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# External Evaluation and Review Report

St John's Theological College

Date of report: 12 November 2019

# About St John's Theological College

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*St John's Theological College (SJC) offers theological and ministry training for the Anglican ministry in Aotearoa New Zealand and Polynesia. Training meets church requirements for the ordination of priests and upskilling of lay people.*

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Type of organisation:	Private training establishment (PTE)
Location:	202-210 St Johns Road, Meadowbank, Auckland
Code of Practice signatory:	Yes, students include those from Polynesia and Melanesia.
Number of students:	Domestic: 114 – Māori six, Pasifika eight, Pakeha 95, Asian five International: six equivalent full-time students
Number of staff:	10 full-time equivalents plus four adjuncts
TEO profile:	See: <a href="#">St John's Theological College</a> SJC is a residential community for ordination students plus blended/distance learning for regional students. Other student-residents study graduate and postgraduate programmes via enrolment in University of Otago distance programmes and Laidlaw College, Carey College and Auckland University of Technology programmes depending on diocesan requirements.
Last EER outcome:	In 2016, St John's Theological College was found to be Confident in both educational performance and capability in self-assessment.
Scope of evaluation:	New Zealand Diploma in Christian Studies (Level 5) (Theological Studies). The diploma is full-time for one year or three to five years part-time.
MoE number:	7885
NZQA reference:	C36067
Dates of EER visit:	19 and 20 September 2019

# Summary of Results

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*SJC provides highly effective ministry and lay training that responds to the needs of the Anglican church. Shared organisational purpose and direction, exemplary academic leadership, and meaningful and respectful collaboration with stakeholders inform changes and improvements.*

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## **Highly Confident in educational performance**

- The NZQA-approved diploma programme is complemented and underpinned by the SJC Formation programme. Together, these programmes provide the knowledge, practical skills and attributes required for successful ministry.
- Of the 40 graduates in the years 2016-2018, 85 per cent completed while six graduates went into related fields. Key contributors to success are careful student selection, comprehensive pastoral support, highly qualified and valued staff, and the relevance of the qualification to the church.

## **Highly Confident in capability in self-assessment**

- Delivery is flexible. This reduces barriers to learning, enables access across regions, and meets both ministry and lay student needs. Appropriate moderation systems assure assessment is valid and reliable across regions and modes of delivery.
- SJC's purpose, direction and values are apparent in the three tikanga structure where Māori, Pasifika and Pakeha strands acknowledge diversity but also support unity as one church.
- SJC is generously resourced and highly accountable. Governance and management structures balance responsibilities and reflect obligations effectively. Reporting is coherent and systematic. SJC successfully manages compliance and Code of Practice accountabilities for international students.
- SJC has used the recommendations from the 2016 EER report to inform its ongoing self-assessment, leading to organisational change and improvements.

# Key evaluation question findings<sup>1</sup>

## 1.1 How well do students achieve?

Performance:	<b>Excellent</b>
Self-assessment:	<b>Excellent</b>
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Diploma students are chosen by bishops in dioceses and are provided with scholarships and residential accommodation at SJC. This year (2019) is year 3 of delivery of the New Zealand Diploma in Christian Studies. The first on-site diploma students graduated in 2017. The first regional diploma students graduated in 2018. Each student has a bespoke programme of theological study suited to their individual needs. Course completion across all three modes of delivery – on-site, in regions (weekend workshops) and Flexilearn (flexible delivery) – is high, consistently 90 per cent or above in 2017 and 2018.</p> <p>Strong internal and external moderation processes provide assurance that achievement outcomes are valid and reliable across delivery modes and regions.</p> <p>Attendance is set at 80 per cent and closely monitored. Small student numbers allow individual attention to each student. This ensures that any academic difficulties are identified early. Available support options enable students to improve their academic skills and return to the programme later.</p> <p>Destination data shows that in the years 2016-2018, 85 per cent of graduates went into fields related to their training, indicating the training is fit for purpose. Academic board minutes provided evidence of extensive discussions around student results and student complaints about the results and how these were considered, managed and successfully resolved.</p>
Conclusion:	Student achievement is high. SJC has built a teaching and learning environment that is academically robust and both challenging and supportive of students and staff.

