TEF Submission

January 2023

1. Provider context

Introduction to Spurgeon's College

1.   Spurgeon's College (College) is a small specialist Higher Education Provider (HEP) whose core activity is training men and women for Christian mission, ministry and leadership in the contemporary world. Based in South London, the College has over 400 students[1] enrolled across its validated and non-validated programmes. The students enrolled on the College's Bachelor of Theology degree include those from a wide range of socio-economic and academic backgrounds and representatives from various age-groups, ethnicities and cultures.

2.   The College was founded by the great Victorian preacher and philanthropist Charles Haddon Spurgeon in 1856 because he recognised the injustice and frustration faced by those who desired to serve churches as ordained ministers but who had not benefitted from the academic education required to gain entry for professional training. Charles Spurgeon wanted to embrace natural talents and abilities and looked for potential and passion, rather than academic privilege and family connections, when recruiting his students. The College has remained committed to raising aspiration and opportunity and widening access to education since that time, as evidenced by the fact that we consistently spend far more on our APP commitments than our higher fee income requires of us.

3.   The mission of the College is, 'To provide an excellent education in a supportive environment, in particular training those called to Christian mission, ministry and leadership in the contemporary world.'[2] We work closely with the economic sector we prepare our students to work in (the charity sector and the churches within it) to ensure that our students meet the current and future workforce requirements of the sector. As part of this the College works closely with the Baptist Union of Great Britain (BUGB), which sets the national standards for ministerial recognition for accredited Baptist ministers. In this regard the BUGB functions as the Professional Standards and Regulatory Body (PSRB) for accredited Baptist ministers and their educational requirements. BUGB is a Union of 2000 churches and is supported by staff in thirteen regional associations and three specialist teams based in Didcot, Oxfordshire. The main 'employer group' to which the College relates is the Christian churches and their ministers, especially those within the BUGB and also other Christian denominations. Churches and church/missional settings provide placements for ministerial students and roles for them (sometimes in the same church/missional setting as the placement) after graduation. The College's links with the churches and missional settings are deep and long-standing. The ministerial supervisors who work directly with students during their studies and professional members who sit on various College committees, evidence the link between the College and churches and missional settings is vibrant. Consequently, the College has an excellent understanding of the needs of the churches which it serves through its programmes. Today's students also include those who are pursuing a theological education on its own merits and this further enriches the life and experience of Spurgeon's diverse learning community.

Educational Strategic Aims

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[1] This includes students on HE programmes, both taught and distance learning, as well as those studying at earlier levels, for example Counselling courses and the Saturday access course Equipped to Minister.
[2] See College's *Mission, Vision, Values, Aims and Objectives*.

4.   In January 2018, the Governors of the College took the strategic decision to seek Degree Awarding Powers. On 7 June 2022, the Office for Students (OfS) granted the College full Taught Degree Awarding Powers (TDAPs), the statutory order coming into effect 1 September 2022. Spurgeon's is the first theological college in the UK to achieve this distinction.[3] The College's TEF submission draws heavily from the Designated Quality Body (DQB), for higher education, report of the College because it was published within the last 10 months and represents a yearlong forensic scrutiny of how the College delivers its programmes and operates as an HEP. The senior management of the College strongly believed, and continues to believe, that full TDAPs will allow the College to operate as a fully independent institution in an evolving HE environment, giving it the flexibility to respond more quickly to the evolving needs of theological students and especially those preparing for varied forms of ministry in a fast-changing world. Throughout the entire TDAPs process the whole student body was a key partner and stakeholder and fully involved in the successful outcome.

