

# Report of External Evaluation and Review

Laidlaw College Incorporated  
Te Wānanga Amorangi

Highly Confident in educational performance

Highly Confident in capability in self-assessment

Date of report: 10 December 2015

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*Final Report*

# 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

Name of TEO:	Laidlaw College (Te Wānanga Amorangi)
Type:	Private training establishment (PTE)
First registered:	1990
Location:	80 Central Park Drive, Henderson, Auckland
Website:	<a href="http://www.laidlaw.ac.nz/">http://www.laidlaw.ac.nz/</a>
Delivery sites:	As above, with delivery sites in Manukau and Christchurch, and also distance learning.
Courses currently delivered:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Certificate in Christian Studies (Level 4)</li><li>• Diploma in Christian Studies (Level 6)</li><li>• Diploma in Ministry Internship (Level 6)</li><li>• Bachelor of Counselling (Level 7)</li><li>• Bachelor of Ministries (Level 7)</li><li>• Bachelor of Theology (level 7)</li><li>• Bachelor of Teaching (Primary) and Worldview Studies (Level 7)</li><li>• Graduate Diploma in Theology (Level 7)</li><li>• Postgraduate Diploma in Theology (Level 8)</li><li>• Master of Theology (Level 9)</li></ul>
Code of Practice signatory:	Yes

Number of students: In 2014 Laidlaw College had 430 equivalent full-time students (EFTS) from 830 enrolments (Māori students, 81; Pasifika students 125; Asian students 11; international students, 10).

The largest proportion of students are on the Henderson Campus. At the time of the external evaluation and review (EER) there were approximately 75 students enrolled at the Christchurch Campus and 30 at Manukau.

Distance learners number in the hundreds, but comprise 70 EFTS.

Number of staff: 40 full-time equivalents, including 62 part-time staff

Scope of active accreditation: <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers/course-accreditations.do?providerId=856313001&delSiteInd=0>

Distinctive characteristics: Laidlaw College (Te Wānanga Amorangi) is a Christian tertiary education provider, founded in 1922 as the Bible Training Institute and also previously known as the Bible College of New Zealand.

The college vision and mission are described as follows:

*'A world shaped by love, compelled and informed by the Gospel'*

*'To equip students and scholars to renew their communities with a faith as intelligent as it is courageous'*

Funding for programmes comes from the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) Student Achievement Component (SAC) funding, Performance Based Research Funding and international student fees. The college offers a number of scholarships from their own sources and some students are funded by scholarships from their particular religious denomination. Approximately 70 per cent of delivery is at degree and postgraduate levels.

Laidlaw has formal relationships with Auckland University of Technology and Otago University for students to progress to doctoral qualifications within New Zealand, and also with the Australian College of Theology for students wishing to pursue an international qualification. Some students proceed to

doctoral study in the United States of America.

The college has professional affiliations with: Christian Theological and Ministries Education Society, and Independent Tertiary Institutions – Nga Wānanga Motuhake.

Recent significant changes:

There have been reviews of various sections and programmes at the college since the last EER, most recently the School of Theology. A college-wide restructure occurred in 2014. The college also closed the student accommodation block (although the college still maintains other accommodation options on site). There has been a reduction of 50 full-time equivalent staff since 2012.

Along with other providers of theological education, Laidlaw College was subject to a reduction in funding from the TEC from 2015 in that subject area. Laidlaw College has been assessed and met the TEC's prudential financial standards in both 2014 and 2015.

A new Manukau campus was opened in 2014, with the purpose of improving access to Laidlaw's programmes by Māori and Pasifika students residing in South Auckland and as a response to the Tertiary Education Strategy.

Previous quality assurance history:

NZQA last externally evaluated Laidlaw College in March 2012. NZQA was Confident in the organisation's educational performance, and Confident in its capability in self-assessment.

Degree monitoring of the Bachelor of Counselling last occurred in 2014. The monitor made 10 recommendations. The monitor also stated that 'the degree is being managed and implemented as planned and presented [at time of original approval] and the recommendations from the previous monitors visit are being addressed'.

Degree monitoring of the Master of Theology also occurred in 2014. This is non-mandatory monitoring by an academic from another tertiary education organisation.

