

## Ministry Council: Periodic External Review Report

# Cranmer Hall

**Conducted onsite, March 2024**

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## Glossary

APL	Accredited Prior Learning
CHO	Cranmer Hall Officers
DCAD	Durham Centre for Academic Development
DDO	Diocesan Director of Ordinands
DSO	Designated Safeguarding Officer
FCT	Free Church Track
IME1/2	Initial Ministerial Education Phase 1/2
LCT	Lindisfarne College of Theology
MDT	Ministry Development Team
MEQ	Module Evaluation Questionnaire
PER	Periodic External Review
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disability
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats
TEI	Theological Education Institution
UKME/GMH	UK Minority Ethnicity / Global Majority Heritage

## Reviewers

**Ven Sam Rushton**, Senior Reviewer; Archdeacon of York

**Revd Canon Dr Georgina Byrne**, Anglican tutor and historian, Queen's Foundation, Birmingham

**Revd Canon Dr Andrew Coleby**, Ministry Training Officer, Peterborough Diocese

**Mrs Debby de Haes**, formerly Director, Renew Consultancy, specialising in public and voluntary sector governance; Peterborough Diocese

## 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 Cranmer Hall

### Introduction

St John's College, Durham, of which Cranmer Hall is one of the two constituent halls, was founded in 1909 and became a College of Durham University in 1919. Cranmer Hall was founded in 1958 when St John's College divided into Cranmer Hall, a theological training institution, and John's Hall. Cranmer Hall continues to be a constituent part of St John's College under its overall governance structure and in the day-to-day reality of a shared life together: students of both Halls share a dining hall and other aspects of college life including the opportunity to worship together and the two Halls have an integrated support structure including Finance, HR, Facilities Management etc. St John's College has a Principal to whom the Warden of Cranmer Hall is accountable albeit with significant delegation. A key difference between John's Hall and Cranmer Hall is that John's students are admitted and taught by the University whilst Cranmer students are admitted by Cranmer and taught by staff employed by Cranmer / St John's. Whilst a seemingly complex relationship, clarity of responsibility and the good nature and flexibility of the staff and students make it work.

Cranmer Hall is a diverse and inclusive community that continues to value its Anglican Evangelical foundation. It offers – indeed prides itself upon - a broad and rich experience of theological education and ministerial formation to students of various church backgrounds and welcomes students from across the spectrum of Anglican traditions. The growth of the Free Church Track has widened the student base significantly and the plans for the Growing Faith Hub have the potential to continue that trend. Cranmer's identity as serving the Church in the North is very evident but students come from all areas of the country and indeed world.

### Recent changes

Since the last Review there has been a significant change in the leadership of Cranmer Hall and also at St John's College. Revd Dr Nick Moore, formerly the Academic Dean was appointed as Warden in September 2023, succeeding Revd Dr Philip Plyming (now Dean of Durham Cathedral) and Revd Professor Jolyon Mitchell as Principal of St John's College, succeeding Revd Professor David Wilkinson who had been Principal for 17 years, also starting in role in September 2023. St John's College and Cranmer Hall have embarked on a review of strategy, governance and operations in light of this change so this PER is set against a background of significant ongoing change.

In addition to the change in leadership, Cranmer has made a number of changes to its internal organisation structure, clarifying responsibilities and bringing focus to key areas of work. Dr Samuel Tranter was appointed as Academic Dean at the beginning of 2024 and Dr Cynthia Bennet Brown as the Director of the MA Programme in February 2024. It has just been announced that Revd Canon Dr Emma Parker, the Deputy Warden, is about to move to be Priest-in-Charge at St Gabriel's Church, Sunderland and Cranmer Hall is advertising for a reshaped role as Dean of Anglican Formation. Revd Steve Muneza

was appointed in 2019 as the Director of Contextual Learning and brings the opportunity of developing links with Burundi where he was born. Revd Ian Galloway was appointed as Director of the Free Church Track in September 2020 and this area of Cranmer's work has grown significantly over the last few years as a result of a new bursary scheme funded by the Relay Trust. Revd Jamie Daniels, a Pentecostal Pastor, was appointed in 2022 to a role funded by the Relay Trust to develop the Growing Leaders North East work and to widen access to theological learning for Free Church and Independent students.

In January 2023 it was announced that Cranmer had been chosen as a Growing Faith Learning Hub in partnership with the Growing Faith Foundation. They are currently working with the national Church of England '30k Project' to develop 30,000 new children and youth leaders by 2030.

The new Learning Resource Centre, anticipated in the last Review, including a new College Library and accessible teaching rooms, was opened in 2019. A project to develop the Leech Hall is underway, also with the aim of creating more accessible space within College. A new Operations Director for Cranmer Hall, Chris Courtman, was appointed following the last PER and he has now been appointed as Director of Finance & Operations for St John's College.

## **PER Process and evidence**

The Senior Reviewer made a preliminary visit to Cranmer Hall on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2024, meeting with the Warden, the Principal and senior colleagues to outline the purpose and scope of the Review and to respond to questions. The Review itself took place on 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> March (reviewers representing the national church's Ministry Development Team) and on 6 March (with Durham University team). The Reviewers are most grateful for the warm hospitality extended to them by the Warden, by the teaching and other staff, and by the students during these visits.

The Reviewers interviewed a range of people within the institution, including the Principal of St John's College, the Warden and Deputy Warden of Cranmer Hall, the Director of Finance & Operations for St John's College, the Academic Dean and the Directors of the Undergraduate and MA Programmes and of Contextual Learning. They also interviewed a wide range of teaching staff, both full-time and part-time, and met with the administrative and support staff of Cranmer and St John's. They held meetings with representative students from various pathways and made themselves available for one-to-one meetings with students, both ordinands and Free Church. They met spouses, alumni, training incumbents and placement supervisors.

The team attended daily worship and sat in on lectures and seminars, made an off-site visit to a placement parish in Spennymoor, and joined students and staff for meals. A wide range of stakeholders was consulted and written or oral communications were received from (among others) the Bishop of Durham, senior figures in Durham University, Durham Diocese and Durham Cathedral, members of Cranmer Committee, St John's Council, DDOs of sponsoring dioceses, training incumbents, placement supervisors and former students. The Team is immensely grateful to all those who made space to offer feedback in this process.



Cranmer Hall made a substantial and comprehensive body of documentation available to the Reviewers in advance, including:

1. Self Evaluation: Formational Overview and Educational SWOT commentary
2. Formational Mapping Document
3. Publicity Material and a range of College Handbooks
4. Staff Policies / Staff Handbook
5. Teaching, Management and Support Staff details
6. Overview of taught programmes including update on progress since last PER
7. Teaching Policies including APL Policy, Admissions Policy, Markers' Handbooks, Student Handbooks
8. St John's College: Council Committee Structure, Council Membership, Memorandum and Articles of Association, Memorandum of Understanding with Durham University, Operations Overview, Audited Accounts, Budget 2023-24, Risk Register
9. Cranmer Committee: Terms of Reference and Current Membership, Staff Meeting / Structure, Budget 2023-24
10. Description of Accommodation and Development Plans
11. Student Statistics

The Common Awards review team also had access to the Common Awards framework and documentation, including:

1. the core regulations for the Common Awards programmes;
2. programme specifications;
3. module outlines;
4. assessment criteria and assessment guidance;
5. contact hours parameters;
6. the Common Awards TEI Handbook;
7. the Guide for PER Reviewers Appointed by Durham University (incorporating the PER Criteria that were developed in conjunction with the Church of England).

During the academic year 2023-24 Cranmer Hall was providing theological education and ministerial formation for 39 Church of England ordinands, 1 clergyperson from another Anglican Province, 36 students on the Free Church Track and 1 trainee Baptist minister; in addition there were 20 students using the MA for in-service training for ministry, 8 independent MA students, and 42 DThM students. There were 22 female ordinands. 15 ordinand students are single, 24 are married or in civil partnerships.