5.   Securing TDAPs was part of the College's larger strategic aims and educational strategy. In April 2018, the Governors approved the College's *Mission, Vision, Values, Aims and Objectives*. In this document, the College sets out its intention to: i, secure DAPs; ii, seek university title; and iii, secure Research Degree Awarding Powers (RDAPs). The College believes that students and staff all learn together within a learning community that allows and encourages 'every student to develop spiritually, academically, emotionally and socially.'[4] Part of the College's commitment to translating intention into action may be evidenced in its commitment to the *UK Professional Standards Framework* for teaching and supporting learning in HE. The College has one full-time member of staff who has a Principal Fellowship of Advance HE, one with a Senior Fellowship and '10 full-time faculty are Fellows of Advance HE.'[5] Students at Spurgeon's College are therefore, taught by academics who are able to engage with a broad understanding of effective approaches to learning and teaching support. The College intentionally fosters an educational ecosystem enriched and informed by an institutional commitment to active research to enhance students' experience. In June 2021, the College introduced a *Statement of Research Expectations*, as part of its intention to make a submission to the 2027 REF (Research Excellence Framework). This was done to augment the already active research environment embedded within the life of the College and every student is invited to the weekly postgraduate research seminar, delivered both in person and online, in which academics from the wider HE sector present papers on their current research. In preparation for a RDAPs application in 2024, the College has written its own 'in prospect' research degree ordinances and regulations; since 1992, 61 students have successfully completed doctoral research (PhD and DMin) at Spurgeon's College.

Provider Information

6.   In the College's 2022 HESA data submission, the number of students on a HE programme was 332. The median age of students taking a validated pathway at the College is 48.[6] 33% of our students are over 55.[7] This is a very mature student profile for an HEP. Having such a high proportion of our students in their 30s, 40s and 50s means that many face challenges outside of

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[3] The DQB *Degree Awarding Powers Assessment* may be found: Spurgeon's College, Degree Awarding Powers Assessment, December 2021 (dqbengland.org.uk)

[4] College's *Mission, Vision, Values, Aims and Objectives*, para 4.

[5] DQB *Degree Awarding Powers Assessment* p14.

[6] AP Student Record 2021-22

[7] AP Student Record 2021-22

their studies, such as supporting families, having to work whist studying, or from existing commitments at their churches. For these students, the support the College provides during their studies plays a critical role in ensuring their academic success and helping them achieve their career aspirations. The College is unable to report on students aged 18-20 on entry to the College or students reporting a disability, due to the OfS dataset practice of suppressing data based on low numbers of students Of those taking the undergraduate programme (full, or part-time in person), approximately 80% were ministerial students, i.e., students who were taking specific ministerial training in addition to their university programme.[8] 32% of the student body would classify themselves as Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic. 44% of the student population are female. 15% of the student population may be classified as POLAR4 quintile 1 and 19% as IMD deciles 1 & 2. One reason why the median age of our students is very mature, is that ministry formation, training and education is a second, third or fourth career.[9]

Educational Gain

7.   In its *Higher Education Leaning Gain Analysis* (HELGA)[10] the OfS stated that 'HELGA has not succeeded in finding a single measure of learning gain that could be used across the sector based on administrative data.' Debates about measuring educational or learning gain are compounded 'by a lack of consensus of what learning gain is.'[11] According to Evans *et. al.*, 'HEFCE/OfS offer a more holistic definition of learning gain as ''an attempt to measure the improvement in knowledge, skills, work-readiness and personal development made by students during their time spent in higher education.'''[12] For the purpose of this TEF submission, the HEFCE/OfS definition, will be used in conjunction with the phrase 'distance travelled'[13] and unpacked to provide the context of learning gain in the delivery of the undergraduate provision at Spurgeon's College.

8.   Accredited ministers of religion are individuals who have gone through a detailed process of enquiry, evaluation, assessment, Personal and Spiritual Development reviews at induction, theological education and ministerial formation at a recognised theological college possessing the authority to oversee and deliver the academic requirements and process of ministerial formation on behalf of an endorsing and accrediting body. In the case of Baptist ministerial formation, this process is overseen and controlled nationally by the BUGB. As the PSRB, BUGB has set out what it defines as 'the Marks of Ministry which describe the characteristics we wish to observe and affirm in all those accredited by the Baptist Union as ministers. It includes the Marks of Calling expected in candidates for ministerial formation and the competencies expected in accredited ministers.'[14] Educational or learning gain as defined by HEFCE/OfS, in the context of the delivery of undergraduate education at Spurgeon's, is a description of the College's core business. The majority of full-time and part-time undergraduate students at Spurgeon's are either preparing for ministerial accreditation, wider Christian service, or are exploring a sense of 'call' to Christian

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[8] AP Student Record 2021-22
[9] Spurgeon's College *Access and Participation Plan 2020-21 to 2024-25,* p14.
[10] https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/media/614623ac-b603-4922-ae2d-422afa354590/helga-report.pdf
[11] C. Evans, C. Kandiko Howson & A. Forsythe (2018) Making sense of learning gain in higher education, *Higher Education Pedagogies*, 3:1, 1-45, DOI:10.1080/23752696.2018.1508360, p3.
[12] Ibid., p4.
[13] Ibid.
[14] *Marks of Ministry*. Document available at File.aspx (baptist.org.uk)

ministry and the Spurgeon's undergraduate programme has been designed with the needs of the student and the accrediting body at its heart.

