



Mana Tohu Mātauranga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Qualifications Authority

External Evaluation and Review Report

Trinity Methodist Theological College

Date of report: 9 August 2023

About Trinity Methodist Theological College (Trinity College)

Trinity College has been an NZQA-registered private training establishment since 1990. It is the primary provider of formal ministry training and development activities for the Methodist Church in New Zealand. The first four graduates of the new Bachelor of Theology programme were capped and recognised at the bicentennial of Methodism in New Zealand in 2022.

Type of organisation:	Private training establishment (PTE)
Location:	202 St John's Road, Meadowbank, Auckland
International students:	Not eligible to enrol, and none enrolled.
Number of students:	Domestic: 63 at the time of scoping the EER
Student profile:	70 per cent Pasifika; 15 per cent Māori; 11 per cent Pākehā and 4 per cent 'other'. The largest sub-groups are Tongan (53 per cent), Fijian (11 per cent) and Samoan (6 per cent).
Number of staff:	Five full-time and nine part-time equivalents
TEO profile:	Trinity Methodist Theological College
Last EER outcome:	At the previous external evaluation and review (EER) in May 2019, NZQA was Highly Confident in Trinity College's educational performance and their capability in self-assessment.
Scope of evaluation:	Leadership training: the range of provider certificate and diploma programmes, and the NZQA-approved New Zealand Diploma in Christian Studies (Level 6) (ID: 2773-1) and Bachelor of Theology (Level 7) (ID: 4260-1)
MoE number:	9644
NZQA reference:	C52238
Dates of EER visit:	12-14 April 2023

Summary of results

Trinity College is effective in its role of ministry training and leadership development. Multiple course and qualification pathways match student learning needs and the Methodist movement's succession needs. The lecturers' quality of scholarship is high, as shown by degree monitor findings and the approaches for collaboration from national and international groups in the academic and faith-based community. Trinity maintains good alignment with NZQA requirements for maintaining registration and programme delivery.

**Highly
Confident in
educational
performance**

- The ministry training is informed by stakeholder and student needs. The PTE helps students to discern their call to full-time ministry, develop their communication and critical thinking skills, and become theologically and pastorally skilled and knowledgeable. Graduates have a sound preparation to begin service within a variety of roles and contexts.
- Since the last EER, Trinity College has carefully mapped its programme portfolio and courses, and has developed, approved and launched a degree programme. Several students have gained the degree, and there is evidence of student progression across the portfolio, including into postgraduate study elsewhere. The combination of 'locally approved' qualifications and courses and a Bachelor of Theology is novel and flexible.

**Highly
Confident in
capability in
self-assessment**

- The PTE recently established a support role which is providing mentoring to students entering academic study. This complements the chaplain's and administrator's valued and effective pastoral support.
- Documentation appraised by the evaluators was of a particularly high quality – rich in quantitative and qualitative information, balancing the needs of stakeholder groups within relatively constrained resources. The PTE has sound record-keeping of its moderation activities, and the academic committee's monitoring is appropriate for a degree. Council oversight of Trinity College is also sound.

Key evaluation question findings¹

1.1 How well do students achieve?

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Good
Preamble:	Students across a range of age groups enrol at Trinity College. They are following one of two 'tracks': those on a pathway to full-time ministry (as selected and supported by the Methodist Church); or those who are students studying for personal enrichment and to strengthen their service in their church and community. Most are studying part-time. Many are concurrently in paid employment, caregiving or parenting. All are involved with church activities to some extent.
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>A range of evidence presented and considered in this evaluation indicates strong student achievement. The starting point, progress and completion for each student's achievement is tracked and well understood. The small cohorts in each course and programme, and the evidence of ongoing monitoring – including at the college council level – also supports this view.</p> <p>Rates of withdrawal from the programmes increased during the Covid-19 pandemic. Students reported an increase in the demands on them, leaving less time available for study. Many students work in 'essential worker' categories and live in the communities most affected by Covid-19 and associated lockdowns. More positively, students are re-engaging in study.</p> <p>The PTE provided data specifically analysed to allow for the evaluation of priority learner group performance (see Appendix 1).² Although student progress is known to staff, and is systematically recorded and verifiable, there is a recommendation at the end of this report relating to this.</p>
Conclusion:	Students are achieving well when considered on a case-by-case basis. There has been some explainable variability. Monitoring of progress and achievement is currently stronger than the analysis and reporting of data.

