

### **EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORT 2023-24**

**Please note that in line with national requirements, this report will be published on the University website. Please do not refer to individual students by name or number in the report. Where your report addresses circumstances relating to an individual or small group of students (not named) these details will be omitted from the published version it may be possible to identify the individuals concerned from the description of the circumstances.**

*Please complete all sections of the report to provide a comprehensive assessment of the programme/subject area examined and the administrative arrangements of the University.*

*Once your report has been received, the Programme team will respond formally using the new section at the end of this form and a copy, including their response and an action plan appropriate, will be returned to you.*

Name: Professor William K Kay

Subject/Programme/Course:

Single Honours Theology and Ministry and MA Theology, Leadership and Ministry (External Accreditation, with Christ the Redeemer College)

Year of Appointment: May 2021

### **THE REPORT**

You are required to provide a detailed report on the relevant subject/programme area, in accordance with the QAA Code of Practice on External Examining, and using the headings given below:

- Scope of Examinations and Assessment Methods  
*Examiners are asked to confirm that the assessment procedures of the subject/course/programme are appropriate to the subject matter, and are relevant, properly demanding and designed to allow for the display of knowledge at a level that compares favourably with other institutions offering similar provision.*
- Marking Standards/Degree Classification/Conduct of Vivas  
*Examiners are invited to comment on the marking standards and grading practices operating in the subject. Any concerns about the distribution of degree classes and the performance of*

*students at the top and bottom end of the ranges should be noted.*

· Assessment feedback

*Please comment on whether you believe assessment and feedback are used effectively in supporting students' development, progression and attainment.*

Student Performance – the overall performance of the students, and the standards of their achievements

*Comments on the quality of students' work, including presentation and style are welcomed. Together with the quality of knowledge, competences and skills demonstrated by the students.*

Course Learning Aims and Outcomes, Structure and Syllabus

*Examiners are encouraged to comment on these in the light of their impact on assessment procedures and performances they relate to national standards including the QAA Qualifications Framework and, where applicable, subject benchmarks. Observations on course literature, handbooks, etc. are also helpful.*

· Developing students' Independence and potential

*Please comment on whether you believe course design, development, Standards and assessment are effective in stretching students to develop independence, knowledge, understanding and skills that reflect their full potential.*

Teaching Methods and Teaching Quality

*The University welcomes the comments of examiners on the quality of teaching, to the extent that this is reflected in the assessment process and in the performance of the students. Similarly, any observations of the effectiveness or otherwise of teaching methods, particularly where these are new or distinctive, will be of great assistance.*

General Issues

*Examiners are invited to comment on any issue relevant to their experiences at the University that is not covered in the checklist or elsewhere in this report. This is particularly helpful as an overview at the end of an examiners term of office.*

· Any additional comments

*Any additional comments with reference to TEF requirements would be welcome.*

New Appointments

*If this is your first year as an external examiner for the University, please comment on the opportunities to view reports from the previous external examiner(s).*

Continuing Appointments

*As a continuing examiner, please comment on whether the points raised by you, or other relevant external examiners in the previous year, have been responded to satisfactorily.*

Please comment on each of the headings in your report below (insert additional pages, where necessary):

**Scope of Examinations and Examination Methods**

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**Marking Standards/Degree Classification/Conduct of Vivas**

This is within the normal range. There were no vivas as far as I know.

**Assessment feedback**

This is done well. I thought the feedback was more realistic and less generic than before.

**Student Performance**

Students complete varied tasks and many showed themselves to have engaged well with course materials.

**Course Learning Aims and Outcomes, Structure and Syllabus**

These are all up to normal standards or better.

**Developing students' independence and potential**

This is hard to assess with any clarity.

**Teaching Methods and Teaching Quality**

Teaching materials in the VLE indicated engagement with appropriate academic literature and norms and varied enough to indicate good teaching methods.

**General Issues**

**Good Practice Identified**

Relevant questions were asked. For instance, I enjoyed reading about the way pastoral care has changed over the years as a result of social pressures and digital platforms.