9.   The 'distance covered,' and the 'improvement in knowledge, skills, work-readiness and personal development' for those studying at Spurgeon's are enormous. The goals are expressed in the BUGB's Marks of Ministry and in the *College's Ministers in Training (MiTs) Accreditation Handbook 2022-2023* given to each new MiT. The learning gain in the Spurgeon's undergraduate programme are:
- to enable all students through an excellent understanding of theology in its:
  - historic, biblical, sociological, economic, doctrinal, religious, philosophical, ethical, political, literary and linguistic context.
- to equip graduates with a broad range of critical, analytical and comparative skills necessary to be adaptive and versatile thinkers in a contemporary world that is dynamic and evolving.
- to train students to be effective, reflective community theological practitioners in a church, missional or chaplaincy setting.[15]
- to develop and hone the leadership and management skills necessary to run a SME
- to enable students to gain the required ministerial skills in:
  - pastoral counselling
  - regulation and compliance
  - youth and children's work
  - safeguarding
  - teamworking
  - civic engagement
  - managing conflict and conflict resolution
  - self-care and personal time-management

Our strength in providing relevant training which ensures our students are prepared for the workplace is clearly demonstrated by the Graduate Outcome survey; 83% of alumni agreed that 'I am utilising what I learnt' 15 months after graduating from College.[16] Spurgeon's undergraduate programme, across its pathways, seeks to lay good foundations that will enable progression to further academic study if appropriate.

10.   Baptist churches are individual charities in their own right, have church constitutions, generate income through regular giving or other means (for example, through the rental use of church property), have a leadership team of Trustees, multiple 'departments' (for example, children and youth work, senior citizen clubs, coffee shops etc.) for which the minister effectively operates as the CEO of a medium sized business. Ministerial formation, for the majority of our students, represents a fundamental career and life change. The BUGB is union of 2000 churches, 13 associations and 5 Baptist Colleges. Approximately 80% of full and part-time undergraduate students at Spurgeon's either wish to train to be nationally accredited ministers, equipped to run and administer a medium sized and highly specialised company, or wish to develop their theological knowledge to be more effective in their church or missional setting. Spurgeon's historically has trained approximately 50% of BUGB ministers within the UK. It takes students with little or no theological or ministerial knowledge or experience and by the end of their studies produces exceptionally high-quality ministers equipped and prepared to become nationally accredited ministers in one of the largest Christian denominations in the UK. To be a Spurgeon's

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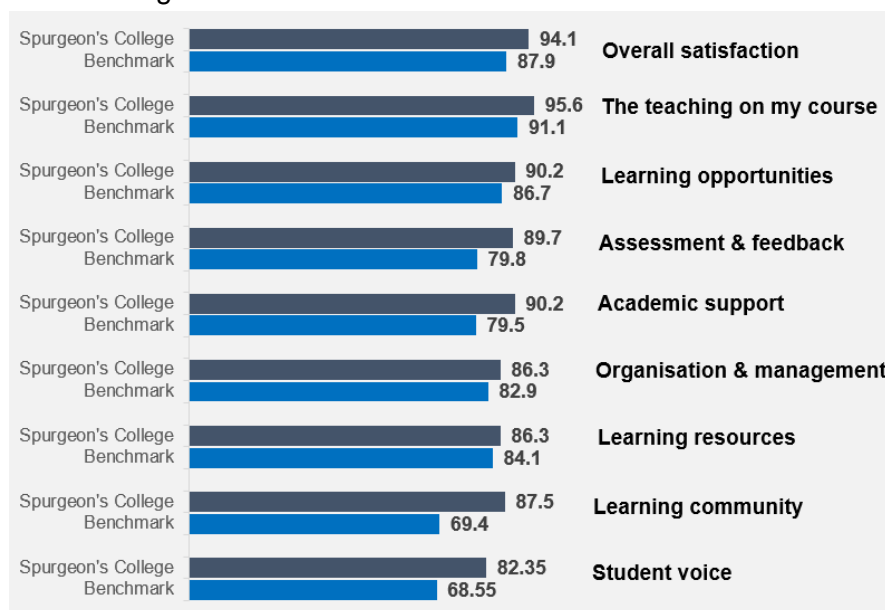[15] Students taking the BA with Ministerial Formation or Chaplaincy.
[16] Source: Graduate Outcome Survey 2017-18 to 2019-20.

graduate is to have ministerial credibility and employability within the global Baptist family and to be ready to succeed in a leadership role within a community-based charity.

