

Ministry Development Board: Periodic External Review Report

Sarum College

Conducted onsite, October 2024

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Glossary

ASE	Annual Self Evaluation
DDO	Diocesan Director of Ordinands
FQ	Formation Quality
ILO	Intended Learning Outcome
LLG	Local Learning Group
LLM	Licensed Lay Minister
PER	Periodic External Review
SCFM	Sarum Centre for Formation in Ministry
SCTEI	South Central TEI
SORP	[Charities] Statement of Recommended Practice
STETS	Southern Theological Education and Training Scheme
TEI	Theological Education Institution
UKME/GMH	UK Minority Ethnicity / Global Majority Heritage

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The Periodic External Review Framework

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

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

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 Sarum College

Introduction

Sarum College was founded as a place of ecumenical theological education in 1995 on the site of the former Salisbury & Wells Theological College. This gives it a significant position with an attractive 17th century house at its heart and, uniquely, a prominent position in a cathedral close (where there was almost certainly a medieval school of theology). The new college continued to provide part-time non-residential ministerial training/formation and sought also to offer a broader and richer vision for theology, using the teaching and residential accommodation (including the sizeable library) for programmes and courses and for individual and corporate hospitality (as well as for the weekends and summer school that are part of ‘non-residential’ training).

The pre-1995 college (in partnership with others) had already developed a non-residential ministry training scheme (the Southern Dioceses Ministerial Training Scheme) in 1974. This continued as a distinct institution (based at Sarum) after 1995; in 1997 it was reconstituted as the Southern Theological Education and Training Scheme (STETS) in partnership with the Methodist and United Reformed Churches. STETS merged in 2015 to become part of Sarum College as its Centre for Formation in Ministry (SCFM). Though SCFM remains ecumenical in theory, in practice the current training policies of other denominations mean it only prepares candidates for licensed ministries in the Church of England.

Immediate background and context

The introduction of Common Awards (coincident with the closure of STETS) led (in 2014) to Sarum College joining in a partnership with the local ministry training programmes of the dioceses of Guildford, Oxford and Winchester to form the South Central TEI. In the past year the college has applied to become a TEI in its own right and, following successful negotiations with Durham University and the college’s former partners, this has (from September 2024) come to be. This PER has been conducted immediately following this significant transition. The timing was suggested by the college as it now has the capacity to plot its own course for the years ahead.

During the past year the college’s trustees have been working towards a new strategic plan. They commissioned a report from the Rt Revd June Osborne (formerly dean of Salisbury Cathedral) which has helped them to begin setting priorities. The reviewers were grateful for the opportunity to read this and to hear the direction of travel (and look forward to the completion of the plan in due course). While this wider college context is not the specific remit of the PER, focusing as it must on the SCFM, ministerial formation and training can only continue and flourish at Sarum if the whole college has a viable future. The Covid years were not kind to places of hospitality and the previous business plan was inevitably somewhat derailed.

Numbers and the ministry training context

Currently there are 72 students in training for licensed ministries (plus 4 independent students). Of these, two-thirds are women, half are training for lay ministry, 6 are under 40, 23 are over 60, and 1 is training for the permanent diaconate.

Ordinand intake has been steady – about 20 a year over the past five years. In the current climate that is quite an achievement. Our conversations with the college and its diocesan partners have highlighted two important factors in this:

- Sarum College is increasingly being seen as the key regional hub and preferred place for delivering ministerial training - hence more incumbent-status (and younger) ordinands who might previously have opted for residential training (four of the local bishops have made this preferential status explicit).
- Sarum's flexibility in providing appropriate training/formation for an increasing number of candidates who might previously have been directed to a specifically local ministry pathway.

The number of Readers/LLMs in training has increased as dioceses have chosen to use Sarum over having their own programmes. Since the Salisbury Readers/LLMs first came to Sarum in 2015 they have been joined by those from Bath and Wells (2020), Portsmouth (2023) and Winchester (2024).

The blended learning approach adopted by the college is suited to the regional hub model. Having weekly tutorials online saves students having to make frequent long journeys, reserving such for weekend residentials and summer schools. The college setting in the cathedral close is an attractive one on both spiritual and practical levels. Though the college is unable to house the whole learning community at once, it can effectively accommodate the community by turns along ordinand/lay ministry lines (for summer school, attended by all ordinands) or cohort/module lines (for residential weekends).

Courses

SCFM offers part-time and full-time pathways over 1, 2 or 3 years validated by Common Awards. For a two-year pathway an ordinand would typically complete 180 credits while Readers/Licensed Lay Ministers do 120 credits. There is a blended approach to learning: home study (through Moodle and supported by weekly online tutorials), residential weekends and (for ordinands) summer school, and contextual (local churches and placements, supported by local supervisors). A Rural Pathway is offered (with a specialist tutor) and there is specific training for parish-based pioneers.

Under the principal, SCFM has a core team of four tutors led by the dean of ministry. Teaching is supplemented by visiting scholars and by the wider Sarum staff, notably the director of academic development, who teaches biblical studies.

PER Process and evidence

The senior reviewer met online with the principal and dean of ministry in July/August 2024 to outline the purpose and scope of the review, to hear the historical and current context, and to answer questions. The reviewers visited the college from 9th to 12th October. We met and interviewed (either together or in pairs) the principal and dean of ministry (separately and jointly), the chair and two other trustees, support staff, academic staff, groups of current and past ordinands, a trainee Reader/LLM group, training supervisors, a DDO and a lay ministry development officer. We observed two online tutorials and two teaching sessions at the weekend and joined the learning community for worship, meals, coffee breaks and in the bar.

The college made a substantial body of documentation available to the Reviewers in advance, including a bespoke self-evaluation; formational mapping document; publicity material; internal college handbooks and policies; details of teaching, management and support staff; details of taught programmes and online learning resources; information relating to governance, finance and business planning; and statistics for student intake. The reviewers also had access to the 2024 validation report on Sarum College by Durham University, approving the college as a TEI in its own right.

We received written stakeholder submissions from two bishops and three DDOs. Subsequent to the weekend the senior reviewer had a telephone interview with the Bishop of Salisbury (who is an ex officio trustee).

We would like to thank all the staff at Sarum for their warm welcome and co-operation – and in particular to the principal, Canon James Woodward, and the dean of ministry, the Rev’d Paul Burden, for all their time, preparation and generosity of spirit.

Summary of Outcomes

The report is written in relation to the PER Criteria in force for 2024-25 and available via the Ministry Development Team’s quality assurance pages on the Church of England website. Overall, the Reviewers have **Confidence** in Sarum College and regard its Centre for Formation in Ministry as fit for purpose in preparing ordinands and licensed lay ministry trainees for their ministries.