## General Observations

The Reviewers were very impressed with much that they saw at Cranmer. Although there are a number of recommendations in this report, on the whole these are suggested improvements to a TEI which is

comfortable in its own skin, gracious, kind, hospitable and caring, and where academic rigour is carefully married with formational excellence. There is a great deal to applaud.

In particular, the Review Team would wish to commend:

- Cranmer’s clarity of vision and values and a deeply embedded culture of graciousness and kindness, firmly rooted in their Anglican and evangelical roots and in the culture of the Northeast of England, but also strongly embracing new initiatives, for example excellent engagement with the national church goal of Growing Younger.
- The rigour and breadth of the Formational Journal and supporting materials, and the intentional and consistent commitment to integrating academic study with ministerial formation.
- A well thought-through commitment to preparing ordinands for the realities of parish ministry today and in the future, especially the module ‘Preparing for Public Ministry’ based around the Guidelines for the Professional Conduct of the Clergy which provides a detailed and broad preparation for ministry, and the use of Bridge Builders material in equipping students for ‘Conflict Transformation’.
- Excellent links with a diversity of churches across the region, including Durham Cathedral, and increasingly, through the Free Church Track, with a wider variety of non-Anglican churches.
- A deeply embedded culture of listening to and responding to feedback in almost all areas of college life, and in particular the hearing of the student voice and the students’ own positive response to feedback.
- A commitment to inclusive worship – inclusive of age, gender, race, tradition and theological stance, providing opportunities for students to lead and experience worship from choral evensong through to all age worship.
- An interactive and responsive teaching style, personable but rigorous in its academic roots and with good flexibility and responsiveness to feedback in module development, including the imaginative use of assessed conversation, encouraging ordinands to speak clearly and with understanding about Christian belief.
- Good governance in a complex environment, excellent engagement and support from a skilled and experienced Council and Cranmer Committee, and an entrepreneurial approach to fund raising and development.
- Strong links with Durham University including partnership in the Michael Ramsey Centre for Anglican Studies and a superlative quality of library resources, digitally and in print.
- Staff commitment to personal learning, research and development.

Notwithstanding these significant strengths, there is always room for improvement and the Reviewers are confident, given Cranmer's commitment to feedback, that these areas suggested by the Review Team will be carefully considered for improvement:

- The Free Church Track offers a number of opportunities which could be exploited for ordinand formation, for example, the Track's commitment to widening access to theological learning to those from non-traditional academic backgrounds, and the opportunity to deepen the appreciation of Anglicanism through a well-held engagement and exploration of difference.
- In the current climate where the over-provision of college-based learning for ordinands is prompting questions around differentiation and distinctiveness, Cranmer Committee and senior leadership is encouraged to engage in a period of vision setting - in collaboration with local dioceses, bishops and TEIs (particularly Lindisfarne College of Theology) - to maximise their strengths, particularly in the missional and faith context of the Northeast.
- In addition, the publicity material for potential students, DDOs and Bishops should be reviewed to ensure it is up to date and adequately showcases Cranmer's distinctive contribution to theological education for the Church of England: its strong links with Durham University, and its northern location and character.
- Cranmer would benefit from being more attentive to 'otherness', for example through more active engagement with interfaith dialogue regionally, having a more clearly communicated staff responsibility for all issues to do with Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, and more active listening to the voice of mixed-mode students, spouses and Free Church Track students.
- Worship is good and inclusive but this inclusiveness can lead to a loss of personality or distinctiveness; a designated person, possibly the newly appointed Dean of Anglican Formation, if given a clear role in shaping the worshipping life of Cranmer students would remedy this.
- At a governance level, Council and Committee should consider their future recruitment processes based on skills required for their strategic future and, in addition, improve accessibility for currently unheard voices, and could improve their induction processes.
- Links with Durham University are excellent, more could be made of opportunities for joint staff development particularly in the areas of EDI and AI.
- In a few areas, updating and reviewing policies and practices which have been in place for a number of years: the relationship with external tutors to ensure they are properly recognised and equipped for the expertise they bring; Placement paperwork; safeguarding processes.
- Find space to engage more with contemporary issues of faith and to grow a more 'prophetic' voice, for example in the areas of the fourth and fifth mark of mission.

## Summary of Outcomes

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

Overall the Reviewers have **Confidence** in Cranmer Hall and wish them well as they continue to adapt and grow.

<b>CRITERION</b>	<b>OUTCOME</b>
A Formational Aims	Confidence
B Formational Context and Community	Confidence with Qualifications
C Leadership and Management	Confidence
D Teaching and Learning	Confidence
E Ministerial Formation	Confidence
<b>Overall Outcome</b>	<b>Confidence</b>

The review team regards Cranmer Hall as fit for purpose for preparing candidates for ordained ministry.

## Section A: Formational Aims

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

1. The Cranmer Hall website clearly states that Cranmer is 'Christ-Centred, Cross Cultured' and that they are 'A vibrant and diverse evangelical Christian community'. The Warden's introduction expands these themes stating that Cranmer is centred on Christ in 'our learning ... our prayer and worship ... our community life ...our formation'. These themes, especially being centred on and growing in Christ, are evident in the life of the College, and epitomised in the Cranmer Hall Community Covenant which all students and staff are invited to affirm annually. The Community Life Handbook also has a very clear exposition of Cranmer's values relating to diversity and unity. It is noticeable, however, that different documents emphasise or restate the vision in slightly different ways. The Warden is currently engaging with Cranmer Committee to review the strategy, beginning with a refining of the vision and aims, and this is to be commended. Once completed, the Review Team suggest that a comprehensive review of all documentation is undertaken to align them to an agreed vision statement.
2. Whilst firmly evangelical and Anglican in its roots as stated in its governing documents, Cranmer is rightly proud of its ability to hold diversity of opinion on theological and liturgical issues with grace and respect. The growth of the Free Church Track is providing a fruitful opportunity to explore what being Anglican means in comparison to other church traditions and, handled well, this will sharpen ordinand formation.

#### **Commendation 1**

**We commend Cranmer Hall for its clarity of vision and values and a deeply embedded culture of graciousness and kindness.**

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

3. The Review Team were provided with a comprehensive mapping document which sets out clearly how the formational programme enables an ordinand to meet the criteria expected at the end of IME1. It shows how the academic programme and ministerial formation elements combine to create a holistic formational journey. A key element of the formational programme is the completion by the ordinand of the Formational Journal, structured around the IME1 formational qualities and with clear questions and tasks to be completed each term. The Journal is reviewed at each tutorial and there is an equally clear and comprehensive Tutors' Handbook which equips tutors to have intentional conversations in a timely way. In addition, each Tutor is given one-to-one support in using the framework. The thoroughness of this approach to formation is to be commended.

4. Cranmer maintains good relationships with Durham Diocese and a wide variety of its constituent parishes and this, plus regular DDO Days, enables the TEI to stay close to the shifting requirements of ministerial formation. There are strong links to the national strategic aims particularly in the area of 'Growing Younger' through engagement with Growing Faith and the 30k initiative and there is a wide range of expertise in the area of 'Mixed Ecology' in the teaching staff. The appointment of a Dean of Anglican Formation will be key in ensuring that there remains a strong grounding in missional parish ministry.
5. The Free Church Track has the potential to stimulate further development of Cranmer's ability to meet the needs of those from non-traditional academic backgrounds with the appointment of an officer with responsibility for widening access to theological training. Currently Cranmer has only 2 ordinands who did not already have a degree when they start. There are opportunities here to learn from this wider experience of formation as there will be if the plans for an apprenticeship scheme to deliver the aspirations of the 30k Project. Cranmer has a good reputation as a provider of life-long learning with 20 people undertaking MAs at Cranmer for Continuing Ministerial Development and a further 42 DThM students.