2.   Student Experience

11.   The latest National Student Survey (NSS) results provide compelling evidence that Spurgeon's College students rate their time studying at College very favourably.[17] Overall satisfaction with the quality of the course was 94%. The College's performance was ahead of benchmark levels across all aspects, especially 'Learning Community' and 'Student Voice', 'Academic support' and 'Assessment & feedback.' The College's high-quality teaching and commitment to helping our students reach their full academic potential, is strongly acknowledged within the NSS. 'Teaching on my course' achieved a score of 95.6% with 'Learning opportunities' and 'Academic support ', both being above 90%.

12.   The NSS results for 2022 reveal that the College had a score of 94.1% for 'overall satisfaction' as against the benchmark of 87.9%; 95.6% for 'the teaching on my course' compared to the benchmark of 91.1%; 90.2% for 'learning opportunities' compared to the benchmark of 86.7; 89.7% for 'assessment and feedback' compared to the benchmark of 79.8%; 90.2% for 'academic support' compared to the benchmark of 79.5%; 86.3% for 'organisation and management' compared to the benchmark of 82.9%; and 86.3% for 'learning resources' compared to the benchmark of 82.9%; 87.5% for 'learning community' compared to the benchmark of 69.4%; and 82.35% for 'student voice compared to the benchmark of 68.55%. This data may be presented in the following format:

	Spurgeon's College	Benchmark	
Overall satisfaction	94.1	87.9	
The teaching on my course	95.6	91.1	
Learning opportunities	90.2	86.7	
Assessment & feedback	89.7	79.8	
Academic support	90.2	79.5	
Organisation & management	86.3	82.9	
Learning resources	86.3	84.1	
Learning community	87.5	69.4	
Student voice	82.35	68.55	

The performance of the College in each of the categories is above the benchmark. In the categories of 'overall satisfaction', 'assessment and feedback', 'learning community', and 'student voice' the performance of the College is significantly above the benchmark.

SE1   The provider has embedded outstanding teaching, feedback and assessment practices that are highly effective and tailored to supporting its students' learning, progression, and attainment.

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[17] Source: National Student Survey (NSS) 2022.

13.   The NSS data relating to the teaching is: Spurgeon's 95.6% compared to the benchmark of 91.1%, which is presented in the following table:

| Spurgeon's College | 95.6 |
| Benchmark | 91.1 |

14.   The NSS data relating to assessment and feedback is: Spurgeon's 89.7% compared to the benchmark of 79.8%%, which is presented in the following table:

| Spurgeon's College | 89.7 |
| Benchmark | 79.8 |

15.   In its report on the College's application for TDAPs the DQB observed that,
The College has in place, monitors and evaluates arrangements and resources which enable students to develop their academic, personal and professional potential. This is because its strategic approach to student development and achievement is to provide excellent and continually improving levels of education, formation and learning resources for all students.[18]

16.   These NSS results are not accidental. They are a reflection of the College's passion to ensure that students achieve the learning gain described above (paragraphs 7-10) in an educational environment intentionally created to deliver student satisfaction and success, as embodied in its approach to excellence in teaching, assessment and feedback. The NSS results are the manifestation of the principles embedded in the College's *Learning, Teaching and Assessment Framework*[19] which is aligned with the pedagogic philosophy embedded within its *BA in Theology Programme Handbook.*[20] To ensure that students get the highest quality teaching possible, it operates an effective teaching peer review process, detailed in the College's *Peer Review of Teaching: Guidelines for Peer Review and Observation*. One of the key academic outcomes the College desires for its students is that they can demonstrate to prospective employers (mostly churches) that they can operate as capable, reflective community theological practitioners, leaders and managers in any church, missional or chaplaincy setting. The monthly Teaching Staff meeting, and planned in-year staff training, ensures that students benefit from the faculty receiving training on the best pedagogic practice available in the HE sector and is embedded in our staff trai8ning programme.