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

Section A: Formational Aims

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

1. Sarum College as a whole is committed to fulfilling its charitable objects – ‘to advance the Christian religion and to advance theological education, training, formation and spiritual growth, including (but without limitation) by the provision and maintenance of a college’. It seeks to do this by the provision of educational programmes, hospitality facilities to its students and licensed office space for partner charities. The homepage of the college website uses the strapline ‘Learning to nourish the human spirit’ and provides a welcome for both the explicitly Christian and those who might be termed ‘spiritual seekers’. A further line states that ‘at Sarum College we offer space for reflection about how people can live together generatively for the common good where all can flourish.’ This models an approach to mission that emphasises conversation, dialogue, partnership and mutual respect within an environment that seeks to deepen spirituality and is engaged with the world and its needs.
2. Within that environment sits the Sarum Centre for Formation in Ministry (SCFM), which shares an inclusive ethos but is explicitly geared to training candidates for ministry (lay and ordained) in the Church of England (and, in principle, ecumenically). There is no prospectus, but a button on the website leads to an introduction by the principal giving a broad outline of SCFM’s approach. There are also video testimonies from a variety of students and former students (including those of UKME/GMH background). The main message though is an invitation to ‘come and see’. Potential students are encouraged to visit when (part of) the community is gathered at residential weekends so that they can experience it for themselves.
3. The website itself focuses on the nature of the learning rather than its aims – ‘discerning’, ‘focused’, ‘practical’ and ‘imaginative’. Formational aims and values are found in the SCFM Handbook. They are focused on educating, training and forming thoughtful, reflective and locally (and culturally) engaged ministers through a community of learning that is open and outward looking, rooted in Scripture, rigorous in theology, reflective in practice, collaborative in leadership, committed to contextual mission and open to transformation through relationships. These values are fleshed out in a series of more specific aims. The formational aims are certainly clearly stated, though not visible other than in the Handbook. But perhaps a more important question is whether they are ‘understood’ and ‘owned’ within (and beyond) the TEI – and all our conversations and observations suggest that they are. We found that SCFM students, staff and external stakeholders understood and appreciated the ethos and were able to articulate at least significant parts of it.
4. It is more difficult to judge as to how deeply engrained this is with the board of trustees with their wider oversight of (and vision for) the college. The Osborne report notes the demise of two of the post-graduate programmes validated by the University of Winchester and seems to suggest that the college needs to return to what might be considered the ‘core business’ of serving the church

by the formation and training of its ministers and by being a trusted leader in Christian theological teaching and research; this was broadly supported by the trustees we spoke to. That may or may not be right for the college, but all the evidence we have seen points to a TEI that has a vision that is widely appreciated and trusted, and a place in the region that – despite national trends – is growing in importance. From a TEI point of view, the issue is not the stabilising of an institution in the light of a precarious future but the giving of time and energy to explore options for expanding what it does and consolidating its position as the leading provider of theological education, training and formation for the Church of England (and potentially other denominations) in the region. Our concern is that the staffing of SCFM is not huge and the principal and dean of ministry will need to be liberated from some responsibilities (for the principal, including the burden of developing and marketing a hospitality business) in order to give time to develop the work of SCFM (see Section C, Recommendations 9 and 12).

5. But this raises the question about whether developing the offer for local dioceses and the wider church (for instance in CMD) is a matter for SCFM or for the college as a whole. We heard of a desire for the college to expand its CMD provision but also of poor attendance at events when it has responded to this. This, again, may require more investment in staff time in order to foster and deepen the relevant diocesan relationships and collaborations.
6. One possible future would be to simplify the structure, remove the SCFM appellation and simply be Sarum College. This could simplify the organisation and give clarity to its purpose. A potential disadvantage would be to lose the missional engagement with those who are seeking spirituality but wary of institutional Christianity. The trustees may want to consider both the missional and financial implications of making this move, but weigh this against the advantage of giving greater clarity to diocesan partners who may have economic as well as other strategic reasons for looking to Sarum for future provision.

Commendation 1

The trustees, principal and staff have created a place that welcomes a broad range of spiritual seekers – and provides an inclusive spiritual home for its ministerial students.

Recommendation 1

The board of trustees should reconsider its structures and staffing to allow for the development of SCFM within its wider vision and purpose.

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

7. As the Church of England has moved away from formation criteria to formational qualities (FQs), SCFM has worked to incorporate the new FQs into student learning and into their reporting. They

are now in the second year of this, explicitly asking students to reflect on their learning in each module in the light of these qualities.

8. We saw in SCFM documents, and heard from staff at all levels, that they are seeking to equip women and men to be enablers of (and advocates for) mission in the different contexts they minister in, now and in the future. Evidence of the success of this we found when meeting current students as well as alumni who are serving in churches of different styles and settings, including those who are working towards, or have gone into, pioneering roles.
9. SCFM is committed to valuing a diverse and varied church culture within the Church of England. It seeks to be independent and thoughtful about church issues and progressive in responding to them, including those things that lead to church growth.
10. We saw evidence of the new FQs incorporated into student learning. We saw this in presentation materials and from expectations of student practice. This was shown in a module presentation which included indication as to which FQs were most directly supported through the module. We also heard from students that they were including reflection on which FQs had been developed in each module, sometimes each assignment.
11. To achieve this SCFM offers eight different standard pathways at undergraduate and graduate level, full and part time, lay and ordained. It currently has students on bespoke individual pathways that can be created where necessary to make Common Awards pathways work for candidates coming with different prior academic and ministerial experience, including where dioceses request one-year pathways for experienced candidates. Reader/LLM candidates train alongside ordinands in mixed online tutorials to nurture a collaborative view of ministry. There is also an option of a Rural Pathway for those wishing to think more fully about mission in this context.
12. SCFM staff commented that they are seeing candidates coming from across a wider age range: from under 30 to post-retirement. They endeavour to view each student as an individual, allowing them to develop in their own giftings and vocation.

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

13. The college website has a 'Ministry' tab that provides an introduction to SCFM with dedicated buttons for ordained and lay ministries. SCFM's aims and its approach to learning are clearly spelt out both descriptively but also with a good use of pictures and videos (including student testimonies). This includes voices and images of UKME/GMH students. There is a clear and helpful introduction to the blended learning style, its rationale, and how that is worked out in the balance of community and individual learning, online and in person. Potential students are encouraged to visit the college on open days during residential weekends so that they can meet the existing community and experience it first-hand.

14. We spoke to one former student (now ordained) from a charismatic evangelical background whose experience on such an open day convinced them to come – and who spoke eloquently of valuing the diversity of the community and of feeling fully accepted within it. Whilst one of our diocesan correspondents wondered whether the college would need to work harder at including what could be an increasing flow of evangelicals, the evidence we heard concerning this was wholly positive. We also heard from a traditional catholic whose testimony was similarly very positive.
15. We found a great deal of confidence in the college from its partner dioceses. In interviews and written submissions the following are typical of comments made by bishops or DDOs:
- ‘You can tell someone who has trained at Sarum – they are always proud of it.’
 - ‘Sarum are good at encouraging reflection and drawing in insight from local communities through supervision arrangements.’
 - ‘Sarum offer a good, broad grounding that prepares ordinands well for ordained ministry.’
 - ‘Strong, broad, generous and grown-up theology. Good formation in reflective practice enabling students to operate safely and well once they are ordained/ licensed. Commitment to development of rich life of prayer among students.’
 - ‘There is a breadth of tradition and understanding that is not merely surface level. There is an undefended quality to the diversity and immensely strong pastoral and formational support.’
 - ‘Ordinands are brought out of their bubbles - if they are in them! - and shown collaborative and generative ways of ministering.’
16. It was clear to us from our interviews that the principal and dean of ministry were well-known to diocesan partners, respected and trusted. Four diocesan bishops have committed to SCFM being their ‘preferred provider’ of ministry training and formation – not excluding others but expressing both long-term confidence in the college as well as the desire to work collaboratively in shaping future provision of training that meets their strategies for mission and ministry. There seems to be an open door here and great potential for future development. The principal and the dean of ministry already invest time in maintaining trusted relationships; development work will require more of the same, and the trustees will need to give attention to how staff structures can best provide the support that will free space for them to do this (see Recommendation 9).