**Any Other Comments**

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**New Appointments (if applicable)**

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**Continuing Appointments (if applicable)**

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<i>Please tick</i>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>N/A</b>
I was satisfied that the mode and standard of assessment tasks were appropriate	x				
Professional requirements have been considered by the Board			Not sure, probably n/a		

## **CONDUCT OF ASSESSMENT BOARDS & ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS**

To provide a detailed assessment of the administrative arrangements in place, please complete the section below by ticking the appropriate box for each statement given below:

<b>I was satisfied with the...?</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>N/A</b>
...information I received about the subject/course		X			
...information I was provided on the scheme of assessment		X			
...information I was provided on marking and grading practices		X			
...information I was provided on my responsibilities as an examiner		x			
...dates and times of the meetings		X			
...domestic arrangements		x			
...overall administration of assessments by the University		x			
...way in which I was provided with the material for consideration	X				
...general level of communication with the subject/programme area	x				
...general level of communication with the University	x				

Please tick the appropriate box to confirm whether you have received the following information:

	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>N/A</b>
Module/Programme Handbooks			
Assessment Criteria			
Question Papers	In VLE		
Up to date University information	x		
External Examiners' Handbook	x		

Please tick to confirm those boards/events you attended:

Subject Assessment Boards (including Work Placement, Broad Curriculum or Core Curriculum)	
Progress/Programme Boards	x
External Examiners' Conference	
Other (please specify)	

Please add any additional comments you may have on administrative arrangements below:

My impression is that the standards of student essays and faculty feedback has improved from when I first took on the role of external examiner. This is my final report because my tenure as external examiner expires at the conclusion of this academic year. It has been a pleasure to work with the staff at the college and I've noticed an upward trend in the performance of students or in the number of students who perform well, the marking and grading. Faculty respond well to external comments and are to be commended.

This year there are a number of essays that show considerable competence and academic confidence. Literature is assessed maturely and good students, in their assignments, make judgements based upon it or at any rate discuss options intelligently. The connection between the literature and the student discussion did not seem merely an academic exercise in the work of the best students.

I'm glad that the software used by the college is able to detect AI generated materials and was actually quite surprised to discover that at least two of the students had attempted to write their essays leaning heavily on the AI technology.

The best essays were certainly comparable to what I have seen in other institutions. There was occasional misunderstanding by students of the question they had been asked, and this lowered their marks. But this was well pointed out in faculty feedback.

If I have any adverse comment to make it is that some of the modules appear to be marked more generously than others. In other words, there are essays given a mark over 70 in one module that would've been given an essay below 70 in another module. I suggest that some sort of discussion between tutors is necessary or else use be made of statistics showing what the average and standard deviation for marks in each module are. Statistics do allow easier comparability but, where only a small number of students is taking the module, such numerical comparisons are of far less significance.

I believe the College is addressing the issue.



## **PROGRAMME/SUBJECT RESPONSE TO EXTERNAL EXAMINERS REPORT**

(Programme/Subject to complete this section responding to items raised for consideration and action. You should complete the attached action plan form and return the whole document to the Quality Office within four weeks of this date: .....)

This response relates to the External Examiner's annual report for Christ the Redeemer College's undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in theology in the 2023-24 academic year, which has been considered at the faculty of the School of Theology, alongside verbal feedback provided by the External Examiner at assessment Boards held during the 2023-24 academic year.

It is noted that the External Examiner has confirmed that:

- the marking standards is within the normal range of UK higher education institutions
- assessment feedback is done well and the feedback was more realistic and less generic than before.
- student performance - students complete varied tasks and many showed themselves to have engaged well with course materials
- course learning aims and outcomes, structure and syllabus are all up to normal standards or better.
- teaching materials in the VLE indicated engagement with appropriate academic literature and norms and varied enough to indicate good teaching methods.
- good practice identified include the fact that relevant questions were asked with example.
- the standards of student essays and faculty feedback has improved from when I first took on the role of external examiner.
- the software used by the college is able to detect AI generated materials
- literature is assessed maturely and good students, in their assignments, make judgements based upon it or at any rate discuss options intelligently.