17.   'The College is able to design and deliver courses and qualifications that provide a high-quality academic experience to all students from all backgrounds, irrespective of their location, mode of study, academic subject, protected characteristics, previous educational background or nationality.'[21] Spurgeon's has its own *Assessment Policy and Procedure*[22] that sets out its principles in assessment, which are aligned to *UK Quality Code for Education*. Key among these principles is the imperative that assessment methods and criteria are closely aligned to learning outcomes and are holistic, reliable, consistent, fair and valid. The College uses a diversity of assessment types which are challenging, stimulating and realistic,[23] enabling students to

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[18] DQB *Degree Awarding Powers Assessment* p64.
[19] Learning-Teaching-and-Assessment-Framework.pdf (spurgeons.ac.uk)
[20] *The Spurgeon's College Undergraduate Programme*, available to students on the College's Moodle VLE.
[21] DQB *Degree Awarding Powers Assessment* p53.
[22] Assessment-Policy-and-Procedure-Spurgeons-College.pdf
[23] For example, wikis, group presentations, posters/brochures, video/audio submissions etc.

demonstrate that they have achieved the learning outcomes of each unit. The College does everything it can to remove barriers to educational success for all its students. So, for example, if a student has a disability or a specific learning need, we take any necessary steps to provide alternative assessment arrangements where appropriate.[24]

18. Our teaching is tailored to ensure our students successful progression to the careers they aspire to and to ensure they are well prepared for the workplace. For ministers in training (MiTs) there are additional assessment practices specifically designed to give students practical experience in a workplace (church or missional setting). Workplace learning is overseen by a Director of Placements and the overall approach to ministerial formation and assessment is overseen by the Dean of Ministerial Formation.[25] Practical advice and guidance for MiTs is contained in the College's *Information Booklet for Ministerial Training*, which the Dean explains to each new MiT. The College's *Placement Guide For Churches* is a guide to help churches and students, understand the expectations of their ministerial placement whilst studying at Spurgeon's College. Each placement church completes an annual assessment as part of the student's professional ministerial practice development, which is designed to assist the MiT in their development towards becoming a nationally accredited minister. To assist with the MiT's development and professional growth, students are also mentored by a senior minister in their workplace and a College appointed Field Placement Tutor with substantial ministerial experience. The latest three years of the Graduate Outcomes Survey, shows that 86% of our graduates go into the workplace and that none of our graduates reported being unemployed. The College's Graduate Outcomes survey showed that 96% agreed with the statement that 'My current activity is meaningful.'

19. The DQB note that the College 'staff have expertise in providing feedback on assessment, which is timely, constructive and developmental'[26] and also noted that, the 'College is commended by its external examiners and students for the level of developmental feedback provided to students on both formative and summative assessments. The students are supported in developing good academic practice through study skills and other resources.'[27] The College proactively seeks the student voice, ideas and comments about how their programme was delivered, and whether or not it was helpful and informative and met the intended learning outcomes. Students provide feedback on each unit of study.[28] They also evaluate their experiences on the programme as a whole and the support they have received at the end of the academic year.[29] This feedback is reviewed by the Senior Management Team, who report any outcomes to the Staff-Student Liaison Council, the Undergraduate Programmes Committee (UGPC) and the Academic Quality Assurance Committee (AQAC), which is chaired by an external university professor and has another external university academic and student representatives. Both UGPC and AQAC 'identify themes or trends, highlight good practice for dissemination, identify areas of concern, and identify enhancement activities.'[30] In addition, MiTs receive

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[24] For example, ensuring that the examination conditions were carefully and individually tailored to create the best possible conditions for student success.
[25] A member of the College's Senior Management Team (SMT).
[26] DQB *Degree Awarding Powers Assessment* p53.
[27] Ibid., p41.
[28] Student Unit Feedback Form. Available to students on the College's Moodle VLE.
[29] Student Annual Feedback Form. Available to students on the College's Moodle VLE.
[30] DQB *Degree Awarding Powers Assessment* p68.

feedback throughout the year in their workplace setting from their prospective employers, senior ministers, Field Placement Tutors and their Pastoral Group Tutors. This is deliberately intended to help the MiT develop their ministerial skills by receiving practical, honest feedback to help them hone their skills and, competencies and to develop and grow as in prospect ministerial professionals. The DQB 'concluded, therefore, that staff and students engage in dialogue to promote a shared understanding of the basis on which academic judgements are made.'[31]

SE2   Course content and delivery inspire the provider's students to actively engage in and commit to their learning, and stretch students to develop knowledge and skills to their fullest potential.