Other:

The Henderson Campus includes housing for the principal, student families and other guests. A pre-school and a primary school also operate on the site,

and some students enrol their children there.

## 2. Scope of external evaluation and review

The four focus areas selected (below) cover the mandatory focus area, the highest level of programme being offered, and all sites and modes of delivery. Other potential 'mandatory' focus areas were not selected because of the relatively small proportion of international, Māori or Pasifika students enrolled. None of the focus area programmes selected were evaluated at the previous EER.

Focus areas and rationale for selection		
1.	Governance, management and strategy	Mandatory in all EERs
2.	Diploma in Christian Studies (Level 5)	This 120-credit qualification is delivered as a pathway programme to degree study. It also functions as an embedded exit qualification within the focus area Bachelor of Counselling. The programme is taught at the Henderson, Manukau and Christchurch campuses, and is also available by distance learning mode.
3.	Bachelor of Counselling (Level 7)	One of the two degree programmes offered in the School of Social Practice. It is taught at both the Henderson and Christchurch campuses. It includes practicum components and can lead to professional recognition as a counsellor.
4.	Master of Theology (Level 9)	This postgraduate degree is Laidlaw College's highest level of delivery. In particular, this focus area provided the evaluators with an opportunity to closely consider linkages with university partners, staff and student research.

### 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>. 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.*

Prior to the on-site visit, a preliminary meeting was held with senior staff at the Henderson Campus. Laidlaw College then provided a self-assessment summary document (including detailed analysis of programme performance) and examples of quality assurance processes and claimed improvements. The evaluators also familiarised themselves with recent TEC performance information and other NZQA information sources, including monitoring reports.

Three evaluators conducted the on-site enquiry over three days at the Henderson Campus (29-30 September and 1 October 2015). By means of the provider's video-conferencing technology, staff, students and graduates from Manukau and Christchurch campuses were fully involved in the evaluative conversations at various points.

Interviews were held with: board members; the principal and other senior staff; lecturers from the focus area programmes; student support staff; external stakeholder representatives, including employers, with a knowledge of programmes and graduates; and iwi representatives (te rūnanga o Te Wānanga Amorangi) also knowledgeable about Laidlaw College programmes and graduates. The evaluators also spoke directly with groups of students and graduates from each of the focus area programmes.

A range of supporting documentation was provided to the evaluators, some requested and others prepared for the EER (for example a range of case studies). These provided context and evidence regarding planning, strategy, educational performance and Laidlaw College's evaluation processes. Elements of the college's student management system, online learning materials and academic reporting systems were also sampled to triangulate or otherwise confirm evidence gathered during the evaluation.

# Summary of Results

## Statement of confidence on educational performance

NZQA is **Highly Confident** in the educational performance and **Highly Confident** in the capability in self-assessment of **Laidlaw College Incorporated**.

Students achieve well at Laidlaw College. There is ample evidence of strong performance across programmes since the previous EER, with course completions maintained at around 87 per cent. Patterns of performance are clearly and accurately reported in methodically analysed educational performance data reports, which are used to understand, compare and improve learner outcomes (see Findings 1.1 for details).

Strong quality assurance and academic processes, including internal and external moderation and course results monitoring, provide a high degree of assurance on the validity of this achievement. Related self-evaluation (the term Laidlaw College prefers) activities also focus on achievement and developing a shared understanding of findings, including any gaps, issues or concerns which can and sometimes do arise.

Graduates gain employment and, according to the college's surveys over the past five years, most often in roles aligned with their qualifications (primarily as religious workers, community and support service workers, teachers and tutors, teachers, counsellors, and other professionals).<sup>1</sup> Ongoing connection with graduates and stakeholders through surveys, hui and the much-revitalised alumni group actively informs self-evaluation. There is a strong alignment between courses and programmes offered, vocational outcomes and sector needs.

Teaching and pastoral care practices at Laidlaw College are guided by and reflect the stated vision, mission and values. All courses and programmes are subject to ongoing review and critique, and input from the sector and university and other tertiary partners is actively sought. Processes for data collection, recording of decision-making and efforts to understand the impacts of teaching and care practices are all very strong, and have been intentionally strengthened in response to the findings and recommendations of the previous EER and also the degree monitor's recommendations.