The review team has Confidence 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. From the introduction of Common Awards in 2014 the college was part of the South Central TEI (formerly the Regional Training Partnership) with Guildford, Oxford and Winchester dioceses. In the past year the college has sought to be a TEI in its own right; this has been duly assessed by Durham University in a process designed to ensure that the other partners would not be adversely affected. From September 2024 SCFM has been recognised as an independent TEI. This gives the college the opportunity to develop its own programmes in response to, and partnership with, its local dioceses.
18. The college (beyond the SCFM) continues to run MA and PhD programmes validated by the University of Winchester. A representative of that university told us that Sarum was a most valued partner because of its commitment to academic quality, consistency of learning and its pastoral care of students.
19. There has been a pattern over recent years of dioceses moving from their own in-house ministry training in favour of using Sarum. Most recently the diocese of Winchester has opted in to sending its Reader/LLM students to SCFM. The term ‘regional hub’ was used frequently both by the college and its surrounding dioceses. The commitment of at least four bishops to see it as such and its new status as an independent TEI now presents an opportunity to build on that sense of partnership with an even greater intentionality.
20. For Reader/Licensed Lay Ministry training, whilst there was great appreciation of the opportunity of training collaboratively with ordinands we sometimes detected a ‘second class citizen’ feeling at having shorter weekends (usually leaving at Saturday teatime) and having a formation group system that separates LLMs from ordinands. On the other hand, one former student was both positive about her overall experience and very glad to be let away early to allow ordinands to do things that were not of interest to her and her lay calling. It is perhaps inevitable that some will feel short-changed when fewer resources are put into lay ministry training. We saw good evidence of the college’s responsiveness to past issues and concerns – for example in allocating tutors to the Reader/LLM formation groups and to giving one of the tutorial staff a special brief for Readers/LLMs.
21. We saw the memorandum of understanding between Sarum and the diocese of Winchester for initial Reader/LLM training and understand that similar documents exist for the relationships with Salisbury, Bath & Wells and Portsmouth dioceses.
22. Amongst the comments we received from those responsible for lay ministry training in the dioceses were these:

- Sarum’s teaching is excellent and the change in those in training is significant.
 - Communications are good, including invitations to come into residential weekends.
 - The Julian (non-accredited) pathway is appreciated though sometimes assessments could be flagged up sooner.
 - There have been issues where it has been perceived that the marking of assessments for ordinands has had priority.
 - Using Sarum provides good value for money.
 - The annual meeting of lay ministry officers with the principal and dean of ministry is valuable though perhaps would benefit from being more focussed (with an agenda).
23. It should perhaps be noted that the growth in Reader/LLM training may have two contributory (and non-exclusive) causes: the quality of provision from Sarum and its low cost compared to employing diocesan officers. For both Sarum’s sake and also for the dioceses’ it would be prudent for each memorandum of understanding to be reviewed regularly and for the costs to be carefully assessed. There are limits to economies achievable by centralising without causing damage. (We noted that this question has arisen over voice training and the extra cost that would be involved in providing this to Reader/LLM students).

Recommendation 2

The new tutorial responsibility for LLM students should be strengthened: to oversee those in Reader/LLM training, to enhance relationships with dioceses, to regularly review their agreements (including realistic assessments of costs) and to remove workload from the principal and dean of ministry.

24. SCFM makes use of a rich variety of placement opportunities. Not surprisingly, considering the location, there are good links with the cathedral and all residential weekends begin with Evensong there. Churches of different traditions (and of other denominations) are visited on Sundays; an inter-faith weekend is held every two years visiting Southampton, and the Rural and Urban weekends also visit appropriate contexts.

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

25. The philosophy of the college’s blended learning is presented in information given to all potential students and seems to be well understood and practised. We observed online tutorials that enabled students to reflect on their individual learning, and were part of a residential weekend where community was formed through communal worship and meals, interactive learning, work in formation groups and space for socialising in tea/coffee breaks and the evening bar. Even though this was only the second such weekend for the participating first-year students, there was

a vibrant and good-natured atmosphere, with good participation in the teaching and group sessions. Student representatives used the bar area to initiate conversations (using post-it notes and large sheets of paper) and garner opinions about aspects of community life.

26. The size of the college prevents bringing together the whole learning community and so residential weekends are module/year group specific. These normally include both ordinands and Readers/LLMs. Both groups expressed appreciation of being able to train together, though we noticed that there was a tendency at meals for grouping together with fellow ordinands or Readers/LLMs. Formation groups divide the cohort along the same lines; this also means that groups planning for worship are all ordinand or all Reader/LLM. A recent adjustment has been to allocate a tutor to the Reader/LLM groups (the ordinands do not have a tutor with them) to help the groups feel more embedded and supported. It would be wise to keep these matters under review and there are undoubtedly pluses and minuses in having dedicated groups for Readers/LLMs.
27. Student representatives sit on the (new) Common Awards Management Committee and the Board of Studies. As referred to above, these (new) students were working out ways of consultation and feedback.
28. We heard positive comments on SCFM's consideration of family life and how such consideration and flexibility had encouraged younger people to choose to train there. Spouses are from time to time invited to Sunday lunches.
29. The tutorial staff for SCFM is small in number but currently includes a (part-time) tutor in rural ministry who is the team vicar and pioneer priest in a group of rural parishes, a lay tutor in mission (with pioneering and youth ministry experience) and a Methodist minister (providing maternity cover). Two are women (as is the much-valued chaplain). In addition, the dean of ministry is a formation group tutor, and the principal leads module teaching. Overall the team represents a large range of interests, personalities and spiritual traditions. Apart from an ethos of inclusiveness there is no discernible ecclesiological bias. They are supported by other members of the Sarum team who bring an even richer diversity, although there is no-one from a UKME/GMH background.
30. The SarumLearn portal includes a suite of policies for the community including those on harassment, safeguarding, disability and equal opportunities, discipline, data protection and social media. Most of these are dated 2019 and do not show signs of regular review. The safeguarding policy is dated 'Dec 2021'. Some of the policies have terminology not relevant to the college (e.g. 'co-principal' and 'centre co-ordinator') and there is an out-of-date reference to Common Awards policies that are validated through SCTEI.

Recommendation 3

The college should introduce a systemic way of reviewing its policies (usually annually) and of updating the website accordingly.