20.   In the section 'Design and approval of programmes' the DQB observed that the College gave examples 'of whether the course content provides a stimulating, engaging, intellectually challenging experience for students as well as whether a proposed course promotes the principles of an internationalised curriculum.'[32] The DQB concluded that,

> The College is able to design and deliver courses and qualifications that provide a high-quality academic experience to all students from all backgrounds, irrespective of their location, mode of study, academic subject, protected characteristics, previous educational background or nationality. This is because it has established effective processes for the design and development of programmes and is informed by the professional requirements of the BUGB and the involvement of external expertise through the BUGB and its external examiners. The approval processes include engagement with stakeholders and students.[33]

Over a three-year period (2019-2022), the College actively engaged with students to understand what they wanted from their studies, academically and professionally, and what would inspire them to succeed in their education. Students were also included in an intensive consultation period that involved prospective employers (Regional Baptist Associations and BUGB), to carefully map the skills, knowledge, competencies and personal development required of theological practitioners.[34] To ensure that the College's new UG programme addressed the needs of 21st century practitioners, it met with recent graduates and listened to and engaged with their post College experience.[35] The feedback from each stakeholder shaped the design of the College's new UG programme.

21.   In the College's annual internal feedback survey on students' experience of the year for 2021-22, one student commented: 'I have been stretched spiritually, I have been challenged academically and I have been stimulated intellectually;' another said, 'I have been given a great opportunity to succeed and appreciated the personal nature of help from my tutors;' and another 'I am changing - being formed - but the change is not always perceptible. I have a quiet confidence that I am being equipped. What I have been learning I have been endeavouring to apply in my placement church and thereby allowing it to become part of who I am.' With a student population with a median age of 48, and approximately 80% of full and part-time students preparing for ministerial accreditation, the focus of the College is to prepare women and men to succeed in a

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[31] Ibid., p41.
[32] Ibid., p35.
[33] Ibid., p44.
[34] 'BA Consultation April-May 2021 Summary of Outcomes'.
[35] Post-collegiate Conference, January 2020.

profession with high rates of stress and burnout.[36] As a consequence, the College employs 8 ordained ministers with church experience in four denominations and utilises a wide range of Associate lecturers working in local churches to provide students with contemporary expertise and insight to prepare them for a variety of roles after graduation. Commenting on the approach the College employs the DQB said that,

> Staff are encouraged, through teaching staff meetings to review teaching and student feedback and share good practice in a developmental setting. Additionally academic staff work together through peer review to critically review professional practice.

The College's commitment to 'dynamic approaches to teaching and learning through creativity, innovation and continuous development,'[37] is evidenced in the institutional decision resulting in 90% of faculty becoming Fellows of Advance HE.

SE3   The provider uses research in relevant disciplines, innovation, scholarship, professional practice and/or employer engagement to contribute to an outstanding academic experience for its students.

22.   The College's vision includes its higher education mission: (i) 'to cultivate a creative learning environment allowing every student to develop spiritually, academically, emotionally and socially'; (ii) 'to deliver a relevant, structured curriculum tailored to training men and women for mission, ministry and leadership,' and (iii) 'to develop the College's position, in the global and diverse city of London, as a research-led, experience-based, centre of excellence delivering positive outcomes for students.' When designing the new UG programme the College's *BA Rationale and Framework*, further developed the *Learning, Teaching and Assessment Framework*. The DQB commenting on this observed that, 'It provides a comprehensive overview of the learning and teaching methods to support students to meet its graduate competencies; an up-to-date and relevant curriculum, which is applied contextually; diverse, research-led and outcomes-based learning.'[38] To ensure that students receive an outstanding HE academic experience, the DQB noted that 'research and advanced scholarship are not treated separately but are rolled together.'[39] The College's *Statement of Research Expectations* clearly outlines its expectations for staff in terms of research performance as well as stating that to support that performance full-time academic staff will be allocated eight hours a week of a normal working week, excluding marking periods, to meet the expected performance level which is a minimum of five outputs every six years at an 'internationally recognised level of excellence.' The College's 'Academic Board receives annual reports on research and writing undertaken by teaching and associate staff and also tracks research activity reports from staff on research leave.'[40] The DQB team concluded that, 'this enables staff to engage with the pedagogic development of their discipline knowledge which directly informs and enhances teaching.'[41]