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

² Some of the specific detail – as tabulated in the appendix – was supplied on request.

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

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Trinity College seeks ‘transformative theological engagement for justice’. The PTE achieves this vision through balancing ‘a focus on practical ministry training and academic theological scholarship’ that responds to ‘the context of Aotearoa and Oceania’.³ The college presented a range of evidence that it had made significant progress in fulfilling its vision since the last EER.</p> <p>Trinity College offers a portfolio of formal programmes and non-formal workshops which broaden and/or deepen the theological knowledge of the participants. Many graduates contribute to their church communities’ mission in paid or voluntary roles.</p> <p>The PTE develops Oceania and Māori graduates (including the first cohort from the Bachelor of Theology) who can think critically and historically. These include ‘voices from the margins’ which historically may not have been heard. Students presented at a conference in 2022, and two of the degree graduates have progressed to postgraduate study elsewhere. Graduates interviewed clearly articulated the value of the learning to them and praised the flexibility of the courses in matching the needs relating to their whānau and ministry. In addition, College staff are producing and publishing recognised research.</p> <p>Documented evidence considered for this EER included: conference abstracts; research outputs; graduate destination data; student, graduate and employer survey findings; the 2022 graduation video; and the principal’s reports to the council. The NZQA consistency review interim report for 2022 for the New Zealand Diploma in Christian Studies found ‘very strong evaluative data has been obtained to confirm consistency of graduate outcomes for each of the strands which have had graduates’.</p>
Conclusion:	Trinity College has matched well the needs and therefore the value of the learning for stakeholders and graduates, in

³ College Handbook 2023 (including the Strategic and Operational Plan: 2022-2024)

	particular within the Methodist community of parishes. Analysis of graduate destination data is currently relatively limited.
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1.3 How well do programme design and delivery, including learning and assessment activities, match the needs of students and other relevant stakeholders?

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Since the last EER, Trinity College has evolved its programme portfolio to better match the needs of students and stakeholders. There is a sound process for gathering and using stakeholder feedback in the development of the degree. The college council monitors and reports on the alignment of the programmes with stakeholder needs. Stakeholder needs alignment is complex and subject to culturally nuanced consultation, ongoing monitoring, and conversations at a national level.</p> <p>The degree monitor’s (2022) comments accurately capture what was seen at this EER:</p> <p>‘A range of assessment methodologies are used according to the course level, course content, and student demographic. These are provided in course outlines. Lecturers incorporate more ‘traditional’ models of assessment (such as essay writing and exams) alongside other approaches (such as [talanoa], tautohetohe/debates, oral presentations, worksheets, quizzes, reflective journals, and study sessions). A marking rubric is given for each assessment task...and is tailored specifically to the assessment. It outlines the requirements appropriate for each grade level. The assessment tasks are indicated briefly in the course matrix, with links made between each task and the relevant learning outcome...and linked to the graduate profile outcomes.’</p> <p>The increased capability and use of blended learning and video conferencing has led to increased opportunities in first language teaching for lay preachers. The college also offers educational pathways from entry-level tuition to postgraduate studies. These factors enhance the matching of various learner needs.</p> <p>Academic quality is well led and functions well. For example, the academic culture and attention to following policy around moderation is robust. The academic committee’s monitoring, recording and reviewing uses a full range of data and</p>

	information to assure programme quality. Teaching staff are suitably qualified and experienced to deliver at degree level; a research plan and professional development schedule is used.
Conclusion:	Since the last EER, much of Trinity's self-assessment resource has been directed towards degree development and approval and administering the two diploma consistency reviews. The academic committee ensures academic and programme quality. The staff have worked well through the challenging pandemic period to maintain the quality of teaching, and also support student retention and success.