31. The disability and equal opportunities policy has no reference to neurodiversity and there is nothing on seeking to increase UKME/GMH diversity.

Recommendation 4

The college's policies should reflect its stated desire to increase UKME/GMH diversity and be more responsive to issues concerning neurodiversity.

32. The Director of Finance & Facilities acts as the safeguarding officer for the college. He, plus the principal and dean of ministry, are trained to senior leadership level. A reference group, chaired by a trustee and including a member of the diocesan safeguarding team, meets termly. We were able to view the system for keeping up-to-date records of DBS checks and training. An annual report is produced for the trustees and passed to the diocesan bishop and the diocesan safeguarding advisory board (as national policy now requires). The most recent of these is posted on the website (and confirms that the safeguarding policy was due to be reviewed in December 2023).

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

33. Sarum College has a magnificent setting in the cathedral close. The front of the building is 17th century (attributed to Christopher Wren). It was purchased by Bishop Hamilton in 1861 to be his new theological college. It contains teaching rooms, some recently refurbished hospitality rooms and some bedrooms on the top floor. Adjacent to this is the 19th century Butterfield chapel where most college worship takes place. It is characteristically high church Victorian Gothic, well-suited for catholic and ceremonial forms of worship but somewhat less conducive to less formal styles (though there is the option – sometimes taken – of using one of the teaching rooms). It has chairs that can be arranged front-facing or chapel-style. It seems a little unloved though would require considerable imagination (and resources) to make more of the space in a way that would be faithful to its past. It can accommodate 40-50.
34. More modern buildings behind those that face the close provide office space, bedrooms, a library, a bar area and a self-service dining room that can accommodate 90. The Royal School of Church Music rents some of the space for its offices. Of the bedrooms, 40 are ensuite (26 singles refurbished in 2014) and 14 are twin or double rooms. Two bedrooms have been made fully accessible, there are lifts to all floors and there is a floor-lift providing disabled access to the dining room. There is still a need to make the chapel fully accessible, due to steps to the altar and vestry.
35. There is regular maintenance and renewal of the building, though the coronavirus epidemic set back some of the actions planned following a quinquennial inspection in 2018 (which said that 'the buildings are generally well maintained and in good condition.')
- We saw no evidence of plans relating to the Church of England's target of carbon neutrality by 2030.

Recommendation 5

The trustees should include consideration of carbon neutrality in their new business plan.

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

36. There is a carefully structured rhythm of worship during residential weekends and at summer school.
37. Residential weekends begin with Evensong at the cathedral. Morning and Evening Prayer on Saturdays are led by formation groups. In the morning *Common Worship Daily Prayer* is always used and a house style followed; in the evening the style of worship rotates between contemplative, informal, Iona/world and BCP. On Sundays there may be early morning prayer in formation groups if the main act of worship is later in the morning – the latter often involves a visit to a local church (with the aim of experiencing a wide range of worship styles) but otherwise is a Eucharist in the chapel.
38. At summer schools the community joins morning prayer (and an optional Eucharist) at the cathedral, midday prayers are led by members of staff in the chapel, and Evening Prayer (led by formation groups) follows the same cycle as at residential weekends. The week concludes with a Eucharist in the chapel.
39. A worship handbook gives careful instructions and guidelines. and also provides suggested ways for formation groups to review their leading of worship (for which they are accompanied by a staff member).
40. The students are exposed to a rich variety of worship but also immersed into habitual practices that ground them in the traditions of common prayer. One disadvantage of the pattern is that Readers/LLMs rarely get to experience or lead more experimental forms (which are generally used on Saturday evenings after the Readers/LLMs have departed). There may be merit in disrupting the usual rhythm occasionally to give room for this.

Recommendation 6

We recommend a modest review of worship patterns to ensure Readers/LLMs have experience of participating in and leading more experimental forms of worship.

41. Expectations of experiences in leading worship are contained in the training agreements between students and their training incumbents/supervisors.
42. One of the online tutorials we experienced opened and concluded with prayer led by the tutor though this did not seem to be a universal practice. It would perhaps reinforce the ethos of the residentials if the seamlessness of learning-community-prayer was an expectation also of online

gatherings of the community (students could be invited to take turns in leading a closing prayer, for example).

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

43. In both online and residential settings we saw examples of the staff creating and sustaining a strong sense of community and belonging, and a weaving together of the spiritual, academic, formational and social. Staff were warm and approachable, able to encourage participation in corporate settings and appropriately vulnerable in their own contributions. We observed how the SCFM staff worked as a supportive team and modelled collaborative ministry.
44. The review team arrived two nights before the residential weekend and we were able to experience the ‘buzz’ of the college and how that creates a space for intellectual and spiritual enquiry. We met with the wider academic staff and observed the fruitful interaction between specialists in biblical studies, spirituality, mission and rural ministry (amongst other areas). The continuing research and learning of staff members, together with visiting scholars and trustees, brings wider links too – such as with Virginia Theological Seminary, Chicago University, Consortium of Christian Study Centres in the US, Leo Baeck Institute, and the Latvian Lutheran Church.
45. Slightly less clear is how the underlying rhythms of prayer undergird the life of the college between residenceals, particularly as the college hosts the well-regarded MA in Christian Spirituality and the Course in Spiritual Direction. We heard how midday prayers (other than at the summer school) lapsed during Covid and have not been reintroduced. There were no clear signs that the chapel is used for personal prayer and little visibility of a spiritual impact from the neighbouring Benedictine community. Part of this may be due to the college seeking to be inclusive of all spiritual seekers and not wishing to put overly dogmatic signs in the way. It may also be that the chapel is out-trumped by the presence of the cathedral. We noted the plan to provide a display case for the St John’s illuminated Bible (see D2 below) so that it can be displayed at the heart of the college as a conversation point and a sign of the college’s Christian identity. It may be that some creative imagination could also be given to enhance the draw of the chapel as the spiritual heart of the place.

Recommendation 7

We recommend that the staff consider further how continuing patterns of prayer, use of the chapel and other ‘signs’ may enhance a Christian presence while maintaining a culture of welcome to all.

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.

