DQB

Designated Quality Body
in England

Quality and Standards Review for Providers Applying to Register with the Office for Students

Emmanuel Theological College

Review Report

January 2023

Contents

Summary of outcomes and confidence levels

Core practice	Outcome	Confidence
S1 The provider ensures that the threshold standards for its qualifications are consistent with the relevant national qualifications' frameworks.	Met	High
S2 The provider ensures that students who are awarded qualifications have the opportunity to achieve standards beyond the threshold level that are reasonably comparable with those achieved in other UK providers.	Met	High
S3 Where a provider works in partnership with other organisations, it has in place effective arrangements to ensure that the standards of its awards are credible and secure irrespective of where or how courses are delivered or who delivers them.	Met	High
S4 The provider uses external expertise, assessment and classification processes that are reliable, fair and transparent.	Met	High
Q1 The provider has a reliable, fair and inclusive admissions system.	Met	High
Q2 The provider designs and/or delivers high-quality courses.	Met	High
Q3 The provider has sufficient appropriately qualified and skilled staff to deliver a high-quality academic experience.	Met	High
Q4 The provider has sufficient and appropriate facilities, learning resources and student support services to deliver a high-quality academic experience.	Met	High
Q5 The provider actively engages students, individually and collectively, in the quality of their educational experience.	Met	High
Q6 The provider has fair and transparent procedures for handling complaints and appeals which are accessible to all students.	Met	High
Q8 Where a provider works in partnership with other organisations, it has in place effective arrangements to ensure that the academic experience is high-quality irrespective of where or how courses are delivered and who delivers them.	Met	High
Q9 The provider supports all students to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes.	Met	High

About this report

This is a report detailing the outcomes of the Quality and Standards Review for providers applying to register with the Office for Students (OfS), conducted by QAA in January 2023, for Emmanuel Theological College.

A Quality and Standards Review (QSR) is a method of assessment QAA uses to provide the OfS with evidence about whether new providers applying to be on the OfS Register meet the Core practices of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (the Quality Code), based on evidence reviewed by expert assessors. This report is structured to outline the assessment team's decisions about the provider's ability to meet the Core practices through detailing the key pieces of evidence scrutinised and linking that evidence to the judgements made.

The team for this assessment was:

Name: Mr Philip Berry
Institution: Middlesex University
Role in assessment team: Institutional assessor

Name: Revd Canon Professor Kenneth Newport
Institution: Liverpool Hope University
Role in assessment team: Subject assessor, Theology

Name: Miss Nina Cupric
Institution: Staffordshire University
Role in assessment team: Student assessor

The QAA officer for the assessment was: Mr Gavin Harrison.

The size and composition of this assessment team is in line with published guidance and, as such, is comprised of experts with significant experience and expertise across the higher education sector. The team included members with experience of a similar provider to the institution, knowledge of the academic awards offered and included academics with expertise in subject areas relevant to the provider's provision. Collectively the team had experience of the management and delivery of higher education programmes from academic and professional services perspectives, included members with regulatory and investigative experience, and had at least one member able to represent the interests of students. The team included at least one senior academic leader qualified to doctoral level. Details of team members were shared with the provider prior to the assessment to identify and resolve any possible conflicts of interest.

About Emmanuel Theological College

Emmanuel Theological College (hereafter the College) specialises in theological education, and in the delivery of ministerial formation for lay and ordained ministry within the Church of England. It was launched in 2021 as a strategic collaborative partnership between the Northwest Dioceses of the Church of England - Blackburn, Carlisle, Chester, Liverpool, Manchester, and Sodor & Man. The College was formed by effectively merging and restructuring three existing Theological Education Institutions (TEIs).

The College is a single institution with a single structure operating in four teaching centres, each one managed by a Centre Lead Tutor working under the Dean and Vice Dean, and served by the College's Operations and Support Team. The centres are in Blackburn

Cathedral, Liverpool Cathedral, Nazarene Theological College in Manchester, and Penrith Diocesan Church House with a satellite hub on Sodor & Man.

The annual student intake is approximately 38 full-time and 100 part-time and the majority of students are sponsored for study by local Church of England Dioceses. The College currently offers the following programmes:

Course	Full-time	Part-time
Certificate of Higher Education in Theology, Ministry and Mission	1	33
Certificate of Higher Education in Christian Ministry and Mission	0	6
Diploma of Higher Education in Theology, Ministry and Mission	14	35
BA (Hons) in Theology, Ministry and Mission	22	6
Graduate Diploma in Theology, Ministry and Mission	0	10
Postgraduate Certificate in Theology, Ministry and Mission	1	0
Postgraduate Diploma in Theology, Ministry and Mission	0	3
MA in Theology, Ministry and Mission	0	7

The programmes at Level 4 to 7 are validated by Durham University (hereafter the University), through its Common Awards Framework. Common Awards is a tripartite relationship between the Church of England, Durham University and individual TEIs, which aims to ensure consistent delivery of awards across this network of independent institutions.

The Dean has overall executive responsibility and reports into the Board of Trustees. The Dean attends all meetings of the Board of Trustees but is not a member of the Board. The Leadership Team has overall executive responsibility of the College. The Dean, Vice Dean, Academic Registrar and four Centre Lead Tutors comprise the Leadership Team.

There are five working groups that are subgroups of, and report into, the Leadership Team. They cover the following key areas of College activity: Academic, Formation, Placements, Staff Development and Operations. The Academic Working Group undertakes strategic monitoring, review and development work to ensure the continuous improvement and

effective implementation of academic provision, policy and procedures, and makes recommendations to the Common Awards Management Committee (CAMC).

CAMC has oversight of quality and standards relating to Common Awards programmes. As part of the Common Awards Framework, a Board of Examiners is also constituted according to the requirements of the University. The CAMC and Board of Examiners report into the Leadership Team at the College and also report into overarching boards operated by the University.

How the assessment was conducted

The assessment was conducted according to the process set out in [Quality and Standards Review for Providers Applying to Register with the Office for Students: Guidance for Providers](#) (July 2022).

When undertaking a QSR all 13 of the Core practices are considered by the assessment team. However, for this assessment it was clear that the provider does not offer a research degree programme. Therefore, the assessment team did not consider Q7 (where the provider offers research degrees, it delivers these in appropriate and supportive research environments).

To form its judgements about the provider's ability to meet the Core practices, the assessment team considered a range of evidence that was submitted prior to the assessment visit and evidence gathered at the assessment visit itself. [Annex 1] To ensure that the assessment team focused on the principles embedded in the Core practices, and that the evidence considered was assessed in a way that is clear and consistent with all other assessments, the team utilised Annex 4 of the Guidance for Providers to construct this report and detail the key pieces of evidence seen. Annex 4 expects that assessment teams will sample certain types of key evidence using a combination of representative sampling, risk-based sampling and randomised sampling. In this assessment, using the random sampling calculator, the assessment team sampled the following areas for evidence for the reasons given below:

- A random sample of 23 admissions records from a total of 52 for the 2022-23 academic year.
- A random sample of 25 pieces of assessed student work from a total of 580 instances of module assessment for the 2021-22 academic year.

The assessment team was able to observe teaching across all levels through attending teaching at Liverpool Cathedral on 23 January 2023 and receiving access to recorded teaching sessions at the other teaching centres for the 2022-23 academic year. The assessment was conducted onsite at Liverpool Cathedral and at the College's offices in Chester and included eight meetings: one meeting with the Leadership Team (Dean, Vice Dean, Manchester Centre Lead Tutor, Penrith Centre Lead Tutor, Academic Registrar); one meeting with students (Student Representatives across all levels); one meeting with admissions staff; one meeting with awarding body representatives (Commons Awards Senior Quality Manager, Chair of the University Common Awards Management Board); two meetings with academic staff (including Formation Group Tutors); one meeting with Board of Trustees representatives (including the Chair, Vice and Sub-Committee Chairs); and one meeting with support staff.

Further details of all the evidence the assessment team considered are provided in Annex 1 of this report.

Explanation of findings

S1 The provider ensures that the threshold standards for its qualifications are consistent with the relevant national qualifications' frameworks

Summary of findings

The team concluded that the Core practice is met for the following reasons:

1   The College has clear and comprehensive academic regulations and frameworks to support the setting and maintenance of academic standards at the relevant threshold level. It draws upon a set of well-established arrangements for the delivery of provision that meets sector-recognised standards, captured under the University's 'Common Awards Framework', which provides that setting of standards is the responsibility of the awarding body,[1] while the College has co-responsibility for their oversight.[2] A validation contract is in place to govern the delivery of programmes,[3] and this sets out the basis on which the University validates the provision offered by the College. A Validation Visit Report[4] further outlines the nature of the relationship with the College, and includes oversight of relevant subject benchmarks, level descriptors and assessment criteria, specifying that credit requirements, both volume and level, for each of the awards delivered by the College are set by the University.[5]

2   The threshold standards described in definitive course documentation are consistent with relevant national qualifications' frameworks. The College, via the University's Common Awards Framework, specifies learning outcomes for each course at programme level as well as within each module,[6, 7] and these demonstrate overall coherence at programme level[8] so that students are clear about what is required at each level of study.[9, 10, 11] The College uses the University's standard credit system as set out under the Common Awards Framework,[12] and both the volume and level of study required for awards are consistent with the sector-recognised standards, while the reference to total 'learning hours'[13] reflects consistency with the sector.[14] This indicates that standards have been set in line with the University's requirements, which themselves align to the sector-recognised standards.