23.   The role of professional staff within the life of the College is critical to creating a holistic academic experience for students. Consequently, professional staff are encouraged to enhance

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[36] R Jones, 'Could your pastor be close to burnout? Our survey says yes' (2016) available https://www.thegoodbook.co.uk/blog/news/2016/03/15/could-your-pastor-be-close-to-burnout-our-survey-s/
[37] *The UK Professional Standards Framework: for teaching and supporting learning in higher education*, p2.
[38] DQB *Degree Awarding Powers Assessment* p37.
[39] Ibid., p51.
[40] Ibid., p52.
[41] Ibid., p52.

their qualifications and expertise as appropriate. For example, staff were encouraged to take an NVQ in Diversity and Equality, training in remote learning, remote team leadership and management skills. Finance staff, which have daily engagement with students, have corporate membership of the Charity Finance Group which has resources of seminars and other training available that is relevant to the College's operations. Professional staff have access to training and relevant external membership to develop their expertise through our membership of both Independent Higher Education (IHE) and the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) and regularly attend training events hosted by HE sector bodies and regulators. Professional staff led the project that successfully installed and embedded the IT infrastructure necessary for the software system Panopto, a system used by 21 of the world's top 25 universities. This was an innovative and substantial project that has transformed the educational experience of students at Spurgeon's. During the Covid-19 pandemic, the use of Panopto enabled the College to provide students with an almost identical educational offer to that pre-pandemic: tutors recorded each lecture to camera and uploaded it to Moodle; students could watch the course material, for each session of every unit during the normal timetable and then had a dedicated live tutorial via Zoom with their unit tutor. Post pandemic, classes are recorded, uploaded to Moodle and available tom students to access whenever suitable. This provides students with the opportunity to search the Panopto recording and review any element, assisting them to revisit any part of the lecture for an enhanced engagement with complex ideas and concepts.

24.   In each academic year, BUGB Regional Minister Team Leaders meet with senior members of College staff formally to discuss, the provision of ministerial formation, the content of that provision, individual work placements of MiTs, and the provision of post-graduation training for newly accredited ministers. College staff engage with regional and national ministerial recognition committees, numerous times a semester. This ensures that the College plays a constructive advisory role in the accreditation process and can assist students in preparing to participate in the settlement process (the name given the process through which a minister receives a call to serve a church).[42] At the national level, within the BUGB, the College plays an active role in the Core Leadership of BUGB, the Baptist Union Council, the Baptist General Assembly, and the BUGB Trustees Board. This proactive approach ensures that the College operates at the heart of the life of the Baptist denomination, the main employer of its graduates, as highlighted in paragraphs 9, 10 and 18 above. As noted earlier, Spurgeon's has historically trained, and continues to train, approximately 50% of ministers within the BUGB.

SE 4   There is outstanding support for staff professional development and excellent academic practice is embedded across the provider.

25.   The College is intentional in advancing excellence across a wide range of academic, professional practice. The extends beyond achieving 90% of faculty having Fellowships of Advance HE. Academic staff are encouraged and facilitated to attend conferences (nationally and internationally) in their specific area of expertise, where the majority present academic papers and the results of their current research. The College pays the conference fees for academic staff.

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[42] *Introduction to the Baptists Together Settlement Process* available at File.aspx (baptist.org.uk)

The College is committed to staff professional development because it understands that it is critical to building confidence within its faculty, enhancing individual and collective expertise in specialist subject areas, raising performance in the lecture room and raising student achievement. Students at Spurgeon's College know that its faculty operates an open-door policy and that when they seek academic advice and guidance their tutors are recognised experts and leaders in their field, nationally and internationally.