46. Sarum College, the charity and the group, is registered as a charitable company limited by guarantee and was set up by a Memorandum of Association on 25 March 2015.
47. Under the Memorandum of Association the objects of the Charity and the group are to advance the Christian religion and to advance theological education, training, formation and spiritual growth, including (but without limitation) by the provision and maintenance of a college. The charity achieves these objectives through: the establishment of accredited and non-accredited educational programmes, supported by a library; the provision of hospitality facilities to its students; the provision of licensed office space to other charities with charitable objects in sympathy with its own, specifically the RSCM (Royal School of Church Music) and the Diocese of Salisbury; and, maintaining the Grade 1 listed building.
48. The management of the charity and the group is the responsibility of the board of trustees. The board is composed of no fewer than 10 and no more than 14 trustees, of whom the bishops of Salisbury and of Bath and Wells are at all times foundation trustees by virtue of their office. In addition, the board may co-opt up to two trustees. New or additional trustees are appointed by the then existing board. In making appointments, the trustees bear in mind the importance of choosing individuals whose skills and experience match the needs of the charity as a whole, the need to reflect an appropriate balance of regional and national experience and denominational background, and principles of equality and diversity including gender and lay/ordained. New trustees receive an induction which includes an introduction to the college, governance, trustee responsibilities and a discussion of current issues. Trustees (other than the foundation trustees) normally serve a four-year term and are eligible for reappointment for one further four-year term.
49. SCFM is part of the wider Sarum College and has, for most parts, clear governance, oversight and management structures in place. Some of the line management structure between college and centre is unusual, but there is nothing to suggest it does not work.
50. Following the PER of SCTEI in 2019 and the establishing of SCFM as a Common Awards TEI independent of others (including Winchester School of Mission, as an example) only very recently in September 2024, there is at Sarum a renewed sense of purpose and hope for the future. Governance is naturally changing in light of these developments, but it seems evident that Sarum are responding with robust attention to some of the challenges presented by change.
51. Sarum College Trustees have ultimate responsibility for the sound strategic and operational management of SCFM. SCFM is overseen by the college Board of Studies, which reports to the Board of Trustees, with input from the Finance & General Purposes Committee. Trustees are actively working to strengthen the governance processes.

52. The trustees are responsible for controlling Sarum’s management and administration. Their responsibilities include: Sarum’s policy, finances, budget and management; envisioning Sarum’s future; planning Sarum’s strategic development; and giving guidance and direction to the Executive Committee.
53. On behalf of the trustees, the Finance and General Purposes Committee reviews all aspects of the management of finance and resources at the college (and gives advice and guidance to the principal and leadership team as required). In particular, it monitors and (where appropriate) makes recommendations to the trustees on: financial management and financial planning, including the annual budget and annual accounts; the appointment of the auditors; hospitality and associated services; the college’s buildings and estate; five year plan for finance and buildings; IT infrastructure; marketing and fund raising; health and safety; all other legal and regulatory matters; risk management.
54. The Board of Studies oversees all aspects of the quality assurance arrangements made by the college. It receives reports from all appropriate committees and other bodies with responsibility for quality assurance in each course or programme. The Board of Studies oversees such structures for quality assurance, course management, course review, examination and assessment, student discipline and other academic purposes as may be required.
55. As per one previous PER recommendation, student representatives from the Common Awards programmes and the Winchester validated MA courses were elected and included in the Board of Studies in 2022, bringing a welcome student perspective into this level of governance.
56. Following the establishment of Sarum as a separate TEI there is a Common Awards Management Committee that is due to meet at least termly and includes student representation.
57. There is active involvement and interest in the ministry training from the chair of trustees, Rt Revd Alistair Redfern, who has contributed teaching on the programme on modern slavery through his involvement in the Clewer Initiative. Other trustees bring expertise that Sarum might draw upon more fully in the future, including the Revd Dr Chigor Chike in decolonisation and social justice.
58. The college continues to work closely with sending dioceses and others who may be interested in the offer of training, short courses and mentoring, seeking to be mutually responsive to the needs of ministry and mission today and tomorrow.
59. The website section on governance does not seem to have been updated since 2022 and so the stated practice of publication of Board of Trustee minutes has not been maintained and the list of trustees is out of date.

Commendation 2

There is a genuine and clear desire amongst the trustees and other senior leadership to forge a path for sustained success at Sarum.

Recommendation 8

Attention should be given to keeping the website up to date (see also Recommendation 3).

C2 The TEI has effective team leadership.

60. The principal and staff of Sarum consistently display a clear and positive sense of team spirit and collaboration.
61. The trustees monitor the performance of all aspects of the work of the college on a regular basis. A strong aspect of this is the committee structure used, with the Board of Studies, Safeguarding, Finance and General Purposes, and the Chair's Committees.
62. In interview one of the trustees spoke of the board of trustees as being very supportive but not cosy; they were not afraid to ask difficult questions. The chair of trustees is highly regarded, providing effective and informed leadership.
63. The last strategic plan for the college was effective 2018-2023, but was impeded by the COVID-19 pandemic. From 2020 the emphasis has been on: initially, financial survival (a significant part of Sarum College's income is through hospitality); then 'steady the ship'; and latterly in 'building back'. As a consequence of this substantial hiatus, a strategic plan going forwards is now being worked on. In the last year, Bishop June Osborne was invited to come into college to interview members of staff and trustees and to report to trustees giving her independent view of what the college needs to address in terms of opportunities and weaknesses. This 'Osborne Report' has now been received and acknowledged, and the outcomes are being used by trustees with the principal and the college leadership team to create a new strategic plan.
64. A theme that emerged from many of our conversations was that the workload of the principal is too great and that developing a sustainable business plan requires the support of strategic business leadership to allow the principal to concentrate on supporting the whole team and building relationships with dioceses and other key partners in extending the college's 'offer'.

Commendation 3

The reviewers found positive staff and trustee input and good working relationships. It is evident that staff and students have confidence in, and great respect for, the principal and leadership team.

Recommendation 9

A current business plan and strategy are needed, and attention to resources, finance and staffing in line with them.

Recommendation 10

SCFM should continue in developing relationships with sending dioceses, and in being a major partner for them in the delivery of ministry formation and training (and developing other strategic partnerships in line with the emerging business plan).

Recommendation 11

The college should consider creating a Chief Operating Officer post, with overall responsibility for financial resilience, organisational efficiency and public profile.

C3 Trustees are appropriately recruited, supported and developed.

- 65. The Bishops of Salisbury and Bath & Wells are ex officio trustees and this obviously helps to embed the college in the life of their dioceses – but also amongst their colleagues in neighbouring dioceses.
- 66. The chair of the Board of Trustees is Bishop Alastair Redfern. In our conversations with him and the principal we discerned a very strong relationship and a deep engagement with the strategy and direction of the college. There was a strong concern to recruit trustees who would contribute to the developing vision.
- 67. Currently there are trustees with experience in the realms of finance, estate management, academia, religious communities, inter-faith relations and missiology. The number also includes the education canon from the cathedral, one person of UKME/GMH background and the recently retired publishing director of Hymns Ancient & Modern. Three of the eleven trustees are women.
- 68. We met three of the trustees during our visit. All seemed well-informed about the college and were clearly contributing with their own skills and experience to the strategic conversations as critical friends, committed to the college's flourishing.
- 69. While diversity continues to remain an issue we are confident that the chair of trustees and principal have been imaginative, resourceful and strategic in recruiting new members and in supporting them in their roles.

