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# External Evaluation and Review Report

Pathways College of Bible & Mission

Date of report: 22 June 2021

# About Pathways College of Bible & Mission

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*Pathways College of Bible and Mission (Pathways) offers theological courses aimed at producing leaders and workers for churches and parachurch organisations in Aotearoa and beyond. It is the educational arm of the Christian Brethren Church of New Zealand.*

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Type of organisation:	Private training establishment (PTE)
Location:	7 Oak Lane, Judea, Tauranga
Code of Practice signatory:	Yes
Number of students:	Domestic: 33 full-time students International: one full-time student Male 12, female 22; under 25 years 30; over 25 years four; Māori eight, Pasifika four
Number of staff:	Three full-time; six part-time; six adjunct faculty (course lecturers)
TEO profile:	See <a href="#">Pathways College of Bible and Mission</a> (NZQA website)
Last EER outcome:	Pathways' previous EER outcome in 2019 was Confident in educational performance and Not Yet Confident in capability in self-assessment.
Scope of evaluation:	New Zealand Diploma in Christian Studies (Theology) (Level 5) <sup>1</sup>
MoE number:	8285
NZQA reference:	C45534
Dates of EER visit:	4 and 5 May 2021

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<sup>1</sup>This is the only NZQA-approved programme delivered by Pathways.

# Summary of Results

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*There is clear and comprehensive evidence that Pathways is providing quality education and support leading to positive outcomes for its graduates, ministry partners and the community.*

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## **Confident in educational performance**

- Pathways' students are highly engaged in their learning and well supported to succeed in both gaining confidence and interpersonal skills as well as achieving formal qualifications. This indicates strong teaching and integrated support.
- Value is evident in graduates gaining relevant employment and/or engaging successfully in further study. The internship model of delivery enables students to learn in a real-world environment.

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

- Programmes are designed to match the needs of key stakeholders and students. Churches and parachurch organisations report that they are seeing graduates who are able to immediately and effectively apply their skills in a range of contexts. Students are achieving their academic and personal goals.
- The organisation is well managed and has a clear philosophy and values which are reflected throughout its operation. The activities are well resourced, and Pathways uses its resources effectively. Important compliance accountabilities are now being managed effectively.
- Many of the contributing processes that lead to Pathways' good performance – and the self-assessment practices that underpin them – are recently established and are yet to be fully embedded and refined over time. The next challenge is to formalise and deepen self-assessment processes and use findings insightfully to make improvements, and to sustain and build on current levels of achievement and valued outcomes.

# Key evaluation question findings<sup>2</sup>

## 1.1 How well do students achieve?

Performance:	<b>Good</b>
Self-assessment:	<b>Good</b>
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Pathways' students have achieved well. Course completion rates have consistently been around 90 per cent.<sup>3</sup> Achievement is supported by good analysis of progress, benchmarked favourably against similar full-time programmes in the religious education field.</p> <p>The high level of graduate employment (discussed in 1.2) is due, in part, to the focus that Pathways has put on preparing graduates for the workforce. The merit of the programme lies not only in the long-term professional outcomes for students, but also in the attributes (such as critical thinking, confidence, communication, teamwork and positive attitudes) that students acquire on the courses. Pathways has embedded the teaching of these characteristics into the programme.</p> <p>Pathways' staff monitor and supervise students on an individual basis, ensuring that action is taken when any student falls behind. When each course of study is finished, every student is invited to complete a feedback survey to assess the performance of the organisation and provide feedback on the learning methods, course delivery and learning environment. The results of this feedback are collated, analysed and used effectively to inform improvements to course delivery.</p>
Conclusion:	<p>Pathways has a strong focus on learner achievement and clearly understands the variables that influence it. This is reflected in its excellent learner achievement and was confirmed by the EER team's interviews with students, graduates, Pathways' governance, management and staff, and a selection of key stakeholders.</p>

<sup>2</sup> The findings in this report are derived using a standard process and are based on a targeted sample of the organisation's activities.

<sup>3</sup> In both 2019 and 2020, course and qualification completion for Māori and Pasifika students was 100 per cent. However, the numbers of Māori and Pasifika students are too low compared with non-Māori and non-Pasifika to draw any definitive conclusions about the significance of this result.