Beyond formal programme delivery, Laidlaw makes a significant national and international contribution towards disseminating knowledge and providing leadership. This is evidenced by, for example, engaging in bicultural and reconciliation work, active involvement with the Gospel Bicentenary<sup>2</sup>, hosting lecture series and regularly producing publications and research in a range of

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<sup>1</sup> Laidlaw College use the Occupation Codes (Statistics NZ) to analyse outcomes data.

<sup>2</sup> [A joint statement outlining the context of the Gospel Bicentenary.](#)

accessible formats. Laidlaw College performed very well in the 2012 Performance Based Research Funding rankings. The college makes an important contribution to wider social and religious debates from a non-sectarian perspective (i.e. not affiliated with or restricted to a particular religious group), and this engagement brings relevance and currency to their programmes. This forward-thinking is balanced well with the college's inherited constitution and founding values, such as those expressed in the 'statement of faith' document.

Laidlaw College's national governing council, principal and executive staff have responded strategically and effectively to recent major challenges (a gradual decline in enrolments in Christian Ministry-related programmes coupled with a reduction in government funding in the theology area). The subsequent restructures and reviews have been completed; realignment of roles and functional teams has also occurred. The academic integrity of programmes and solid student achievement were maintained throughout these processes.

Strategic planning and review, processes of open consultation, recruitment or promotion of new leaders and records of decision-making around projects or activities indicate self-critical, well-documented self-evaluation. This work has maintained the quality of outcomes (i.e. continuity) and led to new ways of organising educational programming in new locations (i.e. change).

Reflecting the key themes summarised above, and elaborated under the key evaluation questions that follow, NZQA can express high confidence in both the educational performance and capability in self-assessment of Laidlaw College.

# Findings<sup>3</sup>

## 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 **Excellent**.

### *Qualification levels and overall achievement rates*

Students achieve well at Laidlaw College, with consistently high course and qualification completion rates since the previous EER (see Tables 1 and 2). Laidlaw programmes contain content that has direct relevance to a range of Christian ministry and other human services occupations. The college is well regarded by relevant stakeholders and employers. Regular consultation and response to, for example, monitor input and research findings leads to refresh and renewal of course content on a regular basis. The evidence presented to the evaluators and confirmed in discussion with stakeholders and by document analysis confirms this.

Laidlaw College provides education largely at New Zealand Qualifications Framework level 7 and above, with less than 30 per cent of provision at certificate and diploma levels. Consistent course completion rates of 80-90 per cent at degree and postgraduate levels are being maintained. Performance of the smaller proportion of delivery at certificate and diploma levels has been weaker, approximately 70 per cent and 80 per cent course completion rates respectively. Students studying by distance mode achieve well, with course completions of close to 90 per cent year on year.

**Table 1. Laidlaw College – TEC educational performance indicators, 2011-2014**

	No. students	Course completion (%)	Qualification completion (%)	Progression (%)	Retention (%)
2011	899	84	62	23	69
2012	858	86	97	29	75
2013	835	87	86	95	77
2014	830	87	96	80	77

Source: TEC published performance data (9 October 2015)

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<sup>3</sup> The findings in this report are derived using a standard process and are based on a targeted sample of the organisation's activities.

Students enrolling in the focus area programmes of this evaluation also achieve well, and in the cases of the Bachelor of Counselling and Master of Theology, extremely well (Table 2). All three programmes now exceed the comparable sector average at the same or similar programme level.<sup>4</sup> Performance benchmarks are discussed below.

**Table 2. Focus area programme course (and qualification) completions (%) 2011-2014**

	2011	2012	2013	2014
Diploma in Christian Ministry	88 (84)	94 (89)	87 (73)	95 (73)
Bachelor of Counselling	91 (54)	93 (97)	91 (100)	92 (100)
Master of Theology	88 (77)	94 (72)	87 (100)	95 (100)

Source: TEC published performance data (various years). Note: fluctuations in qualification completion rates reflect that particular educational performance indicator calculation method.