#### **Commendation 2**

**We commend the rigour of the Formational Journal and supporting materials and the intentional and consistent commitment to integrating academic study with ministerial formation.**

#### **Recommendation 1**

**We recommend that Cranmer Hall review the opportunities for widening access to theological learning to those from non-traditional academic backgrounds.**

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

6. Cranmer Hall holds regular Open Days for DDOs and visits are warmly encouraged. Cranmer rely heavily on their website, Instagram and X as a source of information and publicity but it was noted that, in places, the information on the website is out of date. A section dedicated to information for Bishops and DDOs would improve Cranmer's ability to target this key audience. Overall, the website offers an accurate picture of Cranmer as experienced during the Review and the videos and pictures emphasise Cranmer's aspirations to encourage diversity: the images and videos feature a good mix of students and teachers from GMH backgrounds for example. Cranmer has a good and deserved reputation as an affirming place for women to train for ministry, reflected in the 50/50 balance in gender across the student body as a whole. Stakeholders spoke positively of the ability of Cranmer students to handle difference with grace and respect.
7. A number of stakeholders spoke about the importance to them of Cranmer's northern character and situation and Cranmer appears committed to being a hub of theological learning for the

Northeast. There is a page on the website which showcases this and a conversation with a member of staff highlighted that Cranmer takes this seriously when appointing. Whilst Cranmer welcomes students from across the Church of England (including the Diocese of Europe), there was a prevalence of northern accents amongst students. The reviewers were greatly heartened by this, and hope that this continues through deep contextually motivated conversations, so that Cranmer is further embedded into the faith landscape of the region. In considering its strategy for the future, Cranmer is encouraged to explore this distinctiveness further, perhaps in collaboration with the Northeast and Yorkshire bishops, deliberately offering something distinctively different into the range of theological training on offer across the country.

### **Recommendation 2**

**We recommend that Cranmer undertake some vision setting, perhaps in partnership with others in the region, so that the faith context of the Northeast might further shape and support the learning at Cranmer.**

### **Recommendation 3**

**We recommend a review of the publicity material for potential students, DDOs and Bishops to ensure it is up to date and adequately showcases Cranmer’s distinctive contribution to theological education for the Church of England: its links with Durham University, and its northern location and character.**

<p><b>The review team has Confidence with regard to Criterion A: Formational Aims.</b></p>
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## 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.**

8. Cranmer Hall as part of St John's College is well integrated with the life of Durham University and has good links with the latter's theology department. It is good at sharing resources and good practice within that context.
9. The relationship with Lindisfarne College of Theology is currently rather more distant. However, due to a range of circumstances - the fact that the Warden of Cranmer Hall is relatively new in post and that LCT itself has just appointed a new principal (who knows Cranmer Hall well) and has very recently undergone its own PER - there is now a unique opportunity for the relationship to be re-set, with scope for sharing resources and a suitable division of labour between the two TEIs.
10. Cranmer Hall relates very well to churches in the region, including Anglican churches of all traditions across Durham diocese, in the context of its placement programme. There are strong ties with Durham Cathedral and good ecumenical links as well, reflecting the increasingly ecumenical nature of the student body, although the Wesley Study Centre no longer trains ministers for the Methodist Church.
11. Relationships with other faith communities in the region are currently somewhat thin. Students visit places of worship belonging to other faiths in Newcastle, in the context of teaching about other faiths. This is complemented by an opportunity to attend a Christian-Muslim summer school in Oxford, which counts as a module. In terms of students encountering serious dialogue with Muslims in particular, it is worth asking whether the 'Mahabba' network, which apparently has an active group in Stockton-on-Tees, may provide an option that is regional and accessible.
12. The placement programme extends to a wide range of hospital and other chaplaincies, with scope for learning from the institutions in which they are based.

#### **Commendation 3**

**We commend Cranmer Hall's links with a diversity of churches across the region.**

#### **Recommendation 4**

**We recommend that Cranmer pursue closer partnership with Lindisfarne College of Theology.**

#### **Recommendation 5**

**We recommend more active engagement with interfaith dialogue regionally.**



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

13. There are comprehensive policies covering welfare, pastoral care, equality and conduct contained in the Community Life Handbook, the Academic Guide, the Staff Handbook and the Tutorial Handbooks for tutors and ordinands. These are generally well applied, although the structures for the provision of pastoral care is communicated in different ways in different handbooks which may be confusing.
14. Delays in the university's disability service's processing of students with dyslexia in particular (as flagged in the Self-Evaluation SWOT analysis) is a significant problem in terms of disability support. There are also other issues relating to disability access of varying degrees of intractability. The historic college buildings make disabled access difficult if not impossible in several places although the new Learning Resource Centre (which is fully accessible) and planned improvements to the Leech Hall will improve matters considerably. There are some areas where a little more attention to detail might make a difference fairly easily: speech amplification is generally good in the teaching spaces but the reviewers were surprised that neither the chapel nor the Leech Hall have a hearing loop; some presentation slides were not ideally suited to those with visual impairment; Morning Prayer in the Chapel is quite loud and might be difficult for those with some neurodiversities to engage with (although there is a quieter space at one end of the Chapel to which those wanting a quieter space might withdraw).
15. The gender balance amongst the teaching staff is currently satisfactory but this may decline with up-coming staff changes. The ethnicity of the staff is predominantly 'white British' although the appointment of Revd Muneza in 2019 was a positive step toward a more racially diverse teaching staff. The student body is probably as diverse as one might expect in the context of national vocations, however Cranmer do not collect data on racial diversity so this was difficult to judge. In the context of the national church's desire to see a more diverse clergy population, the Reviewers invite Cranmer to consider whether collecting data in this area might be a good starting point. We would see this as a responsibility of the lead officer role suggested at Recommendation 6. The college will be hosting a gathering of UKME/GMH ordinands and curates in September 2024 as part of efforts to attract a wider range of students.
16. Safeguarding procedures, training and practice are generally in line with national requirements. However, the Warden being the Designated Safeguarding Officer and the Deputy Warden the deputy DSO raises questions about the independence of the safeguarding reporting processes within Cranmer. Any risk is mitigated by the close relationship between the TEI and the Durham Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser and one tutor spoke about how they felt empowered to contact the DSA directly for advice. There are no prescribed safeguarding structures for TEIs from the national Ministry Team but the Review Team considers it would be good practice to review safeguarding roles and processes, including consideration of the appointment of a Designated

Person with whom concerns could be raised and the appointment of a member of the Cranmer Committee with responsibility for overseeing safeguarding from a governance perspective

17. The community functions adequately in residential, dispersed and online modes. Students prevented by temporary circumstances from attending 'in person' teaching sessions are reasonably catered for via Zoom. Mixed-mode students spoke positively about their ability to access learning resources remotely.
18. The student voice is well represented and heard in a number of ways: the Staff Student Consultative Committee, Community Hours (drop-in) sessions and weekly meetings (in term-time) between the Warden and student president and fortnightly meetings between the Warden and executive team. There is generally good up-take of Module Evaluation Questionnaires with time allowed within teaching sessions for these (online) documents to be filled out. Students commented to the reviewers that feedback generally produced change and if, for whatever reason, no change was possible with a particular issue, this would be clearly explained by staff. There were, however, comments that mixed-mode students and their needs are sometimes over-looked by the college. Free Church Track students are also quite distinct from Anglican ordinands, with different expectations of them in terms of attending corporate worship and formation. The continuing growth of this track looks set to have an impact of the college's culture and cohesiveness and it would be helpful if the voices of these students were more actively encouraged.
19. There have been significant efforts to include spouses and families in the life of Cranmer Hall: these include the Monday afternoon tea and All-Age Worship; the right of spouses to be part of a tutorial session once a year and freedom to 'audit' courses. But in practice, several of the students and spouses that the reviewers met did not feel that the voice of spouses was being well listened to within Cranmer's decision-making processes. Some of them had significant issues in connection with the rental accommodation owned by the college. The reviewers came across several lapses in communication in connection with this in the short time that they were on site.

