



Report of External Evaluation and Review

Pathways College of Bible and Mission

Confident in educational performance

Confident in capability in self-assessment

Date of report: 15 November 2011

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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:	694 Great South Road, Penrose, Auckland
Type:	Private training organisation
First registered:	1999
Number of students:	Domestic: 37 equivalent full-time students (EFTS) International: three equivalent full-time students
Number of staff:	Four full-time equivalents and three part-time
Scope of active accreditation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Certificate in Christian Ministry (Level 4)• Certificate in Foundational Christian Studies (Level 4)• Diploma in Christian Ministry (Internship) (Level 5)• Diploma in Christian Studies (Level 5)• Diploma in Ministry Leadership (Internship) (Level 6) <p>Pathways College also delivers theological courses that are non-NZQA, local courses at certificate and diploma levels (5 and 6).</p>
Sites:	Block courses are delivered at four locations throughout the North Island.
Distinctive characteristics:	Pathways College of Bible and Mission (Pathways College) is the educational arm of the Christian Brethren Churches in New Zealand who provide governance at board level. Pathways College is a

charitable trust.

Students are all distance learners; courses are delivered using an internship model with block courses run six times a year.

Pathways College receives funding for 29 EFTS which was increased from seven EFTS in August 2010.

Recent significant changes:	None
Previous quality assurance history:	Summative judgements of the EER of February 2010 were: Confident in educational performance; Not Yet Confident in capability in self-assessment.

2. Scope of external evaluation and review

Following a review of documentation provided and telephone discussion between the NZQA lead evaluator and Pathways College executive principal, the following focus areas were identified for inclusion in the external evaluation and review:

- Diploma in Christian Ministry (Internship) (Level 5).

The majority of Pathways College students are currently enrolled in this one-year, full-time qualification.

In accordance with NZQA policy, the EER scope included the following mandatory focus area:

- Governance, management, and strategy.

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/>

A team of two evaluators visited Pathways College at the Auckland office and on site at Karapiro during a block course. Interviews were held with all Pathways College employees and diploma students. Telephone interviews were conducted with stakeholders and the chair of the board.

The evaluation team viewed a range of documents, including the student handbook, ministry supervision handbook, examples of the supervisors' quarterly

review, supervisors' fortnightly feedback, pastoral care meeting minutes, an internal moderation report, and a block course evaluation form.

Pathways 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 **Pathways College of Bible and Mission**.

Pathways College has spent the past 18 months purposefully and strategically working towards improving educational outcomes for learners who in recent years had poor achievement rates. As a result, there has been a dramatic increase in the completion and qualification rates of learners; in 2010, all learners but one in the Diploma in Christian Ministry achieved the qualification.

There is now an expectation that students will achieve. The tightening and enforcement of academic processes, which are monitored and responded to by Pathways College staff, has made a major contribution to this genuine improvement and is enhanced by the support and training provided to the programme supervisors.

The destinations of students are beginning to be tracked and initial trends indicate that increased numbers are moving on to further study.

The qualification and internship experience is highly valued by both students and stakeholders in preparing them for further study and to gain credibility in their ministry work within their respective churches.

Statement of confidence on capability in self-assessment

NZQA is **Confident** in the capability in self-assessment of **Pathways College of Bible and Mission**.

Pathways College has enforced and strengthened internal processes; the collection and analysis of data and planned reviews are evident throughout the Diploma in Christian Ministry programme. There are examples of improvements to the programme which have arisen from self-assessment data and analysis.

Pathways College is becoming data-rich. Over time, the monitoring of recent initiatives will provide valuable trend data. Clear benchmarks will assist in the analysis of this extensive data collection and determine the most useful information for analysis which will improve the quality of the programme and the learning for students.

The nature of this small PTE, with close relational ties to stakeholders, has real advantages which Pathways College is capitalising on by gathering feedback directly and in person from supervisors and anecdotally through staff members' various relationships within Christian communities.

Providing opportunities for students to provide feedback that is not primarily via a person who has a role determining student outcomes, or with whom the student

has strong personal ties, would improve the validity of the current information gathered.

Findings¹

1.1 How well do learners achieve?

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

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

In 2010, 100 per cent of learners completed the Diploma in Christian Ministry course. This is an improvement on the previous two years where 61 per cent completed the course in 2008 and 83 per cent in 2009.

Pathways College currently delivers the level 5 Diploma in Christian Ministry (Internship). This is a one-year local course which, after successful completion, can lead to the level 6 diploma. In 2011, a memorandum of understanding was formalised with another tertiary institute where Pathways College graduates are able to gain entry and cross-credit to the second year of a theology degree programme.