3   Staff understand and apply the College's approach to setting and maintaining standards. An Academic Working Group (AWG)[15] has been established by the College, which supports the work of the University's Common Awards Management Committee (CAMC) and is charged with governance.[16] At the inaugural meeting of the group (November 22), plans were set out to revamp the induction process for new staff to include briefings on several key areas relating to maintenance of academic standards. These include marking,

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[1] 015 Validation Agreement
[2] 021 External Examiner
[3] 015 Validation Agreement
[4] 013 Validation Report
[5] 003 Programme Specifications
[6] 046 Curriculum Map
[7] 047 Curriculum Overview
[8] 045 Durham Application Self Evaluation Document
[9] 045 Durham Application Self Evaluation Document
[10] 046 Curriculum Map
[11] 047 Module Overview
[12] 003 Programme Specifications
[13] 006 Learning Hours Guidance
[14] 003 Programme Specifications; 045-047 Module Overviews
[15] 009 Academic Working Group
[16] 009 Academic Working Group Terms of Reference

moderation and the annual review process.[17] During meetings staff showed familiarity with the Common Award Regulations.[18, 19, 20, 21]

4   Plans for maintaining threshold standards are robust and credible and fully understood by staff. Under the terms of the validation agreement,[22] the College is responsible for 'developing and using procedures...which will maintain and enhance the quality of Students' learning experience and enable them to achieve the required standards'. The AWG focuses on academic development matters and the implementation of policy.[23] Staff development relating to the maintenance of standards is undergoing development, for example the inclusion of initial briefings for new staff relating to assessment and moderation.[24] The terms of reference for the AWG gave further confidence that plans for maintaining threshold standards are in place, and the development of a Staff Development Working Group (SDWG) charged with overall responsibility for staff development, including induction,[25, 26] further supports this. At the time of the visit the first annual programme review was in progress, and the terms of reference for this include the requirement to provide and share with the University reflections on the maintenance of standards.[27]

5   Assessed student work demonstrates that credit and qualifications are awarded only where the relevant threshold standards have been met. There is evidence in the sample tested[28] that the learning outcomes to which these assignments relate reflect the threshold standards and give the students the opportunity to show how they have met them. Assessment titles are flexible enough to give scope for individual responses, but clearly set at the level required. The marking grid used by all markers (drawn from the Common Awards Framework) clearly sets out what is required for different levels to be achieved, and staff are marking in line with these set criteria, which ensures comparability across the cohorts and is in line with what is recognised within the sector.[29]

6   External examiners confirm that threshold standards are consistent with the relevant national qualifications' framework, and credit and qualifications are awarded only where these threshold standards have been met. The role of the external examiner in maintaining standards is set out in the University regulations and their reports explicitly require external examiners to confirm that the standards of the awards are consistent with the University's qualification descriptors and the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ), and the external examiner confirms that this is consistently the case. The academic standards of student work are also confirmed by the external examiner as comparable to similar programmes.

7   The assessment team considers that, based on the evidence scrutinised, the standards that will be achieved by the College's students are expected to be in line with the sector-recognised standards defined in paragraph 342 of the OfS's regulatory framework. Based on the scrutiny of all the evidence provided the assessment team concludes that this Core practice is met.

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[17] 035 SDWG Minutes
[18] M02 Meeting with Leadership Team
[19] M03 Meeting with Admissions Team
[20] M06 Meeting with Academic Staff
[21] M08 Meeting with Academic Staff
[22] 015 Validation Agreement
[23] 035 SDWG Minutes
[24] 035 SDWG Minutes
[25] 031 Staff Dev Terms of Reference
[26] 035 SDWG Minutes
[27] 034 Request for additional Information
[28] ASW Assessed Sample of Work
[29] ASW Assessed Sample of Work

The team had a high degree of confidence in this judgement for the following reasons:

8   The assessment team was able to review all of the available evidence recommended in Annex 4, and this was triangulated in meetings with senior, teaching and professional staff, together with representatives of the University. Therefore, the assessment team has a high degree of confidence in this judgement.

S2 The provider ensures that students who are awarded qualifications have the opportunity to achieve standards beyond the threshold level that are reasonably comparable with those achieved in other UK providers

Summary of findings

The team concluded that the Core practice is met for the following reasons:

9   The College has clear and comprehensive academic regulations and frameworks to support the setting and maintenance of academic standards beyond the threshold level that are reasonably comparable with those achieved in other UK providers. The College operates within the University's established Common Awards Framework, which includes clear and comprehensive regulations relating to course design and the setting and maintenance of academic standards which are beyond the threshold. These are consistent with sector-recognised standards, and encompass requirements for student support, assessment, marking, moderation and externality (including the role of the University-appointed external examiner) at all levels, at the threshold and beyond. The assessment criteria are extensive and cover a range of assessment types, providing detailed guidance on how assessments across Level 4-7 should be assessed with reference to the level of student achievement. The validation agreement confirms that the College is required to adhere to the University's regulations and overall Common Awards Framework [30] and to maintain these. The College's Common Awards Management Committee plays a central role discharging this responsibility [31] and will continue to do so going forward as part of the validation agreement.

10   The standards beyond the threshold level described in definitive course documentation for the eight courses within the current provision are reasonably comparable with those in other UK providers, because they are based upon the University's documentation relating to assessment standards beyond threshold level. The College is required to use the published Common Awards Assessment Criteria for all Common Awards programmes, and this in turn is aligned to the University's generic assessment criteria, which themselves reflect sector-recognised standards.

11   The external examiner report confirms that standards in place at the College are comparable to those of other UK higher education institutions.[32] This allows the external examiner to make informed judgements about the College's provision, including attainment beyond threshold, in a credible way.

12   Staff understand and apply the College's approach to setting and maintaining standards. In particular, they are familiar with the Common Awards Framework, including that relating to assessment and use the University's guidance when assessing at levels beyond threshold.[33] The College also has guidance for markers,[34] which sets out the requirements for College staff who are involved with marking and provides links to key University documentation. Reference is made to grade-specific judgements and the appropriate use of language. The College follows the University requirement for moderation and second marking: dissertations are second marked as are some other pieces of work, but most work is batch-moderated using a sample.[35] In November 2022 the staff development working group advised that all new members of staff be further briefed on assessment

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[30] 015 Validation Agreement
[31] 034 Request or Additional Information
[32] 021 External Examiner
[33] M5 Meeting with academic staff
[34] 048 Local Guidance for Markers
[35] 048 Guidance for Markers

requirements as part of induction.[36]

13   Students[37] understand what is required to reach standards beyond the threshold. They reflected positively about the level of focused support they were able to access and were appreciative of the extensive web-based resources made available.[38] There is explicit guidance on what is required to achieve at levels above threshold and students confirmed that this is routinely part of the feedback given on all assignments.[39] Formative assessments aligned to module learning outcomes are used by the College to support students in ways that enable them to understand their current progress on each module.[40] Students expressed the view that assessment was fair and understood the role of the external examiner.[41]

14   Plans for setting and maintaining comparable standards are robust and credible, because monitoring and evaluation of courses has been factored into the arrangements. Much of this is driven by the requirements of the Common Awards Framework where the College can draw upon the expertise, both subject-specific and governance, from the University. Under that framework, the College is required to undertake module evaluation, and this has been undertaken for the 2021-22 academic year.[42] There is evidence of forward planning at the College as related to further plans to ensure the maintenance of academic standards. For example, there is an advisory academic working group which is charged with the development of the academic aspects of the College,[43] and actions from its October 2022 meeting include implementation of module reviews, ensuring students access academic support and review of assessment types.[44] The 'strategy objectives' include planning for the development of governance, staffing and 'high-quality' learning,[45] with a collective aim of maintaining academic standards, including those beyond threshold. This provides confidence that the plans at the College to make opportunities available to students to achieve above the threshold are credible and robust.

15   Assessed student work demonstrates that credit and qualifications are awarded only where the relevant standards have been met. The assessment of student work[46] indicates that credit is awarded where learning at the appropriate level has been demonstrated, and where students had demonstrably produced work beyond threshold level, this was reflected in the grading.

16   The assessment team, based on the evidence presented, determined that the standards set for students to achieve beyond the threshold on the College's programmes are reasonably comparable with those set by other UK providers. The assessment team considered that the standards described in the approved programme documentation and in the College's academic regulations and policies should ensure that such standards are maintained appropriately. Therefore, the assessment team concludes that students who are awarded qualifications have the opportunity to achieve standards beyond the threshold level that are reasonably comparable with those achieved in other UK providers and that this Core practice is met.

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[36] 035 SDWG Minutes
[37] M1 Meeting with Students
[38] M1 Meeting with Students
[39] M1 Meeting with Students
[40] 017 Assessment Policy
[41] M1 Meeting with Students
[42] 032 Module Evaluations
[43] 036 Academic Working Group Minutes
[44] 036 Academic Working Group Minutes
[45] 028 Strategic objectives Summary
[46] ASW Assessed Student Work

The team had a high degree of confidence in this judgement for the following reasons:

17   The assessment team was able to review all of the available evidence recommended in Annex 4, in particular the sample of assessed student work and the external examiner report, and this was triangulated in meetings with academic staff and students. Therefore, the assessment team has a high degree of confidence in this judgement.