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

- 70. The trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the college's transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the Group and the Charity and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the Group and the Charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

71. As evident in Sarum’s Self-assessment and its SWOT Analysis, the college is aware of output, resources and financial opportunities and threats and has displayed a balanced approach to such. For example, one challenge has been the loss of hospitality income during the pandemic, which has ramifications for the work of SCFM. However, it is evident that Sarum have considered and will continue to consider different avenues for development that are reasonable, proportionate and adequate, as well as financially prudent.
72. Sarum have effective and appropriate budgeting and management accounts with regular reviews (including Quinquennial) and timely annual financial reporting, independently audited. The financial reporting framework complies with the current statutory requirements, the requirements of the charitable company's governing document and the provisions of the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS102) (effective 1 January 2019). Since the group and the Charity qualify as small under section 383 of the Companies Act 2006, the Group strategic report required of medium and large companies under the Companies Act 2006 (Strategic Report and Directors' Report) Regulations 2013 is not required.
73. The Board of Trustees is responsible for the management of risk. The College Leadership Team compile a detailed consideration of risk in a risk register each year. Risks are identified and assessed according to probability and impact with corresponding actions to reduce risk. The Finance & General Purposes Committee and Trustees undertake a formal review of risk on an annual basis. Risks fall into five distinct categories: governance, operational, financial, external and compliance.
74. The key controls used by the charity include:
- Formal agendas, minutes and reports for all committee and trustee activity
 - Detailed terms of reference for all committees
 - Comprehensive strategic planning, budgeting and management accounting
 - Established organisational structures and lines of reporting
 - Formal written policies, reviews and appraisals
 - Clear authorisation and approval policies, and
 - Vetting procedures as required by law for the protection of the vulnerable.
75. The risk register is presented to the trustees each year at the June meeting of the Board. This is a live document, involving ongoing review. Through the risk management processes established for the college, the trustees are satisfied that the major risks identified have been adequately

mitigated where necessary. It is recognised that systems can only provide reasonable but not absolute assurance that major risks have been adequately managed.

76. The college is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of students and guests, and ensuring that all staff and volunteers share this commitment. Appropriate policies and training are in place to underpin this commitment.
77. We sensed that the college is at a significant moment – after post-Covid recovery and with its new independent TEI status - when decisions need to be made that will ensure its future, financially and strategically. For the purposes of this review we detected a great deal of confidence in SCFM from its diocesan partners as a provider of mature, wise and faithful Christian theological formation – and that there should be ample opportunity for building on this reputation and good will.

Commendation 4

The college has clear, robust and effective day-to-day business planning and financial processes, with very good risk management.

Recommendation 12

The college should build on its identity as an independent TEI, with a clear and renewed focus on its Christian foundations and core purpose as a provider of ministerial formation.

Recommendation 13

The college should pursue further income streams, including those afforded by further developing some of the external relationships already identified (such as a greater synergy with Salisbury Cathedral in the area of hospitality).

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.

78. SCFM offers a range of undergraduate and postgraduate programmes that respond to the ministerial training needs of the sponsoring church. The offering uses modules from the Common Awards from Durham University, mapped into several standard pathways: one for Readers/LLMs, and for ordination candidates, at different academic levels, 1-, 2- or 3-year durations, and options including rural and pioneer pathways. Thus, SCFM offers full-time and part-time ordination pathways, part-time Reader/LLM pathways. Modules are offered at various academic levels from undergraduate (L4) to MA (L7) and are placed into a framework of theological reflection and pastoral care.
79. SCFM has demonstrated an awareness of the changing needs and practices of the church – specifically in adapting their training as the church shifted from criteria to qualities that they now train to. SCFM trains women and men to enable and be advocates for mission in the different contexts they minister in.
80. The teaching we observed, online and in person, was presented in the context of references to learning objectives including the new Formational Qualities (FQ) of the Church of England. These FQ are also used in student feedback, so that students are very aware of these.
81. The T11 mapping documents defining the pathways available for students still refer to the 2014 Formation Criteria, rather than the 2020 Formation Qualities, but we understand this partly reflects a Ministry Development Team preference, as curriculum content maps more straightforwardly onto the 2014 framework than to the more recent Qualities.

Commendation 5

We commend the good practice of clear and systemic referencing of Formational Qualities in the college's teaching.

82. Sarum College has an academic offer that is wider than just the SCFM. While outside the scope of this review, the offering of other courses was described by students and staff as enriching their experience in several ways, including greater diversity of relationships. The college offers MA courses validated by Winchester University, an Exploring Theology course (foundational, non-validated, for lay people), a Spiritual Direction course, and a programme of short courses, delivered either online or in college, across a wide range of subjects. This wider diversity in the student body is felt by SCFM students to enrich their experience profoundly, over time.

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

83. The T9 submission to Durham University shows that staff members are appropriately qualified, resourced and developed for their roles.
84. From the ASE, supported by discussions with staff, we could see that staff induction is in place and is being reviewed. Staff development is encouraged through annual provision of time and finance for a conference. There is also encouragement for extra study, with staff members having recently completed online coaching or accredited study. Plans were in place for peer review of staff within the Sarum ministry team and staff regularly attend each other's presentations. Peer review of teaching starts for all new staff as part of their induction.
85. The wider Sarum College academic faculty meets regularly and includes staff development, including an annual gathering to explore some aspect of theological thinking involving visiting scholars. This includes exchange of ideas, and an increasing degree of cooperation areas such as the teaching study skills.
86. There is a well-equipped library, with both physical books and online copies, all appropriately curated. The team noted that the college is home to one of the hand-written and beautifully illuminated St John's Bibles. During our visit, together with the students, we were privileged to interact with the two New Testament volumes (of the seven that make up the whole bible).
87. It was good to hear of the efforts that SCFM is making to help alumni retain access post-qualification. Indeed it is a valuable resource that is also on offer more generally for life-long learning throughout the local dioceses through their intention to become a crucible of transformation.
88. The team experienced 'SarumLearn', the online, e-learning, or virtual learning environment website, based on Moodle. Each module is taught using online learning and tutoring, residential periods, and with experience based on the practice of ministry in the home, or sending environment. This provides the blended learning pattern that we saw students responding to very positively and being excited about.
89. We observed students who were following personalised individual pathways that had been modified to take into account accredited prior learning and life experiences. We also saw students who had 'student learning support plans' that enable students, who have disabilities or additional learning needs, not to be disadvantaged. Maintaining parity for all was illustrated as a dyslexic student was asked not to record on Dictaphone, as others were asked not to take verbatim notes, while a personal experience was being shared.

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

90. SCFM uses a blended approach, with learning in community (in college), personal learning (at home, individually) and learning in context (local church). Learning in community happens at Sarum College, for a residential weekend in each module. Personal learning includes the 10 hours per week of reading, videos, thinking or investigating. This is supplemented by an hour's compulsory online small group tutorial on Zoom. Twice a module, in place of the tutorial there is a local learning group (LLG) of people from church or locality. Learning in context is with a training supervisor, usually an incumbent, to experience different aspects of ministry locally or in a short placement. Training supervisors are invited to the college twice a year for training and support.
91. We saw a wide range of approaches to teaching and learning, including small group online tutorials (with students attending from home) and lectures with 40 participants. We saw group work; good use of online and blended learning; and appropriate supporting material. Students told us about a variety of assessments. We saw excellent engagement with all these contexts. We heard from one LLM student (and others) about how much they were learning through communicating their course material in their LLG.
92. Some students found that multiple assignments within a single module seemed to increase an already heavy workload. Some felt this might indicate that they were working at too deep a level, and several felt that the preparation required for multiple assignments overloaded the time needed for the module.

Commendation 6

We commend the practice and use of local learning groups.