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

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

Performance:	<b>Excellent</b>
Self-assessment:	<b>Excellent</b>
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>The New Zealand Diploma in Christian Studies may provide a stepping stone towards a degree. The University of Otago, Laidlaw College and Carey College all recognise the diploma as credit towards the first year of a Bachelor's degree. SJC graduates are viewed by these organisations as well-prepared for Bachelor's-level study.</p> <p>Students seeking ordination undertake a non-NZQA SJC Formation programme that includes participation in church-based field placements around the Auckland region. This enables students to apply their knowledge and skills to benefit the local community and to reflect on their ministry practice.</p> <p>Students return to the referring diocese once qualified. In this way, both the graduate and the diocese get the added value of a trained priest. While graduates are 'fit for purpose' for initial appointments, longer-term follow-up has been limited. SJC is addressing this issue by initiating feedback from employing bishops and supervising vicars in term 3 of each year.</p> <p>The three tikanga of Pakeha, Māori and Pasifika support and challenge students to consider the history of the Anglican church in the context of the history of Aotearoa, Polynesia and Melanesia, and in relation to students' personal histories and backgrounds.</p> <p>Not all students are training to be ordained priests. Many students are taking papers for personal interest or to better serve in church roles. These students value SJC's contribution to their goals.</p>
Conclusion:	Churches benefit from well-trained clergy who return to the diocese that selected them for training. SJC benefits from knowing that it is adding value for individual graduates (both personally and professionally) and the church communities they serve. SJC also contributes to the training needs of lay staff which strengthens church communities.

### 1.3 How well do programme design and delivery, including learning and assessment activities, match the needs of students and other relevant stakeholders?

Performance:	<b>Excellent</b>
Self-assessment:	<b>Excellent</b>
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>SJC exists to meet the needs of the Anglican church for trained priests and church workers, and others interested in deepening their knowledge and faith. To serve this wide range of interested students, SJC offers a mix of residential and regional training.</p> <p>Scholarships for residential training include free housing for families and a living allowance. Flexible (Flexilearn) delivery enables regional students to complete the diploma in three to five years. Regional training includes weekend intensives in Christchurch, Wellington and Waiapu and a summer school in mid-December.</p> <p>Teaching and learning is engaging, although some student feedback indicated that the emphasis on the lecture style of delivery reduced time for discussion and sharing of ideas. However, a combination of face-to-face, online forums and reflective journals provide a variety of opportunities to interact with others to consolidate learning. The on-site John Kinder library is an up-to-date, user-friendly resource and study hub for SJC students.</p> <p>The diploma has no practical component. The practice supervisors oversee the non-NZQA Formation programme which has separate learning outcomes from the diploma. Together the two programmes provide the knowledge, practical skills and attributes required for successful ministry.</p> <p>Students are together and on ministry placements in year 1 of the diploma, but once the students progress to years 2 and 3 there is a sense of fragmentation, with a detachment from practical ministry realities. SJC is considering seeking approval for an applied theology degree to address this issue.</p>
Conclusion:	SJC has strong self-assessment activities that welcome the contribution of all stakeholders. Programme review is systematic and addresses the emerging needs of students and the referring dioceses.

