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Report of External Evaluation and Review

Good Shepherd College - Te Heparā
Pai

Highly Confident in educational performance

Confident in capability in self-assessment

Date of report: 6 March 2017

Contents

Purpose of this Report.....	3
Introduction	3
1. TEO in context.....	3
2. Scope of external evaluation and review	4
3. Conduct of external evaluation and review.....	4
Summary of Results	6
Findings	8
Recommendations	15
Appendix	16

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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:	Good Shepherd College - Te Heparā Pai
Type:	Private training establishment (PTE)
First registered:	18 August 1992
Location:	20 Ponsonby Road, Auckland
Delivery sites:	As above
Courses currently delivered:	Bachelor of Theology (Level 7) and Graduate Diploma in Theology (Level 7)
Code of Practice signatory:	Yes
Number of students:	Domestic: 42 domestic students, 1.7 per cent of whom are Māori and 5.2 per cent of whom are Pasifika. Up to a third of students are studying part-time. International: 16 students
Number of staff:	Eight full-time and 11 part-time staff
Distinctive characteristics:	Good Shepherd College is the New Zealand-based campus of the Catholic Institute of Sydney, which is a member college of the Sydney College of Divinity. The main purpose of Good Shepherd College is to educate students in the knowledge and skills necessary for ministry in the Roman Catholic Church. Most students who attend are sponsored by the Catholic Church.

	Approximately 30 per cent of Good Shepherd College's students are studying by distance learning mode.
Previous quality assurance history:	At the PTE's previous external evaluation and review (EER), NZQA was Highly Confident in Good Shepherd College's educational performance and Highly Confident in their capability in self-assessment. In 2016, Sydney College of Divinity met the Australian Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency threshold standards for self-accrediting authority in relation to courses of study in the fields of Philosophy and Religious Studies. This included all Australian and overseas sites. Sydney College of Divinity is required to submit a report in July 2017 on how it is addressing and monitoring attrition and steps taken to mitigate risk.
Other:	Good Shepherd College is an agency of the Good Shepherd College Charitable Trust established by the New Zealand Catholic Bishops Conference and the Society of Mary in New Zealand for the purposes of delivering theological education.

2. Scope of external evaluation and review

The EER examined the following focus areas:

- Bachelor of Theology (Level 7) – this is the main programme delivered by Good Shepherd College.
- International students' support and well-being – this is a standard focus area for all tertiary education organisations that enrol international students.

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.

Good Shepherd College supplied the evaluation team with a self-assessment document and other relevant documents in the lead-up to the EER. For the on-site phase of the EER, the evaluation team of two spent two days at Good Shepherd College's premises in Ponsonby. The evaluation team met with the key staff, including the principal, the dean of students, the business manager and lecturers. In addition, interviews were conducted with members of the academic advisory board, the chairperson of the Senate, a member of the trust, seminary rectors and a small number of students. The evaluation team also had the opportunity to observe the scheduled examiners' meeting while on site. A range of documentation was also reviewed, including feedback from learners and employers, the quality management system, moderation reports and achievement data.

Summary of Results

Statement of confidence on educational performance

NZQA is **Highly Confident** in the educational performance of **Good Shepherd College - Te Heparā Pai**.

Good Shepherd College is well connected to its community. Engagement with the bishops, seminaries and the wider Catholic community is purposeful and ongoing. Stakeholders report a high demand for the knowledge and skills being developed through the teaching. Destination data demonstrates that most graduates either continue with further study or find relevant employment.

Good Shepherd College data reflects strong achievement with sustained high course completion rates sitting at over 90 per cent over several years. However, this data does not reflect the lower achievement for the small number of Pasifika learners and for part-time students.

Robust academic processes include internal and external moderation, course reviews and examiners' meetings. The connections with Sydney College of Divinity provide useful benchmarking and quality oversight. Research is well supported in the organisation, with staff provided with support to undertake postgraduate study and sabbaticals to engage in research projects. A research committee oversees all activity. In addition, there are a range of approaches to supporting learners while they are in study, including a dedicated staff member to help support the academic needs of international students.

Good Shepherd College has a range of governance structures in place which provide an effective oversight of performance. In addition, there is strong academic leadership provided by the principal and dean of studies and the academic committee and board of studies. The college is well resourced, with strong support for staff research. There are strong systems and processes in place to ensure ongoing compliance with relevant regulations and requirements.

Statement of confidence on capability in self-assessment

NZQA is **Confident** in the capability in self-assessment of **Good Shepherd College - Te Heparā Pai**.

The organisation has a range of approaches to reviewing its performance. Students are systematically surveyed and provided with ongoing opportunities to provide feedback. There were clear examples of responding to this feedback, including strengthening support for international students and strengthening systems for engaging distance learners online. Good Shepherd College is well connected with key stakeholders including the bishops, the seminaries and integrated schools, and there was good evidence of ongoing processes to ensure that their input and feedback is sought and responded to.