*Benchmarks of performance (Table 3)*

The college uses a three-year rolling average to analyse and compare publicly available TEC data. It also uses this method to benchmark performance at level 7 and above against 'comparable providers': 11 degree-awarding PTEs; institutes of technology and polytechnics (ITPs); and also universities. The methodology seemed reasonable to the evaluators, who agreed that Laidlaw College does compare favourably.

**Table 3. Laidlaw College completion rate comparisons – level 7 and above, 2011-2013**

All courses (three-year rolling average method)	Laidlaw	Selected PTEs	ITPs	Universities
Course completion (%)	86	85	80	86
Qualification completion (%)	86	89	69	79

Source: TEC published performance data (various years)

*Demographic profile and achievement (Table 4)*

Somewhat uniquely, Laidlaw College's student profile shows approximately one-third of enrolments in each of the three TEC groups: under 25 years; 25 to 39 years; 40 years or older. TEC reports (2014) indicate that Māori students comprise about 8 per cent of enrolments and Pasifika students 18 per cent (an increase of 4 per cent over the previous year). In general, Pasifika student completion rates are considerably weaker than the norm, and this corresponds with the already stated softer course completion rates at certificate and diploma levels.<sup>5</sup> Influencing factors

<sup>4</sup> 2012-14 sector average as calculated by Laidlaw College using TEC published performance data for selected PTEs offering: levels 5-6 = 77 per cent; levels 7-8 = 98 per cent; levels 9-10 = 68 per cent.

<sup>5</sup> As a point of comparison, a large provider with a particular focus on Pasifika students, delivering at level 4 or below, recorded a 73 per cent average course completion rate for 2010-2013.

here include: the intentional increase in enrolments of under 25-year-old and Māori and Pasifika students in response to the Tertiary Education Strategy and meeting the need expressed by Pasifika church leaders for more provision for their members in South Auckland. The college is intentionally enrolling more students who may require new variations in teaching and support approaches, and they are very aware of this. Strategies to close this gap were convincing in their intent, are being implemented, and are discussed under Findings 1.3 and 1.5. For the purposes of relevant comparison, sub-sector medians are used to benchmark sub-group course completions.

**Table 4. Laidlaw College demographic profile and achievement, 2012-2014**

	Course completion alongside number enrolled			Sub-sector median (2013)
	2012	2013	2014	
Māori students	83% (60)	84% (60)	92% (81)	78%
Pasifika students	75% (107)	72% (98)	73% (125)	79%
Under 25-year-olds	84% (121)	86% (161)	85% (178)	83%
All students	86% (858)	87% (835)	87% (830)	83%

Sources: Laidlaw College and TEC published performance data (various years).

Note: some students identify with more than one ethnicity which may distort the enrolled totals.

Strong quality assurance and academic processes, including internal and external moderation and programme results monitoring, provide a high degree of assurance of the validity of this reported achievement. All course assessments are pre- and post-moderated on a three-year cycle (annually for postgraduate courses). Analysis of grade allocations also occurs, and regular scheduled external moderation with other tertiary partners, including university academics, is captured and reported to the national academic committee. Instances of plagiarism, for instance, are being detected and are dealt with fairly and effectively. The useful critical analysis of this achievement-related information as well as the ongoing, in-depth analysis of achievement patterns led to a rating of excellent for self-assessment under this key evaluation question.

## 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**.

Laidlaw College has a clear view of the wide range of stakeholders the college seeks to serve and how well it is doing. Their programme portfolio, which has been subject to critical review and change over time, reflects this. As well as working for religious organisations such as churches and mission agencies, graduates are gaining employment and contributing to other mainstream social service, counselling and educational sectors. This evaluation found solid evidence that this value of outcomes has occurred since the previous EER and with the most recent graduates.

Full scholarships for seven degree students in 2016 provided by a major Christian denomination indicate the level of ongoing confidence expressed in the college. A significant portion of the college's income is by way of donation, also reflecting stakeholder confidence that there is genuine perceived value in the outcomes of the educational activities.

In relation to the focus area programmes, the Diploma in Christian Studies is a pathway to higher education or an exit qualification depending on students' aspirations and/or academic ability. The cross-credit to degree provides added value to those progressing to higher levels of study, and Laidlaw College had the highest progression rate in the PTE sub-sector in 2014. For those who do not progress to the degree, there was some evidence that employers in the faith-based sector recognise the qualification as relevant, and an appropriate tertiary qualification for a range of ministry-related roles.