S3 Where a provider works in partnership with other organisations, it has in place effective arrangements to ensure that the standards of its awards are credible and secure irrespective of where or how courses are delivered or who delivers them

Summary of findings

The team concluded that the Core practice is met for the following reasons:

18   The College has robust and credible plans to secure standards in provision delivered in partnership. Assurance on this is based upon the initial University Validation Report[47] and the University Post-Validation Visit Report,[48] which demonstrate that the College is fulfilling its responsibilities in relation to this partnership and has effective arrangements in place to ensure the standards of the awards. The awarding body representatives[49] confirmed the arrangements in place for the oversight of standards and the expectations they have of the College, and it was clear from discussions with the Leadership Team[50] that these responsibilities were clearly understood.

19   The College has clear and comprehensive regulations and policies for the management of partnerships to ensure that the standards of awards are credible and secure. The Validation Agreement[51] makes it clear that the University's processes apply, and students enrolled are subject to the University Programme Regulations.[52] Appendix 3 of the Validation Agreement[53] clearly sets out the allocation of administrative responsibilities including those related to academic standards. The College has some discretion over developing local policies such as admissions (including accreditation of prior learning),[54] Assessment Policy (including academic misconduct),[55] and Student Complaints Policy (including appeals),[56] subject to an annual review process which was described by the College's Leadership Team[57] and confirmed by the awarding body representatives.[58]

20   Partnership agreements are clear and comprehensive, up-to-date and reflect the College's policies for the management of partnerships. The Validation Agreement[59] with the University sets out the expectations of the parties in the maintenance of standards and confirms that the University sets the standards which the College is responsible for maintaining, subject to regular processes and review. Programmes have been designed with reference to the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ).

21   Staff from both the College and the University understand their respective responsibilities for academic standards. Staff at the College were able to clearly articulate their understanding of the responsibilities they are required to undertake[60, 61] and professional staff[62] understood the relationship between the College and the University and

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[47] 013 University Validation Report
[48] 014 University Post Validation visit report
[49] M4 Meeting with Awarding Body Representatives
[50] M2 Meeting with Leadership Team
[51] 015 Validation Agreement
[52] 024 Programme Regulations
[53] 015 Validation agreement
[54] 017 Admissions Policy
[55] 023 Assessment Policy
[56] 033 Student Complaints Policy
[57] M2 Meeting with College's Leadership Team
[58] M4 Meeting with Awarding Body Representatives
[59] 015 Validation Agreement
[60] M5 Meeting with Teaching Staff
[61] M8 Meeting with Teaching Staff
[62] M7 Meeting with Professional Support Staff

demonstrated an understanding of the shared responsibilities.[63] They articulated the roles and responsibilities within the partnership and how the oversight of standards was managed, as set out in their terms of reference and standing orders.[64] The Board[65] also showed that they clearly understood their role in maintaining standards within the partnership arrangement[66] and equally understood their role and responsibilities in this regard.

22   External examiner reports and assessed student work confirm that the standards of awards delivered in partnership are credible and secure. External examiners are appointed by the University under the Validation Agreement[67] and use a standardised external examiner report,[68] which confirms that the standards of the programmes are consistent with both the University's qualification descriptors and the FHEQ. This report was considered within the deliberative process of the College, including the November 2022 CAMC meeting,[69] evidencing consideration and actioning of the report by the College. Assessed student work[70] demonstrates that a standardised marking process is in place, that staff are marking in line with these criteria, and that this collectively ensures comparability of standards across the cohorts and is in line with what is recognised within the sector.

23   The College and the University have a formal partnership agreement in place, and this is underpinned by the University's policies, and those delegated to the College. Staff from both parties[71, 72] understand their roles in ensuring that the partnership works in such a way as to ensure the maintenance of standards, and this is also affirmed by the external examiners and by the sample of assessed student work reviewed. The assessment team concludes, therefore, that the Core practice is met.

The team had a high degree of confidence in this judgement for the following reasons:

24   The assessment team was able to review all of the available evidence recommended in Annex 4, and this was triangulated in meetings with senior staff and representatives of the University. Therefore, the assessment team has a high degree of confidence in this judgement.

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[63] M2 Meeting with Leadership Team
[64] 063 Board of Trustees Standing Orders
[65] M6 Meeting with Trustees
[66] M4 Meeting with University Representatives
[67] 015 Validation Agreement
[68] 022 Standard External Examiner Report
[69] 056 Minutes of CAMC Meeting November 2022
[70] ASW Assessed Student Work Sample
[71] M2 Meeting with Senior College Staff
[72] M4 Meeting with University Representatives

S4 The provider uses external expertise, assessment and classification processes that are reliable, fair and transparent

Summary of findings

The team concluded that the Core practice is met for the following reasons:

25 The College's plans for using external expertise in both setting and maintaining academic standards, and assessment and classification are robust and credible because the validation agreement[73] clearly sets out the role of the external examiner and what is expected to be undertaken in relation to the College and its role in relation to them. The University's assessment parameters[74] and Common Award programme specifications[75] which outline the Common Awards specific assessment criteria are aligned to the University's generic assessment criteria and level descriptors. The Common Awards Management Committee overseas programmes delivered, and shares oversight of student progression and achievement with the College's Board of Examiners.[76]

26 The College has clear and comprehensive regulations and policies describing its requirements for using external expertise in setting and maintaining academic standards. This is because the College, through a validation arrangement with the University[77] and the Common Awards website,[78] has clear and comprehensive regulations and policies describing its requirements for using external expertise in setting and maintaining academic standards. The Core Regulations for Undergraduate Programmes in the Common Awards in Theology, Ministry and Mission Scheme[79] set out the general principles of assessment, credit requirements for progression, classification rules and the requirements of the University's Board of Examiners which recommends to the University Senate students who have met the requirements of the award for the conferment of awards and decisions relating to their progression.

27 The College has clear and comprehensive regulations and policies for assessment and classification, and these processes are reliable, fair and transparent. The College's assessment policies and procedures through reference to the Assessment Policy[80] and Student Handbook[81] contain all core programme, assessment and information on the awards provided to students which is also available on the virtual learning environment (VLE). The Assessment Policy Statement[82] confirms the close adherence to the requirements of the Common Awards Framework[83] and the Assessment Policy.[84]

28 External examiner reports, and the College's responses to them, confirm the use of external expertise and that the College gives that expertise due consideration because the team found evidence of external examiner input through a variety of items of evidence including Assessment Board minutes[85] and an external examiner report.[86] The initial draft report was noted in the minutes of the November 2022 Common Awards Management

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[73] 015 Validation Agreement
[74] 005 Assessment Parameters
[75] 003 Programme Specifications
[76] 007 Common Awards Management Committee Terms of Reference
[77] 015 Validation Agreement
[78] 021 Common Awards website
[79] www.durham.ac.uk/media/durham-university/governance/programme-regulations/validated-programmes/2022-23_CA_Core-Regulations_UG.pdf
[80] 017 Assessment Policy
[81] 010 Student Handbook
[82] 044 Assessment Policy statement
[83] 005 Assessment Parameter
[84] 017 Assessment Policy]
[85] 039 Examination Board Minutes
[86] 022 Draft External Examiner report

Committee (CAMC) meeting[87] and a summary has been shared with the Academic Working Group (AWG) tasked to review and address the recommendation. From the minutes of the November meeting of the AWG,[88] recommendations are being taken forward demonstrating the use of feedback from external expertise and acting upon it. Subsequently, the report was confirmed in December 2022 with a draft response[89] being prepared addressing queries regarding moderation and demonstrating the College is working within the requirements of the partnership when it comes to standards.

29   Records of course approval and review confirm that external expertise is used according to the College's regulations. The Post Validation Report[90] confirmed the use of external expertise as part of the validation process demonstrating that external expertise was used as part of the course approval process. As the College operates under the Common Awards Framework[91] the team noted that the awards delivered were highly prescribed with little scope for customisation by the College. The College has scope to choose the modules they offer from the Framework, design of assessment[92] and focus of module content. In developing the programme the College took independent external expertise into consideration as part of the overall project.[93] The Leadership Team[94] confirmed the approach they would take in using external expertise in future course developments and this was confirmed by academic staff,[95] demonstrating that there were robust plans in place.

30   External examiner reports confirm that the College's assessment and classification processes are reliable, fair and transparent. The University requires the College to prepare a response to specific elements of the written feedback highlighted by the University. The report is initially considered by the CAMC[96] with the Academic Working Group (AWG)[97] tasked with taking recommendations forward to ensure academic standards are maintained. The College's Chair of Examiners drafts the formal response to the final report, informed by the University's specific requests for further information, and influenced by the recommendations of AWG on resulting actions.

31   Assessed student work confirms assessment and classification are carried out in line with the College's and course requirements because the application of policies for assessment were considered by the team through scrutiny of moderation,[98] the assessment timetable[99] and a sample of assessed student work.[100] These demonstrated a robust approach to the assessment of work by the use of marking rubrics which were tailored to and aligned with the relevant FHEQ level for the assessment. There was clear evidence that the College's assessment processes were reliable, fair and transparent as moderation had occurred in line with their policies and the Core Regulations for the Common Awards.

