

Report of External Evaluation and Review

St John's Theological College

Confident in educational performance

Confident in capability in self-assessment

Date of report: 26 January 2012

Contents

Purpose of this Report.....	3
Introduction	3
1. TEO in context.....	3
2. Scope of external evaluation and review	5
3. Conduct of external evaluation and review.....	5
Summary of Results	6
Findings	8
Recommendations	13
Appendix	14

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Purpose of this Report

The purpose of this external evaluation and review report is to provide a public statement about the Tertiary Education Organisation's (TEO) educational performance and capability in self-assessment. It forms part of the accountability process required by Government to inform investors, the public, students, prospective students, communities, employers, and other interested parties. It is also intended to be used by the TEO itself for quality improvement purposes.

Introduction

1. TEO in context

Location:	202-210 St Johns Road, Meadowbank, Auckland
Type:	Private training establishment (PTE)
First registered:	2009
Number of students:	Domestic: 18 equivalent full-time students. Most students are studying part-time. International: Two equivalent full-time students
Number of staff:	18 full-time equivalents
Scope of active accreditation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Diploma in Anglican Studies (Level 5)• Diploma in Anglican Studies (Applied) (Level 6)• Diploma in Anglican Studies (Advanced) (Level 6)
Sites:	As above
Distinctive characteristics:	St John's Theological College is an Anglican theological college which has been delivering training for church ministry for over 150 years.
Recent significant changes:	St John's Theological College (St John's) registered as a private tertiary education provider in early 2009. The qualifications offered were approved late 2009 and early 2010. A change of governance occurred as a result of a review which reported to the General Synod, Te Hinota Whanui of the Anglican Church in May 2010. The outcomes of the review included the

dissolution of the College Board of Oversight and the appointment of a commissioner, which occurred in August 2010. The review also led to the reduction of three semi-autonomous Tikanga colleges to one college, with provision for the three tikanga (Tikanga Polynesia, Tikanga Māori, and Tikanga Pakeha) to be represented by deans and external stakeholder representation. The permanent governance structure for the college is still to be confirmed.

Previous quality assurance history: At the previous quality assurance visit by NZQA, an audit in late 2009, the college met all applicable Policies and Criteria for PTEs.

Other: Under the Canon of the Anglican Church, the college works in a three-Tikanga relationship to ensure recognition of appropriate bicultural contexts in its teaching and community. The Canon requires the inclusion of Maori language and culture in ordination training programmes, and “that training for ordination requires Māori language and cultural studies of sufficient rigour, intensity and depth to ensure that candidates for ordination have the capacity to conduct fluently all of the important tikanga karakia in Māori, and to be able to perform ably on marae and in other Māori settings”.

With the support of the St John’s College Trust, the college is able to provide scholarships for its students across Aotearoa/New Zealand and the Pacific Islands.

Most students are concurrently enrolled in degree and diploma programmes, either at the University of Auckland or the University of Otago. St John’s has memoranda of understanding with both these institutions.

2. Scope of external evaluation and review

The external evaluation and review examined the following mandatory focus areas:

- Governance, management, and strategy.

Because of the small number of international students, it was decided that student support for internationals would be examined through the key evaluation question 5, *How well are learners guided and supported?*

The other focus area chosen was the Diploma in Anglican Studies (Level 5) as this programme has the most students enrolled as well as a small number of graduates.

3. Conduct of external evaluation and review

All external evaluation and reviews are conducted in accordance with NZQA's published policies and procedures. The methodology used is described fully in the web document Policy and Guidelines for the Conduct of External Evaluation and Review available at: <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/registration-and-accreditation/external-evaluation-and-review/policy-and-guidelines-eer/introduction/>

St John's supplied the evaluation team with a number of documents, including the annual programme review and a document outlining evaluation and review processes. Two evaluators visited St John's over a day and a half. While on site, the evaluation team interviewed the commissioner, the director of Anglican studies, and the director of administration. Also interviewed were the Tikanga deans, the lecturers, current students, and members of the board of studies, including the chair. The evaluation team also viewed a range of documents, including student surveys, achievement records, and minutes of meetings.

