



Mana Tohu Mātauranga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Qualifications Authority

External Evaluation and Review Report

Good Shepherd College - Te Heparā
Pai trading as Te Kupenga -
Catholic Theological College

Date of report: 13 January 2026

About Good Shepherd College - Te Heparā Pai trading as Te Kupenga - Catholic Theological College

Te Kupenga -Catholic Theological College (CTC) delivers NZQA-registered level 5 and 6 diplomas in teaching religious education in Catholic integrated schools. The college also offers Bachelor-level qualifications through affiliation with the University of Notre Dame, Australia.

Type of organisation:	Private training establishment
Location:	40 Vermont Street, Ponsonby, Auckland
Eligible to enrol international students:	Yes
Number of students:	<p>Domestic: 435 equivalent full-time students: 57.36 (funded); Māori 10 per cent, Pasifika 16 per cent, Asian 18 per cent (2024 figures)</p> <p>International: 13, mostly from Vietnam – all Bachelor of Divinity (Level 7) students; 27 domestic students – Bachelor of Divinity; 370 domestic students – New Zealand Certificate in Christian Studies (Religious Education) (Level 5) for teachers in the Catholic school system.</p>
Number of staff:	13 full-time and 24 part-time; 24.3 full-time equivalents
TEO profile:	<p>See: Te Kupenga Catholic Theological College</p> <p>Te Kupenga Catholic Theological College (CTC) is a registered charity created by a merger of Good Shepherd College in Auckland and the Catholic Institute of Aotearoa New Zealand. It is New Zealand's sole Catholic tertiary education provider. The main campus of CTC is in Auckland. The organisation teaches throughout New Zealand. This is achieved by having teaching sites in the six Catholic dioceses of New Zealand (Auckland, Hamilton, Palmerston North, Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin), and by offering</p>

	courses via distance, online and blended learning.
Last EER outcome:	At the most recent external evaluation and review in 2021, CTC was found to be Highly Confident in educational performance and Confident in capability in self-assessment.
Scope of evaluation:	<p>Three focus areas were selected for this EER:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Zealand Certificate in Christian Studies (Religious Education) (Level 5) • Bachelor of Divinity (Level 7) • International Student Support and Wellbeing. <p>The college is in its fourth year of affiliation with the University of Notre Dame, Australia (UNDA) in offering degree-level programmes.</p>
MoE number:	8717
NZQA reference:	C61797
Dates of EER visit:	4-6 November 2025

Summary of results

CTC comprehensively meets stakeholder needs. Both domestic and international students achieve their respective qualifications. Highly effective self-assessment informs all aspects of the organisation's activities and processes. Governance and management understand, support and actively contribute to the vision and mission of the college.

Highly Confident in educational performance

- Course completions for certificate students are consistently high year on year. Student numbers have increased over time, indicating increased awareness of the value of the certificate for teachers of religious education.
- Degree student achievement benchmarks favourably with similar sector providers. Most CTC degree graduates are employed in relevant ministry roles.

Highly Confident in capability in self- assessment

- Academic processes and activities for the degree demonstrate high levels of collaboration with UNDA and the Catholic Institute of Sydney. These provide assurance to NZQA of the quality of teaching and learning and the rigour of students' assessment results.
- Engagement and support for students is proactive and comprehensive, including for priority students and those with language needs.
- Staff are valued, highly qualified and research-active. The quality and breadth of research outcomes inform teaching and learning at local and international levels.
- CTC leads, informs and collaborates with a range of entities within the Catholic Church who share a commitment to the provision of high-quality religious education and ministry.
- CTC has been in a period of consolidation since the last EER. During this time, it has reviewed its policies and procedures and employed staff to better meet priority student needs and its management of compliance accountabilities. CTC is a highly reflective organisation where self-assessment activities are embedded in all aspects of its operation.

Key evaluation question findings¹

1.1 How well do students achieve?

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Course completions are a more accurate measure of success than qualification completions for the level 5 certificate. Teachers in schools have many competing demands on them, some completing only one paper per annum. Course completions for the years 2021-24 were 95.4 per cent, 84.2 per cent, 89.9 per cent and 84.5 per cent respectively.</p> <p>Across both the level 5 and level 6 certificates, student numbers grew over this time from nine students in 2021, to 11 in 2022, 13 in 2023 and 24 in 2024. A teacher certification handbook sets out the certification levels expected for kaiako in Catholic schools, based on the number of credits obtained in approved NZQA courses offered by CTC in religious education.</p> <p>International students must meet IELTS² entry requirements. Those who do not meet requirements have to continue with English language learning to reach the standard and then reapply for entry to the CTC programme. Course completions for the Bachelor of Divinity for the years 2021-24 were 93.8 per cent (39 students), 93.7 per cent (52 students), 92.3 per cent (59 students) and 82.9 per cent (53 students) respectively.</p> <p>CTC provided completion and withdrawal data for 2021-24 for students with disabilities. Māori and Pasifika do not have parity of achievement with non-Māori and Pasifika. Reasons for this are prioritising family commitments, health and changed circumstances. CTC knows all its students well and their reasons for withdrawal.</p>

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

² International English Language Testing System.