32   Staff understand the requirements for the use of external expertise, and the College's assessment and classification processes. Teaching staff[101] are aware of the role the external examiner plays in assuring standards and the responsibilities they have to the

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[87] 056 Common Awards Management Committee minutes
[88] 036 Academic Working Group minutes
[89] 068 External Examiner Report response - draft
[90] 014 Post validation report
[91] 005 Assessments Parameter
[92] 005 Assessment Parameter
[93] 049 Rotar Emmanuel Project Overview
[94] M2 Meeting with Leadership team
[95] M8 Meeting with teaching staff
[96] 056 Common Awards Management Committee minutes
[97] 036 Academic Working Group minutes
[98] 067 Moderation report
[99] 020 Assessment schedule
[100] 061 Admissions and Assessment sample
[101] M5 and M8 Meeting with teaching staff

University. Staff have training on the Common Awards Framework and the policies for assessment and were able to articulate how the use of marking rubrics helped ensure consistency in assessments and the role moderation played in the assessment process. They were clear that the classification of awards was the sole responsibility of the University and if students needed advice they would be directed to the Academic Registrar. The Academic Registrar and Dean[102] confirmed the classification process and how the University has responsibility, noting the need to balance this with the University's expectations in this area which influences the advice and guidance provided to students. They also outlined their plans to support teaching staff with further guidance on classifications.

33   Students confirm that the College's assessment and classification processes are reliable, fair and transparent. When exploring the matter of assessment and classification in the meeting with students,[103] the team heard that students considered the College's assessment processes were reliable, fair and transparent. Students cited the use of marking rubrics as a key method for them to understand the level of achievement they could reach, with the information being available on their VLE and always being provided as part of feedback for assessments. Students were able to explain the role the external examiner plays in ensuring the standards of their awards alongside the internal moderation process. The students had not seen the external examiner report as it was not yet finalised with a response, although they were aware that they should receive a copy in due course.

34   The team concludes that the College is using external expertise, assessment and classification processes that are reliable, fair and transparent. In delivering a validated programme of the University, the College is bound by the academic regulations and policies of the University. Assessment briefs and assessed student work demonstrates adherence to these processes and external examiner reports confirm assessment and classification processes are reliable and fair. External examiner reports are considered by the College at the Common Awards Management Committee, and the College is therefore giving due consideration to external expertise. The assessment team concludes, therefore, that the Core practice is met.

The team had a high degree of confidence in this judgement for the following reasons:

35   The assessment team was able to review all of the available evidence recommended in Annex 4. This was triangulated in meetings with students, staff and a University representative and a random sample of assessed student work. Therefore, the assessment team has a high degree of confidence in this judgement.

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[102] M9 Final meeting
[103] M1 Meeting with Students

Q1 The provider has a reliable, fair and inclusive admissions system

Summary of findings

The team concluded that the Core practice is met for the following reasons:

36   The College has a clear policy for the recruitment and admission of students which is robust and credible because the Admissions Policy[104] clearly defines the admissions procedure. The Admissions Policy breaks down each step in the process and details the differences between applicants who are preparing to be ordained, Licensed Lay Ministry or Reader Ministry and Independent Applicants, which are applicants not sponsored for ministerial training by a diocese. The Board of Trustees reviews the policies related to admissions annually and receives regular updates through the Dean of the College.[105]

37   The College's plans reflect the validation agreement with the University[106] which ensures that admissions systems are reliable, fair and inclusive because the University maintains oversight of the recruitment, admission and induction process as well as the training of the admissions team.[107]

38   Information for applicants is transparent, accessible and fit for purpose because the policy can easily be found on the College's website[108] which provides comprehensive and transparent information about the overarching requirements and core principles for admission, admissions process, entry requirements and complaints processes. The College's entry requirements are in line with the generic entry requirements for Common Awards[109] and are therefore fair and appropriate for the level of study. The Admissions Policy[110] lists the typical entry requirements for each course and is consistent with the online prospectus under the entry requirements.[111] The approach is inclusive as any candidates unsure of their suitability are encouraged to get in contact with the College's Admissions team to discuss their personal circumstances. This is supported by the detailed interview notes in the admissions sample.[112]

39   The admissions requirements set out in approved course documentation are consistent with the College's policy.[113] The programme specifications[114] for each course outline the typical admissions requirements including employment, education and experience as well as English language requirements. The programme specifications also state the maximum credits of accredited prior learning (APL) that may be granted to applicants. Decisions are based solely on the individual merits of each applicant and their suitability for the programme for which they have applied.[115] Conditional and unconditional offers are made by the College dependent upon the applicants satisfying all academic and other entry requirements.

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[104] 023 Admissions Policy
[105] M6 Meeting with Board of Trustees
[106] 015 Validation Agreement
[107] www.durham.ac.uk/departments/academic/common-awards/policies-processes/admissions/admissions/ 28/01/23
[108] https://emmanueltheologicalcollege.org.uk/information-policies/ 19/11/22
[109] 024 Programme regulations
[110] 023 Admissions policy
[111] https://emmanueltheologicalcollege.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/ETC-Prospectus-Mar-21.pdf 19/11/22
[112] 060 Admissions and Assessment sample
[113] M3 Meeting with Admissions staff
[114] 003 Programme Specifications
[115] 023 Admissions Policy

40   The College confirmed that it does not work with recruitment agents.

41   Admissions records demonstrate that the College's policies are implemented in practice. The team reviewed a random sample of 23 admissions records.[116] The offer letters in the sample clearly state whether the offer is conditional or unconditional and the detail of the condition if applicable. There is clear detail on what pathway or programme the offer is for. In the sample, there was one applicant who had not been sent an offer letter. The College Facilitator confirmed that this instance had been picked up prior to the assessment visit and that the letter was not sent out due to the student applying very close to the start of the term. The team concluded that this was a minor omission which did not harm the integrity of the procedure or the interest of the applicant.

42   Staff involved in admissions understand their role and are appropriately skilled and trained. All staff involved in the admission process confirmed that they had relevant training on the systems and policies.[117] Final admissions decisions are made by the Dean of College[118] and are based on the interview notes showing the candidate's aptitude and understanding of the ethos of the College.

43   Students tend to agree that the admissions system is reliable, fair and inclusive. In the Student Submission[119] students confirmed that they found the admissions process straightforward and flexible to their individual circumstances and this was further verified by the team in the meeting with students.[120]

44   The team concludes that the College has a reliable, fair and inclusive admissions system. This is because there is a credible and robust approach to admissions of students underpinned by the College's Admissions Policy which demonstrate reliability, fairness and inclusivity. Entry requirements are aligned with the overall regulations and policies of the College and the University, and admissions decisions reflect the entry requirements agreed with the University and published in the programme specification. Admissions records demonstrate that admissions policies are implemented in practice and that admissions decisions are reliable, fair and inclusive. The assessment team concludes, therefore, that the Core practice is met.

The team had a high degree of confidence in this judgement for the following reasons:

45   The assessment team was able to review all of the available evidence recommended in Annex 4. This was triangulated in meetings with the staff, students and the sample of admissions records. Therefore, the assessment team has a high degree of confidence in this judgement.

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[116] 060 Admissions sample
[117] M3 Meeting with admission staff, M5 and M8 Meeting with teaching staff
[118] M3 Meeting with admissions staff
[119] 066 Student submission
[120] M1 Meeting with Students

Q2 The provider designs and/or delivers high-quality courses

Summary of findings

The team concluded that the Core practice is met for the following reasons:

46   The College has robust and credible plans for designing and delivering high-quality courses because the validation agreement makes it clear that the College must work within the overall University's Common Awards Framework,[121] both in terms of broad content and fundamental aspects of governance. For example, a Common Awards Management Committee is required to be set up and assessment must be subject to the scrutiny of the University-appointed external examiner. It is for the College, however, to determine the detail of the courses it wishes to offer in line with its priorities.

47   The College's policies for course design and delivery facilitate the design and delivery of high-quality courses because the Common Awards Framework[122] requires the College to work within a comprehensive set of parameters that have been carefully set to assure the quality of provision. The documentation designed by the College as part of the validation process with the University indicates that the College is adhering to these requirements[123] with the result that the provision is of high quality. The College works within the University's established Common Awards Framework.[124] This framework sets the broad parameters of the awards offered by a number of Theological Education Institutes, of which the College is one. The University's curriculum framework[125] sets out core aspects of the College's courses, including programme specifications for each award. These stipulate both the volume and level of credit required.[126] Comprehensive module outlines are also predetermined.[127] Programme regulations[128] are proposed by the College and subsequently approved by the University.[129] Programme regulations must align with the requirements set out in the University's Programme Specification. This framework is robust and aligned with the sector-wide norms for the design of strong academic programmes. In entering into the validation arrangement with the University, the College has benchmarked its provision against a quality framework that is credible and robust.

48   Approved course documentation indicates that the teaching, learning and assessment design enables students to meet and demonstrate the intended learning outcomes. The College selects from the range of module outlines and works with these to design specific courses that are consistent with the University-determined regulations and programme specifications. The University's Principles of Programme Design are also cited by the College as providing further guidance.[130] The College therefore has significant responsibility for course design, though works within a set of University parameters. Upon completion of this course design, the College's documentation is scrutinised by the University and approved through their deliberative processes.[131] The courses are coherent in that the module learning outcomes, their assessment and the programme specifications align.