## 1.4 How effectively are students supported and involved in their learning?

Performance:	<b>Excellent</b>
Self-assessment:	<b>Excellent</b>
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>SJC provides a highly supportive residential community where students have time to integrate learning into their daily lives. Students listen to others as they worship or share meals. The on-site chapel provides opportunities for students to regularly share and lead worship and to give each other feedback. It also builds relationships across the three tikanga and provides 'cultural windows' through which to discuss 'faith' in different cultural contexts.</p> <p>SJC understands the essential role family provides for the student in training. Student support is comprehensive. It ranges from scholarships, housing and medical support for students and families. This enables people already in employment and with family obligations to consider and undertake training. The high level of support is appreciated by the students.</p> <p>The one-week orientation has been replaced by a four-week wānanga. This change has been highly successful as it has enabled students to develop skills, knowledge and attitudes more gradually.</p> <p>Pastoral support is supplemented by staff in other support roles. There are two contracted trainers who assist with online learning, one in the regions, the other on site. A complaints officer was appointed in 2018 to deal with any sexual harassment issues.</p> <p>Tikanga deans have clear roles and responsibilities. Residential students are interviewed by tikanga deans on arrival and the deans maintain pastoral and academic oversight throughout their scholarship. SJC has exit strategies for students who decide to withdraw from training.</p>
Conclusion:	Academic and social support for students is highly effective. It is underpinned by the on-site and wider church community who share beliefs and values. Students are encouraged and supported to pursue their chosen vocational pathways, in or outside the church.

## 1.5 How effective are governance and management in supporting educational achievement?

Performance:	<b>Excellent</b>
Self-assessment:	<b>Excellent</b>
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>SJC does not select its students or hold funds. The St John's College Trust Board oversees the assets of the trust and is accountable to the General Synod of the Anglican Church in the Province of Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia. Te Kotahitanga, a board appointed by the General Synod, is responsible to advise on the strategic use of the resources of the trust and the direction of theological education in the province. Until 2014, Te Kotahitanga was also the board of governors for the college. Since then, Te Kaunihera has been established to act as the college's governing body.</p> <p>This change reflected the three tikanga model, introduced greater external expertise, and has contributed to more transparent decision-making. One member from each tikanga is appointed by Te Kotahitanga plus four members with specialist skills. The college manager and Te Manukura (principal) are at most meetings in an ex-officio, non-voting capacity. Once the annual budget is approved by Te Kaunihera, it passes to Te Kotahitanga for final sign-off and funds are distributed by the trust board for payment of invoices.</p> <p>At the previous EER, there was a recommendation that Te Kaunihera review its effectiveness. This began in 2017, and in 2019 an external review was undertaken and recommendations accepted and implemented. These recommendations included aligning Te Kaunihera's responsibilities and reporting to NZQA's key evaluation questions.</p> <p>Professional development for staff is very generous. Most staff are at doctorate level or completing a doctorate. All staff are expected to upskill and add to their skills and knowledge.</p>
Conclusion:	Governance and management structures have become more closely aligned to SJC's mission. Recent staff appointments have added to SJC's capacity and capability to support educational achievement.



## 1.6 How effectively are important compliance accountabilities managed?

Performance:	<b>Excellent</b>
Self-assessment:	<b>Excellent</b>
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>SJC's internal SER (self-evaluation and review) is comprehensive. Since the 2016 evaluation SJC has systematically reviewed all its policies and procedures. The SER document feeds into the annual review.</p> <p>Management of Code of Practice obligations is thorough. Review is undertaken regularly by the college manager, tikanga deans, accounts administrator and programme administrator. The programme administrator discusses expectations and outcomes to assess compliance and progress against goals and any recommended changes before submitting the required documentation to NZQA.</p> <p>The board of studies oversees academic matters. It includes senior staff, a youth representative, a representative of Te Kotahitanga and a Māori faculty member from Laidlaw College. Wide membership encourages stakeholder input.</p> <p>All on-site programmes had slight changes to learning outcomes, content or assessment. These changes were submitted to and approved by NZQA for delivery in 2019.</p> <p>Memoranda of understanding with Carey College, Laidlaw College and the University of Otago were sighted and deemed fit for purpose.</p>
Conclusion:	SJC has a strong commitment to maintaining compliance. Regular review is used to identify any 'gaps' and to make improvements to policies and procedures.