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

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Good
Preamble:	A significant number of Trinity College students have English as a second language. Many have no previous tertiary education. Almost all are working and/or caregiving alongside their study. Students are interviewed, given clear guidance on courses, dates and their teachers in a letter of acceptance. The PTE directs prospective students to an achievable course and appropriate mode of delivery. ⁴ Interviews with students confirmed these aspects.
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>The primary pastoral context for most students is their church. All students show a high degree of interest in their studies and are motivated to succeed. The college has focused on fostering a 'community of learning' approach to support. Whānau groups were established as a new initiative to foster a student culture on campus. The college also listened to student feedback identifying the need for a study and research skills tutor. A relevant PhD-qualified individual now offers academic and research skills training, and also mentors students by drawing on their life experience.</p> <p>The PTE uses fono/hui and anonymous surveys to gather student feedback, which staff collate and analyse. Student representatives also write a formal report to the council. The end-of-year survey on pastoral care found that 95 per cent of the respondents agreed that Trinity College is either 'highly effective'</p>

⁴ Lay preaching training is also being facilitated in English, Samoan and Siamelie (Tongan).

	<p>or 'effective' in creating an inclusive learning environment where student social and cultural networks are valued and where students are free from discrimination and abuse. A similar percentage agreed that Trinity College is a place of welcome and safety for the students.</p> <p>A positive and respectful dynamic was observed in all interviews beyond the formalities of ordinary courtesies. The learning environment allows all views to be considered, and there is careful listening and measured comment. The chaplain clearly articulated his role, purpose, activities and ethical limits. This role is significant, culturally attuned, and aligns well with the college ethos. He works from a clear and relevant role description. The college administrator also provides important day-to-day support to the students.</p> <p>Since the pandemic, Trinity College has been undertaking orientation online, which also covers the NZQA Code of Practice. Library services were confirmed as suitable. The learning management system used to support all courses includes guidance and instructional videos. Academic committee minutes record that plagiarism is detected from time to time and is attended to appropriately by teaching staff. This concern is also discussed in staff workshops.</p> <p>The college allocates various financial supports and scholarships available from Methodist central resources.⁵ On-site accommodation is available for out-of-town students. The college also paid the registration fees for four students to attend the New Zealand Methodist Conference.</p> <p>The socialisation of the Code of Practice is a little behind what might be expected (pandemic related). The Code does not have a particularly prominent profile. That said, Trinity is soundly achieving the Code outcomes in relation to their context.</p>
<p>Conclusion:</p>	<p>Trinity College is strongly pastoral and concerned about student success. Students are well supported and involved in their learning. The timing of the EER at the tail end of the disruptions caused by a major pandemic sees some reasonable resetting of activities occurring, as well as responses to learnings gained from the lockdown era. The student group dynamic is positive.</p>

⁵ Connexional Budget Task Group

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

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Trinity College benefits from experienced and capable leaders who balance well the multiple tensions and sometimes competing needs of stakeholders to further the vision of this college. As stated earlier, the college has navigated the Covid pandemic challenges and has maintained a good number of enrolments. There has been some impact on student progress because of justifiable withdrawal from study. The small numbers enrolled in some course offerings could be a matter of concern for the college.</p> <p>There is a high calibre of academic leadership, clarity around procedures, roles and responsibilities, and an academic culture reflective of and tilted towards new or evolving notions of theology, often informed by an Oceania perspective.⁶ Collectively, the college draws on a diverse faculty with the academic, linguistic, cross-cultural and interpersonal skills necessary for supporting student achievement in this context. Staff are well supported to develop as researchers. Retreats and sabbatical leave are offered for both professional development and staff wellbeing. Trinity makes ongoing investment in the necessary IT resources and library services.</p> <p>Trinity finely balances academic freedom and diversity of views with fidelity to Methodist Church core beliefs and values. For example, students and graduates affirmed the value of exposure to new and nuanced approaches to the Bible. But they were also clear that their own deeply held views are respected and that they are free to articulate these views in their conversations and assignments.</p> <p>The evaluators have some uncertainty around the job size and responsibility level of the administrator, and so recommend some kind of benchmarking exercise with similar colleges.</p>
Conclusion:	Governance and management are well focused on student achievement and relevance and viability. Trinity has made a number of improvements since the last EER, as noted throughout this report. Most notable, perhaps, was the