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[121] www.durham.ac.uk/departments/academic/common-awards/
[122] www.durham.ac.uk/departments/academic/common-awards/
[123] 045 Durham CA Application SED, 046 Durham CA Curriculum Map, 047 Durham CA Module Overview
[124] www.durham.ac.uk/departments/academic/common-awards/
[125] 021 Common Awards website
[126] www.durham.ac.uk/departments/academic/common-awards/policies-processes/curriculum/
[127] www.durham.ac.uk/departments/academic/common-awards/policies-processes/curriculum/modules/
[128] 024 Programme Regulations
[129] www.durham.ac.uk/departments/academic/common-awards/policies-processes/teis/emmanuel-theological-college/
[130] 034 Request for additional evidence
[131] 045 Durham CA Application SED, 046 Durham CA Curriculum Map, 047 Durham CA Module Overview

49   The external examiner report[132] confirms that the courses are high quality because the standards of the awards at the College are comparable to similar courses and that the courses delivered by the College reflect the sector-wide standards. The external examiner's report[133] comments favourably on the design of provision at the College, indicating that the standards are consistent with the sector and that the consistency between learning outcomes, module content and assessment enables the students to meet the requirements. Marking is said to be 'appropriate to the levels of the students'.

50   External advisers, existing students, stakeholders and subject experts were consulted in the development of the provision.[134] The team explored the process by which the core documentation submitted to the University[135] had been drafted, paying particular attention to the involvement of stakeholders such as prospective employers and students already registered on one of the existing courses. The College submitted evidence that a number of focus groups had been convened with students on existing courses, alumni, existing staff and partner dioceses (prospective employers). The Dean considered the outcome of these conversations and drafted an outline of a possible suite of courses.[136] Given the intended delivery model, the views of an external professional in online delivery were also gathered.[137] At a meeting that included members of the University, further expert views were expressed relating to content and assessment.[138]

51   Observations of teaching and learning demonstrate clarity of objectives, good planning and organisation, a sound method or approach, good delivery, appropriate content, effective use of resources and student engagement. Teaching sessions observed were aligned to the course documentation and explicitly referenced the learning outcomes as well as the specific session aims. These were set out in each case by the lecturer to an extent that suggested guidance from senior leaders. The sessions were well structured and the level of student participation high and at the appropriate level. The content of sessions observed by the subject expert on the team was judged to be at an appropriate standard and the level of student engagement consistent with the sector. Staff were well informed and able to deliver complex material clearly.[139]

52   Staff are able to articulate what 'high quality' means in the context of the College, and to show how the provision meets that definition. Staff at the College understand what is meant by 'high quality' courses and align this with the Common Awards Framework.[140] Staff recognise the responsibility to ensure that the Framework is put in place and that the courses delivered are consistent with what has been validated.

53   Students tend to regard their courses as being of high quality. Observations indicated that students at the College are well prepared for teaching sessions and can engage at the level required. Students expressed the view that assignments are clear and that they know what they need to do in order to achieve.[141] Students consider the courses to be well designed and organised with a variety of content across a range of disciplines. Student feedback to the Common Awards Management Committee (CAMC) student representative reflected that students particularly appreciate the breadth and variety of

[132] 022 Draft External Examiner Report
[133] 022 Draft External Examiner Report
[134] 049 ETC Rotar Project Overview, 050 Academic Subgroup minutes, 051 Consultations summary
[135] 045 Durham CA Application SED, 046 Durham CA Curriculum Map, 047 Durham CA Module Overview
[136] 051 Consultations Summary
[137] 049 Rotar Emmanuel Project Overview
[138] 050 Academic Subgroup minutes, 054 Academic Subgroup minutes
[139] Observations of teaching 1-3
[140] 021 Common Awards website
[141] M1 Meeting with students

content offered in the taught academic courses.[142]

54   The assessment team concludes that the College designs and delivers high-quality courses. This is because the University has clear oversight of the programme design process. Therefore, the College's regulations and policies for course design and delivery facilitate the design and delivery of high-quality courses. This demonstrates that the College has robust and credible plans for designing and delivering high-quality courses, and approved course documentation indicates that the teaching, learning, and assessment design enables students to meet and demonstrate the intended learning outcomes. Therefore, the assessment team concludes that the Core practice is met.

The team had a high degree of confidence in this judgement for the following reasons:

55   The assessment team was able to review all of the available evidence recommended in Annex 4. This was triangulated in meetings with staff and students, observation of teaching and external examiner reports. Therefore, the assessment team has a high degree of confidence in this judgement.

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[142] 066 Student Submission

Q3 The provider has sufficient appropriately qualified and skilled staff to deliver a high-quality academic experience

Summary of findings

The team concluded that the Core practice is met for the following reasons:

56   The College has robust and credible plans for the recruitment, appointment, induction and support of sufficient appropriately qualified and skilled staff. There is a comprehensive approach that includes both academic and support staff and provides regular training both within the College and through the University.[143] The University is responsible for the provision of partnership-wide annual and periodic monitoring reporting of the College's staffing.[144] The University's Post-validation report (May 2022) notes that the staffing within the College is appropriate to enable the requirements of the award to be met.[145]

57   The College's policies for the recruitment, appointment, induction and support for staff provide for a sufficient number of appropriately qualified and skilled staff. The College has a Staff Recruitment Policy[146] that outlines both the process and priorities for staff recruitment and all appointments, other than that of casual staff. A Staff Development Group has recently been established at the College.[147] This Group is responsible for core aspects of staff development and induction, including developing a staff development framework. The University confirmed that staff at the College take part in training courses, including the 'core skills' course, which leads to associate fellowship of the Higher Education Academy (HEA). The College sets completion of this course within three years as a target for all academic staff.[148]

58   There are sufficient appropriately skilled and qualified staff to deliver a high-quality academic experience. The minimum requirement for a teaching post at the College is a full master's degree. The possession of such is stipulated as 'essential' in the job descriptions.[149] All current academic staff at the College meet this requirement.[150] A review of all academic staff CVs gave confidence that the College has been able to attract and retain well qualified members of staff who have a range of experience and qualifications. The job description for Academic Support Tutor[151] demonstrated that the role was designed to support students in achieving their outcomes and the CV summary[152] confirmed they had the relevant experience to fulfil the role.

59   Observations of teaching and learning indicate that teaching staff are appropriately qualified and skilled. Observations of three teaching[153] sessions demonstrate that staff at the College are well qualified to deliver the provision. The level of student preparation for the learning sessions was high and this resulted in informed discussion on the topics. The staff proactively included each student (even in the large group observed) and there was active classroom management to retain students' focus throughout.

60   Staff have been recruited, appointed, inducted and supported according to the

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[143] 043 Staff Recruitment Policy
[144] 015 Validation Agreement
[145] 014 Post Validation Report
[146] 043 Assessment Policy statement
[147] 031 Staff Development Working Group: Terms of Reference
[148] M2 Meeting with Leadership Team
[149] 042 Academic Support Tutor Job Description, 043 Staff Recruitment Policy
[150] 040 Staff CV Summary
[151] 042 Academic Support Tutor Job Description
[152] 018 Staff CV summary
[153] Observation of teaching 1-3

College's regulations and policies. The majority of staff at the College were existing members of staff on the separate training courses which have been amalgamated into the new, single Theological Education Institution (TEI). The team reviewed two academic postholders appointed since the formation of the College (Tutor in Theology and Academic Support Tutor)[154] and found that the processes that had been used for the appointment of these new colleagues was consistent with the process as outlined in the relevant policy.[155]

61   Students tend to agree that there are sufficient appropriately skilled and qualified staff to deliver a high-quality academic experience. Students are positive about the quality of the staff and are satisfied that staff in post are able to support them to meet the requirements of the course.[156] Students stated[157] that teaching staff draw on a wide range of resources (books, articles, videos, podcasts) and activities (discussions, debates, quizzes, surveys, church visits) and that staff use different approaches when teaching in order to allow students with different learning styles to maximise their learning. Students also commented[158] that staff actively encourage students to think about managing their study time, workload and deadlines. Students were positive that staffing at the College enabled them to succeed and that the range of specialisms was appropriate to the courses being offered.[159]

62   The assessment team concludes that the College has sufficient appropriately qualified and skilled staff to deliver a high-quality academic experience. This is because the College's policies for the recruitment, appointment, induction, and support for staff provide for a sufficient number of appropriately qualified and skilled staff. The assessment team concludes, therefore, that the Core practice is met.

The team had a high degree of confidence in this judgement for the following reasons:

63   The assessment team was able to review all of the available evidence recommended in Annex 4. This was triangulated in meetings with staff and students, observations of teaching and learning and the sample of job descriptions, staff CVs and records of recruitment. Therefore, the assessment team has a high degree of confidence in this judgement.

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[154] 043 Assessment Policy statement
[155] 042 Academic Support Tutor Job Description
[156] 066 Student Submission
[157] 066 Student Submission
[158] 066 Student Submission
[159] M1 Meeting with Students

Q4 The provider has sufficient and appropriate facilities, learning resources and student support services to deliver a high-quality academic experience

Summary of findings

The team concluded that the Core practice is met for the following reasons:

64   The College has a Board of Trustees which is responsible for strategic planning for facilities and resources and has a Structure Chart and Organisational Chart[160] which set out the interrelationships between entities and how support is provided and overseen. There is a Strategic Development Plan[161] which contains an objective 'to progress high-quality learning and formation experiences for students'[162] and the plans described for facilities, learning resources and student support services are credible because there are actions for the objectives which have assigned owners and target dates.