#### **Commendation 4**

**We commend the hearing of the student voice within Cranmer Hall and its prevailing culture of responsiveness to feedback in staff and students.**

#### **Recommendation 6**

**We recommend that there should be clearer communication regarding responsibility for issues to do with Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.**

#### **Recommendation 7**

**We recommend a review of safeguarding roles and policy to ensure independence of disclosure process from Cranmer's senior leadership.**

## Recommendation 8

**We recommend more active listening to the voice of mixed-mode students, spouses and those on the Free Church Track.**

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

20. The historic buildings of Cranmer Hall present a significant challenge to those with mobility issues with internal and external steps and narrow corridors. The newer buildings like the Learning Resource Centre are much better from that point of view. There is no hearing loop in the chapel or the Leech Hall. These venues are otherwise adequate and capable of imaginative and creative use.
21. There is an Accommodation and Development Plan which is being implemented. Some of the current issues with the College's rental properties raised with the Reviewers are being addressed by the rolling programme of development for these houses and clearer communication on these plans might help to deal with some ongoing gaps in expectation. In terms of the single student accommodation, some issues were raised by inhabitants in one of the student properties where a mismatch of expectation was causing some distress. Again, more clarity in communication would have been helpful to avoid any misunderstanding.
22. In terms of carbon neutrality, St John's College now has a 'Reduction of Carbon Emissions Action Plan' in place aimed at reducing carbon emissions progressively by 2030 and 2035 but no date has yet been set for the achievement of net zero. The plan is due to be reviewed annually. The Facilities Manager noted that achieving the target of Carbon Net Zero is challenging in what is a World Heritage Site.

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

23. Corporate worship is central to the life of Cranmer Hall. The reviewers attended Morning Prayer in chapel twice and the Tuesday evening Eucharist in the Leech Hall and some reviewers also attended the All-Age Worship in the Leech Hall on Monday afternoon. The students participated well in these services.
24. Morning Prayer is compulsory for full time ordinands as is attendance at Tuesday evening College Communion, and Thursday Evening Prayer. Ordinands must also attend one of the other Evening Prayers during the week: Monday All-Age Worship, Wednesday Choral Evensong or Friday Evening Prayer. A Wednesday lunchtime Communion is also available which is deliberately set aside for those for whom a regular Anglican Eucharist is important. Anglican ordinands are exposed to the Book of Common Prayer through designated Book of Common Prayer weeks each term. Through this mixed diet of worship, the intention is that ordinands develop a rhythm of prayer which is life-giving to fuel their ministry.

25. On the whole, feedback suggests that this pattern meets those needs, however, some feedback suggests that the worship lacks heart-felt diversity across the Anglican spectrum and there was a desire to experience worship which is rooted in each of a range of traditions. Inviting ministers who represent different traditions to celebrate communion in their own distinctive way, including those from the Free Churches, and offering a short commentary on the reasons for difference would be one way of achieving this. The Review Team notes that there is no one person on the staff team with the responsibility for shaping the worshipping life of Cranmer and this may explain why it lacks ‘personality’.
26. The worship observed was inclusive of gender and differing theological convictions. Theological difference is held together well in this and other areas of the college’s life.

#### **Commendation 5**

**We commend Cranmer for the inclusivity of its worshipping life.**

#### **Recommendation 9**

**We recommend that a designated person, possibly the newly appointed Dean of Anglican Formation, is given a clear role in shaping the worshipping life of Cranmer students.**

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

27. The interactions observed between staff and students in both learning and social settings were all very positive. In teaching, the style was highly interactive and personal.
28. The staff modelled faithful learning and reflection very positively and seemed very comfortable in the company of the students.
29. The students appreciate the passion which the staff show for their subjects and their faith-filled engagement with study.

#### **Commendation 6**

**We commend Cranmer Hall for its interactive teaching style.**

**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.**

30. Cranmer Hall is not a separate legal entity. Cranmer Committee ('Committee') oversees formational training, pastoral policy, detailed development of policy and making proposals on Cranmer strategy. It is a sub-committee of St John's Council ('Council'), which is the legal entity. Council members are Trustees (Directors) of the St John's College Charity, whereas Committee members are advisory.
31. The complexity of this relationship is broadly well handled. It operates in several ways. Formally, there is good mutual representation on the respective oversight bodies. Seven (out of twelve currently) members of Cranmer Committee are also full members of Council, including three independents and one student. Historically the same person is Vice-Chair of both. This crossover allows for good communication and advocacy, and good understanding of issues from both perspectives. The Warden is a member of St John's senior leadership team. Student representation is also helpful, as the President of Cranmer Common Room (CCR) is a full member of both Committee and Council. These formal mechanisms appear to work well.
32. There are clear terms of reference for Council, Committee and sub-committees. It is good practice to limit the number of terms of office non-executives can hold and the Reviewers encourage both Council and Committee to consider this. This is not currently an issue as student representatives change every year and there has been a reasonable degree of turnover on both Council and Committee due to external circumstances. However, this is not by design.
33. The Cranmer student representative mechanisms appear to work particularly well and are to be commended. Student reps are elected annually, and the student body has good representation on Council and Committee, as stated above. The President has weekly meetings with the Warden and holds regular open question-and-answer sessions jointly with the Warden, to identify and discuss student concerns. The President also holds student forums to discuss sensitive issues in an open and non-attributable way. Matters arising from these can be raised with the Warden by the President anonymously. This system appears well-used. Students appear to know who their specific reps are, and regularly consult them – e.g., over welfare issues.
34. Most management and administrative functions such as finance, HR (including employment), repairs and maintenance, catering, College facilities and housing, are run by St John's. This dependence of Cranmer upon St John's for all these functions, whilst advantageous at one level, could potentially be challenging. However, there appears to be good clarity and transparency about how these functions operate, with clear mechanisms for determining relative allocations, response times and budget-setting.

35. The informal working relationships between individuals at St John's and Cranmer appear strong, which helps negotiate the less integrated parts of the system. The review team had a concern that good working between St John's and Cranmer could be too dependent on informal relationships, at all levels, but this is probably the reality of working within this type of complex governance structure. Currently, it seems to be handled well, and the team had no major concerns in this area.
36. Within Cranmer itself, there is a clear and balanced organisational structure which has benefitted from the new Warden's recent restructure, giving more reasonable spans of control. Annual appraisal systems appear to operate well. Staff felt happy to raise issues with their managers at any time but also at annual appraisals. Those who wish to improve their skills and experience are actively encouraged to undertake relevant training, with generous provision given. This appears to be more reactive than proactive, and Cranmer could benefit from considering how to encourage more staff to engage in training and development.
37. There is good representation on both Council and Committee from key partners, such as the diocese, local ministers, stakeholders in the Free Church Track and Durham University. There are good links with the Cathedral which provides another useful resource for Cranmer.