There has been a conscious drive to improve course and qualification completions. These changes have been achieved by an improvement in processes, such as the expectation that students hand in assessments on time, with close monitoring and review of this requirement. Students' progress is also closely monitored by supervisors who report fortnightly to validate that the required hours are worked in ministry and who provide quarterly reports about supervision meetings, personal growth, theoretical learning, and the students' role in ministry.

Tracking the destinations of students from Pathways College's own data indicates that 52 per cent of students from 2010 have gone on to further study; almost half of these students continued into the second year of study at Pathways College. The remainder have continued studies at other institutes within New Zealand. This compares favourably with 36 per cent of students in 2008 and 57 per cent in 2009 moving on to further study.

Achievement is not only about gaining the qualification, which provides credibility to those students who wish to pursue vocational roles within the church on a paid or voluntary basis. Another key outcome identified by Pathways College is the students' personal relationship with God and the development and growth of the individual. Secondary evidence is gathered from the supervisors' quarterly reports, student blogs, and interactions with Pathways College staff during block courses. A primary source of evidence has been introduced this year in the form of an annual quality questionnaire for the student to complete. This questionnaire will eventually provide direct feedback from the student as to the extent of Pathways

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

College's provision of learning and support. How Pathways College plans to benchmark this information to interpret the results of the questionnaire is yet to be determined.

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 **Excellent**.

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

Pathways College has active and ongoing engagement with stakeholders who are the pastors and church leaders who supervise students on the diploma courses. Relationship-building with these supervisors has been an ongoing priority, and a representative from Pathways College meets with them in person every semester.

At these semester meetings, supervisors provide feedback to Pathways staff directly about the value and quality of the Diploma in Christian Ministry programme. This feedback is discussed at Pathways College staff meetings and any actions are considered.

The supervisors interviewed by the evaluators affirmed the value of the Diploma in Christian Ministry qualification and the renewed confidence they now have in the quality of the programme and rigour of the theology that is taught. One outcome of this is that churches that previously had poor experiences with Pathways College are now guiding prospective students to the PTE.

Students and stakeholders most valued the internship model which allows students to work in their selected ministry in their local church while studying toward the qualification. Knowledge is acquired during the block courses run six times a year.

Students then return to their own church and are supported by supervisors to translate the academic theology into practice within their ministry. Supervisors are greatly assisted in this support role by having full access to Moodle software to track students' progress.

The experience of the 2010 Diploma in Christian Ministry students was sufficiently beneficial that a quarter have gone on to study the Diploma in Ministry Leadership at Pathways College without access to StudyLink funding. Pathways College is now beginning to receive enrolment enquiries because of the positive experiences of previous interns.

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 **Good**.

The programme design of six compulsory live-in block courses dispersed throughout the academic year brings students together who are otherwise geographically dispersed. The internship allows young people to develop their skills and personal qualities while remaining connected to and contributing to their own church community.

Pathways College is using the feedback comments from the 2010 cohort exit interview to make changes to the format of the block courses, and these changes have been implemented this year (2011). An evaluation is completed by all students at the end of every block course. However, the quality and range of questions does not capture evidence to show that the most important needs of students are being met.

Supervisors have a vital role to play in the success and support of students. The primary supervisor is usually the pastor or a nominated person from the church where the student is involved in ministry. Supervisors are required to provide support to ensure students comply with academic requirements, to nurture the spiritual growth of the student, and to oversee the intern on a day-to-day basis in their particular area of ministry. These roles may be undertaken by the one supervisor or provided by up to three separate supervisors.

Either the Pathways College executive principal or the ministry internship coordinator provides one-to-one introduction and training to the supervisor which outlines the role and responsibilities of the position and reporting expectations. A handbook has been created to assist with this role. Supervisors are visited by Pathways College staff each semester, providing support and gathering feedback. Communication between supervisors and Pathways College is effective, visible, and consistent.

The majority of Pathways College students in the Diploma in Christian Ministry are new to tertiary study; 50 per cent have not achieved NCEA level 2 prior to enrolling and there is some ethnic diversity among learners. These students are welcomed into the open-entry programme because of their personal attributes and recommendation by their pastor or church leader. This is a legitimate entry criterion for the local diploma qualification. A form of needs analysis would be useful to identify the possible learning needs of individuals and the cumulative effect on the cohort for entry study at level 5. Needs analysis would provide Pathways College tutors and adjuncts (contracted lecturers) with information about learning demand when preparing materials, assessments, and delivery.