Self-assessment could be strengthened with a more direct focus from governance on the educational achievement of all learners. The organisation could also benefit from a deeper analysis of the factors that impact on achievement. For example, while part-time learners are less likely to achieve, it is not clear to what extent this is affected by choosing to study by distance.

Findings¹

1.1 How well do learners achieve?

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

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

Achievement at Good Shepherd College is strong, with consistently high successful course completion rates sitting above 90 per cent over several years. The new educational performance indicators show first-year retention rates compare strongly, with 88 per cent of the 2014 cohort retained as compared with 73 per cent of degree-level students across the sector.

However there are some gaps in achievement. Data presented by Good Shepherd College shows that, over several years, Pasifika learners have not achieved as well as other learners. Better support for these learners has been discussed and a Pasifika member of the teaching team appointed. In addition, qualification completion rates for part-time students are significantly lower. For example, for the 2010 enrolling cohort, 83 per cent of full-time learners completed the qualification compared with only 33 per cent of the part-time learners. While staff have anecdotal information about why part-time students do not complete, this could be strengthened through a more complete analysis. It is interesting that the course completion rate of those studying by distance is not dissimilar to those studying on campus.

Students spoken to by the evaluation team were confident they were learning important knowledge and skills to equip them for their current or future roles. An indicator that students are satisfied with their achievements are the course evaluations that, for semester 1, 2016, show an overall level of satisfaction of 87 per cent, a slight increase on 2015.

Achievement data is looked at and results are analysed by the teaching team at the end of each semester. Results are compared across courses, and medians and means are discussed. Anomalies are raised for discussion. Results are moderated at the examiners' meeting at the Catholic Institute of Sydney twice a year. It is not clear that achievement data, analysed and benchmarked, is reported to the Senate or the Board.

¹ 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 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 **Good**.

There is evidence of valued outcomes for graduates who complete the Bachelor of Theology and/or the Graduate Diploma. Data collected for the previous three years shows that of 48 graduates, 21 moved into employment, 16 went to further study, and 11 were unable to be contacted. A separate graduate survey showed that most of those employed were working as ordained priests. Stakeholders noted that there was a high demand for people with these qualifications in parishes and also within Catholic integrated schools. Graduates who were surveyed were positive about their learning experience at Good Shepherd College.

There is value in the theology degree in that it aligns to the required academic learning for anyone who is wanting to become a priest. This required academic learning, the 'Ratio Studiorum', has been approved by the bishops and signed off in Rome. Learners interviewed spoke of the value of having an in-depth understanding of theology that they used for teaching catechism within the church and integrated schools.

There is a strong research culture at Good Shepherd College, and it is one of the few PTEs to qualify for funding in the previous Performance Based Research Fund round. The organisation has a research committee and staff are well resourced and encouraged to do research and publish. The 2015 annual report details ongoing research conducted by eight members of the teaching team. The organisation has a clear focus on lifting the quality and quantity of research being published, and this has an impact on performance reviews and appointments. Management and other stakeholders noted that the research is essential for informing the currency and quality of the teaching.

Graduate surveys are conducted by Good Shepherd College, Catholic Institute of Sydney and Sydney College of Divinity, although it could be argued that the questions asked do not specifically target the value of the knowledge and skills learned. However, the information collected is analysed and shared with staff and the academic board. There is also ongoing regular engagement with key stakeholders, including the bishops and the New Zealand Catholic Education Office, and therefore the value of the education to them is well understood.

1.3 How well do programme design and delivery, including learning and assessment activities match the needs of students 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 **Excellent**.

There is good evidence that the programmes match the needs of stakeholders well. As noted above, the programme meets the curriculum requirements as listed in the Ratio Studiorum, required by the Catholic Bishops of New Zealand for priests to be ordained. While the programme and curriculum have been approved by NZQA, they belong to Catholic Institute of Sydney. Good Shepherd College has input into curriculum reviews, and there is good evidence of changes being made to better match the New Zealand context, including the addition of New Zealand-specific context, for example in the Māori pastoral care paper. Tutors are deeply knowledgeable about their subjects and many are involved in relevant research. In addition, the graduate diploma was designed to meet the needs of those learners who would like a shorter programme and who are not interested in becoming ordained.

Most delivery is on campus. However, approximately 30 per cent of learners are studying by distance. Distance learning is supported by the online learning platform Moodle, and the evaluation team heard how improvements and innovations were being made to better engage these learners. These include students getting online badges for tasks completed, student forums and professional development for staff teaching the courses. Achievement data viewed by the evaluation team indicates that distance learners are achieving their courses at the same rates as those studying on campus.

The validity of assessment is assured by a range of moderation activity which occurs systematically. This includes comprehensive (discipline and academic) moderation being conducted by Sydney College of Divinity; an external New Zealand-based moderator has been used for the New Zealand-specific paper. Internal pre-moderation of assessments and post-moderation of results occurs through the examiners' meetings. Moderation results are considered by the programme team and changes made when appropriate.