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

38. Despite the potentially challenging nature of the interrelationships between St John's and Cranmer, leadership works well and is effective in practice. Both the Principal and Warden are relatively new in post and appear already to have good and effective working relationships. This enthusiasm for working together and the modelling of good practice by the two leaders appears positively to affect working relationships between St John's and Cranmer at all levels. This partnership in leadership will no doubt continue to develop.
39. Cranmer Hall Officers meet every week to ensure oversight on all key management aspects of Cranmer. The CHOs comprise the Warden, Deputy Warden, Academic Dean, Director of the Free Church Track, the Admissions and Placement Secretary as the most senior member of the Cranmer Hall Operations Team, and the Warden's PA. There is a rolling agenda which is updated weekly which covers a range of items from progress on major initiatives to the planning of one-off events. The meeting is purposeful and well run.
40. There are good relationships between executives and non-executives. Executives feel able to call on non-executives to discuss issues in their areas of expertise.
41. The Review Team noted a strong motivational climate among staff, a passion for student success and a commitment to the clear principles and values on which both St John's and Cranmer are based. Regular formal and informal meetings ensure issues are generally tackled early.
42. Strategy, and a clear direction of travel for the next few years, is being developed jointly and is still a work-in-progress, as noted above in Section A.

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

43. Members of Council are highly skilled and experienced, across a wide range of relevant areas, and have strong links to key stakeholders.
44. Cranmer Committee members' experience is understandably more focused in academic and church areas, and these again are high-level and relevant. There are currently good links to key stakeholders, including a Free Church Rep – in addition, the newly revised TOR offers the possibility for a FC student to join. Potentially any additional initiative likely to impact significantly on Cranmer life, e.g., if the apprenticeship scheme happens, could also merit a place on the Committee. There is also a lower percentage of external members on the Committee than would represent good practice. The Committee appears aware of this and reviewers would urge them to recruit more. The Review Team notes the Committee's terms of reference have been reviewed very recently and encourage Cranmer to undertake regular reviews in this way.
45. The Review Team commends St John's and Cranmer for the high level of skills, experience and broad representation of the members of their Council and Committee respectively.
46. As St John's and Cranmer develop their strategic direction more clearly, the Review Team recommends undertaking a skills audit for future needs; the initial work in this area is recognised as a good start.
47. Background, gender and age diversity appear good, however, the Review Team recommends members of Council and Committee also to identify additional ways of hearing different (and currently unheard) voices in their decision making, to broaden and inform discussion and avoid 'groupthink'.
48. Although the Reviewers were not able to observe meetings of either body, feedback indicates that the level of scrutiny and appropriate challenge is good and welcomed by the executive. Members engage well with issues, particularly at Council.
49. Council members receive a half-day induction when specifics of St John's College are explored. Neither Council nor Committee has an explicit member (or Board) development plan beyond mandatory training. There are also no role descriptions for members of Council or Committee.
50. We recommend Council and Committee review their induction processes, including introducing role descriptions, and in addition, consider introducing an annual development plan, setting out activities focused on exploring different insights into future issues and challenges, including, for example, external speakers or visits.

#### **Commendation 7**

**We commend St John's and Cranmer for the high level of skills and experience of the members of their Council and Committee respectively.**



### **Recommendation 10**

**We recommend Council and Committee consider their future recruitment processes based on skills required for their strategic future and, in addition, improve accessibility for currently unheard voices.**

### **Recommendation 11**

**We recommend that Council and Committee review their induction processes, introduce role descriptions, and, in addition, consider introducing an annual development plan, setting out activities focused on exploring different insights into future issues and challenges.**

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

51. Cranmer is in a sound financial position, with strong cash and reserves. There is good budgeting in place, both at St John's and Cranmer levels, with good input from Cranmer into the overall St John's budgeting process.
52. As the strategic plan for St John's and Cranmer is being developed, there is currently no business plan setting out a financial plan for delivering it. In addition, a major development of the financial accounting systems means that, at the time of the review, no management accounts were available. Whilst Council is aware of this and has spent time discussing the risks, it is vital that this be addressed urgently.
53. We commend the level of external fundraising, which is a real strength for St John's and Cranmer, with new buildings and staff posts funded in this way. There is every sign this will continue.
54. Risk assessment is well developed at St John's, with some identified risks being held by the University (e.g., most IT and cyber risks), and some risks being specific to Cranmer. A recent external review has identified further enhancements, which will enable more proactive management of risks, including identifying fewer high-level risks and enabling more movement of these risks on the register as action is taken to reduce them. We encourage the use of this more refined process to manage risks more proactively.

### **Commendation 8**

**We commend the level of external fundraising by St John's and Cranmer.**

### **Recommendation 12**

**We recommend that the new financial accounting system be made fully functional as a matter of urgency to enable full management reporting for both St John's and Cranmer.**

**The review team has Confidence 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.

55. Cranmer Hall offers the following awards in Theology that are validated by Durham University (DU) and Durham Common Awards (DCA):
- **The BA in Theology, Ministry and Mission (DCA).** This is a full Honours degree delivered over three years, full-time (360 credits/120 per year) with CertHE, DipHE, and Ordinary degree options. Students may complete a DipHE in two years, or BA in three years, or BA in two years with APL.
  - **MA in Theology and Ministry (DU).** This may be completed in one year (full-time), or part-time over two or three years, and either in Durham or remotely. Modules carry 30 credits (rather than the 20 credits DCA equivalent), which allows for interchangeability with the University departments. Teaching of the MA comprises weekly classes (Thursdays) and intensive blocks. Ordinands complete it over two or three years, with audited BA modules, placements, and formational commitments, which together make up a full-time pathway.
  - **Doctor of Theology and Ministry (DU).** This is a professional doctorate, part-taught, part-research, completed over three years (full-time) or six years (part-time). It is a partnership programme, with teaching and supervision shared by Cranmer and Durham University's Department of Theology and Religion. Ordinands undertaking the DThM do so with agreement from the Research Degrees Panel.
  - **BA in Theology and Religion and PhD in Theology (DU).** These two programmes are delivered by Durham University's Department of Theology and Religion.
56. All awards have been approved as pathways for ordination by the Ministry Development Team.
57. Anglican ordinands may study as full-time residential students (including weekly boarders and daytime commuters), full-time non-residential, context-based students (called 'mixed mode'), and by exceptional agreement with NMT, part-time students.
58. Alongside ordinands, there are Free Church students who come from a variety of contexts, and also Independent students (mostly on postgraduate programmes). Cranmer Hall bears no direct formational responsibility for these, but nevertheless is whole-heartedly committed to their academic learning and rejoices at their presence.
59. Cranmer Hall makes excellent use of its location and partnership with Durham University, building on historically strong relationships with continuing commitment and engagement at institutional, professional and personal levels. Both the Warden and Academic Dean are honorary fellows in the

University Department and are copied into all departmental correspondence. The University's Michael Ramsey Centre for Anglican Studies includes Cranmer as one of its partners.

60. Reviewers were pleased to note the level of thought that had been given to how the taught modules integrated intentionally with the national formational requirements of ordinands at IME1. This was reflected not only in the TEI paperwork, but in conversations with staff and students.
61. The teaching is of a consistently high standard, and tutors connect classroom learning with formation and life experience in a way that is both natural and deliberate.

### **Commendation 9**

**We commend the strong links with Durham University including partnership in the Michael Ramsey Centre for Anglican Studies.**

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

62. Teaching at Cranmer is informed by the specialisms of the tutors, and there is a deep commitment to research shared by all academic staff. This is embedded within the structure of the academic year, meaning that every member of academic staff receives a term of study leave once every nine terms. This pattern has been maintained even during staff vacancies and is something that is valued by staff members. Staff are asked to provide a brief proposal for this leave – this may include reading for the development of their teaching or undertaking research – and offer a short account at the end of the period. The proposal and report are seen by the Research Committee as well as the CHOs.
63. Staff are actively encouraged to share their research with one another. This happens informally, through the staff reading group, as well as formally through the required study leave process.
64. All new teaching staff undergo an induction programme via the University's 'Oracle' platform. HR is managed by St John's, drawing on resources available through the University.
65. Staff are encouraged to make use of the Durham Centre for Academic Development (DCAD), and to proceed to Higher Education Academy fellowship.
66. Teaching standards are monitored by an in-house peer review system. Staff complete a *pro forma* review, which is used as a part of the general staff reviews. Student comments on the module teaching comes through the MEQs at the end of each module. Reviewers noted that staff took care to encourage in-class feedback as well as the online evaluations. Students are also encouraged to give 'real time' feedback during modules.
67. Staff are encouraged individually to make use of DCAD (see above), but reviewers noted a need for some in-house *corporate* pedagogical staff development. The reviewers welcome the prioritising

of the EDI agenda and hope that this becomes firmly embedded into the teaching culture, allowing all staff to teach confidently and with appropriate awareness.

