a week and for residential weekends.

### **Commendation 6**

We commend the personal tutor and student 'buddy' relationships for the way in which they build confidence and enable students to navigate more difficult times in their student experience as well as preparing them for public ministry.

### **Commendation 7**

We commend the action taken to remove the potential for inconsistent overall direction of the organisation by replacing the position of Executive Lead, exercising co-leadership with the Principal, with a Director of Business and Finance reporting to the Principal.

### **Commendation 8**

We commend the formation of an Environmental Response Group, the new EDI policy and the work in process to form an EDI working group.

### **Commendation 9**

We commend the quality of discussion observed at both the AGM and the Board of Trustees meetings.

**Commendation 10**

We commend the effectiveness of student representatives' engagement in Trustee and Board of Studies meetings, and the way their contributions were received.

**Commendation 11**

We commend the clarity of thought and positive approach towards partnering of LCT with St John's College/Cranmer Hall of the paper "Theological Training in the North-East – Towards a United Approach".

**Commendation 12**

We commend the positive attitude of LCT Core Staff towards closer partnering with Cranmer Hall.

**Commendation 13**

We commend the way in which the current Principal has undertaken his role, justifiably earning high and widespread regard.

**Commendation 14**

We commend the strengthening of LCT's core staff through, inter alia, the recent recruitment of a Postgraduate Director of Studies.

**Commendation 15**

We commend trustees' passionate and deeply caring support of LCT and their open willingness to improve their exercise of governance.

**Commendation 16**

We commend the assignation to the Director of Business and Finance of sole accountability for the management of policy documents.

**Commendation 17**

We commend LCT for its innovative approach to providing CPD opportunities for those in active ministry.

**Commendation 18**

We commend LCT's provision of career development for theological educators.

**Commendation 19**

We commend LCT for investing in staff continual professional development.

**Commendation 20**

We commend LCT's rigorous approach to collecting and responding to feedback.

**Commendation 21**

We commend LCT's proactive approach to responding to individual students' needs whilst maintaining appropriate academic rigour.

**Commendation 22**

We commend LCT for the quality of its teaching.

**Commendation 23**

We commend LCT's proactive response to the emerging issue of generative AI.

**Commendation 24**

We commend LCT for its supportive approach to assignments.

**Commendation 25**

We commend LCT's training and support of associate and personal tutors, placement supervisors and training incumbents.

**Commendation 26**

We commend LCT for the quality of its placement provision.

**Commendation 27**

We commend the diverse and numerous placement opportunities provided for students, and especially the long placements valued by the students.

**Commendation 28**

We commend the level of pastoral support and care given to the students.

**Commendation 29**

We commend LCT for undertaking unconscious bias training with a focus on racism and prejudice in the Church.

**Commendation 30**

We commend LCT on the quality of the Ministerial Formation Portfolio manual for ordinands and Reader/LLM students and the separate Discipleship and Formation Portfolio manual for independent students.

**Commendation 31**

We commend LCT on the depth and clarity of its pre-licensing reports on students.

## Summary of Recommendations

### **Recommendation 1**

Alongside the commendation above, we recommend that LCT core staff and Trustees consider afresh how the aims of LCT are reflected in the pathways offered and whether any pathways might be more effectively offered by, or collaboratively with, a partner TEI in order to allow LCT to deepen its offering to those students it serves so well (i.e. those identified in the aims of attentiveness to place and to leading partners).

### **Recommendation 2**

We recommend that regular checks are put in place to ensure that the many benefits of a ‘mixed ecology’ are not negated by the experiences of some students whose cohorts have very small numbers and may be without a significant voice within the strong ministry training community.

### **Recommendation 3**

The review team would strongly recommend that conversations with Cranmer Hall are revisited and taken forward by a new Principal with immediate effect. We understand that major decisions may not be possible until all senior staff posts in both dioceses are filled, but planning conversations and moves towards greater unity are essential if LCT is to thrive in its area of formational expertise.

### **Recommendation 4**

We recommend that LCT’s website is updated to give more detail of the aims that are in line with the formational qualities (e.g. those aims relating to attentiveness) and to offer more information on the formational aspects of training for enquirers.

### **Recommendation 5**

We recommend that care is taken to ensure that the term ‘inclusion’ does not enter into a narrow usage meaning simply class and educational background but that regular attention is paid to publicity material and the culture of the TEI to ensure no-one is being inadvertently excluded.

### **Recommendation 6**

In the light of the clear value of Easter School we recommend that LCT seeks ways to open these experiences to all in training for significant, licensed ministries (both lay and ordained), including making it known that modest grants may sometimes be available from college or diocesan sources.

### **Recommendation 7**

We recommend that instructions about how to respond to a safeguarding issue and a number to contact are clearly placed on the home page of both the website and Moodle (one click is all that should be

required) and that contact details are updated and given prominence in all other handbooks (in particular the student and placement handbooks).

### **Recommendation 8**

We recommend that time is taken for teaching about use of informal spaces for worship during residential weekends.

### **Recommendation 9**

We recommend that, similar to Recommendation 2 in section A2 of the report, regular checks are made on the health of the community in core staff meetings concentrating particularly on ensuring no groups of students are feeling excluded and finding ways to enable those students' voices to be heard.

### **Recommendation 10**

We recommend that the Trustees review how best to resolve the issues arising from the Articles of Association stipulations on Trustees' length of service and their re-appointment.