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

Performance:	<b>Good</b>
Self-assessment:	<b>Good</b>
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Students gain worthwhile skills in the programme that Pathways delivers, which helps them to build a career in ministry or to pursue other work or study ambitions. Graduates and employers report that the skills and knowledge gained are immediately applicable to the workplace. Pathways has agreements in place with three other tertiary organisations which allow Pathways' graduates entry and credit transfer into degree-level study.</p> <p>The internship model of delivery enables students to gain knowledge and skills in a real-world context. Meaningful interaction with potential employers, and feedback from internship host providers, has enabled Pathways to gain a good appreciation of the extent to which students have acquired the attributes mentioned in 1.1. The representatives from various ministry organisations that the evaluators spoke with during the EER emphasised that Pathways' graduates were well prepared for employment.</p> <p>The exit interview processes are comprehensive and facilitated by an independent person. They enable Pathways to collect student feedback on the value of the training and their immediate career destinations, or aspirations, on graduation.</p> <p>Pathways has lots of informal and anecdotal information about graduate activity, and feedback from stakeholders about graduates is positive. However, a more systematic understanding of medium-term graduate outcomes is essential to inform ongoing improvements to valued outcomes.</p>
Conclusion:	<p>Students who complete programmes at Pathways are gaining good value from their study by achieving or exceeding their academic and personal goals. Long-term relationships with stakeholders also signify that they value the programmes for the benefits that they bring to their organisations and their communities. Better understanding of graduate outcomes would inform ongoing improvements.</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:	<b>Excellent</b>
Self-assessment:	<b>Good</b>
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Pathways' processes are effective in ensuring that stakeholder and student needs are understood and met, and high standards are maintained. There is a high level of student satisfaction with the teaching and facilities. The newly redesigned learning management system (Pathways Connect) provides a stimulating and engaging platform for students when studying online. Core teaching takes place in block courses that provide a relatively intense environment for personal and educational growth, and opportunities for community and relationship building.</p> <p>Pathways has regular, ongoing interaction with a wide stakeholder group through varying mechanisms and at all levels of the organisation as a core feature of its operation. These mechanisms include frequent contact with students; student satisfaction surveys; regular staff meetings; discussions with ministry partners; participation in ministry networks; church and community events; and the advisory board. The information from these interactions is fed back through the organisation to inform future strategy and programme planning. Students regularly complete surveys to provide feedback on the learning methods, course delivery and their learning environment. The results of this feedback are analysed and used effectively to inform improvements to course delivery.</p> <p>Although all of the components of programme review are apparent, formalisation of the process is essential to provide a regular and comprehensive whole-of-programme review to ensure that the programme is systematically updated to meet the existing and emerging needs of students and stakeholders.</p> <p>Assessment practice includes a range of sound approaches. Students are provided with opportunities to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding through written work, project work and oral presentations. Internal moderation processes ensure quality assessment practice are consistent with Pathways' policy, although it is important that Pathways ensures that frequency of internal moderation is maintained. External</p>

	<p>moderation practices have improved since the last EER with the appointment of an experienced moderation partner.</p> <p>Academic standards are clear, understood and maintained.</p>
Conclusion:	<p>Pathways' regular and purposeful interaction with its students and stakeholders ensures that programmes and activities meet their existing and emerging needs, and is a strong feature of the organisation. A more formalised system of programme review would better meet stakeholder needs.</p>

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

Performance:	<b>Excellent</b>
Self-assessment:	<b>Excellent</b>
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Students at Pathways receive active, integrated and ongoing social and academic support from staff at all levels of the organisation. Intending students are well guided into courses that are appropriate to their aspirations and capabilities. Teachers and students described numerous activities and initiatives that motivate, engage and encourage students to get the full benefit from their time at Pathways.</p> <p>Students are highly engaged, and they have opportunities to apply their knowledge and skills in a range of contexts in both the classroom and in internship placement. Student learning goals are well understood. The mentorship programme, whereby every student has three mentors<sup>4</sup>, was lauded by students, graduates and employers as a stand-out feature of the programme.</p> <p>Teachers provide timely, ongoing feedback to each student on their progress.</p> <p>Staff are building cultural competency, particularly around strengthening the understanding of Te Ao Māori and Te Tiriti of Waitangi, which enhances educational support for the students and the inclusiveness of the learning environment. The nature of</p>

<sup>4</sup> Mentors are appointed for each of academic, ministry (practical/field-based components) and person/spiritual aspects. In some cases, one mentor may cover two of these facets. The intent is that each mentor meets with their student for at least 30 minutes every fortnight. All mentors undergo a training programme to ensure the consistency and quality of care of the students in their ministry placements.

	the organisation means that its staff go above and beyond the scope of a traditional educational organisation to provide social and academic support.
Conclusion:	Students at Pathways are experiencing a strongly supportive and caring learning environment, which has contributed positively to the high levels of student engagement, achievement and satisfaction.