Conclusion:	Teachers in the Catholic education system successfully complete study that increases their own and students' confidence and commitment to religious education. Degree students have high levels of academic success, and graduates are employed in ministry positions in the Catholic Church.
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1.2 What is the value of the outcomes for key stakeholders, including students?

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>All students gain skills and knowledge that inform their spiritual and personal lives. Teachers reported that the certificate increased their knowledge and confidence in delivering religious education, and that students responded to their confidence with increased interest and engagement.</p> <p>CTC provided evidence to the NZQA consistency review (May 2025) for the New Zealand Certificate in Christian Studies (Level 5) with strands in Christian Ministry and Religious Education. The qualification met NZQA requirements as sufficient.</p> <p>CTC showed that graduates consistently demonstrate the graduate outcomes for the certificate. The organisation also showed that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the learning outcomes were clearly stated at the beginning of the course • the development of topics was coherent • assessment tasks were clearly outlined and aligned to the learning outcomes • assessment tasks allowed the student to demonstrate their learning • the skills gained helped the students to make connections in their work and role, and met Catholic schools needs for religious education. <p>Degree student achievement benchmarks favourably with similar sector providers. Most CTC degree graduates are in relevant ministry employment. The range of ministry roles</p>

	<p>in the Catholic Church is broad. It may include prison, hospital, youth chaplaincy, paid and voluntary work in Catholic parishes, work in diocesan offices, and ministry in various charitable organisations.</p> <p>Highly effective communication internally across the church, and externally with entities that value and contribute to CTC's mission and goals impacts positively on all stakeholders.</p>
Conclusion:	<p>CTC is the sole provider of Catholic education across New Zealand. Degree students engage successfully with study and gain relevant employment where they can apply new skills and knowledge. Personal, spiritual and community needs are advanced.</p>

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

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Programmes are relevant to the needs of stakeholders. Enrolment processes are clear and systematic. There is orientation for both on-site and offsite students. Students choose to study face to face, online or by blended delivery. This range of options reduces barriers to learning. The demand for online learning has grown, with 59 per cent of students now remote enrolments. Distance learning has led to targeted professional development opportunities for staff and changes to course delivery and access to resources.</p> <p>Student satisfaction ratings for programmes and lecturers are consistently high across all delivery at over 80 per cent, many over 90 per cent. Surveys of students studying remotely also showed high levels of satisfaction with course materials and interactions with staff. Timetabling for the certificate is flexible to accommodate people who are working. Flexible options include central locations, delivery at local schools and evening classes. Classes are interactive, with opportunities for discussion and debate.</p> <p>Otago University provides external moderation for the level 5 certificate. Evidence indicates that the certificate</p>

	<p>contributes strongly to the quality of religious education provided to students at both primary and secondary levels. The degree programme is monitored and reviewed by the academic advisory board. The board minutes provided were comprehensive and action-focused.</p> <p>External moderation by the academic advisory board and the assessment review committee of the Catholic Institute of Sydney and the Notre Dame board of examiners demonstrates consistency of academic standards for the level 7 degree. The degree includes papers on Māori issues which are moderated by an academic with appropriate cultural expertise. Programmes are updated regularly to meet existing and emerging student and Catholic education needs.</p>
Conclusion:	Robust programme development and regular systematic review processes ensure that programmes are current, compliant and responsive to stakeholder needs.

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

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Students are well informed and orientation is thorough. The website and prospectus have been recently updated. Barriers to learning for level 5 certificate students are reduced by national coverage, scholarships and the high quality, enthusiasm and adaptability of the teaching staff. International degree-level students, mostly seminarians, are well supported across their learning journey. Students who are not progressing well, either personally or academically, are identified and followed up promptly.</p> <p>Students are supported by specialist staff. This includes support with essay writing and assistance for second language English speakers. There are dedicated pastoral support staff for Māori and Pasifika students. These staff bring a shared understanding of cultural values, mitigate potential barriers to learning, and optimise successful retention in study for these students. The Colin Library and its librarians provide strong academic support through their</p>

	<p>extensive catalogue of resources. The library is an asset for CTC and the wider community.</p> <p>Student and graduate feedback affirms the value of the flexible learning environment. The online student learning platforms provide greater accessibility for those working outside main centres, or those who have difficulty travelling to class.</p> <p>The student voice is embedded in CTC's structure, with student representation on several committees and boards. The Code of Practice review and attestation is thoughtful and realistic, all the while acknowledging where ongoing developments and improvements could be made.</p>
Conclusion:	Students appreciate the quality and effectiveness of pastoral and academic support and the difference it makes to their academic, social and spiritual progress. Staff are highly engaged and committed to the wellbeing of all students.