65   The Standing Orders for the Board of Trustees[163] and the Terms of Reference for the Common Award Management Committee and the Academic Partnerships Subcommittee[164] demonstrate that the College designates clear responsibilities for the oversight of the facilities, learning resources and student support services. Strategic commitments are supported operationally by the Academic Working Group[165] which has responsibility for continuous improvement and leads on the effective implementation of academic provision. The Common Awards Management Committee,[166] clearly recognised in the College's Organisational Chart,[167] has responsibilities for monitoring a wide range of aspects of provision including the quality and standards of education provision, and there is evidence that its agenda covers issues related to learning resources and facilities. The Validation Agreement[168] with the University demonstrates which aspects of the facilities, resources and student support are the responsibility of the College rather than the University and these include information technology and learning support services. The Common Awards Validation Report (January 2021)[169] makes it clear that the College is making use of facilities and buildings that have already been validated by the University.

66   The College's strategies and plans are robust and credible because they are supported by the oversight provided by committees and working groups and because there is an Annual Action Plan[170] for the delivery of sufficient and appropriate facilities, learning resources and student support services to deliver a high-quality academic experience. The College's Teaching and Learning Strategy[171] provides a working document for the College in its approach to providing learning resources and student support.

67   The assessment team viewed facilities directly through teaching observations[172] and by reviewing recordings of part-time teaching[173] and found that there was sufficient space for teaching and that technology was used to enhance the teaching. Simultaneous

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[160] 001 Structures, ETC_002_Org_Chart
[161] 058 RedactedSDP_Dec22
[162] 028 ETC Strategic Objectives Summary
[163] 063 Standing Orders of The Board
[164] 007 CAMC ToR, ETC_062_ToR_Academic_Partnerships_Subcommittee
[165] 009 AcWG ToR
[166] 007 CAMC ToR
[167] 002 Org Chart
[168] 015 Validation Agreement
[169] 013 Validation Report
[170] 069 AnnualActionPlan_2223
[171] 074 Teaching and Learning Strategy 2125
[172] Observation of teaching and learning forms
[173] 065 Evening (Part-Time) Teaching Centres Video Link

teaching across two sites was effective, with students being able to fully engage on both sites.

68   The assessment team was able to see a demonstration of the College's VLE and see the range of learning and student support resources available to students across the separate locations. The team found them to be comprehensive and capable of providing a consistent source of support for specific learning needs, academic writing and dealing with plagiarism. Students were clearly signposted to this information both in the VLE and Student Handbook.[174]

69   Trustees, managers, and staff[175] evidenced engagement with the planning and delivery of learning resources at appropriate levels. Board members spoke of their strategic responsibilities for planning and review and indicated that they were not involved in operational matters, stating that the Dean was responsible for creating a detailed action plan from the Strategic Development Plan. This plan has not yet been approved by the Board of Trustees, so its contents are not widely known, but the Teaching and Learning Strategy sets out the values for teaching excellence and student experience. Leadership Team members were aware of the strategies and plans in place for facilities, learning resources and student support services through the Strategic Development Plan, Teaching and Learning Strategy and Annual Action Plan, and were able to clearly articulate these plans. They also described annual review processes for curriculum, resources, and facilities, including reviews of contracts for facilities providers, the outcomes of which go to the Board of Trustees and are used as a basis to allocate funding with the aim of achieving excellence for students.

70   Academic and support staff[176] were fully aware of the Teaching and Learning Strategy and of the importance of their role in ensuring that physical environment is of a sufficiently high quality to support the academic experience. They were able to describe their roles in supporting students and in providing resources and described how they direct students to other members of staff, such as the Academic Support Tutor, for specific support. They were also able to describe the library resources available to students[177] and confirmed that there were sufficient library resources to support the modules they delivered. Academic staff also evidenced activity in working groups to identify opportunities for improvement and enhancement, in annual library review and in the Common Awards Management Committee working to improve the offer of resources between groups and to achieve economies of scale. They also spoke of their formal roles in responding to student feedback as a close team of staff who could respond to issues in teaching centres or with facilities.[178]

71   Students[179] spoke positively about student support arrangements and the effectiveness of online in-person support and of the value of VLE resources. They also confirmed the support they had received from the Academic Support Tutor and indicated that they were referred to an external provider for support outside of the College's expertise. Collectively, this support contributed to them receiving a high-quality academic experience. Module evaluations[180] demonstrated student satisfaction with the library and online resources, and this was supported by the Student Submission.[181] Some students indicated that the library 'could be better' and that some resources took a long time to find due to the need to navigate multiple systems and that student awareness of resources including free online resources could be improved. Other students indicated that they have access to both

[174] 010 Student_Handbook_VLE_extract
[175] M2 Leadership Team, M5 Teaching Staff 1, M6 Board of Trustees
[176] M5 Teaching Staff 1, M6 Board of Trustees, M7 Support Staff
[177] M8 Teaching Staff 2
[178] M5 Teaching Staff 1 NOTES, M8 Teaching Staff 2 NOTES
[179] M1 Students
[180] 032_Module_Evaluation
[181] 066 2023_01 Student Submission

an excellent physical library in South Manchester as well as an online library catalogue, and that all necessary materials including journals are available to them. IT support was also said to be readily available.

72   The College has sufficient and appropriate facilities, learning resources and student support services to deliver a high-quality academic experience because its approach to providing learning resources and student support is robust and credible. The Board of Trustees oversees clear structures for planning, management, review, and continuous improvement, which result in appropriate plans, strategies, processes, and procedures. Appropriate committees and working groups coordinate activity at an operational level and there are clear definitions in the validation agreement of where College responsibilities lie. The College VLE and handbooks clearly demonstrate a comprehensive range of learning and support resources which are effective. Academic support staff have clearly defined roles and responsibilities, and academic staff are fully aware of plans, resources, and support. Student feedback supports sufficiency and satisfaction with resources, and this is confirmed by the team's direct observations. The team therefore concludes that the Core practice is met.

The team had a high degree of confidence in this judgement for the following reasons:

73   The assessment team reviewed all the available evidence recommended in Annex 4. This was triangulated in meetings with senior, academic, professional and learning resources staff involved in planning and managing the VLE and other aspects of student support. Therefore, the assessment team has a high degree of confidence in this judgement.

Q5 The provider actively engages students, individually and collectively, in the quality of their educational experience

Summary of findings

The team concluded that the Core practice is met for the following reasons:

75   The College actively engages students, individually and collectively, in the quality of their educational experience because it has emergent strategic commitments to enhancing engagement with its students and specific actions related to these. The actions related to the objective 'to progress high quality learning and formation experiences for students'[182] include the expressed intent to embed the annual review process in enhancement arrangements and to review mechanisms for and increase the involvement of students in decision-making and feedback processes.

76   The College's structure document[183] demonstrates that student representatives are members of the Academic Working Group, Common Award Management Committee (CAMC), Formation Working Group and Placements Working Group all of which input to Leadership Team business. The emergent Strategic Development plan commits to the introduction of a Dean's Advisory Group (DAG) formed of students who will be nominated by Centre Lead Tutors.[184] The DAG will meet termly with the Dean to share opinions, give feedback, discuss community wide issues, and reflect on and develop the ethos and culture of the College.

77   The CAMC minutes[185] demonstrate the effective engagement of student representatives in the governance of the College because they show the attendance of six student representatives and their active contribution to the committee and also evidence College staff actively encouraging the representatives' participation.

78   Guidance on how students can feed back on their academic and student experience is provided in the Student Handbook,[186] which contains information on engagement that is easily accessible to all students, and on the VLE. The handbook is clear about the ways that students could feed back on their experience, but it does not detail how students can become involved in student representation or how students could contact their representatives.

79   Student representatives are divided into two groups. One group is elected by the students to sit on CAMC, and the other group of Student Advisors will attend the Dean's Advisory group, the Academic Working Group, the Placements Working Group, and the Formation Working Group. Student Advisors are selected by the College to ensure a breadth of interests and effective demographic representation. Students are invited to put themselves forward as student representatives to CAMC via email[187] and are elected to the role in an online election. The email communication includes a role description as well as the estimated time commitment to the role. There is no formal training for the Student Representatives. The College's explanation[188] is that training has been informal thus far, typically undertaken as emails, discussions, and briefings within meetings. A structured, yet informal 'catch up' has been planned for January 2023 to ensure that student representatives have all necessary tools at their disposal, and the College's intention is to

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[182] 058 RedactedSDP_Dec22. P7, 8.
[183] 001 Structures
[184] 058 Redacted SDP_Dec22
[185] 008 2022_03 Term 2 CAMC Confirmed Minutes v.1
[186] 010 Student Handbook VLE extract
[187] 037 Student Rep Info1
[188] 034c_Request_for_additional information Response

incorporate elements of training.[189]

80   The College collects student feedback through the Module Evaluation Surveys and Annual Common Awards Survey. The Module Evaluation Surveys are monitored by CAMC and there is evidence of discussion of survey outcomes.[190] The Common Awards Survey focuses on academic themes including learning and teaching, study support, learning communities and student voice; results are reviewed through CAMC and the Board of Trustees[191] and are monitored by the Dean. The Board describes plans to have students attend a student-focused session in July 2023 in order to talk about their specific experiences.[192]

81   There is evidence of change resulting from the student feedback in CAMC minutes[193] which note closed actions, and students confirmed[194] that they had seen evidence of changes following feedback in the previous year. This was confirmed by academic staff[195] who were able to give several examples of where student feedback had been acted upon. Student representatives confirmed that they felt adequately supported by the College and expressed the view that any concerns or feedback on their academic experience would be effectively handled by their Formation Group tutor and that they would be equally comfortable approaching the Dean or any other member of staff.[196]

82   The College actively engages students, individually and collectively, in the quality of their educational experience and has an emergent strategic commitment which is supported by robust and credible plans. It has created an environment where students are able to express their views freely, through both formal and informal routes, and although training and support has been informal, there is clear evidence from students, staff and from committee minutes that student feedback is acted upon and that the College's approach is effective and viewed positively by students.

