



Mana Tohu Mātauranga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Qualifications Authority

External Evaluation and Review Report

St John's Theological College
Hoani Tapu

Date of report: 21 October 2024

About St John's Theological College

St John's College courses of study support the formation of Anglicans to continue the mission and ministry of Jesus Christ. The constitution of the Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia enables self-determination of Māori, Pākehā and Polynesian tikanga. The St John's College programme offers a curriculum of theological and ministerial education that builds on Christian Anglican identity and respects differences within tikanga (source: Academic Handbook 2024).

Type of organisation:	Private training establishment – referred to as a tertiary education organisation (TEO) in this report
Location:	202-210 St John's Road, Meadowbank, Auckland
Eligible to enrol international students:	Yes (one enrolled at the time of the EER)
Number of students (2023):	Domestic 42 – 12 equivalent full-time students (EFTS) Pasifika four (three EFTS); Māori three (two EFTS)
Number of staff:	17 (approximately 15 full-time equivalents)
TEO profile:	St John's Theological College (TEO profile on NZQA website)

Following independent reviews commissioned by the governance of the college, St John's is in a process of institutional renewal. New leadership is introducing changes in emphases and staff capabilities. There are recent or new appointments to the positions of te kaunihera (the TEO council), manukura (principal) and academic director, as well as other significant supporting roles.

Students studying at St John's are either residential (living at the campus) or regional, based in church settings across New Zealand. Enrolments decreased from 86 in 2020 to 42

in 2023. This is an issue of concern that the college is discussing with its stakeholders.

Last EER outcome: At the previous external evaluation and review (EER) of St. John's in 2019, NZQA was Highly Confident in the PTE's educational performance and Highly Confident in its capability in self-assessment.

Scope of evaluation: Focus area: New Zealand Diploma in Christian Studies (Level 5) (Theological Studies) 2793-2 v7. ID.120821 (hereafter, NZDipCS)

The purpose of this qualification is to provide Christian churches, agencies and community organisations with people who can evaluate and deliver ministry programmes within their specialist area(s) and lead a wide range of Christian operations (source: NZQA qualification overview).

MoE number: 7885

NZQA reference: C54483

Dates of EER visit: 13-15 August 2024

Summary of results

St John's is undergoing significant institutional renewal. Academic quality management and attention to programme upkeep and renewal has been effective. Responsiveness to student and stakeholder needs has been relatively consistent and well maintained in relation to delivery of the New Zealand Diploma in Christian Studies (Level 5) (Theological Studies).

- Confident in educational performance**
- Key stakeholders from across groups within the Anglican Church of Aotearoa and the south Pacific express their confidence in the leadership and mission of the TEO.
 - The NZDipCS programme is valued nationally. It is current and is being well stewarded and suitably staffed. St John's is providing ample resources, and students are well served by the teaching, research scholarship and library facilities.

- Confident in capability in self-assessment**
- Student achievement has remained strong, including through the pandemic period. There has been some decrease in Māori and Pasifika course/qualification achievement rates.
 - St John's plans and documents its policies and practices well, which supports effective self-assessment. Decision-making processes are clearly recorded. In most cases, there is a clear line of sight from discussion to implementation of change. Data is mostly clear and well used.
 - Student wellbeing, sense of safety and ability to raise issues and get support has been variable. This has led to a well-resourced, independent and comprehensive review (followed by other targeted reviews). St John's is addressing the needed improvements identified in the review.
 - The TEO is remaining compliant with NZQA rules, although with some gaps. However, there is emerging evidence that the positive impacts of planned change are occurring.

Key evaluation question findings¹

1.1 How well do students achieve?

Performance:	Good
Self-assessment:	Good
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Students continue to achieve well. Most students are mature, with life experience and a clear focus on academic achievement and success. This focus is responded to well by lecturers in terms of challenging and relevant course content and modes of delivery. Student numbers have decreased since the last EER, so the overall volume of achievement is modest (see Appendix 1).</p> <p>For the NZDipCS, between 2020 and 2023 course completion averaged 86 per cent. Māori completion rates decreased during the pandemic (2020 and 2021), which is a pattern visible across the tertiary education sector. The 90 per cent retention in study rate is considered a positive achievement by the college's own assessment.</p> <p>Analysis and review of achievement data is reasonably comprehensive: there is year-on-year benchmarking; priority group learner achievement is monitored (disabled student data is not yet captured); student progress is tracked across years as regional students mostly progress through the programme at a slower pace.</p> <p>The student management system has been upgraded and improved since the last EER, and the programme review process has also been improved. Despite some variance to procedures in handling student data due to changes in role holders, St John's has a clear understanding of (or monitors) achievement and makes improvements where needed to support students to achieve.</p>
Conclusion:	Students achieve well, and the content is current and valued. Self-assessment is mostly comprehensive. Improvements have been made to ensure data reliability.