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

Performance:	<b>Good</b>
Self-assessment:	<b>Good</b>
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Pathways is a not-for-profit charitable trust, governed by a board of trustees. There is strong educational, financial and business expertise within the board which has recently undertaken a self-review and is committed to continued capability-building on an ongoing basis.</p> <p>Pathways' organisational strategy is formally documented, with clear strategic goals in key areas such as academic, mission, connections, financial security, research and staff development. Management and staff have a common understanding of the PTE's vision and direction.</p> <p>The positive changes brought about by two recent managerial appointments are still bedding in. Academic leadership is showing evidence of the depth and range of expertise necessary to lead the academic development of the organisation. Pathways has well-established administration and management systems and procedures in place, with ethical practices. An open-door policy and clear communications have created a very positive atmosphere within the organisation.</p> <p>Pathways employs a well-qualified and experienced group of staff who are valued for their expertise and provided with good support in their roles. Support for professional development is provided to full-time and adjunct staff who do the majority of teaching. Continued focus on supporting professional development for all teaching staff especially in teaching and assessment – would be beneficial.</p>



	<p>A new and comprehensive performance review process for staff is currently in its initial stages. The first full rotation of performance review for adjunct staff will be completed in 2021 as their teaching commitments are fulfilled.</p> <p>Pathways encourages reflection on its role and how to continue to make ongoing and continuous improvements in meeting the needs of students and other stakeholders. The PTE is collecting and collating lots of useful data. Many of the processes for interpretation and analysis, and subsequent actions to improve educational performance, are in the early stages of implementation.</p>
Conclusion:	Pathways has a clear vision and understanding of its enterprise, and strong leadership committed to providing effective support for educational achievement. The regular and effective monitoring of performance within Pathways is a work in progress.

## 1.6 How effectively are important compliance accountabilities managed?

Performance:	<b>Good</b>
Self-assessment:	<b>Good</b>
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Compliance is overseen by the principal who has many years of experience in effectively managing and meeting compliance requirements in an educational setting. Non-compliance issues identified at the last EER<sup>5</sup> have been addressed.</p> <p>All requirements and recommendations from the 2019 EER have been satisfactorily addressed. An appendix to Pathways' self-assessment report coherently displayed how and when each was addressed. Importantly, the requirement that all students be police vetted was actioned in October 2019 and continues to be maintained. Memoranda of agreement with partner organisations<sup>6</sup> were updated in 2020 and remain current.</p> <p>Pathways is in the process of commissioning specialist board management software to assist the board to set agendas and</p>

<sup>5</sup> The 2019 EER identified that students had not been police vetted as required under the Children's Act 2014; and that required information on the one international student at that time was not available.

<sup>6</sup> Carey Baptist College, Laidlaw College Incorporated and the University of Otago.

	<p>supporting documents, monitor actions and store files. This software is also being used by the principal to monitor and report compliance obligations and actions which can in turn be monitored by the board.</p> <p>Pathways has completed a self-review of its implementation of the interim domestic Code<sup>7</sup>, and submitted an attestation to this effect to NZQA before 1 March 2021 as required. The self-review was a team effort involving a range of staff. A plan is in place to continue building the capability of the organisation in the area that was identified as not already well implemented.</p> <p>Pathways has one international student in 2021. A check by the evaluation team found that all required documentation was available and correct. Pathways is meeting its obligations in respect to the international Code of Practice.<sup>8</sup></p> <p>The evaluation team identified an anomaly in the website promotion of courses that are not quality assured by NZQA. The wording in one section could have been interpreted as the courses having NZQA approval. This was immediately rectified once brought to the principal's attention.</p> <p>Courses are delivered as per programme approvals, and regular communication is maintained with NZQA to ensure that understanding of compliance requirements remains current.</p>
<p>Conclusion:</p>	<p>Compliance management at Pathways has improved since the last EER. The PTE now has systems in place to ensure that compliance accountabilities are managed effectively, although these are yet to be tested through a full cycle of compliance reporting.</p>

<sup>7</sup> The Education (Pastoral Care of Domestic Tertiary Students) Interim Code of Practice 2019

<sup>8</sup> The Education (Pastoral Care of International Students) Code of Practice 2016

# Focus Areas

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

## 2.1 Focus area: New Zealand Diploma in Christian Studies (Theology) (Level 5)

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

# Recommendations

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

NZQA recommends that Pathways College of Bible & Mission:

- Put in place processes for formally tracking graduate outcomes and the value gained.
- Continue to develop staff capability in assessment practice.
- Formalise the programme review process.
- Widen the newly established performance review process to include adjunct and part-time staff.