The team had a high degree of confidence in this judgement for the following reasons:

83   The assessment team reviewed all the available evidence recommended in Annex 4. This was triangulated in meetings with senior and teaching staff involved in planning and managing the student engagement approach, policies, and procedures, and with students. Therefore, the assessment team has a high degree of confidence in this judgement.

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[189] 034c Request for Additional Information Response, 26
[190] 008_2022_03 Term 2 CAMC Confirmed Minutes v.1
[191] M6 Board of Trustees NOTES, M9 Final Meeting
[192] M6 Board of Trustees NOTES
[193] 008_2022_03 Term 2 CAMC Confirmed Minutes v.1
[194] M1 Students including Student Reps NOTES
[195] M8 Teaching Staff 2
[196] M1 Students including Student Reps NOTES

Q6 The provider has fair and transparent procedures for handling complaints and appeals which are accessible to all students

Summary of findings

The team concluded that the Core practice is met for the following reasons:

84   The College has fair and transparent procedures for handling complaints and appeals which are accessible to all students because it has a Student Complaints Policy[197] for responding to formal and informal complaints. The Student Complaints Policy is accessible to all students through the College's website and the Student Handbook[198] and commits to dealing with complaints in confidence, promptly, with impartiality, and without recrimination. The policy details formal and informal mechanisms through which students can make representations and raise issues, and clearly defines its scope and the stages of its procedures. The scope of the policy is limited to academic complaints and a list of aspects of academic provision that a complaint may be related to is provided.

85   The College's policy and procedure for responding to formal and informal complaints aligns with the Office of the Independent Adjudicator's Good Practice Framework for handling student complaints and academic appeals.[199]

86   The Student Complaints Policy[200] clearly states that it does not cover non-academic complaints and academic appeals, which are covered by the University's policies and procedures.

87   There is no mention of support for students raising a complaint until the University review stage, when students are directed to the Students' Union. Academic staff, including Formation Group tutors[201] confirmed that informal support is provided through the Formation Group tutors. Despite the lack of explicit detail of the support available for students involved in the complaints process, the team was assured that any support needs would be met by existing support mechanisms.

88   The College had one academic complaint in the academic year 2021-22. The complaint which was informal was dealt with according to the procedure detailed in the Student Complaints Policy and within the period specified.[202]

89   College students[203] knew where to find the complaints and appeals policies and knew of the process itself. They confirmed that before raising a complaint through the procedures detailed in the policies, they would be comfortable to discuss it with College staff. All staff and the Board of Trustees demonstrated understanding of their role in the complaints procedure and were able to clearly articulate the policy.[204]

90   The University confirmed[205] that the College's complaints procedure was 'in alignment with the expectations of the Common Awards Scheme'. The College is required to supply a copy of its Students Complaints Policy for annual review by the University.

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[197] 033 Student Complaints Policy
[198] 010 Student Handbook VLE extract
[199] 000 Emmanuel_Theological_College_QSR_Submission_2022_11
[200] 033 Student Complaints Policy
[201] M5 Teaching Staff 1 NOTES, M8 Teaching Staff 2 NOTES
[202] 000 Emmanuel_Theological_College_QSR_Submission_2022_11, P16
[203] M1 Students including Student Reps NOTES
[204] M5 Teaching Staff 1 NOTES, M8 Teaching Staff 2 NOTES, M6 Board of Trustees NOTES
[205] 013 Validation Report, Paragraph 54

91   The College has fair and transparent procedures for handling complaints and appeals which are accessible to all students. Its approach to providing fair and transparent procedures for handling complaints and appeals is credible and robust because commitments and processes are clearly detailed in College and University procedures which are transparent and accessible to all students and staff, and which are reviewed by the validating University. Students and staff demonstrated a good understanding of the approach and there was evidence of the procedure described in the complaints policy being used to resolve an issue raised by a student and of that student's involvement in the resolution. The assessment team concludes, therefore, that the Core practice is met.

The team had a high degree of confidence in this judgement for the following reasons:

92   The assessment team reviewed all the available evidence recommended in Annex 4. This was triangulated in meetings with senior and teaching staff involved in planning and managing the approach, policies, and procedures for handling complaints and appeals, and with students. Therefore, the assessment team has a high degree of confidence in this judgement.

Q8 Where a provider works in partnership with other organisations, it has in place effective arrangements to ensure that the academic experience is high-quality irrespective of where or how courses are delivered and who delivers them

Summary of findings

The team concluded that the Core practice is met for the following reasons:

93   The College has robust and credible plans to ensure a high-quality academic experience for provision delivered in partnership. This is because the University has undertaken both validation[206] and post-validation[207] visits and produced reports which specifically demonstrate that the College is fulfilling its responsibilities in relation to this partnership and has effective arrangements in place to ensure the quality of the provision. The validation agreement provides that the University has ultimate responsibility for the delivery of a high-quality academic experience, subject to regular processes and review, and that programmes have been designed with reference to the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ). The Validation Agreement[208] also specifies that the University's quality assurance processes apply, and students enrolled are subject to the University Regulations.[209] The awarding body representatives[210] confirmed the arrangements in place for the oversight of quality and the expectations they have of the College, and it was clear from discussions with the Leadership Team[211] that these responsibilities were clearly understood.

94   The College has clear and comprehensive regulations and policies for the management of partnerships with other organisations to ensure that the academic experience is high quality, and these closely align with the requirements of the University. The Common Awards Management Committee (CAMC) has oversight of quality and standards relating to Common Awards programmes and meets on a termly basis, and attendance includes the College's University Liaison Officer. This Officer is appointed by the University and is responsible for producing an annual report on their work, which is reviewed and monitored by the University, and for participating in College committees with staff appointment responsibilities. The validation agreement provides (Schedule 3) that the College is responsible for undertaking an annual self-evaluation exercise, and reporting the results to the University, although at the time of the review the document relating to the initial (2021-22) intake was still in preparation, pending presentation at a meeting with the University scheduled for February 2023.[212]

95   Students studying for future ministry within the Church of England typically undertake their studies alongside the College's Ministerial Formation Programme, which integrates a contextual placement as part of a wider ministerial training pathway (held at residential and weekend study events). Independent students do not undertake placement activity as part of their academic programmes.[213] All such placements and other related opportunities are subject to the published guidance of the University in this regard.[214]

96   Staff from both the College and the University understand their respective

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[206] 013 Validation Report
[207] 014 Post Validation Report
[208] 015 Validation Agreement
[209] 024 University Regulations
[210] M1 Awarding Body Representative Meeting
[211] M2 Meeting with Leadership Team
[212] 034c Request for additional information
[213] 003 Programme Specifications
[214] 003 Programme Specifications

responsibilities for quality, and in particular staff at the College were able to clearly articulate understanding of the responsibilities they had when it came to ensuring the delivery of a high-quality academic experience. Teaching staff [215, 216] and professional support staff [217] understood the relationship between the College and the awarding body and demonstrated an understanding of the split of responsibilities when it came to quality. The Leadership Team [218] articulated the roles and responsibilities within the partnership and how the oversight of standards was managed between the Board of Trustees, [219] CAMC [220] and Academic Working Group (AWG) [221] as set out in their terms of reference or standing orders. The Board [222] also showed they clearly understood their role in maintaining quality within the partnership arrangement.

97   External examiner reports confirm that the academic experience is high quality. The validation agreement [223] demonstrates that external examiners are appointed by and responsible to the University, and their work is evidenced in their formal report, [224] which includes specific confirmation that the academic experience at the provider is high quality. The provider uses this assurance within its internal quality processes, and the external examiner report reviewed was considered by the CAMC in November 2022, [225] and a draft response [226] to the University was prepared following consideration at an AWG. [227]

98   The College and the University have a formal partnership agreement in place and this is underpinned by the University's policies and those delegated to the College. Staff from both parties understand their roles in ensuring that the partnership works in such a way as to provide a high-quality experience for the students, and the quality of the provision is also affirmed by the external examiners. The assessment team concludes, therefore, that the Core practice is met.

The team had a high degree of confidence in this judgement for the following reasons:

99   The assessment team was able to review all of the available evidence recommended in Annex 4, and this was triangulated in meetings with senior, teaching and professional staff, together with representatives of the University. Therefore, the assessment team has a high degree of confidence in this judgement.