St John's Theological College has had an opportunity to comment on the accuracy of this report, and submissions received have been fully considered by NZQA before finalising the report.

Summary of Results

Statement of confidence on educational performance

NZQA is **Confident** in the educational performance of **St John's Theological College**.

St John's students are achieving well in the new qualifications offered by the college. In 2010, the achievement rate for successful paper completion was 82.6 per cent. For semester one 2011, this has improved to 90 per cent. Two of the four graduates have been licensed as ordained assistants and two are in further study. As the qualifications are so new, and the number of graduates small, there is no meaningful data to benchmark. However, St John's has proactively sought external input into both programme review and moderation. This external input has assured the organisation of the parity and congruence of their programmes with those offered by other providers.

The college has a number of significant stakeholders who provide input to help develop the programmes delivered. St John's is working hard to match the varying needs of students, bishops, tikanga, dioceses, and other stakeholders. The move to seek accreditation with NZQA, the new qualifications, and the recent changes in governance are all examples of the organisation changing to address needs more effectively. There is emerging evidence that these changes have given credibility to the training and reinvigorated the college.

It is clear that the change to St John's structure has not been an easy one and that the college is in a transitional phase. Furthermore, the college is delivering new programmes. However, there are policies and procedures in place to ensure quality education is delivered, and these are continuously being reviewed. There is evidence that issues are quickly identified and addressed. Good examples include the changes to the extension policy and moderation practices which resulted from student feedback and programme review. There is still work to do to ensure that Māori culture is embedded in the programme content and delivery.

Statement of confidence on capability in self-assessment

NZQA is **Confident** in the capability in self-assessment of **St John's Theological College**.

The new commissioner has a clear strategy and a mandate from the board to implement the changes recommended by the review, which reported in May 2010. The commissioner chairs the board of studies to which the director of studies reports. The commissioner reports to Te Kotahitanga board, as does the director of Anglican studies. These reports are reflective, critical, and informed by a range of data.

The organisation regularly engages with key stakeholders, including bishops, the board of studies, students, lecturers, and other education providers to inform

planning and quality improvement processes. There is a range of data gathered during these processes and there is evidence that the college seeks to ensure that the range of perspectives is incorporated into planning and decision-making.

There is ample evidence of purposeful reflection occurring, and there is some evidence that improvements are occurring. It is notable that the college has actively sought the input of external advisors from universities and other private education providers, to review content and assessment. The organisation has self-assessment systems in place which will measure the effects of the structural and programme changes, but as yet there is little information or data to hand because the improvements are so recent. However, early indications are that the improvements are ensuring the programmes match stakeholder needs more effectively.

Findings¹

1.1 How well do learners achieve?

The rating for performance in relation to this key evaluation question is **Good**.

The rating for capability in self-assessment for this key evaluation question is **Good**.

As noted above, the rate of achievement in the papers which make up the Diploma in Anglican Studies has improved from 2010 to 2011. The qualitative data indicates that students are achieving skills and knowledge relevant to Anglican ministry, including te reo. Students also noted an improved ability to read religious texts critically.

Achievement data is being collected and student achievement is closely monitored. However, the programme has only been running for a year and the number of students completing the diploma programme is small, which makes meaningful comparisons difficult.

1.2 What is the value of the outcomes for key stakeholders, including learners?

The rating for performance in relation to this key evaluation question is **Good**.

The rating for capability in self-assessment for this key evaluation question is **Good**.

The four graduates have moved either into positions working for the Anglican Church or on to further study. There is value in the new Diploma in Anglican Studies programme to key stakeholders in that students gain valuable practical knowledge which enables them to work effectively as leaders in building Anglican communities. That this programme reflects Anglican identity is important for the dioceses.