68. Although the Academic Handbook offers clear guidance to students concerning plagiarism, there is little written guidance concerning the fast-moving world of Artificial Intelligence. Responses to AI are emerging from the academy, and the reviewers encourage tutors to think together about this issue so that students can be given clear guidance for their work.
69. Students enjoy superlative library facilities through Cranmer's connection with the University, which offers full access to digital books and journals in the Bill Bryson Library. Students off-site, who prefer hard copy to digital, may request books to be sent. New texts are added to the college library at the request of students and staff.
70. The recently completed Learning Resource Centre offers a modern and spacious learning environment, with a library specialising in theology, study spaces, accessible lecture rooms, and seminar rooms equipped with lecture capture technology.
71. Uniquely among TEIs, Cranmer Hall does not use Moodle, but Durham University Learn Ultra. This offers greater opportunities for library and resource access. Students describe it as easy to use.
72. Students spoke of receiving support for study skills from the staff, beyond the more focused SENDA. Study skills sessions are included as part of the induction, which are also recorded and made available to all. These are followed-up later in the academic year with drop-in sessions. Tutors may also suggest specific coaching or support at DCAD.
73. Module materials are posted on Learn Ultra and students make use of a range of content before and after classes, from videos and PowerPoints to reading. Students may access reading lists digitally through the 'Talis Aspire' system. Lectures are recorded and stored for students and are easily accessible on the module pages, and there is a consistency of formulation and approach in all modules.
74. Tutors consistently ensure that their online module materials include writings and videos from GMH theologians and scholars and students value this.
75. Students are actively encouraged to add to the module reading lists and to bring their own interest and expertise to bear on the learning environment.
76. Module handbooks are reviewed and updated annually by the module lead.
77. Module evaluations take place at the end of each module, both in class, informally, as well as online. Modules are re-shaped or developed in response to evaluation and monitored regularly. Students expressed confidence in their evaluations being heard and noted. Additionally, students and staff spoke of how modules might be reshaped part-way through, to take account of learning needs or particular interests within the class.

78. At the time of writing, the Common Awards team are preparing their report, the CA review having taken place the week before the PER.
79. Cranmer makes use of external tutors to supplement teaching, especially in subject areas beyond the expertise of the internal staff. This happens mostly on the MA programme, or when University PhD students teach New Testament Greek. Responsibility for modules remains with the module lead. There is a recognition that, within the wider academy, the confessional side of theology is less overt than it once was. The value of external tutors would be well expressed by a review of the work they offer at Cranmer and the payment, professional training, and support they receive.

#### **Commendation 10**

**We commend the staff's commitment to personal learning, research and development.**

#### **Commendation 11**

**We commend the superlative quality of library resources available to students, digitally and in print.**

#### **Commendation 12**

**We commend Cranmer's flexibility and responsiveness to feedback in module development.**

#### **Recommendation 13**

**We recommend some joint staff development particularly in the area of EDI and AI.**

#### **Recommendation 14**

**We recommend that Cranmer review terms and conditions for external tutors to ensure they are properly recognised and equipped for the expertise they bring.**

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

80. The reviewers saw a variety of approaches to teaching and learning and a culture of learning within and beyond the classroom.
81. The last PER (2018) queried the use of 1 hour 45 minute lecture blocks. This has been reviewed and maintained. Students are comfortable with this practice: there is always a break in the middle of the block and the classes are sufficiently interactive to maintain attention.
82. Within the classes, reviewers observed excellent and engaging teaching which balanced input and discussion, drawing on student knowledge and critical engagement. Students were encouraged to participate, and we noted that they did so naturally and whole-heartedly. Those attending via Zoom were fully included in the lectures. Staff are aware that, although the technology is helpful, it will need to be monitored and updated to allow for positive learning experiences.

83. Whilst the usual practice of assessment is by essay, reviewers note a commitment to assessed conversation that is to be commended. Assessed conversations have become a standard practice in the doctrine module, not as a mitigation, but as a part of the assessment for all students. A moderator sits in on a number of the conversations along with the marker.
84. Students commented that return times of assessed written work from lecturers were variable.

### Commendation 13

**We commend the imaginative use of assessed conversation, encouraging ordinands to speak clearly and with understanding about Christian belief.**

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

85. Students spoke warmly of how previous experience and learning is taken into account within the classroom. They are encouraged to add to reading lists or to other resources from their own research and knowledge. The APL policy is waiting to be updated to reflect recent staffing changes.
86. The tutorial structure allows ordinands to consider and reflect on their study in the light of the formational journey. The formational journal and the structured conversations about it with tutors foster the sense of significance of learning for their present development in faith and future public ministry which is contextual, mission-focussed and rooted in the tradition.
87. Beyond the classroom, students with expertise and experience in areas of equality, diversity and inclusion have been encouraged to share their knowledge with staff as well as students and to help shape the EDI agenda. This, the reviewers believe, is warmly to be encouraged, and might be seen as part of the wider commitment to deep thinking as noted in Recommendation 13 above.
88. There is a serious commitment to students with special educational needs, and students were confident that staff were supportive and active on their behalf. There was some frustration expressed by both staff and students at the current provision. The University SEND provision is known to be superior to that offered by the MDT, but it is far slower than the MDT, especially for students who arrive without an existing diagnosis. It is beyond the remit of the PER team to make recommendations to either the MDT or the University, but reviewers encourage Cranmer staff to think creatively about how best to make provision for students, and particularly those who are returning to study after a time away from formal education who may only discover their need when at the TEI.

### Recommendation 15

**We recommend a review of Cranmer's SEND provision for students in the light of delays in getting timely support from the University.**

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

89. Students undertake a number of placements during the course of their time at Cranmer. These range from ‘term-time’ placements in local churches, to ‘block’ placements in the vacations (mostly summer or Easter). The term-time placements take place over the first two terms, after which, students may change their context, or continue. It is usual for students to move to a new placement each year.
90. The ‘block’ placements allow for some creativity and give the students an opportunity to explore alternative forms of ministry, either in a very different parish from what they are used to, or else some form of chaplaincy.
91. Tutors read the BAP Stage Two reports before students begin at Cranmer, making sure that the first term-time placement meets the priorities in the report.
92. The tutor with particular responsibility for placements has a good understanding of the local area and its clergy, and works hard to build relationships with the diocese of Durham and beyond, in order to help students find suitable placements, taking transport and family into consideration. Training is offered to all placement supervisors; recent training considered the new Qualities, for example. Training is optional. There is also a ‘thank you’ lunch for supervisors in the summer.
93. There is no accredited module supporting placement learning, but students expect to bring the placement context into their study. Tutors and students spoke of doing this in Mission and Evangelism, Preaching, and Theological Reflection, where they can reflect on their learning in the light of the placement context. Students also spoke of how they are encouraged to on placement experiences in a natural way wherever possible, something that placement supervisors commented on, noting that Cranmer students have a developed ‘theological instinct’. The Reviewers noted that the student and supervisor paperwork associated with the placements had, in some cases, not been updated for some time, and certainly not since the new formational criteria were introduced. The Reviewers would encourage this paperwork to be reviewed so that the Placement material is more fully aligned with the Formational Journal.
94. The reviewers discerned some good connections with local churches and clergy but would encourage this to be developed in a more consistent and structured way. More might be made of the mixed-mode pathway, for example, where students are actively engaged in contextual learning. Connections with the diocese, parachurches, and the cathedral might be strengthened.