Recommendation 14

We recommend a review of the number and length of assessments in line with both Durham expectations and student workload.

93. SCFM is adequately equipped with projecting equipment as well as other more traditional equipment like flipcharts (during the residential). While the latter still has its place, we encourage its gradual replacement with emerging technologies for visualisation. As the college largely serves a digitally adept learner community there seem to us to be ready opportunities for further creative IT use.

Recommendation 15

We recommend a review of the use of digital and other teaching aids.

94. We saw an illustration of the support available for a dyslexic student, which includes the use of a dictaphone (loan available), appropriate allowance for spelling, punctuation and grammar in

assignments, and additional tutor support to discuss essay structuring. The student felt very well supported and included. Students also mentioned how some of them had been supported in returning to study after very many years, and at a higher academic level than they had ever worked at before.

95. We saw examples of the feedback provided through the marking of assignments, including essays, projects and resources for others.
96. We are satisfied that the system of assessment and feedback is working well. A look at the performance of the students also shows that staff use a range of marks available to them, rewarding exceptional work with higher grades while also pointing out poorer work through constructive feedback. Overall, we are satisfied that assessment and feedback systems are working well and produce outcomes that allow each student to demonstrate how they meet the ILOs.
97. Common difficulties with presentation tools were experienced, such as lack of a particular font on the actual presentation hardware, or the challenge of presenting out of order, an ordered set of slides.

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

98. Based on a review of the curriculum map we are satisfied that the module portfolio at SCFM allows students to meet their learning outcomes. We can make this call across all the levels (HEQF levels 4-7). When looked at in the context of HEQF expectations we note that the portfolio of modules allows for student progression and development over their course of learning programmes. It is clear why some modules are foundational and how they relate to other modules. The modules are designed with sufficient levels of overlap, but always with clarity around the learning objectives and formational qualities. The more foundational modules (level 4) provide a platform to build and establish key theological and other concepts and practices while the higher-level modules (level 7) encourage the development of independent critical thinking about the bigger theological questions facing society.
99. Indeed, talking to the Reader/LLMs and ordinand students across the programmes, we are satisfied that SCFM students do meet their learning objectives and formational qualities. We have pointed out elsewhere in this report how SCFM programmes provide sufficient breadth to meet the expectations of the 'formational qualities' that need to be met. We note with satisfaction that students can choose to specialise in rural or pioneer ministry.

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

100. The training in context model used at SCFM allows all students to integrate their academic learning with in-situ ministerial development. Reflective practice is an important part of their learning and development and, as reflected elsewhere in this report, students are encouraged to learn about theory in their classes but also build theory through practice. For the students, the placement requirement helps them link their academic learning to the practices they encounter in day-to-day ministry. The formation groups and the availability of an SCFM tutor and a placement supervisor encourages them to process their experiences against this background of the academic courses.
101. The current organisation of the initial modules encourages students from the very beginning to become theologically reflective thinkers, and several of them said that they found this helpful. They also said that they had surprised themselves, venturing into ministerial areas and traditions that were out of their comfort zones. We noted some good examples of peer-to-peer learning. Several of them mentioned how they felt that ‘the generous orthodoxy’ and the habit of listening supportively to each other in use at SCFM felt deeply appropriate. Students were able to explain clearly how they were being prepared to work in teams and follow models such as oversight ministry; several mentioned the likelihood that they would find themselves covering several parishes that may well include very different Christian traditions. Listening to past students we heard convincing evidence that this had prepared them well for the contexts in which they were working.

Commendation 7

We commend SCFM for the quality and consistency of its formation in reflective practice.

102. Student feedback quoted in the ASE revealed that all agreed that “Placements I have undertaken as part of my award have helped me learn and develop” and “The support available before, during, and after my placements was appropriate.” One student added that “it is good to relate placement reflections to other course learning.” Sarum have introduced specific tutorials for placement modules.

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.

103. The programme (and rhythm) of worship on residentials provides students with a good experience of the daily office as well as other approaches to prayer. ('We live the weekends in a monastic rhythm'.) We found that the students engaged with this naturally and with commitment. In conversation and in teaching sessions they were able to move seamlessly between the articulation of personal faith, the church's mission and theological ideas. Former students had continued to be sustained by faith and good spiritual practices. Diocesan partners spoke of ex-Sarum students being well prepared for the long haul of ministry and being spiritually and emotionally resilient.

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

104. SCFM clearly has the confidence of the bishops, the stakeholders and the students as a place of uniquely tailored ministerial formation. There is a strong sense that these students feel themselves not only to be called by God but are also being resourced to explore their discipleship and beliefs in ways which are meaningful in the everyday life of their context across a range of settings. For example, we heard from academic staff of their desire that both lay and ordained ministers be encouraged to preach well in the way of 'inhabiting the Gospel', by their speaking and chatting as much as by their leadership.
105. Personal tutors echoed this, one stating that SCFM is 'a crucible for transformative formation'. Students are encouraged to be liturgically and missionally creative in their parish settings (supported by their supervisors) and we felt we had met ministerial trainees with religious literacy, who are developing understanding of religion in society and what that can contribute to us.
106. Students' weekly/monthly supervision meetings also serve to keep them grounded and understanding of professional boundaries in ministry and pastoral care. One described that this "helped bring out the calling I felt was emerging in partnership".

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

107. Due to the nature of the approach to ministerial training at SCFM, students do appear flexible and adaptive when under pressure or in changed circumstances. They are able to absorb the information and techniques they are being taught by reflecting back on their lectures and experiences. In conversation individuals revealed that much of this reflection happens outside of college once they have completed their residentials, due to the packed programme during their stay. This process of reflective practice is also very much evident in the work submitted.

108. In the teaching we witnessed students were respectful of, and prepared to learn from, one another, and were realistic, developing an honest assessment of their own abilities.
109. In conversations with both alumni and current students we saw their desire and ability to create and maintain positive relationships both within and outside the church, and an articulation of the necessity to balance the needs of others with their own. There was also a clear understanding of the professional boundaries they will be working within during their ministry, particularly in terms of pastoral care.

E4 Students are helped to grow in wisdom.

110. During interview training supervisors highlighted their coaching of students in managing the expectations of workload. They were sensitive to issues of work/life balance and versed in guiding individuals from the outset to make wise and reasonable choices in the future as ministers. This, they felt, was pertinent because they noted that across dioceses lay and ordained ministries are not supported with equal commitment.
111. They noted that students who came to them were well self-motivated, capable and organised. The reviewers had a sense of this from the students themselves, who being only weeks into starting their training were pragmatic about boundaries on their time and workload.
112. Local learning groups have had a key role in equipping students with the necessary skills of resilience and remaining robust at times of stress and managing change. Some returning students were able to reflect critically on pushbacks they received in their context, where due to the dynamic shift in their leadership position they needed to model different styles of leadership and power. One described feeling ‘very held during training’. Another stated that these groups were “fantastic opportunities to link learning with contextual experience”. The unique nature of these groups at SCFM is how they encourage students to use their learning to teach others – and in the art of translating (almost instantly) their acquired knowledge and wisdom to those in their parish context.