Employers demonstrate confidence in the Bachelor of Counselling. This viewpoint was expressed both by the sector and by graduates who had gained employment over the past few years, and had seen other Laidlaw College graduates employed in their organisations. Graduate tracking indicates that 60 per cent are in directly related employment within six months of completing. Evidence provided showed quite diverse employment outcomes across the field, such as into schools, service providers and in private practice. The qualification allows a graduate to become a registered counsellor, which in turn provides opportunity for income from the government health system. Excellent examples were given of positive contributions being made to important needs in communities within New Zealand and overseas, for example refugees and new migrants and those with serious health, addiction or other mental health issues. It was noted that demand for counselling services is very high and increasing in New Zealand.

The Master of Theology is Laidlaw College's highest level of delivery and is equipping people in ministry leadership positions, as well as for other para-church organisational roles where work with youth and children, to give one example,

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requires a theologically informed approach. Research, policy and programme development outcomes in these sub-sectors were noted. Some graduates move on to PhD study both within New Zealand and at overseas universities. The quality of graduates' academic preparation was noted favourably by university partners.

Laidlaw uses a suitable graduate survey with clearly reported findings which can now be used as benchmarks. It captures data on hard and soft outcomes<sup>6</sup>, which explicitly links to the college's vision and mission as well as graduate profiles within the specific qualifications. This information will likely be particularly useful to NZQA's consistency reviews in future.

Growth of the alumni network also assists with gaining a clearer picture of value to the college. The principal and other staff are enabled to network face to face around New Zealand, and at times with partner institutions in, for example, the United States of America, Papua New Guinea and the Pacific. The college's *rūnanga* facilitates ongoing hui with Māori. Collectively, these activities very clearly contribute to ongoing needs analysis and assist with maintaining programme relevance, but also, and equally importantly, with disseminating theological reflection beyond the campus. There is a two-way flow of thinking and reflection, both in written and visual media and by conversation, and this is a key defining feature of Laidlaw College. Documentation, analysis and sharing of information around this engagement is comprehensive.

As was noted under the statements of confidence, beyond formal programme delivery Laidlaw makes a significant national and international contribution disseminating knowledge and providing leadership. The college makes an important contribution to wider social and religious debates from a non-sectarian perspective, and this engagement brings relevance and currency to the programmes and serves stakeholders well. The worthwhile improvements and improved outcomes derived from self-assessment are best reflected in the outcomes for communities and individuals who are benefiting from the pastoral workers, counsellors, teachers and other educators who are graduating and finding relevant employment in consistently strong numbers.

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<sup>6</sup> For example, relevance of programme to work, type of employment, income as well as the degree to which the programme completed had positively impacted their ability to apply their faith in the 'marketplace'.

### 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 **Excellent**.

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

As stated in Findings 1.2, Laidlaw College has a clear understanding of its communities of interest, and match their needs by providing programmes ranging from part-time distance study at lower levels to full-time supervised research at Master's level – and students enjoy very strong rates of success across programmes with very few gaps in performance. Laidlaw College's careful tracking and understanding of the quality of outcomes is well aligned with their knowledge of stakeholders' needs.

There are increasing numbers of under 25-year-old enrolments, and students progressing to diploma and higher-level programmes at Laidlaw College. The number of Māori and Pasifika students enrolled is also slowly increasing. This indicates that the programme portfolio and student profile elements closely match aspects of the government's Tertiary Education Strategy and the associated TEC funding targets.

Programme delivery, including moderation activities and resource provision, matches the approval and accreditation gained with NZQA. As well as mandatory degree monitoring, Laidlaw has continued with their own external monitoring arrangements and evidence was provided that recommendations are taken seriously and are acted on. Students express high satisfaction with their studies in regular surveys, and there are few complaints.

The ongoing conversations with Maori and Pasifika stakeholders, and the efforts of the college to reflect both biculturalism and the implications of the Treaty of Waitangi, as well as the needs of newer migrants, are referred to elsewhere in this report. This opening of a new campus in Manukau City is another example of investing to match needs.