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 students?

Performance:	Good
Self-assessment:	Good
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>The NZDipCS programme is designed to provide knowledge and skills for Christian ministry in a range of settings. Graduate surveys found that 57 per cent of respondents have entered ordained ministry or are otherwise prepared for ministry in their faith communities. Eighty-nine per cent said they were in employment related to their studies at St John's. The college maintains close relationships with bishops, ministry educators and placement supervisors across the country. This provides additional formal and informal feedback on the growth of the graduates and their impact on ministry.²</p> <p>Over 80 per cent of residential students progress to higher-level study. There is a formal cross-credit arrangement with three other theological programmes³, which is being maintained for those students currently studying. This connection also benefits the college in terms of external moderation partners, research and collegial networks, and as a driver to ensuring St John's graduates are soundly prepared for higher-level study.</p> <p>The theological research and scholarship by St John's staff is exceptional, and notably for academics teaching primarily a diploma-level programme. Staff and graduates also said they gained a significant increase in understanding and application of te Tiriti o Waitangi, te reo Māori and mātauranga Māori. This can be traced to the TEO's whole-of-college language acquisition strategy (Te Rautaki Reo Māori 2022).</p> <p>Data management and reporting of graduate outcomes, and evidence of value and transfer of learning could be</p>

² In September 2019, St. John's programme underwent a consistency review with NZQA. This found: 'comprehensive self-assessment, using an extensive range of quantitative and qualitative evidence. The organisation established their own threshold and benchmarks for evidence. This was effectively used to support judgements that graduates meet the graduate profile outcomes'.

³ Enduring formal study pathways with cross-credit arrangements have operated with Laidlaw College, Carey Baptist College and the University of Otago.

	clearer for both internal and external review based on current evidence.
Conclusion:	The intended value of the NZDipCS has been largely maintained since the last EER. There are a range of useful formal as well as anecdotal sources supporting self-assessment to evidence this. The outcomes of the programme are critical to the formation of future pastoral leaders and administrators in the Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia. The scale of provision by St John's has decreased, and there is aspiration for a change of programme in the future.

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

Performance:	Good
Self-assessment:	Good
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>St John's succeeds in attracting an ethnically diverse student body. Mature age students are strongly represented in the programme. There is a small presence of Māori and Pasifika ākonga (students) in the residential cohort, and younger students made up a good proportion of these in 2023.</p> <p>The scale of the value for regional stakeholders has decreased due to some scaling back of course offerings. Regional students, most often studying part-time, routinely comprise most enrolments. The decline in female and non-Māori/non-Pasifika enrolment is also notable here.</p> <p>The college understands the diverse needs that underpin the design and delivery of the programme. The programme context is rich and multilayered. Self-assessment reflects analysis and action to better meet needs now and into the future. However, there are some unresolved weaknesses in the matching of needs.</p> <p>The residential/regional complementary course offering has met many needs well. But there has been some variability in the students' experience, for example the quality and timeliness of academic and administrative support, and variable teacher capability to deliver online. Management has focused on developing teachers' flexible</p>

	<p>delivery capability since the last EER. This dual programme delivery model is one of the main challenges for the college leadership to satisfactorily resolve. As with other policies, procedures and terms of reference sampled, the academic policy for regional delivery is robust and current.</p> <p>The religious 'formation programme' is an important corollary to the diploma programme. This has been maintained and refined in response to the reviews that have occurred.</p> <p>To meet the requirements of a revised version of the qualification, the college undertook a thorough programme review. Several elective courses which were found to be no longer well designed for the qualification were also retired. Programme review is insightful, well recorded, and draws on student feedback.</p> <p>Although external moderation with partner TEOs has occurred as planned, some internal moderation was deferred from 2023 to 2024, due to changes in academic leadership. Planned external moderation processes are occurring and are current. According to St. John's, the other TEOs receiving graduates are confident in the academic skills, and the level and general preparedness of the St. John's graduates they enrol.</p> <p>There is a soundly functioning academic board. Minutes provide evidence of academic oversight, achievement monitoring, disciplinary and appeals activities, and a forum with a clear academic quality focus.</p>
<p>Conclusion:</p>	<p>Academic quality management, attention to programme upkeep and renewal, and responsiveness to stakeholder and student needs have been well maintained since the last EER. Based on draft strategic plans – and actions already taken arising from high-level review – the new college leadership will likely further align the programme with student and stakeholder needs.</p>