### **Recommendation 11**

We recommend that AGMs and Board of Trustees meetings are both supported by the use of tabular-form action trackers.

### **Recommendation 12**

We recommend that action trackers, in a similar format to that advocated in Recommendation 11, be established and maintained for all regular and periodic internal and external meetings with the exception of the periodic reviews held with DDO's & Reader/LLM Wardens.

### **Recommendation 13**

We recommend the LCT Board of Trustees invites the Bishops of Newcastle and Durham, in consultation with their respective DBFs, to each nominate one person to join the Board as their representatives.

### **Recommendation 14**

We recommend that the co-chairs of the LCT Board of Trustees meet with the Bishop of Newcastle, the Acting Bishop of Durham (as appointed upon the retirement of the current Bishop of Durham), the Principal of St John's College and the Warden of Cranmer Hall to agree how to initiate and progress the suggested "Big Tent" discussion.

### **Recommendation 15**

We recommend that all key management documents such as the Business Plan and SWOT analysis, and strategic action plans arising from them, are owned and approved by the Board of Trustees, used by the Board in exercising oversight of LCT and, unless there are over-riding reasons against, shared with the LCT senior leadership team.

### **Recommendation 16**

We recommend that the Board of Trustees operates with a single chair, supported by a vice-chair, at least until the governance-related recommendations of this Review are addressed. If it subsequently wishes to operate with two co-chairs, the Articles of Association must be revised to allow for this.

### **Recommendation 17**

We recommend that the Board of Trustees is enhanced through the addition of someone with strong business skills and experience.

### **Recommendation 18**

We recommend that the Board of Trustees reflects carefully on whether the current limit on the number of Trustees should be raised (and the Articles of Association revised accordingly) or, to accommodate the additions of Recommendations 15 and 19, that one or more of the current Trustees steps down.

### **Recommendation 19**

We recommend that the Board of Trustees establishes and implements a structured induction process for new Trustees.

### **Recommendation 20**

We recommend that Board of Trustees reviews and updates the skills register and implements a cycle of annual reviews.

### **Recommendation 21**

We recommend that the Board of Trustees, with support from senior LCT staff, addresses the concerns identified in this report regarding the Business Plan by redrafting and then formally approving it.

### **Recommendation 22**

We recommend that the Risk Register is updated, taking into account the observations made within this report.

### **Recommendation 23**

We recommend that a Risk Review meeting of senior staff is held at least quarterly, and that the meeting minutes are provided to Trustees.

### **Recommendation 24**

We recommend that LCT discusses with Newcastle Diocese whether they would adopt the same LLM training model as Durham.

### **Recommendation 25**

We recommend that LCT reviews course provision annually to ensure all courses are functioning well and are viable.

### **Recommendation 26**

We recommend that LCT conduct more market research to assess the size of any potential market for an MA, including opportunities for bursaries.

### **Recommendation 27**

We recommend that these CPD opportunities are discussed as part of the annual appraisal process to ensure all staff take advantage of the CPD and well-being offer.

### **Recommendation 28**

We recommend that Emmaus should only be used if there are adequate teaching facilities, that is three usable classrooms, and that they therefore continue to explore options for alternative venues, ideally without increasing expenditure.

### **Recommendation 29**

We recommend that LCT ensures all students have access to appropriate libraries and academic resources.

### **Recommendation 30**

We recommend that LCT utilises formal and informal mechanisms for hearing student feedback on the effectiveness of the induction process.

### **Recommendation 31**

We recommend that LCT consider more extensive use of assessed conversations and other approaches to assessment.

### **Recommendation 32**

While recognising the commendable work already taking place (Commendation 23), we recommend that LCT needs to remain alert to opportunities and risks of generative AI and develop appropriate strategies in response to future developments, including considering how AI can be used to reduce staff workload as well as more use of assessment methods other than essays.

### **Recommendation 33**

We recommend that LCT should consider whether providing input on study skills later in term one might be more effective, at a point when all students have written at least one essay.

#### **Recommendation 34**

We recommend that LCT check that feedback from formative assessment is always timely enough for students to complete their summative assessment.

#### **Recommendation 35**

We recommend that LCT should develop and implement a consistent approach to remote access to weeknight teaching.

#### **Recommendation 36**

We recommend that requests to incorporate teaching on children and youth work and pioneering and church planting are considered seriously by staff and trustees, and where possible that they are accommodated and integrated into existing programs.

#### **Recommendation 37**

We recommend that similar guidance to that included in the residential weekend program entitled 'A note about saying the Offices' be given to students in using structured or formulaic prayers, to help the prayers flow and to enable fellow worshippers to be prayerfully more engaged.

#### **Recommendation 38**

Building on the work already undertaken and acknowledged in Commendation 29, we recommend that LCT acts on the student feedback and seeks to find ways to build on the annual unconscious bias training undertaken by introducing specific anti-racism activities/training, acknowledging the intersectionality of racism and prejudice across more than just colour, and the need for a variety of voices and experiences in the debate.

#### **Recommendation 39**

We recommend that students on residential receive feedback from a variety of people including their fellow students, thus providing different perspectives and inputs to their growth in ministry.

#### **Recommendation 40**

We recommend that LCT reintroduces the section 'Areas for Development' in the current version of interim, penultimate and final reports.