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

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>CTC has a clear vision and mission. The organisation is committed and passionate about educating seminarians and staff teaching in Catholic schools. Supporting the special character of the Catholic education system guides and informs a range of decisions that CTC governance and management make daily. The governance board impressed as well informed, highly engaged and knowledgeable. This engagement includes holding board meetings in the various dioceses, a highly effective initiative to better understand stakeholder needs.</p> <p>The academic advisory board provides strong academic oversight. It includes experts from Auckland, Otago and Wellington universities. Academic focus is the responsibility of the chief executive, the director and deans. Programme knowledge is held by the programme coordinator. New programmes are developed when needed; for example, a level 8 programme for principals is</p>

	<p>in development. CTC systematically revises qualifications and has recently introduced a micro-credential.</p> <p>Data analysis is comprehensive and used to inform quality assurance and strategic planning. The board contributes to the strategic direction and monitors performance and risk. CTC management reports regularly to the board on student progress, and informally as needed.</p> <p>Policies and procedures ensure that academic workload issues are fair and transparent. Resources to support teaching, learning and research enable staff to attend conferences and further their academic work. Examples of significant research with international applications were discussed.</p>
Conclusion:	<p>CTC governance and management is highly effective and student-centred. Regular reporting informs understanding of educational achievement and guides improvements. Maintaining high standards for the 'special character' of Catholic schools is critical to CTC leadership.</p>

1.6 How effectively are important compliance accountabilities managed?

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>CTC is financially supported by the New Zealand Catholic Bishops Conference which enables research, resource and programme development and subsidised fees for students.</p> <p>The 2021 EER report included several recommendations. There was strong evidence that CTC has used these recommendations to make changes and improvements to processes and staffing since the last EER. Changes made include reviewing key compliance accountabilities to ensure expectations are well understood and processes are clear in relation to insurance obligations for international students on work visas; increased analysis of achievement data to investigate trends or differences that arise from data; and reporting on student achievement and outcomes for Māori and Pasifika students, including how well these students are supported and their needs met.</p> <p>Review of these recommendations resulted in the employment of staff in specialist roles for priority students</p>

	<p>and compliance management. In addition, external monitoring processes for the degree programme have been strengthened, and the level 5 and 6 programmes are externally moderated, meeting NZQA expectations (see Recommendation). Improvements to the level 5 programme include the development of detailed rubrics and a marking schedule that aligns with assessment tasks in the revised religious education curriculum.</p> <p>Sampling of international student files showed that CTC meets Code requirements, including insurance and visa obligations not fully met at the previous EER. The organisation understands its obligations to health and safety and student complaint and appeal processes, including reporting complaints on the website.</p>
Conclusion:	<p>Responses to the recommendations and requirements from the 2021 EER have been met and in some instances exceeded. Additional staff roles and improved processes assure NZQA that CTC has the capacity and capability to effectively manage its compliance obligations.</p>

Focus areas

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

2.1 New Zealand Certificate in Christian Studies (Level 5) with strands in Christian Ministry and Religious Education

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent

2.2 Bachelor of Divinity (Level 7)

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent

2.3 International Student Support and Wellbeing

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent

Recommendations

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

NZQA recommends that Good Shepherd College - Te Heparā Pai consider including level 5 and 6 qualifications in the academic advisory board moderation and review processes, and prepare a summary of moderation results and actions taken to submit to the academic advisory board.

Requirements

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

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

Appendix

Conduct of external evaluation and review

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

Disclaimer

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

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

- Identify organisational fraud³*
- Provide comprehensive coverage of all programmes within a TEO, or of all relevant evidence sources*
- Predict the outcome of other reviews of the same TEO which, by posing different questions or examining different information, could reasonably arrive at different conclusions.*

³ NZQA and the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) comprehensively monitor risk in the tertiary education sector through a range of other mechanisms. When fraud, or any other serious risk factor, has been confirmed, corrective action is taken as a matter of urgency.

Regulatory basis for external evaluation and review

External evaluation and review is conducted under the Quality Assurance (including External Evaluation and Review (EER)) Rules 2022, which are made by NZQA under section 452(1)(t) of the Education and Training Act 2020 and approved by the NZQA Board and the Minister of Education.

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

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

The requirements for participation and cooperation are set through the Programme Approval and Accreditation Rules 2022, the Consent to Assess Against Standards on the Directory of Assessment and Skill Standards Rules 2022 and the Micro-credential Approval and Accreditation Rules 2022 respectively.

In addition, the Private Training Establishment Registration Rules 2022 require registered private training establishments to undertake self-assessment and participate in external evaluation and review as a condition of maintaining registration.

NZQA is responsible for ensuring non-university TEOs continue to comply with the rules after the initial granting of approval and accreditation of programmes, micro-credentials and consents to assess and registration. The New Zealand Vice-Chancellors' Committee (NZVCC) has statutory responsibility for compliance by universities.

This report reflects the findings and conclusions of the external evaluation and review process, conducted according to the Quality Assurance (including External Evaluation and Review (EER)) Rules 2022. 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). All rules cited above are available at <https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/about-us/our-role/legislation/nzqa-rules/>, while information about the conduct and methodology for external evaluation and review can be found at <https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/external-evaluation-and-review/>.

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