There is perceived value in the fact that the training now offered by St John's leads to a registered qualification. This external validation enhances the legitimacy of the qualification in the various church environments and the wider community and means students have a transferable qualification upon completion of their course of study.

The programme appears to work effectively as a foundation for further study. A large university has reviewed the programme and is positive about the possibility of cross-crediting papers from the diploma into its degree programme. Students and staff spoken to by the evaluation team believed the programme improved their academic literacy skills and provided a useful bridge to university study.

¹ The findings in this report are derived using a standard process and are based on a targeted sample of the organisation's activities.

This diploma programme was developed after ongoing consultation with the bishops and dioceses. Regular communication continues, as the college aims to deliver a qualification that is valued by the wider Anglican community. Graduate numbers are small; however, systematic links with graduates will be important to establish value.

1.3 How well do programmes and activities match the needs of learners and other stakeholders?

The rating for performance in relation to this key evaluation question is **Good**.

The rating for capability in self-assessment for this key evaluation question is **Excellent**.

The qualifications were developed to fill a gap identified by the church. Training at St John's had become off-campus, non-denominational, and university-based. The aim was to rebuild a community at St John's and ensure that those studying learned relevant and contemporary ministry skills applicable to the Anglican context. Early indications are that the new programmes appear to match these needs.

The students who arrive at St John's come from a range of cultures, educational backgrounds, and church contexts. Each student has a covenant which determines their level of service and obligations during their course of study. The college manages the complexity of demands well. There are good processes in place for recognition of prior learning, and the programme is structured to allow students to study part-time. Additionally, two academic tutors have been contracted to support students to develop study and academic skills, and students and staff endorsed this as a positive development. Students' views are regularly canvassed, both formally and informally.

The deans are responsible for ensuring that the values, culture, and special character relating to each tikanga are incorporated across all aspects of the college, and this is mostly effectively managed. There are ongoing efforts to balance the programme with Tikanga Māori and Tikanga Pakeha papers and content. There is a perception that support for each Tikanga is not consistent. However, this year the acting dean for Tikanga Māori has provided support for his students to ensure their progress and pastoral care following changes in staff and differing expectations defined in students' covenants. There is an overt commitment to offering a bicultural programme and there are genuine efforts to address the complexity inherent in such an undertaking.

1.4 How effective is the teaching?

The rating for performance in relation to this key evaluation question is **Good**.

The rating for capability in self-assessment for this key evaluation question is **Good**.

Lecturers are well qualified, with teaching qualifications and subject expertise. Evidence suggests that they use a range of approaches and activities in the classroom. Class sizes are small and allow one-to-one support; additional tutorials and support are offered willingly. Feedback from students about lecturers is positive.

The programme review highlighted issues with moderation and the issuing of extensions and the impact this had on returning marked assessments. There have been improvements made to moderation processes and an effort to communicate the policies more clearly to lecturers to ensure there is consistency across the college. There are still some issues related to the timely return of assessments. Feedback from staff indicates that the shift to the registered qualification has led to improvements in the quality of teaching and learning, and these are ongoing.

The programmes are overseen by a board of studies which meets on a regular basis to discuss academic matters related to content, delivery, and student achievement. The college proactively seeks external review and moderation of the programmes and the papers it offers. This external validation has highlighted areas for improvement but has also benchmarked the content and level of the programmes and ensured there is equivalency.

1.5 How well are learners guided and supported?

The rating for performance in relation to this key evaluation question is **Good**.

The rating for capability in self-assessment for this key evaluation question is **Good**.

Scholarships offered by St John's are generous and pay for students' study fees and associated costs, housing, and travel and living expenses. The facilities at St John's include housing, extensive grounds, a common room, dining hall, chapel, function rooms, and the John Kinder Theological Library. The obligation on students to participate in campus activities is working to build a sense of community that had been lost on site.

The course of study that students participate in is often difficult and life-changing, and the college recognises this by providing pastoral care both on campus and externally to the college. Other support, mentioned earlier, includes the study support tutors, who are available regularly on site at St John's.