The evaluators believe that Laidlaw College could do more to understand the specific issues affecting performance at the lower levels of delivery to determine how well programmes are matching learner needs. More broadly, intentional capture and analysis of students' previous educational achievement (before enrolling at Laidlaw College) would enhance self-assessment by deepening knowledge of variations within the student profile beyond age and ethnicity data.

Investment and strategy to better meet the needs of students with disabilities is discussed under Findings 1.5.

## 1.4 How effective is the teaching?

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**.

This high rating of effectiveness of the teaching at Laidlaw College is evidenced and supported by:

- Strong educational achievement across qualifications
- High student ratings on relevant aspects, including course organisation and materials, assessment, teacher communication and learning and understanding. Aggregated ratings<sup>7</sup> in these regular surveys show a range of 84 to 98 per cent positive ratings between 2012 and 2015 (semester one) with an average score across all courses and campuses of 94 per cent in 2014
- Regular reviews of programmes and course content to confirm that content and the sequence of learning is appropriate for students. Examples of this include a new postgraduate course in Indigenous Theology, a new child-centred counselling course, modifications to internship processes and ongoing work around reviewing students' assessment work-load
- Close monitoring of student progress, assessments and grades by lecturers, heads of school and the national academic committee
- Adapting both teaching and timetabling approaches, and evaluating increased use of educational technologies, to better serve students
- Ongoing professional development of staff by, for example, participation in Ako Aotearoa workshops, internal seminars and within their subject area networks.

As outlined in Findings 1.1, moderation processes are thorough, lead to changes where required, and engage with appropriate academics (who must be 'active scholars') for external moderation. All aspects of monitoring and approval are well managed by the national academic committee, which is in turn closely monitored by an academic advisory board comprising members from theological seminaries, universities and a polytechnic. One recent case of a diploma course with a low pass rate in 2014 provided the evaluators with a good example of how these processes were actively used to investigate the matter, understand the factors involved, and arrive at a fair and academically defensible solution.

A clear theme identified by the evaluators, and linked to the college's mission statement, is the intellectual and personal development of students. Students and

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<sup>7</sup> Of 'student perceptions of teaching effectiveness'.

graduates spoke of their enhanced critical thinking; ability to engage with (biblical and other) texts; 'non-indoctrinating' exposure to a variety of world views and theological ideas leading to a much clearer understanding of their own views and how to respond constructively to others in society holding different views. Supporting this finding, graduate outcomes survey data on alignment with the college's graduate profile shows that the strongest aspect of alignment has been with 'enabling [the graduate] to embrace the tensions of life and faith'. Students also valued the accessibility of staff, and opportunities to debate and draw on the experience of fellow students. They commented extensively on the professional experience and research activity of teaching staff, and the support of library and other staff and how this enriched course content and their student journey.

Diverse modes of learning occur at the college, ranging from more traditional lectures, tutorials, distance learning, practicum and effective internship placements, through to e-learning discussion forums, noho Marae and, most recently, a wānanga approach. Staff are adept across a range of teaching approaches. Innovations on time and mode of teaching are occurring at the new Manukau Campus as lecturers seek to determine the most effective modes of delivery for the largely Pasifika student profile enrolled there. Learning environments are planned and structured for the benefit and needs of learners at Laidlaw, and the restructure of academic schools has provided further opportunities for flexibility. The newly established centre for teaching and learning is a timely initiative, and now provides teacher evaluation and development coordination for the college. The teacher appraisal processes in place are suitable and in use. Allocation of time and resources for staff research have also been clarified and fully implemented since the previous EER.

Technology is being used with the goal of facilitating delivery more effectively and economically. High-quality, high-speed video-conferencing links the three campuses, and in addition lecturers travel to Manukau and Christchurch on a regular basis to teach. There have been some challenges for both lecturers and students in fully embracing this mode of learning, but indications are that these are being resolved. The concurrent monitoring and review of the video-conference pilot programme was a useful example of embedding self-evaluation. Increased use of a campus-wide e-learning platform provides students with open access to learning materials and aspects of administrative support. For example, applying for extensions is now a more consistently applied, online process through the centralised administration.