Understanding of programme activity is detailed and there is good evidence that feedback from students, graduates and other key stakeholders is considered by either programme staff, the academic committee, board of studies or research committee. This includes moderation results, programme reviews and the highly engaging and effective examiners' meetings. Feedback from students about particular papers is shared with the teaching member of staff and informs annual performance reviews.

1.4 How well are students supported and involved in their learning?

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**.

There is good evidence that students are well supported to achieve. For example, there is an at-risk register for those learners who are identified as needing extra support. An example was also given of a student who was at risk of not achieving being referred to a language school to develop their English language skills. International students are well supported with a dedicated academic support person who meets one-to-one with students twice a week in the first semester and then once a week or when required. In addition, students meet weekly with the principal.

To support students, course outlines provide useful information about the learning outcomes and assessments. An orientation day and library tour are used to introduce students to the campus environment. Students spoken to by the evaluation team were clear about whom they could approach for help, and a range of pastoral care services is available. There is a well-equipped library and broadband available to support learning. The organisation has put in place some new processes to better support distance learners, including better tracking of engagement. It is too soon to tell whether these processes will have an impact on qualification completion rates.

Students reported getting timely and useful feedback on their assessments which helped them to understand what they had done well and where they need to improve. This feedback was supported by a review of 2016 student evaluations showing that with few exceptions, students believed there were clear guidelines for assessments, and the comments and feedback from these tasks helped them learn. Most evaluations reported highly favourably on the effectiveness of the lecturer facilitating learning. The return rates on these student evaluations is high at 78 per cent.

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

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

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

Good Shepherd College has a range of governance structures in place, including oversight by the Sydney College of Divinity and Catholic Institute of Sydney. In New Zealand the college is overseen by the trust and its delegated authority, the Senate of the college. These bodies receive regular reports which detail outcomes,

resources and finances. The college is well resourced in terms of low staff-to-student ratios, a well-equipped facility and support for staff research. A gap, identified by staff and students, was better resourcing to ensure teaching is well supported by developments in information technology.

There is evidence of strong educational leadership provided by the principal and dean of studies. In addition, an academic committee, a board of studies and research committee oversee activity. The recruitment of staff is effective, with annual performance appraisals and ongoing professional development. An area highlighted for professional development in 2016 was the more effective use of the Moodle online learning platform. In addition, the organisation is focusing on lifting the number of research outputs produced by teaching staff.

As noted above, the organisation has a range of approaches to gain feedback from key stakeholders, and there is good evidence that this feedback is reviewed and used to inform ongoing improvements. The greater consistency between course descriptors and strengthening online delivery for better student engagement are examples of current enhancements.

Research outcomes are a key focus of the Senate and the academic committee. A more detailed analysis of achievement could be reported and considered by these governing bodies. It is noted that the new policy on addressing attrition developed by Sydney College of Divinity requires attrition data to be assembled and analysed annually to identify areas of concern. A similar process, with reports to the Senate and academic committee, could strengthen understanding of gaps in achievement. The self-assessment processes for the academic committee and Senate could strengthen the performance of these governing bodies.

1.6 How effective are important compliance accountabilities managed?

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**.

The evaluation team understands that Good Shepherd College has strong, consistent systems for monitoring compliance. Examples viewed on site included the examiners' committee review of course descriptors, learning hours and modes of delivery, and reviews of courses by Sydney College of Divinity.

The organisation is aware of important legislation. For example, compliance with health and safety legislation is taken seriously. An accident register is kept and fire and earthquake drills are undertaken. In July 2016 a thorough review of the Education Code of Practice was undertaken with all staff, and records are maintained.

In addition, the organisation has systems in place to ensure finances are protected, including financial audits and regular financial reports to the Senate. There is an ongoing system to review the quality management system and make updates when required. To stay up to date, the dean of studies and the business manager are members of ITENZ (Independent Tertiary Education New Zealand, which alerts members to important education updates), and also attend NZQA workshops. The organisation was commended by the NZQA analyst for the quality of application when a type 2 programme change was required. For an organisation of this size, compliance monitoring is appropriate and thorough.

Focus Areas

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

2.1 Focus area: Bachelor of Theology (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 **Good**.

2.2 Focus area: International Student Support

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

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

Recommendations

NZQA recommends that Good Shepherd College:

- Strengthen the analysis and reporting of achievement data provided to the academic committee and the Senate. This could include an analysis to understand more fully why part-time students are less likely to complete the qualification. A strategy to address the attrition of all students could be supported by this analysis.
- Look at aligning graduate survey questions to understand how well the graduate profile has been met and the value of that to the graduate.
- Ensure resources are available for teaching staff to enable them to fully use developments in information technology.
- Use self-assessment processes to understand and improve the effectiveness of the academic committee and the Senate.

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). 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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