⁶ The degree has a 'unique emphasis on Moana Studies, which takes seriously Māori and Oceania epistemologies' – Bachelor of Theology Handbook 2022

	successful launch of a Bachelor of Theology. The organisation uses data and student feedback thoughtfully to make decisions. There is a culture of respect and reflection across the college – council, leadership, faculty. This is also evident among the students and graduates interviewed. Self-assessment is formal and informal, values based and effective.
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1.6 How effectively are important compliance accountabilities managed?

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Trinity College has a robust culture of implementing formal procedures and systems which support high quality educational performance and compliant practice. The principal oversees clearly assigned roles and responsibilities which supports consistent practice. The role of the academic committee is significant here. Review and reflection on key compliance requirements is robust. These requirements include academic processes such as course design and delivery, moderation, teaching quality, research and results approval. There is clear evidence of a quality management system with policy and procedures in place and which is being adhered to.</p> <p>Required interaction with NZQA is appropriate: statutory reporting documentation flows are timely; student fee aspects have been checked by the NZQA Risk team; key staff and council changes are notified to NZQA. The evaluators appraised a coherent and evidence-based review of the Code of Practice. They identified an error in the annual fee return to NZQA which is being corrected by the PTE.⁷</p> <p>There are sufficient appropriately qualified and experienced staff for the leadership, teaching and learning support roles.</p> <p>Two NZQA consistency reviews since the last EER both gained a rating of 'sufficient'. External and internal moderation reports, supporting documentation, and interviews provide confidence that assessment practice is suitable.</p> <p>Key evidence considered here, and under 1.5 included: council and academic committee minutes; internal and external</p>

⁷ The number of unfunded EFTS (equivalent full-time students) (n. 41) was not stated. Previous years' returns were clearly stated.

	moderation documentation; the principal's reports to the council; Code of Conduct review report and action plan; the degree monitor's report; staff profiles and research activity.
Conclusion:	Trinity College manages compliance well, and this evaluation found nothing of concern.

Focus areas

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

2.1 Leadership Training

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent

Recommendations

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

NZQA recommends that Trinity Methodist Theological College:

1. Implement a council and management appraisal of the Tertiary Education Strategy to ensure that all staff are aware of that high level document. Refine achievement monitoring and reporting to ensure a clear and comprehensive understanding of priority learners' performance – those with a disability or needing learning support, Māori ākonga, Pasifika learners. This primarily relates to key evaluation question 1.
2. Continue reflection on ways to supplement survey feedback with other documented summaries of qualitative student voice feedback on all aspects of the student journey – informed by the Code of Practice as well as Trinity's values, goals and aims. This primarily relates to key evaluation question 3.
3. In an echo of the recent feedback from the degree monitor, the job size and responsibility level of the administrator could be aligned with a typical registrar role. Trinity could carry out a benchmarking exercise with similar colleges. This primarily relates to key evaluation question 5. These recommendations touch on the 'sustainability' and 'staff valued' tertiary evaluation indicators used by NZQA.

Requirements

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

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

Appendix 1

Achievement data by programme 2019-22 (source: Trinity College) – the gathering of disability data is still to be developed (see Recommendations)