## 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**.

Web and published materials are well designed and easy for enquirers and students to follow. Processes for entry and enrolment were centralised from late 2014, and although there were evidently pressures and challenges for staff and slight disruption to students, these matters were well managed. Examples of efficiencies were provided to the evaluators, but more time is required to evidence these. The well-refined *Readiness for Distance Learning* self-review is significant to the guidance in that mode of delivery, which has a consistently high pass rate. The 'orientation to online learning' course provides another example of good practice.

Leadership development, including student representation from the active student council in decision-making (for example on the college's national governing council) is an area of focus at the college. One example of this is the weekly meetings between the student council representatives and the principal and academic dean. Social events at the three campuses also encourage less formal interaction between staff and students from all programmes. Some students described concerns they had brought to the attention of management at various times, and indicated that these were responded to appropriately.

The learning environment and ethos at Laidlaw College is a particularly inclusive one, with a wide range of student ages, ethnicities, religious and non-religious backgrounds. The strategic plan sets 'key objectives' around meeting the needs of students with disabilities.<sup>8</sup> There is strong evidence that this is given effect. External audits have been conducted of facilities to measure accessibility, and investment and change has occurred as a result; the enrolment form was significantly changed to better capture information early on about learner needs, and processes for responding to this are effective. Students with a range of challenges succeed in their studies and graduate, and those interviewed spoke highly of the 'extra mile' support they received from staff – some of whom have also overcome significant personal challenges. This is an area of very notable performance.

The annual reviews of the Code of Practice for the Pastoral Care of International Students are collaborative and monitor ongoing compliance with the Code. The small number of international students achieve well, and most take the opportunity to live in flatting situations on the campus. Those interviewed expressed a high

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<sup>8</sup> 'The College is deeply committed to education that is accessible to staff and students often labelled as "disabled" and excluded from educational opportunity. [Laidlaw's response] will be evidenced by the makeup of staff and students [and all aspects of courses, teaching and community life].' The plan has specific, measurable and increasing participation goals in each year ahead.' Source: Laidlaw Strategic Plan 2015-17.

degree of satisfaction with administrative processes, teaching, personalised support and the campus facilities. No gaps or concerns were identified in this area.

The facilities and grounds at the Auckland campus are spacious and well maintained. No concerns were expressed by Manukau or Christchurch students or student representatives about those sites, which were not visited by the evaluators. Postgraduates have benefited from more office space following restructures and relocations of teaching staff. It was not clear that the regular student surveys capture comment on facilities, and this may be an area to consider. Library facilities, holdings, inter-loans and improvements based on useful, ongoing self-evaluation efforts were readily apparent.

As in Findings 1.3, the evaluators believe that Laidlaw College could do more to understand the specific issues affecting performance at the lower levels of delivery. Most relevant here is determining how well the recently centralised administration and additional staffing in guidance and support roles are matching learner needs. A case study provided by the School of Theology evaluating support and guidance for Pasifika students provides an excellent model to follow.

## 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 **Excellent**.

Laidlaw College governance and management are clearly and effectively focused on maintaining excellent educational performance, and this is reflected in the various other key evaluation question ratings recorded within this report. Achievement is high and value is confirmed and well understood as a result of ongoing consultation and engagement with the sector. Teaching and guidance aspects are excellent, reflecting effective recruitment, development and leadership of staff. There is clear definition and understanding of the role of the governance group, management and academic committees. Leadership is value-centred and intentional but not overbearing, and this particular culture of leadership apparently permeates the whole organisation.

Meetings and decisions are clearly recorded, and incorporate action points. They are now more focused on impacts and outcomes than at the time of the previous EER. A greatly enhanced use of a broad range of performance data is used to understand and improve performance, and reflect on areas of weaker performance. Further socialisation and integration into processes will likely occur as the modified organisational structure becomes the norm. The college leadership has reliable performance information available to them, based on effective analytical and benchmarking approaches (see Findings 1.1), and this is monitored closely.