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

## Section E: Ministerial Formation

### E1 The TEI's programme of ministerial formation enables students to grow in their love for God.

95. Cranmer Hall's website homepage describes how they are 'centred on Christ in our prayer and worship, believing that both take us deeper into our relationship with Christ and feed us to serve Him in the world.... Discover the joy of a rhythm and discipline to meeting with God.'. The Community Handbook describes how prayer and worship 'fuel formation'. Reviewers noted that students engaged well with the worship observed during the period of the Review and also that although Free Church students were not obliged to attend morning prayer, many of them did so.
96. The evangelical tradition is well-modelled, worship and prayer being rooted in scripture. It has a contemporary flavour. Ordinands are strongly encouraged to experience a diversity of tradition through their placements and there are a wide range of opportunities across the dioceses to do so. The presence of the cathedral next door to the college is appreciated by a number of students and the cathedral staff are keen to engage with them. There is an active partnership with the cathedral, which takes a number of ordinands during the summer vacation and has developed a structured programme of engagement that benefits the cathedral as well as the students. There could be an opportunity to deepen this relationship to further strengthen ordinand engagement with a more formal Anglican spirituality.
97. The Review Team were surprised to note that there seemed to be little engagement with contemporary issues of justice, peace and creation beyond the academic curriculum. There was no evident activism amongst the student body which was a surprise in what is otherwise a TEI which does feel like it engages with contemporary church life. One recent ordinand observed that 'Cranmer could have better engaged with more contemporary issues. Engaging theologically with topics such as AI, social media, political polarisation...' Students have the opportunity to engage with issues of poverty and deprivation in many of the placements which are offered.

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

98. On their whole, stakeholders and former ordinands are very positive about the way in which Cranmer prepares people for the reality of ministry. They observe that there is a bias toward academic rigour rather than practical equipping, however, few seem to argue for a shift away from this. One placement supervisor identified that ordinands seemed very competent in leading worship and preaching but less so in engaging one-to-one: 'Most need to grow in confidence in starting conversations with strangers, pastoral visiting, public ministries...' although it is also acknowledged that they do improve during their time in training. The breadth of placements offered enable ordinands to experience and, it is reported, to *appreciate* the wide diversity of the Church of England. Overall, the supervisors were positive about the relationship with Cranmer,



speaking warmly of the students and the privilege of having students working alongside them. Communication with tutors where placements revealed formational issues are good.

99. Ordinands are also encouraged to experience the wider Anglican Communion where possible and funding is being sought to enable this to happen more regularly. Deepening links with Burundi will also support this aim.
100. During the Review, there was an opportunity to experience one lecture in the module 'Preparing for Public Ministry' which takes as a structure the Guidelines for the Professional Conduct of the Clergy. Students engaged well with the material being presented which was rooted firmly in the real world of the complexity of parish ministry. Generally, ordinands felt that they were being well-prepared for the reality of parish ministry, however, there was some call from spouses to be included in that preparation.
101. The culture of Cranmer was described by one person as being 'open, accessible and humble' – the humility of staff and students is an excellent grounding for developing ministry which is conscious of the need for support.

#### **Commendation 14**

**We commend the module 'Preparing for Public Ministry', based around the Guidelines for the Professional Conduct of the Clergy, which provides a detailed and broad preparation for ministry.**

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

102. It has been noted already that a key mark of the student body is the grace and mutual respect with which difference is treated at Cranmer. One person described their experience of Cranmer as of a community being markedly gracious and kind. Ordinands spend time in discipleship groups learning how to be together in smaller groups which change each year. These groups are self-directed in that there is no appointed leader and no staff presence. This year they have been set the task of studying 'The Twelve Habits of a Reconciler' created by The Rose Castle Foundation to help equip leaders to transform conflict. The fruits of this group work will be in both exploring the material but also the conversations which arise from it.
103. Ordinands undertake nationally prescribed safeguarding training and seemed to have adequate understanding of the principles and practices which go to make a safe church culture. When asked, there was some lack of clarity over how and to whom to make a safeguarding disclosure whilst at Cranmer, however, students knew where to access the information when required.
104. The Review Team heard from both ordinands and their families about the pressures that training puts on family life but there was an acceptance that this would also be part of their future reality and that they had to take responsibility for self-care and care for their own relationships.



Ordinands spoke about how staff at Cranmer were willing and able to be flexible when family concerns needed to take priority over learning and this was widely welcomed, however one ordinand observed that there was a lack of consistency across the staff team and suggested that more clarity on responding to situations not covered in the very clear Tutor's Handbook would be helpful.

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

105. The acquisition of academic learning is central to the culture of Cranmer, for both staff and students. The Review Team heard from a number of students how they appreciated the opportunity to be stretched academically, especially those undertaking higher degrees. Staff model lifelong learning well particularly through being seen to take regular study leave. A number of former students return to Cranmer to continue their academic development once ordained and their presence in the student body is an encouragement to current ordinands.
106. For full time residential students, the wide range of placements offer good opportunity to reflect on learning in context. The small number of mixed mode students value this opportunity highly and it is surprising, given their positive experience, that this is not a more popular option at Cranmer. Mixed mode students reflected that Cranmer were aware of the difficulty in attending every day, as full-time residential students are obliged to do, and were allowed to opt out of various requirements including corporate prayer on Thursdays and Fridays and discipleship groups. They were aware that the onus was then on them to build the missed elements into their own pathway but rose to the challenge.
107. The Formational Journal invites reflection on the ordinand's journey of faith, call to ministry, and deepening discipleship. One question, for example, is to describe how the ordinand might share their faith journey with a six-year-old. These questions are discussed during the tutorial so both written and verbal reflection is invited.
108. Leadership is expressed in a number of contexts: in discipleship groups, on placement and in taking on various college roles. There is a specific module on leadership and the requirement for all students to complete the 3-day Conflict Transformation course rooted in the work of Bridge Builders. Less obvious, as has been mentioned, is the application of knowledge and leadership in the area of mission, particularly the fourth and fifth marks of mission: transforming unjust structures and tending the creation. It may simply be lack of time in a pressured timetable in which case the Review Team suggests that this is reviewed to see if space can be created for more informal engagement in these issues and encouragement given to use that space to follow students' own passion for justice.

109. A key area of strength for Cranmer is the culture of feedback, being able to give and receive feedback well and responding in a respectful and thoughtful manner. This is modelled by the staff and students alike and is a fruit of the humility which is a mark of the life of Cranmer.

### **Commendation 15**

**We commend the use of Bridge Builders material in equipping students for ‘Conflict Transformation’.**

### **Recommendation 16**

**We recommend that Cranmer review whether it is possible to make more space for students to engage informally in the fourth and fifth marks of mission.**

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

110. Another key mark of Cranmer Hall, as has been mentioned, is the ability to engage respectfully, with grace and kindness, to theological difference. Ordinands have the opportunity to share a generous theology with both adults and children in worship and elsewhere, through preaching and leading. Each ordinand is required to lead All Age Worship at least once and are strongly encouraged to sing the liturgy of Choral Evensong for which specific training is given where required. Students said that they were glad that they had pushed themselves so far out of their comfort zone in these areas. Placements also offer the opportunity to engage with a wide variety of contexts, theologically, liturgically and socio-economically. There are specific block weeks on Disability Awareness and Racial Justice, and this latter is reinforced with a student-organised celebration of Black History Month every year. The Review Team did, however, observe a few moments of thoughtlessness both in the areas of disability and race, the latter being dealt with well by a member of staff who was present.
111. The Formational Journey asks ordinands to reflect on how they manage their time and energy. There is strong encouragement to manage the rhythms of term-time busyness with the quieter times in between. The Tutor’s Handbook gives specific prompts at the beginning of the Michaelmas Term to remind Tutors to speak about wellbeing, sources of pastoral support, financial hardship, specific anxieties and hopes for the coming year, faith and prayer life, etc.