Certificate in Lay Preaching	2019	2020	2021	2022
Programme enrolments	8	3	14	11
Course/paper pass rate	67% (5)	100% (3)	100% (14)	60% (7)
Course/paper fail rate	nil	nil	nil	nil
Programme withdrawal (students who discontinued)	33% (3)	nil	nil	40% (4)
Programme completion	67% (5)	100% (3)	35% (5)	27% (3)
Programme completion – Pasifika	40% (2)	nil	21% (3)	nil
Programme completion – Māori	40% (2)	33% (1)	7% (1)	27% (3)
Programme completion – Other	20% (1)	67% (2)	7% (1)	nil
Programme continuation	nil	nil	64% (9)	40% (4)
Diploma in Methodist Studies	2019	2020	2021	2022
Programme enrolments	5	6	8	19
Course/paper pass rate	100% (5)	83% (5)	83% (7)	82% (16)
Course/paper fail rate	nil	nil	17% (1)	nil
Programme withdrawn (students who discontinued)	nil	17% (1)	nil	18% (3)
Programme completion	20% (1)	17% (1)	nil	5% (1)
Programme completion – Pasifika	20% (1)	17% (1)	nil	5% (1)
Programme completion – Māori	nil	nil	nil	nil
Programme completion – Other	nil	nil	nil	nil
Programme continuation	80% (4)	80% (4)	100% (8)	78% (15)
NZ Diploma in Christian Studies (Level 6) (ID: 2773-1)	2019	2020	2021	2022
Programme enrolments	20	10	6	2
Course/paper pass rate	90% (18)	50% (5)	40% (2)	100% (2)
Course/paper fail rate	10% (2)	nil	nil	nil
Programme withdrawn (students who discontinued)	nil	50% (5)	60% (4)	nil
Programme completion	40% (8)	20% (2)	nil	100% (2)
Programme completion – Pasifika	40% (8)	10% (1)	nil	50% (1)
Programme completion – Māori	nil	nil	nil	nil
Programme completion – Other	nil	10% (1)	nil	50% (1)
Programme continuation	60% (12)	60% (3)	40% (2)	nil

Advanced Diploma in Religious Studies	2019	2020	2021	2022
Programme enrolments	11	4	1	1
Course/paper pass rate	100% (11)	50% (2)	100% (1)	100% (1)
Course/paper fail rate	nil	nil	nil	nil
Programme withdrawn (students who discontinued)	nil	50% (2)	nil	nil
Programme completion	55% (6)	25% (1)	nil	100% (1)
Programme completion – Pasifika	55% (6)	25% (1)	nil	100% (1)
Programme completion – Māori	nil	nil	nil	nil
Programme completion – Other	nil	nil	nil	nil
Programme continuation	45% (5)	50% (1)	100% (1)	nil
Bachelor of Theology (ID: 4260-1)	2019	2020	2021	2022
Programme enrolments	n/a	n/a	21	18
Course/paper pass rate	n/a	n/a	81% (17)	100% (18)
Course/paper fail rate	n/a	n/a	5% (1)	nil
Programme withdrawn (students who discontinued)	n/a	n/a	14% (3)	nil
Programme completion	n/a	n/a	nil	100% (4)
Programme completion – Pasifika	n/a	n/a	nil	100% (4)
Programme completion – Māori	n/a	n/a	nil	nil
Programme completion – Other	n/a	n/a	nil	nil
Programme continuation	n/a	n/a	86% (18)	78% (14)

Appendix 2

Conduct of external evaluation and review

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

Disclaimer

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

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

- *Identify organisational fraud⁸*
- *Provide comprehensive coverage of all programmes within a TEO, or of all relevant evidence sources*
- *Predict the outcome of other reviews of the same TEO which, by posing different questions or examining different information, could reasonably arrive at different conclusions.*

⁸ NZQA and the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) comprehensively monitor risk in the tertiary education sector through a range of other mechanisms. When fraud, or any other serious risk factor, has been confirmed, corrective action is taken as a matter of urgency.

Regulatory basis for external evaluation and review

External evaluation and review is conducted under the Quality Assurance (including External Evaluation and Review (EER)) Rules 2021, which are made by NZQA under section 452(1)(t) of the Education and Training Act 2020 and approved by the NZQA Board and the Minister of Education.

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

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

The requirements for participation and cooperation are set through the Programme Approval and Accreditation Rules 2021, the Consent to Assess Against Standards Rules 2021 and the Training Scheme Rules 2021 respectively.

In addition, the Private Training Establishment Registration Rules 2021 require registered private training establishments to undertake self-assessment and participate in external evaluation and review as a condition of maintaining registration.

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

This report reflects the findings and conclusions of the external evaluation and review process, conducted according to the Quality Assurance (including External Evaluation and Review (EER)) Rules 2021. The report identifies strengths and areas for improvement in terms of the organisation's educational performance and capability in self-assessment.

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

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

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