## Focus Areas

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

### 2.1 Focus area: New Zealand Diploma in Christian Studies Level 6

Performance:	<b>Excellent</b>
Self-assessment:	<b>Excellent</b>

## Recommendations

*Recommendations are not compulsory but their implementation may improve the quality and effectiveness of the training and education provided by the tertiary education organisation (TEO). They may be referred to in subsequent external evaluation and reviews (EERs) to gauge the effectiveness of the TEO's quality improvements over time.*

There are no recommendations arising from the external evaluation and review.

## Requirements

*Requirements relate to the TEO's statutory obligations under legislation that governs their operation. This include NZQA Rules and relevant regulations promulgated by other agencies.*

There are no requirements arising from the external evaluation and review.

# Appendix

## Conduct of external evaluation and review

*All external evaluation and reviews are conducted in accordance with NZQA's published rules. The methodology used is described in the web document <https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/external-evaluation-and-review/>. The TEO has an opportunity to comment on the accuracy of this report, and any submissions received are fully considered by NZQA before finalising the report.*

## Disclaimer

*The findings in this report have been reached by means of a standard evaluative process. They are based on a representative selection of focus areas, and a sample of supporting information provided by the TEO under review or independently accessed by NZQA. As such, the report's findings offer a guide to the relative quality of the TEO at the time of the EER, in the light of the known evidence, and the likelihood that this level of quality will continue.*

*For the same reason, these findings are always limited in scope. They are derived from selections and samples evaluated at a point in time. The supporting methodology is not designed to:*

- *Identify organisational fraud<sup>2</sup>*
- *Provide comprehensive coverage of all programmes within a TEO, or of all relevant evidence sources*
- *Predict the outcome of other reviews of the same TEO which, by posing different questions or examining different information, could reasonably arrive at different conclusions.*

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<sup>2</sup> NZQA and the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) comprehensively monitor risk in the tertiary education sector through a range of other mechanisms. When fraud, or any other serious risk factor, has been confirmed, corrective action is taken as a matter of urgency.

## Regulatory basis for external evaluation and review

*External evaluation and review is conducted under the Quality Assurance (including External Evaluation and Review (EER)) Rules 2016, which are made by NZQA under section 253(1)(pa) of the Education Act 1989 and approved by the NZQA Board and the Minister authorised as responsible for Part 20 of the Education Act.*

*Self-assessment and participation and cooperation in external evaluation and review are requirements for:*

- *maintaining accreditation to provide an approved programme for all TEOs other than universities, and*
- *maintaining consent to assess against standards on the Directory of Assessment Standards for all TEOs including ITOs but excluding universities, and*
- *maintaining training scheme approval for all TEOs other than universities.*

*The requirements for participation and cooperation are set through the Programme Approval and Accreditation Rules 2018, the Consent to Assess Against Standards Rules 2011 and the Training Scheme Rules 2012 respectively. These rules were also made by NZQA under section 253 of the Education Act 1989 and approved by the NZQA Board and the Minister.*

*In addition, the Private Training Establishment Rules 2018 require registered private training establishments to undertake self-assessment and participate in external evaluation and review as a condition of maintaining registration. The Private Training Establishment Registration Rules 2018 are also made by NZQA under section 253 of the Education Act 1989 and approved by the NZQA Board and the Minister for Tertiary Education, Skills and Employment.*

*NZQA is responsible for ensuring non-university TEOs continue to comply with the rules after the initial granting of approval and accreditation of programmes, training schemes and consents to assess and 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 Quality Assurance (including External Evaluation and Review (EER)) Rules 2016. 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](http://www.nzqa.govt.nz)). All rules cited above are available at <https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/about-us/our-role/legislation/nzqa-rules/>, while information about the conduct and methodology for external evaluation and review can be found at <https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/external-evaluation-and-review/>*

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