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

112. Ordinands are helped to prepare for the transition to IME2 primarily through one-to-one reflection on their Formational Journal, much of which is both reflecting on the past and looking ahead to the future. For example, the fifth tutorial in the Epiphany Term invites reflection on what the ordinand has learned about trusting in God through their experience of the church and ministry over previous terms. It also asks the ordinand to reflect on how able they are at adapting to

change and to consider what they may need to do to develop in this area over the coming 6-12 months. DDOs and former ordinands both indicate that they feel that Cranmer effectively prepare people for ministry and are responsive to diocesan strategies and needs.

113. Placements also offer an opportunity to engage in the reality of ministry in a changing church. There is a focus in Cranmer on ‘Growing Younger’ and ‘Mixed Ecology’ which appear to equip students well to see beyond the current patterns of ministry and mission and to be more confident in attempting new things.

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

114. Cranmer’s module on Preparing for Public Ministry, rooted in the Guidelines for the Professional Conduct of the Clergy, is an excellent basis for building churches which are safe and harmonious. Students are invited to reflect both in this module and in their Formational Journey on the importance of safeguarding, church discipline and the demands of public ministry, including their use of social media. The combination of these two elements in the curriculum is to be commended. One DDO commented favourably on Cranmer’s openness to adapt to the needs of their strategy including the exercising of oversight ministry in combination with focal ministry.

**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.**

115. The Tutor’s Handbook provides clear advice and support on record-keeping through the year which is an important tool in writing interim and end of year reports. The structure of the Formational Journal and accompanying Tutor’s Checklist means that observations are recorded under the formational headings required in external reports and these, together with placement reports, are used to write clearly evidenced reports. One Placement Supervisor observed, however, that the structure of Placement Reports has not changed significantly since her time as a student so the Review Team recommend that these are reviewed in the light of the new formation qualities, and echoing the excellent work on the Formational Journal, to better enable clear, evidenced reports.
116. DDOs were, on the whole, happy with reports written but some were aware of instances where more open reporting of issues in training, often character or relationship issues, would have been helpful. The Tutor’s Handbook sets out clear boundaries of confidentiality and reporting lines, ensuring that the ordinand is fully aware of issues that might be raised and inviting them to raise them themselves with their DDO or Bishop before conversations with the Warden. The Review Team recommends that Cranmer reflects on feedback on issues related to ordinands which may be raised by DDOs / Bishops to see if the reporting framework might be amended to ensure that

ordinands receive appropriate diocesan support and advice before and immediately after ordination.

#### **Recommendation 17**

**We recommend that Cranmer review its placement materials in the light of the new formation qualities to better enable clear, evidenced reports.**

#### **Recommendation 18**

**We recommend a review of the guidelines for tutors in creating Final Year Reports to ensure that the right support is available from the diocese before and after ordination.**

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

## **Conclusion**

**The review team has Confidence in Cranmer Hall in preparing students for Ordained Ministry in the Church of England.**

## Summary of Commendations

### **Commendation 1**

We commend Cranmer Hall for its clarity of vision and values and a deeply embedded culture of graciousness and kindness.

### **Commendation 2**

We commend the rigour of the Formational Journal and supporting materials and the intentional and consistent commitment to integrating academic study with ministerial formation.

### **Commendation 3**

We commend Cranmer Hall's links with a diversity of churches across the region.

### **Commendation 4**

We commend the hearing of the student voice within Cranmer Hall and its prevailing culture of responsiveness to feedback in staff and students.

### **Commendation 5**

We commend Cranmer for the inclusivity of its worshipping life.

### **Commendation 6**

We commend Cranmer Hall for its interactive teaching style.

### **Commendation 7**

We commend St John's and Cranmer for the high level of skills and experience of the members of their Council and Committee respectively.

### **Commendation 8**

We commend the level of external fundraising by St John's and Cranmer.

### **Commendation 9**

We commend the strong links with Durham University including partnership in the Michael Ramsey Centre for Anglican Studies.

### **Commendation 10**

We commend the staff's commitment to personal learning, research and development.

### **Commendation 11**

We commend the superlative quality of library resources available to students, digitally and in print.

**Commendation 12**

We commend Cranmer's flexibility and responsiveness to feedback in module development.

**Commendation 13**

We commend the imaginative use of assessed conversation, encouraging ordinands to speak clearly and with understanding about Christian belief.

**Commendation 14**

We commend the module 'Preparing for Public Ministry', based around the Guidelines for the Professional Conduct of the Clergy, which provides a detailed and broad preparation for ministry.

**Commendation 15**

We commend the use of Bridge Builders material in equipping students for 'Conflict Transformation'.

## Summary of Recommendations

### **Recommendation 1**

We recommend that Cranmer Hall review the opportunities for widening access to theological learning to those from non-traditional academic backgrounds.

### **Recommendation 2**

We recommend that Cranmer undertake some vision setting, perhaps in partnership with others in the region, so that the faith context of the Northeast might further shape and support the learning at Cranmer.

### **Recommendation 3**

We recommend a review of the publicity material for potential students, DDOs and Bishops to ensure it is up to date and adequately showcases Cranmer's distinctive contribution to theological education for the Church of England: its links with Durham University, and its northern location and character.

### **Recommendation 4**

We recommend that Cranmer pursue closer partnership with Lindisfarne College of Theology.

### **Recommendation 5**

We recommend more active engagement with interfaith dialogue regionally.

### **Recommendation 6**

We recommend that there should be clearer communication regarding responsibility for issues to do with Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.

### **Recommendation 7**

We recommend a review of safeguarding roles and policy to ensure independence of disclosure process from Cranmer's senior leadership.

### **Recommendation 8**

We recommend more active listening to the voice of mixed-mode students, spouses and those on the Free Church Track.

### **Recommendation 9**

We recommend that a designated person, possibly the newly appointed Dean of Anglican Formation, is given a clear role in shaping the worshipping life of Cranmer students.

### **Recommendation 10**

We recommend Council and Committee consider their future recruitment processes based on skills required for their strategic future and, in addition, improve accessibility for currently unheard voices.

### **Recommendation 11**

We recommend that Council and Committee review their induction processes, introduce role descriptions, and, in addition, consider introducing an annual development plan, setting out activities focused on exploring different insights into future issues and challenges.

### **Recommendation 12**

We recommend that the new financial accounting system be made fully functional as a matter of urgency to enable full management reporting for both St John's and Cranmer.

### **Recommendation 13**

We recommend some joint staff development particularly in the area of EDI and AI.

### **Recommendation 14**

We recommend that Cranmer review the terms and conditions of external tutors to ensure they are properly recognised and equipped for the expertise they bring.

### **Recommendation 15**

We recommend a review of Cranmer's SEND provision for students in the light of delays in getting timely support from the University.

### **Recommendation 16**

We recommend that Cranmer review whether it is possible to make more space for students to engage informally in the fourth and fifth marks of mission.

### **Recommendation 17**

We recommend that Cranmer review its placement materials in the light of the new formation qualities to better enable clear, evidenced reports.

### **Recommendation 18**

We recommend a review of the guidelines for tutors in creating Final Year Reports to ensure that the right support is available from the diocese before and after ordination.