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

Performance:	Marginal
Self-assessment:	Good
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>New students sign a 'covenant' laying out expectations, the support available from the college, and students' responsibilities and expected contribution to community life. There is further accurate, clear information available to students in the academic handbook. Orientation processes are also comprehensive. The learning management system houses a repository of essential student information and course material. Current students noted useful feedback on assessment and progress. They indicated that staff are visible, approachable and readily available.</p> <p>Student wellbeing, sense of safety and ability to raise issues and get support surfaced as serious concerns in 2019. This led to a comprehensive review followed by other targeted reviews focused on improving some key roles and inputs. Responses and improvements identified are in the process of being fully addressed.</p> <p>Student experience and support is culturally informed. It is structured upon the knowledge, practices and skills which reflect each of Māori, Pākehā and Polynesian tikanga. There is increased attention to and monitoring of student wellbeing since the last EER. This was necessary and is being positively received by the students. Chaplaincy and deans' services provide students with options for non-course-specific support and guidance.</p> <p>The John Kinder Theological Library is described by students and graduates as a significant facility/service available to both residential and regional students to support their study and research. Lecturers are the primary means of academic support for all students. Additional learning support for residential students is being provided by the Pasifika dean.</p> <p>Counselling services are made available free to students. Although there has been limited uptake recently, a graduate interviewed by NZQA described her positive experience accessing the service. Another graduate provided similarly positive, detailed insights into the</p>

	<p>guidance and support offered within the regional programme delivery.</p> <p>The intent of flourishing relationships stated in the mission of the college is being strengthened in a range of ways: the establishment of a women’s leadership group which is developing well and is valued by staff and students; strong social networks are reported by students; the sound implementation of marae-based regional delivery was mentioned as a highlight by students and graduates.</p> <p>The college also adds value as a site for material and residential support for staff and students from the Anglican dioceses. It provides students and graduates (and often, their whānau) the opportunity to live in community in an environment focused on spiritual and cultural reflection and growth as they progress to or pursue tertiary education elsewhere in Auckland.</p> <p>A student representative approach is embedded in the various academic and governance committees. Student surveys are used to gather student feedback. Code of Practice (2021) reviews have occurred on an annual cycle. Attention to the student voice has been significantly strengthened. There is a need to consolidate current understanding and prioritise upskilling of all college leaders and staff about the Code.</p>
<p>Conclusion:</p>	<p>Student concerns and complaints that had gone unheard or unaddressed at St John’s led to an independent review. The recommendations from this were far-reaching. While many important changes have already been implemented, and currently student support and involvement is positive, it is too soon to confidently state that the sought-after transformational change has occurred.</p>

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

Performance:	Marginal
Self-assessment:	Good
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>St John's purpose is clear; the context in which they operate is relatively complex; there are some notable challenges. For example, declining enrolments are linked to declining participation in the Anglican Church.</p> <p>The new team in place is well qualified and starting to make improvements, but it is too early to determine the impact. They are in a state of rebuilding and development with a key focus on organisational culture and quality to support the students to succeed. This is supported by the kaunihera (council) which is driving and monitoring the changes in response to the independent reviews. Kaunihera meeting minutes provide evidence of a methodical process of working through review recommendations; some crisis management; increased clarity on the future strategy; and key elements to work on.</p> <p>There is also sound management oversight of incidents and challenges arising from supporting a significant residential population of students and families while positioning the college for a new era. There have been some policy and procedure lapses. For example, lecturer observation and performance appraisal processes have been used, but not always in alignment with internal policy. Leadership has been subject to change since the last EER, and this may have had a detrimental impact on some aspects of management.</p> <p>There have been some significant improvements. Health and safety on campus had been a concern and the new operations manager has implemented change in tandem with a consultant. New and suitably experienced staff appointments join a stable group of lecturers who have maintained the delivery of the courses and the qualification and have provided continuity of service to the students and stakeholders.⁴ The extended group needs time to gel.</p>