# 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 1

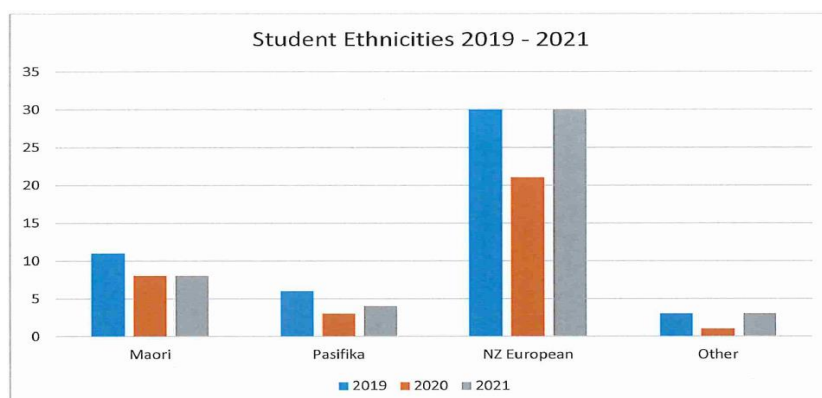
**Table 1. Course completion rates 2019-20 New Zealand Diploma in Christian Studies (Theology) (Level 5)**

Course Code	Course	Successful Completions		% Retention		Student Count	
		2020	2019	2020	2019	2020	2019
MIN510A	Supervised Ministry Training	96	91	96	91	27	37
MIN510B	Extended Supervised Ministry Training	96	89	96	91	27	37
MIN520	Negotiated Ministry Practice	100	92	100	92	27	38
THEOL501	Christian History	100	92	100	92	27	38
THEOL502	Interpreting the Bible	100	92	100	92	27	38
THEOL503	Biblical Survey	96	92	96	92	27	38
THEOL504	Theology	96	89	96	92	27	38
THEOL505	The Life of Christ	96	89	96	92	27	38

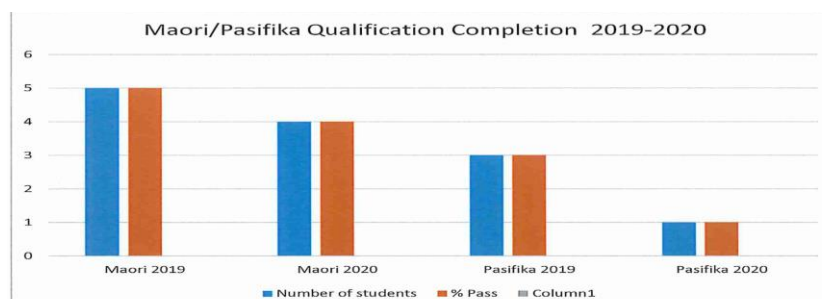
**Table 2. Qualification completion rates 2019-20 New Zealand Diploma in Christian Studies (Theology) (Level 5)**

2019	38 students	82.9%
2020	27 students	96.3%

**Table 3. Enrolments by ethnicity**



**Table 4. Māori and Pasifika learners**



# Appendix 2

## Conduct of external evaluation and review

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

### *Disclaimer*

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

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

- *Identify organisational fraud<sup>9</sup>*
- *Provide comprehensive coverage of all programmes within a TEO, or of all relevant evidence sources*
- *Predict the outcome of other reviews of the same TEO which, by posing different questions or examining different information, could reasonably arrive at different conclusions.*

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<sup>9</sup> NZQA and the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) comprehensively monitor risk in the tertiary education sector through a range of other mechanisms. When fraud, or any other serious risk factor, has been confirmed, corrective action is taken as a matter of urgency.

## Regulatory basis for external evaluation and review

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

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

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

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

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

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

*This report reflects the findings and conclusions of the external evaluation and review process, conducted according to the Quality Assurance (including External Evaluation and Review (EER)) Rules 2016. The report identifies strengths and areas for improvement in terms of the organisation's educational performance and capability in self-assessment.*

*External evaluation and review reports are one contributing piece of information in determining future funding decisions where the organisation is a funded TEO subject to an investment plan agreed with the Tertiary Education Commission.*

*External evaluation and review reports are public information and are available from the NZQA website ([www.nzqa.govt.nz](http://www.nzqa.govt.nz)). All rules cited above are available at <https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/about-us/our-role/legislation/nzqa-rules/>, while information about the conduct and methodology for external evaluation and review can be found at <https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/external-evaluation-and-review/>.*

NZQA

Ph 0800 697 296

E [qaadmin@nzqa.govt.nz](mailto:qaadmin@nzqa.govt.nz)

[www.nzqa.govt.nz](http://www.nzqa.govt.nz)