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

113. The Sarum College Homepage describes how students are ‘Learning to nourish the Human Spirit’ and the Centre for Formation in Ministry webpages acknowledge distinctive formation and training programmes designed to develop the unique skills and lived experience of individuals so as to “shape a theologically versatile and articulate group of ministers”.
114. Reviewers noted that students engaged well with the worship observed during the period of the review, with students fully involved in planning, organising and delivering worship (although Readers/LLMs have less breadth of opportunity – see B4). Students are taught how to be clear and articulate in their speaking, receiving voice coaching and teaching in oration skills (although

currently there is not the capacity to offer equal opportunity for this across all forms of ministerial training.)

- 115. Students were comfortable talking about their faith and about prayer and worship. We were impressed by a natural and seamless spirituality expressed in worship, tutorials and conversation – and by an easy movement between considering the interior life to the outworking of faith through social and environmental concerns.
- 116. Growth in personal prayer and an outward looking spirituality is nurtured by students being recommended to have a spiritual director – most, though not all, take this up.
- 117. Conversations with teaching and support staff illustrated how students are equipped for a public-facing ministry and the demands that everyday life will entail. Anecdotal examples from students past and present confirmed this and illustrated a clearly expressed enjoyment of their missional practice, where they are not only keen to teach others but also to learn more themselves.
- 118. In conversation students articulated a calling and desire to help others mature in their Christian journey and to equip and grow them in their varied vocations.

E6 Students are equipped to continue to develop their potential.

- 119. In interview with senior teaching staff and the principal it was clear that they believe their approach to blended learning (see above, especially Introduction and D3) is in itself entrepreneurial and was often referred to as pioneering. There was however a less clearly defined sense of what specifically the students were experiencing which would develop them as identifiably ‘pioneer ministers’. The reviewers felt that these definitions were being used interchangeably and we at least found this confusing. We saw – and read of – more examples of how following the rural pathway might be preparing for ministry and mission in that context.

Recommendation 16

There should be greater clarity in what is on offer for those training on a pioneer pathway.

- 120. Having said that, we were impressed by how the model of blended learning and the concentration on reflective practice is clearly helping to form well-rounded and theologically deep ministerial practitioners. This was evidenced in both the current students and alumni we met.

E7 Students are able to demonstrate trustworthiness.

- 121. We saw and heard ample evidence of students having a well-developed pattern of life grounded in prayers, scripture and reflection. In interviews and observed discussions we observed students being aware of their own beliefs, commitments and prejudices – and able to listen to and empathise with those of different perspectives.
- 122. Reviewers found adequate evidence that students are empowered to grow their skills in a way that reflects church policy – i.e. to have ministers that can co-operate with their peers, are focussed on

mission, diverse in their outlook, and can adapt to the circumstances they will work in. This came through in conversation with training supervisors in particular.

123. Students are also building a wealth of knowledge of Christian tradition and faith and are developing a positive regard for their sponsoring church and the different elements and attitudes found within it. Ministerial students were also seen to be growing their skillsets to enable theological reflection and reflective practice to be second nature to them. They are given a full programme of safeguarding training and show awareness of good practices in safeguarding, use of social media and in being a representative public minister.

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.

124. Reporting procedures are outlined in SCFM handbook (p. 30).
125. For Reader/LLM candidates the diocese and its relevant officer are responsible for assessing progress – though SCFM provides brief reports and a summary of assignment marks.
126. For ordination candidates an open process of reporting is used for interim and final reports, which are drafted by the personal tutor and finalised by the principal. They draw on evidence from module work, tutors, training and placement supervisors, and, more informally, the whole SCFM staff. Each report is expected to include affirmation, critique and challenge for future development.
127. A first-year review is conducted for three-year students; a report is written but not provided to sponsoring dioceses unless requested.
128. The bishops and diocesan officers we met, or who wrote to us, were very satisfied with communications with SCFM. There is good co-operation in arranging suitable attachments and placements and in ongoing conversations about particular candidates. Reporting was mostly appreciated – with SCFM being rated as having greater transparency and honesty than some TEIs, though it can be variable.

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

Conclusion

The review team has Confidence in SCFM in preparing students for Ordained and Licensed Lay Ministries in the Church of England.

Summary of Commendations

Commendation 1

The trustees, principal and staff have created a place that welcomes a broad range of spiritual seekers – and provides an inclusive spiritual home for its ministerial students.

Commendation 2

There is a genuine and clear desire amongst the trustees and other senior leadership to forge a path for sustained success at Sarum.

Commendation 3

The reviewers found positive staff and trustee input and good working relationships. It is evident that staff and students have confidence in, and great respect for, the principal and leadership team.

Commendation 4

The college has clear, robust and effective day-to-day business planning and financial processes, with very good risk management.

Commendation 5

We commend the good practice of clear and systemic referencing of Formational Qualities in the college's teaching.

Commendation 6

We commend the practice and use of local learning groups.

Commendation 7

We commend SCFM for the quality and consistency of its formation in reflective practice.

Summary of Recommendations

Recommendation 1

The board of trustees should reconsider its structures and staffing to allow for the development of SCFM within its wider vision and purpose.

Recommendation 2

The new tutorial responsibility for LLM students should be strengthened: to oversee those in Reader/LLM training, to enhance relationships with dioceses, to regularly review their agreements (including realistic assessments of costs) and to remove workload from the principal and dean of ministry.

Recommendation 3

The college should introduce a systemic way of reviewing its policies (usually annually) and of updating the website accordingly.

Recommendation 4

The college's policies should reflect its stated desire to increase UKME/GMH diversity and be more responsive to issues concerning neurodiversity.

Recommendation 5

The trustees should include consideration of carbon neutrality in their new business plan.

Recommendation 6

We recommend a modest review of worship patterns to ensure Readers/LLMs have experience of participating in and leading more experimental forms of worship.

Recommendation 7

We recommend that the staff consider further how continuing patterns of prayer, use of the chapel and other 'signs' may enhance a Christian presence while maintaining a culture of welcome to all.

Recommendation 8

Attention should be given to keeping the website up to date (see also Recommendation 3).

Recommendation 9

A current business plan and strategy are needed, and attention to resources, finance and staffing in line with them.

Recommendation 10

SCFM should continue in developing relationships with sending dioceses, and in being a major partner for them in the delivery of ministry formation and training (and developing other strategic partnerships in line with the emerging business plan).

Recommendation 11

The college should consider creating a Chief Operating Officer post, with overall responsibility for financial resilience, organisational efficiency and public profile.

Recommendation 12

The college should build on its identity as an independent TEI, with a clear and renewed focus on its Christian foundations and core purpose as a provider of ministerial formation.

Recommendation 13

The college should pursue further income streams, including those afforded by further developing some of the external relationships already identified (such as a greater synergy with Salisbury Cathedral in the area of hospitality).

Recommendation 14

We recommend a review of the number and length of assessments in line with both Durham expectations and student workload.

Recommendation 15

We recommend a review of the use of digital and other teaching aids.

Recommendation 16

There should be greater clarity in what is on offer for those training on a pioneer pathway.