⁴ Since the last EER, faculty members launched the Anglican Journal of Theology in Aotearoa and Oceania. They have also contributed to the development of Te Piri

Conclusion:	There have been significant and concerning weaknesses in the college culture placed under the spotlight since the last EER. The responses to address this have been robust and suitably resourced and documented. The underlying scholarly life and teaching has been resilient through the pandemic era and this institutional turbulence and change.
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1.6 How effectively are important compliance accountabilities managed?

Performance:	Marginal
Self-assessment:	Good
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>The college has a positive history of engaging constructively with NZQA-required quality assurance activities. A consistency review of the NZDipCS in 2019 rated the TEO's performance as 'Sufficient'. NZQA monitored the assessment of the NZDipCS in 2022 and rated the TEO's performance as 'Meets some criteria/Partially meets other criteria'. The TEO made some adjustments and improvements, and their performance was deemed 'Satisfactory' by NZQA in 2023.</p> <p>The programme on offer is current and NZQA approved; the college contributed to the review of the qualification alongside other TEOs offering it. Type 2 programme changes were approved by NZQA.</p> <p>The college's review of the Code was appropriate, but action plans were incomplete or not updated at the time of the EER. The self-review attestation summary, as published on the website, lacked key information/evidence to support their self-review ratings of 'Implemented' and/or 'Developing implementation'. In addition, information on student accommodation ownership, or detail about complaints and critical incidents was absent.</p> <p>To maintain its registration, a private training establishment (PTE) must notify NZQA of any intended changes to its governing members. There have been numerous of these changes, but the TEO has not routinely met this requirement in a timely way.</p>

Poho: Anglican Theological Research Network (Te Piri Poho Strategic Vision 2021-2026) an Aotearoa/Polynesia collaboration.

Conclusion:	Although management of compliance requirements with NZQA has mostly been strong (particularly at the programme delivery level), there have been some lapses. Policy and practice have now been improved, with new capacity deployed in oversight over the functions of registry, academic quality, and governance and management. The oversights identified by NZQA were promptly corrected.
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Focus areas

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

2.1 New Zealand Diploma in Christian Studies (Level 5) (Theological Studies) 2793-2 v7 ID.120821

Performance:	Good
Self-assessment:	Good

Recommendations

Recommendations are not mandatory 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 St John's Theological College:

- Consider how to present graduate and other outcomes data more clearly, and so provide more clarity for both internal and external review, and ongoing and continuous improvement.
- Provide clear information to potential students and stakeholders about regional programme delivery plans.
- Consolidate current Code of Practice (2021) understanding and prioritise upskilling of all staff about the Code.
- Aligned to the above, ensure that the plan for monitoring implementation of the Code self-review actions (2024) are formally tracked at both governance and management levels, and that staff and students are aware of what these actions involve and what they are intended to achieve and why.

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.

NZQA requires St John's Theological College to:

- Ensure that all proposed changes to governance, trustees and senior staff complete the required Fit and Proper Person and Conflict of Interest statutory declarations and submit these to NZQA in a timely manner (as per the Education and Training Act 2020).

Appendix 1

Annual enrolments by ethnic identity (regional and residential)

Year	NZ European	Māori	Pasefika	Other	Grand Total
2019	65	4	8	6	83
2020	57	12	7	10	86
2021	48	5	3	7	63
2022	47	7	3	10	67
2023	31	3	4	4	42

NZDipCS Qualification Data: Regional/Residential

Year	Diploma Completions		Diploma Completions		Total Compl.
	Regional	% of Enrolments	Residential	% of Enrolments	
2019	9	13	6	46	15
2020	5	7	13	72	18
2021	5	10	8	50	13
2022	7	13	5	36	12
2023	8	22	2	40	10

AVERAGE COURSE COMPLETION	2020	2021	2022*	2023*
Pasefika	93%	83.33%	71.17%	83.3%
Māori	72.6%	61.91%	100%	100%
Non-MPI	87.5%	90.91%	91.25%	92.6%

Data supplied by St John's College.

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 fraud⁵*
- *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.*

⁵ 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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