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[215] M5 Meeting with Academic Staff
[216] M8 Meeting with Academic Staff
[217] M7 Meeting with Professional Support Staff
[218] M2 Meeting with Leadership Team
[219] M6 Meeting with Board of Trustees
[220] 056 CAMC Minutes
[221] 009 AWG Terms of reference
[222] M6 Meeting with Board of Trustees
[223] 015 Validation Agreement
[224] 022 EE Report
[225] 056 CAMC Minutes
[226] 068 Draft response to EE
[227] 009 AWG Terms of Reference

Q9 The provider supports all students to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes

Summary of findings

The team concluded that the Core practice is met for the following reasons:

100   The College supports all students to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes because it has plans which are led by the vision and emergent strategy and operationalised effectively through policies, regulations, procedures and staff roles and activities. The vision[228] commits to 'offering outstanding theological teaching, formation, and training for both lay students and ordinands' and the emergent strategy has a specific objective[229] which commits to progressing high-quality learning and formation experiences for students. Actions identified to help fulfil the objective are support focused and include a specific commitment to use programme review 'to ensure that teaching and assessment provide an equal opportunity for all students to achieve and demonstrate their full academic potential as well as providing opportunities across the curriculum for our students to develop the personal and transferable skills to succeed in the workplace'.[230] Additionally, there is an action which commits to developing 'other kinds of access pathways that will enable people from a broader range of backgrounds to access teaching and training for church-based work'.[231]

101   The strategic position is supported by specific commitments set out in the Access and Participation Statement[232] which describes how the College works to support students to achieve successful outcomes and offers direction to appropriate policies and procedures. The Academic Development Programme supports students with academic skills, with the aim of enabling them to achieve successful academic outcomes. Academic support for students is detailed in the handbook,[233] with clear headings signposting students to the information and all students are invited to an induction and orientation event prior to the beginning of their programme which includes an introduction to the Formation Group Tutor who has a particular responsibility for student support. Student support particularly around welfare is also clearly articulated in the Student Handbook[234] and is easily accessible to students through the VLE.

102   The student handbook includes a link to the Academic and Study Skills resources[235] which provides information on how to book one-to-one support tutorials with the Academic Support Tutor. The Academic Support Tutor, whose CV demonstrates that they are appropriately qualified for the role, can assist students with preparing for an upcoming assignment and understanding feedback they receive.[236] The Academic and Study Skills resources are comprehensive and cover key concerns such as academic misconduct.

103   College staff are well briefed on expectations relating to their role in supporting students' achievement,[237] both academically and pastorally and the Staff Handbook[238] details staff duties, communication standards and training support. Formation Group tutors focus on non-academic support that covers personal and professional development work

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[228] 000 Emmanuel_Theological_College_QSR_Submission_2022_11, P1
[229] 000 Emmanuel_Theological_College_QSR_Submission_2022_11, P7
[230] 000 Emmanuel_Theological_College_QSR_Submission_2022_11, P8 5.1.5
[231] 000 Emmanuel_Theological_College_QSR_Submission_2022_11, P10 5.5.2
[232] 011 Access & Participation Statement
[233] 010 Student Handbook VLE extract
[234] 010 Student Handbook VLE extract
[235] https://emmanuel.commonawards.org/course/view.php?id=49, 23/12/2022
[236] 018 T9_CV_Summary
[237] M5 Teaching Staff 1 NOTES, 8 Teaching Staff 2 NOTES
[238] 016 Staff_Handbook_VLE_extract

and identifies any additional support needs. Students meet their tutor for at least one substantial tutorial per term, and additional support is available where necessary. Formation Group tutors stated[239] that they receive support in their role through the line management structure and the monthly all staff meetings where training is often delivered. One tutor is currently undergoing a qualification in coaching, paid for by the College to support their role as a Formation Group tutor.

104   The College employs a dedicated Academic Support Tutor, who leads an Academic Development Programme of seminars and workshops which are clearly set out in the Academic Development schedule. This demonstrates that the College effectively supplements learning resources and student support services by enhancing the academic experience and supporting students to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes. The job description for the Academic Support Tutor clearly demonstrates that the role was designed to support student academic experience. During a meeting with teaching staff, the Academic Support Tutor was clearly able to describe how they support students to successfully achieve outcomes. For example, the Academic Support Tutor leads on the Academic Development programme and is also available for one-to-one support for students across all sites. Students have equal access to this member of staff and can book face to face, online and telephone meetings. Optional academic skills sessions are run as part of residential weekends and students are encouraged to attend them.

105   The Formation Group tutors were able to explain how they tailor their support and advice based on the students' own interests and encourage them to consider their next steps and the transferable skills they need to gain. Tutors also draw on their own experience and signpost students to other colleagues who have experience in specific fields of student interest. Formation Group tutors can also assist students to create a development plan.[240]

106   Students[241] felt that Formation Group tutors and the curriculum, which is designed to support ministerial formation and develop the professional skills and qualities required by the Church of England's specific criteria for ordained and lay ministry, encouraged them to reflect on their preparedness for ministry and potential further study. An independent student particularly confirmed that they felt supported and guided to succeed professionally. Students also referred to the work of the Academic Support Tutor following assessment where the tutor is automatically notified when a particular student required further assistance. All students knew the tutor by name and were very positive about the quality of the support available through tutors. They were also satisfied with the quality of the resources available to them on the Academic and Study Skills pages which they noted they used regularly.

107   The team concluded that the College supports all students to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes because it has in place relevant and appropriate structures, policies, and procedures for identifying and supporting student needs through the duration of their programmes. Staff have clearly articulated responsibilities for student academic and pastoral support and Formation Group tutors are effectively supported by the Academic Support Tutor and by a range of information and materials in the College's VLE. The assessment team concludes that the College's approach should support all students to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes and that the Core practice is met.

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[239] M5 Teaching Staff 1 NOTES, M8 Teaching Staff 2 NOTES
[240] M2 Leadership Team, M5 Teaching Staff 1 NOTES, M8 Teaching Staff 2 NOTES
[241] M1 Students including Student Reps NOTES

The team had a high degree of confidence in this judgement for the following reasons:

108   The assessment team reviewed all the available evidence recommended in Annex 4. The evidence was triangulated in meetings with senior and teaching staff and with students. The assessment team, therefore, has a high degree of confidence in this judgement.

Annex 1 - Evidence listing

00   Emmanuel_Theological_College_QSR_Submission_2022_11.pdf

01   Structures.pdf

02   Org_Chart.pdf

03   Programme_Specifications.pdf

04   Module_Descriptors.pdf

05   Assessment_Parameters.pdf

06   Learning_Hours_Guidance.pdf

07   CAMC_ToR.pdf

08   2022_03 Term 2 CAMC Confirmed Minutes v.1.pdf

009 AcWG_ToR.pdf

10   Student_Handbook_VLE_extract.pdf

11   Access&Participation_Statement.pdf

12   Academic_Development_Schedule.pdf

13   Validation_Report.pdf

14   Post_Validation_Report.pdf

15   Validation_Agreement.pdf

16   Staff_Handbook_VLE_extract.pdf

17   Assessment_Policy.pdf

18   T9_CV_Summary.pdf

19   Research_Ethics.pdf

20   Assessment_Schedule.pdf

21   External_Examiner.pdf

22   Draft_EE_Report.docx

23   Admissions_Policy.pdf

24   T3_Programme_Regulations.pdf

25   T4_Module_Overview_Table.xlsx

26   T5_Curriculum_Mapping.xlsx

27   Curriculum_Development.pdf

28   ETC Strategic Objectives Summary.pdf

029 Peer_Review_Form.docx

30   APDR_Form.docx

31   StaDev_ToR.pdf

32   Module_Evaluation.pdf

33   Student Complaints_Policy.pdf

034c Request_for_additional information_Response.docx

035 SDWG_Minutes_Additional_StaffDev_Evidence.pdf

036 Academic_Working_Group_Minutes.pdf

037 Student Rep Info1.pdf

038 Student Rep Info2.pdf

039 Examination Board Minutes.pdf

040 2022_12_CV_Summary.docx

041 Sodor&ManProvision.pdf

042 AcademicSupportTutor_TutorinTheology_JDs.pdf

043 Staff Recruitment Policy Induction Overview.pdf

044 Assessment Policy Statement.pdf

45   DurhamCA_ApplicationSED.pdf

46   DurhamCA_CurriculumMap.pdf

47   DurhamCA_ModuleOverview.pdf

48   Guidance_for_markers_at_Emmanuel_Theological_College.pdf

49   ETC_Rotar_EmmanuelProjectOverview.pdf

50   Academic_SubGroup_Minutes.pdf

51   Consultations Summary.pdf

054 Academic Subgroup_ToR.pdf

055 Implementation Group Membership.pdf

056 CAMC_Minutes.pdf

57   DRAFT_CAMC_AGENDA.pdf

58   RedactedSDP_Dec22.pdf

59   Induction_and_Studyskillsmaterials.pdf

062 ToR_Academic_Partnerships_Subcommittee.pdf

063 Standing Orders of TheBoard.pdf

064 Request to provider for additional evidence TPM.docx

065 Evening (Part-Time) Teaching Centres Video Links.pdf

066 2023_01 Student Submission.pdf

067 Moderation Report TMM1211 - Final.pdf

068 EE_Report_Response_DRAFT.pdf

69   Annual Action Plan_2223.xlsx

70   Annual_Cycle_Staff_Meeting.docx

71   FGT_Responsibilities.pdf

72   Library & Academic Resources Development 2223.pdf

073 BOT 20.10.22 Minutes_Redacted.pdf

074 Teaching and Learning Strategy 2125.pdf

ExampleAppointment_ApplicationCoveringLetter.pdf

ExampleAppointment_ApplicationCV.pdf

Example Appointment Centre Lead Tutor JD Interview.pdf

ExampleAppointment_HighestDegreeCertificate.pdf

ExampleAppointment_InterviewersForm.pdf

ExampleAppointment_Reference1.pdf

ExampleAppointment_Reference2.pdf

ExampleAppointment_Reference3.pdf

Meetings

M1 Meeting 1 with Students

M2 Meeting 2 with Leadership team

M3 Meeting 3 with Admission staff

M4 Meeting 4 Awarding body representatives

M5 Meeting 5 and M8 Meeting 8 with Teaching staff

M6 Meeting 6 with Board of Trustees

M7 Meeting 7 with Support staff

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