In addition, the external examiner also noted that:

- There was occasional misunderstanding by students of the question they had been asked, and this lowered their marks which was well pointed out in faculty feedback.
- some of the modules appear to be marked more generously than others.
- some sort of discussion between tutors is necessary or else use be made of statistics showing what the average and standard deviation for marks in each module are

In response to this feedback from the External Examiner, the School of Theology faculty propose to:

- 1) design and adopt a standardised assignment brief which is internally moderated to ensure clarity, completeness and comprehensive. This will eliminate the occasional misunderstanding by some students. Faculty is also encouraged to explain the requirements of the assignment in class during tutorial sessions to ensure all students understand their requirement. Faculty to establish Academic Skills Unit for additional support to students requiring this service. This to be in place in the 24-25 academic year.
- 2) undertake regular assessment and marking training exercises and discussion of examples of good practice to ensure that feedback and marks are standard across all modules and among all faculty members through enhanced moderation exercise to ensure that grade awarded are agreed by at least two member of faculty to avoid disproportionate marking differences among modules and/or faculty members.
- 3) engage in regular discussion during the monthly faculty meetings to discuss course improvement and share good practices. For example, standardisation of assignment assessment, marking and assessment feedback during the period to become a standing agenda in faculty meetings.

## ACTION PLAN (If Appropriate) in response to External Examiner Report 2021-22

<b>Report for Year:</b>	2023-24	<b>Subject/Programme:</b>	<b>Theology</b>
<b>Faculty:</b>	School of Theology Christ the Redeemer College	<b>Department:</b>	School of Theology Christ the Redeemer College
<b>Subject Leader/ Programme Leader</b>	Dr Yaya Obozua Head of the School of Theology Christ the Redeemer College	<b>Date :</b>	3 March 2025

<b>Items identified</b>	<b>Planned action</b>	<b>Person Responsible</b>	<b>Date to be completed by</b>
There was occasional misunderstanding by students of the question they had been asked, and this lowered their marks which was well pointed out in faculty feedback.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Review Assignment brief standardisation discussion as a regular agenda item on the School of Theology's monthly faculty meetings.</li> <li>2. Design and adopt a standardised assignment brief template which is internally moderated to ensure clarity, completeness and comprehensive to eliminate the occasional misunderstanding of questions by some students.</li> <li>3. Faculty members to explain the requirements of the assignment in class during tutorial sessions to ensure all students understand their requirements.</li> <li>4. Faculty to establish Academic Skills Unit for additional support to students requiring this service. This to be in place in the 24-25 academic year</li> </ol>	Dr Yaya Obozua, Head of the School of Theology	During the 2024-25 academic year

<p>Some of the modules appear to be marked more generously than others.</p>	<p>Undertake regular assessment and marking training exercises and discussion of examples of good practice to ensure that feedback and marks are standard across all modules and among all faculty members through enhanced moderation exercise to ensure that grade awarded are agreed by at least two member of faculty to avoid disproportionate marking differences among modules and/or faculty members.</p>	<p>Dr Yaya Obozua, Head of the School of Theology</p>	<p>During the 2024-25 academic year</p>
<p>Some sort of discussion between tutors is necessary or else use be made of statistics showing what the average and standard deviation for marks in each module are</p>	<p>During the course improvement monthly meeting, faculty members to engage in regular discussion of marking standardisation and share good practices. For example, standardisation of assignment assessment, marking and assessment feedback during the period to become a standing agenda in faculty meetings. The college does not yet use statistical methods to assess standard deviation in view of the numbers of students per cohort.</p>	<p>Dr Yaya Obozua, Head of the School of Theology</p>	<p>During the 2024-245 academic year</p>

**FOR QUALITY OFFICE USE ONLY**

<b>REPORT RECEIVED DATE</b>	
<b>DATE PASSED TO SUBJECT</b>	
<b>DATE PASSED TO PVC, VC AND DR</b>	
<b>DATE RESPONSE RECEIVED FROM SUBJECT</b>	
<b>DATE RESPONSE SENT TO EXTERNAL EXAMINER</b>	
<b>COMMENTS</b>	