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**.

Teaching occurs at block courses throughout the year and is delivered by Pathways College teaching staff and adjuncts, of which there are at least ten. Pathways College teaching staff are qualified in their fields and adjuncts are equally qualified or experienced in their fields of expertise. Peer observation of teaching occurs at least once every three years. There is a structured set of useful questions which are discussed with the lecturer at the time of the review. Lecturers have been replaced when an issue of performance has arisen.

Adjuncts and Pathways lecturers are responsible for the design, delivery, and assessment of their respective topics. Internal moderation of each course within the Diploma in Christian Ministry qualification occurs at least once every three years. On the whole, the moderation process is robust; however, the internship part of the course is yet to be externally moderated. Considering that the internship is 60 per cent of the programme and provides 25 per cent of the grade for the qualification, moderation of this highly valued component of the diploma is desirable.

Feedback on the methodologies and quality of the teaching and on the content of the programme from students is formally sought when the course is moderated. Outside of this, students need to initiate feedback. Considering the profile of the students at Pathways College and the tight timetabling of block courses, gathering student feedback on teaching practice and course content more regularly and offering the opportunity to a larger proportion of students would improve the validity of the current information gathered and provide more comprehensive feedback from the direct recipients of the learning.

The introduction of Moodle as a student management tool provides students, supervisors, and Pathways College with a means to track academic progress. The wide range of functions to enhance learners' experiences and provide access to resources and management of the programme are well utilised and have successfully assisted Pathways College in its efforts to monitor and respond to issues that may affect the students' completion of the qualification.

1.5 How well are learners guided and supported?

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

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

Pathways College has invested heavily in student support. This includes the appointment of a part-time position dedicated solely to the pastoral care and support of the students.

The main features of support include: fortnightly phone calls to students, meeting in person with Pathways College staff at visits to the students' church community every semester, and gathering with students in person on block courses. Learning materials are available on Moodle prior to attending block courses.

Monitoring supervisor quarterly reports and all student blogs closely is also considered useful in detecting any possible issues that may arise. Any issues are discussed at pastoral care meetings fortnightly and followed up with the student.

Pathways College gauges the effectiveness of its student support for distance learners by face-to-face feedback from the supervisors. Students also have the opportunity to raise any issues during the fortnightly phone calls or in person on block courses and at an exit interview at the end of the programme.

There is ethnic diversity among the students and 50 per cent are 20 years of age or younger. Almost all the feedback about aspects of the students' learning experience is collected via discussion with the supervisors and Pathways College staff or associates. Providing opportunities for students to provide feedback that is not via a person who has a role in assessing course and internship outcomes would improve the validity of the current feedback gathered.

Several examples were given where improvements have been made to the 2011 Diploma in Christian Ministry course, such as the creation of spiritual formation groups where first and second-year students are placed in groups and have a session timetabled together during the block courses to meet for support and fellowship.

Pathways College staff relate effectively to students; the evaluators heard directly from students that they felt genuinely cared for, and the fact that Pathways College staff pray for them was significant.

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

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

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

The governing board of Pathways College has 12 members who are various representatives of the Christian Brethren Church. The executive board manages the day-to-day running of the PTE and consists of the principal, board chair, board treasurer, and executive principal. Both the governing and executive boards meet regularly. Monthly reports from the executive board keep the governing board informed between meetings, and opportunities for informal discussion between the board chair and principal are frequent.

An independent review of this long-serving governing board is under consideration and may be useful to gain authentic feedback to corroborate the effectiveness and mission of the board into the future.

The purpose and direction of Pathways College is clear and the key operational roles of principal and executive principal complement each other by enhancing stakeholder relationships and ensuring the operation and most important processes of the PTE are implemented and monitored. Where Pathways identifies the use of external input into reviews of process or feedback, the robustness of this would be strengthened if the people utilised were independent of the PTE and their employees.

Staff and pastoral care meetings are held fortnightly and faculty meetings are run as required. All staff have the opportunity to contribute at these meetings and at annual staff retreats where exit interviews are reflected on. There is evidence that changes to the programmes and processes at Pathways College occur as a result of feedback received.

Pathways College is becoming data-rich with information which it analyses. Over time, this process will provide valuable trend data. Clear benchmarks will assist in the analysis of this extensive data collection and determine the most useful information to inform strategic decision-making and implementation by Pathways College.

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 **Excellent**.

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

2.2 Focus area: Diploma in Christian Ministry (Internship) (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 implied or expressed 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 all 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/>

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