Specific changes and improvements noted by the evaluators include:

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- More clarity and more funding for time allocation to research has occurred since the previous EER, leading to improvements in both programme-related aspects and research outputs. These link positively to monitors' recommendations as well as the aspirations of staff teaching degrees.
- A decline in enrolments and TEC funding reductions have led to some restructuring; this occurred with due consultation and minimal disruption to students.
- Recruitment and development of new staff and promotion of others into leadership roles seems effective.
- The Manukau Campus development – in particular recruiting suitable staffing, modifying the facilities, and working to link that site to the main campus – was consultative and reflects aspirations both to better serve communities and to meet Tertiary Education Strategy goals.
- Active external academic relationships and partnerships with other tertiary education organisations within New Zealand and internationally are clearly used to inform quality and review processes, and further the strategy and objectives of the college.
- Excellent library facilities and holdings, and ongoing investment into making the campus more contemporary and student-friendly are ongoing. Self-assessment activities inform these investments. Plans for further evolution of the facilities available on the Henderson site are well advanced, and reveal careful consultation processes with, for example, local iwi.

## 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 **Excellent**.

Although there were no recommendations listed in the previous EER, the college has fully responded to those implied within the body of that report. All key features of effective self-assessment were evident to the evaluators on this occasion. The college has responded constructively to the challenges of reduced funding with reconfiguration of academic and administrative units, and has implemented some new models of staffing with fewer full-time equivalents and more use of contracted part-time staff with particular expertise.

There has been both investment in new or improved facilities and retrenchment from, or new modes of use for, buildings (such as the halls of residence) that were deemed no longer fit for purpose. Stewardship of resources is careful and appropriate and is in keeping with the strategy and goals of the college.

Strategically, strengthened alliances with Māori and Pasifika Christian leaders and an increased number of alumni more connected with the college seem both useful and necessary.

Most reflective of aspects of decision-making relating to these and other matters relevant to this focus area are the records such as national governing council meeting minutes and the Strategic Plan 2015-2017. The ongoing reflections on the college's founding constitution and statement of faith also guide decisions. There is ample evidence that consultation with stakeholders and careful reflection by the leadership occurs, and that this has an impact on direction and feeds into key objectives and focus areas with measureable outcomes. The national governing council, for example, is also provided with clear information about programme achievement and outcomes. In relation to the Tertiary Evaluation Indicators<sup>9</sup>, credible responses to all 'engaging with communities' and 'organisational learning' indicators were apparent.

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<sup>9</sup> [Tertiary Evaluation Indicators](#)

## 2.2 Focus area: Diploma in Christian 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**.

As indicated under Findings 1.1, performance is slightly weaker at levels 4 and 5. The programme is also subject to mandatory review and, as such, there is some uncertainty about the future shape of delivery and the ability to maintain the valuable cross-credit linkage with the degree programme. The rationale for the programme, its useful content and the students' satisfaction with its delivery were all apparent; the performance and self-evaluation aspects led to a rating of Good on both scales.

## 2.3 Focus area: Bachelor of Counselling (Level 7)

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

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

## 2.4 Focus area: Master of Theology (Level 9)

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

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

# Recommendations

NZQA recommends that Laidlaw College:

- Continue to closely monitor and assess the diverse range of surveys and other data-gathering measures in place. Laidlaw College will need to ensure that these measures are being used effectively – and are cost-efficient – providing useful and actionable insights into understanding where and how ‘value’ is being added, and ultimately for making comprehensive improvements.
- Consider ways in which survey ratings and feedback can more formally be reported to students so that college responses are more apparent to them.

# Appendix

## Regulatory basis for external evaluation and review

*External evaluation and review is conducted according to the External Evaluation and Review (EER) Rules 2013, which are 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.*

*Self-assessment and participation in external evaluation and review are requirements for maintaining accreditation to provide an approved programme for all TEOs other than universities. The requirements are set through the NZQF Programme Approval and Accreditation Rules 2013, which 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.*

*In addition, the Private Training Establishment Registration Rules 2013 require registered private training establishments to undertake self-assessment and participate in external evaluation and review, in accordance with the External Evaluation and Review Rules (EER) 2013, as a condition of maintaining registration. The Private Training Establishment Registration Rules 2013 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 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 External Evaluation and Review (EER) Rules 2013.*

*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)).*

*The External Evaluation and Review (EER) Rules 2013 are available at <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/assets/About-us/Our-role/Rules/EER-Rules.pdf>, while information about the conduct and methodology for external evaluation and review can be found at <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/external-evaluation-and-review/policy-and-guidelines-eer/introduction/>.*

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