The tikanga deans provide pastoral care to the students from the different tikanga. Their role is also to liaise with the ministry educators and bishops. Managing the demands of these different stakeholders can be complex, requiring the deans to advocate from a range of perspectives. Feedback suggested that ensuring some

students have alternative avenues of support and advocacy could improve their ability to study successfully.

1.6 How effective are governance and management in supporting educational achievement?

The rating for performance in relation to this key evaluation question is **Good**.

The rating for capability in self-assessment for this key evaluation question is **Good**.

St John's has been through big changes in terms of governance and management. The changes are ongoing, but appear to be being managed effectively. New positions are still being clearly defined and some permanent positions are still to be filled. In spite of the unsettling nature of the changes, the new commissioner is widely supported by staff and Te Kotahitanga, the board she reports to.

The new governance structure allows for key stakeholders to be represented effectively. Reports to Te Kotahitanga reflect the diverse perspectives of the stakeholders and an honest assessment of progress toward the strategic goals and objectives. The various tikanga viewpoints are represented on Te Kotahitanga as well as through separate hui for each tikanga which are held at the college.

There is a collegial approach to leadership, with regular senior management meetings where student learning and achievement and operational matters are discussed. There has been a shift to ensuring that policies and procedures are well understood and followed, to improve the quality of delivery of the programmes.

There is abundant evidence that the organisation has reflected on the value of the education it delivers and that significant changes have occurred as a result. There are multiple channels of communication with important stakeholders, and reflection is open and transparent. The issues identified by the evaluation team on site were reflected in the organisation's own review documents. It is important to note that change is ongoing and that some impacts are yet to be seen. The evaluation team is confident that mechanisms to evaluate effectiveness are in place.

Focus Areas

This section reports significant findings in each focus area, not already covered in Part 1.

2.1 Focus area: Governance, management, and strategy

The rating in this focus area for educational performance is **Good**.

The rating for capability in self-assessment for this focus area is **Good**.

2.2 Focus area: Diploma in Anglican Studies (Level 5)

The rating in this focus area for educational performance is **Good**.

The rating for capability in self-assessment for this focus area is **Good**.

Recommendations

There are no recommendations arising from the external evaluation and review, other than those expressed or implied within the report.

Appendix

Regulatory basis for external evaluation and review

Self-assessment and external evaluation and review are requirements of course approval and accreditation (under sections 258 and 259 of the Education Act 1989) for all TEOs that are entitled to apply. The requirements are set through the course approval and accreditation criteria and policies established by NZQA under section 253(1)(d) and (e) of the Act.

In addition, for registered private training establishments, the criteria and policies for their registration require self-assessment and external evaluation and review at an organisational level in addition to the individual courses they own or provide. These criteria and policies are set by NZQA under section 253(1)(ca) of the Act.

NZQA is responsible for ensuring non-university TEOs continue to comply with the policies and criteria after the initial granting of approval and accreditation of courses and/or registration. The New Zealand Vice-Chancellors' Committee (NZVCC) has statutory responsibility for compliance by universities.

This report reflects the findings and conclusions of the external evaluation and review process, conducted according to the policies and criteria approved by the NZQA Board.

The report identifies strengths and areas for improvement in terms of the organisation's educational performance and capability in self-assessment.

External evaluation and review reports are one contributing piece of information in determining future funding decisions where the organisation is a funded TEO subject to an investment plan agreed with the Tertiary Education Commission.

External evaluation and review reports are public information and are available from the NZQA website (www.nzqa.govt.nz).

*Information relevant to the external evaluation and review process, including the publication *Policy and Guidelines for the Conduct of External Evaluation and Review*, is available at: <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/registration-and-accreditation/external-evaluation-and-review/policy-and-guidelines-eeer/introduction/>*

NZQA

Ph 0800 697 296

E qaadmin@nzqa.govt.nz

www.nzqa.govt.nz