26.   The design and implementation of the College's Curriculum Framework is based upon a Connected Curriculum approach[44] which upholds the principle that the predominant mode of learning for students at all stages of their programmes should be through active engagement in applied enquiry and research. The Scaffolding Framework, used with the UG programme, supports educational theory models which advocate that when students initially tackle a new skill or subject matter they accomplish much more when directed support is in place; but as they master skills and subject matter that level of support can be reduced in order for their confidence and independent learning capabilities to flourish. The Scaffolding supports an 'outcomes-based' approach to learning. It is focused on what the student gains through the learning process. This is tied into two sector-standard expectations (qualification descriptors as determined by the *UK Framework for HE Qualifications* and the *Subject Benchmark Statements*) and the individual programme learning outcomes, as determined by the programme design processes.[45] The College requires all new undergraduates to attend a study skills course during their first semester to support the acquirement of an understanding of the necessary skills to demonstrate good academic practice. In their assessment of the College, the DQB 'team viewed the resources and online course on the VLE which is arranged over nine weeks and includes relevant sessions on topics such as referencing, essay-writing, critical thinking, and understanding and avoiding academic malpractice.'[46] They concluded that, 'the College provides students with opportunities to develop an understanding of and the skills required to demonstrate good academic practice and has appropriate processes in place for identifying and managing unacceptable academic practice.'[47]

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[44] See Dilly Fung, *A Connected Curriculum for Higher Education* (London: UCL Press, 2017).
[45] See Spurgeon's College *UG Programme Specification and Handbook*.
[46] DQB *Degree Awarding Powers Assessment* p41.
[47] Ibid., p42.

SE5   The provider ensures a supportive learning environment, and its students have access to a wide and readily available range of outstanding quality academic support tailored to their needs.

27.   The NSS data relating to the learning community within the College is: Spurgeon's 87.5% compared to the benchmark of 69.4%, which is presented in the following table:

Spurgeon's College	87.5
Benchmark	69.4

28.   The DQB commented that the College, 'focuses on holistic personal development in a safe but challenging environment, motivating students to engage in learning in a supportive and diverse community.'[48] The College's *Guidelines for Pastoral Groups for students on Theology Programmes*, is one expression of its intentionality to nurture holistic student personal development for all its students, single honours or ministerial. In the guidelines to Pastoral Group Tutors, the guidance states that,

> Pastoral groups play an essential role in ministerial training and formation. They are intended to provide a group of peers with whom MiTs can form relationships of support, learning and reflection during their time in College. Each group is assigned a pastoral tutor who will normally accompany students for the duration of a full-time course.

The aims of all pastoral groups are as follows:
- To provide a group of peers with whom supportive relationships can be formed
- To provide opportunity for prayer, Bible reading and spiritual reflection
- To provide a forum within which any concerns or questions about the student's programme of study or personal development can be aired in a relaxed atmosphere

The guidelines to Pastoral Group Tutors also advises that,

> Single honours students are invited to participate in the weekly pastoral groups but are not required to attend weekly. They will, nevertheless, be allocated a pastoral tutor.

The advice to pastoral tutors states that 'it is important that an equivalent degree of support and availability is shown by the pastoral tutor for these students as we extend to ministerial students.'

29.   As a Christian Higher Education theological college our values[49] are directly drawn from and aligned with biblical principles. In particular:
- We believe in the inherent moral equality, dignity and worth of every individual.
- We value the unique distinctiveness of each member of the College community.
- We celebrate the richness of being a diverse and inclusive community.
- We believe that as a community meeting daily for worship we should seek to listen to God and discern his will and purpose.
- We endeavour to promote the general wellbeing of all members of the student community and College staff.
- We are committed to assisting every student in reaching their potential.

The values of College deliberately permeates everything it does so that the learning environment for students is holistic and provides the most conducive context for academic success and personal development for all its students, across all its programmes.

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[48] Ibid., p37.
[49] As stated in the College's *Mission, Vision, Values, Aims and Objectives*.

30.   The NSS data relating to academic support for students at Spurgeon's College is: Spurgeon's 90.2% compared to the benchmark of 79.5%, which is presented in the following table:

Spurgeon's College	90.2
Benchmark	79.5

31.   The NSS data is also supported by the observation from the DQB which concluded that, The College has in place, monitors and evaluates arrangements and resources which enable students to develop their academic, personal and professional potential. This is because its strategic approach to student development and achievement is to provide excellent and continually improving levels of education, formation and learning resources for all students. This aim can be seen throughout the Academic Governance Committee structure and throughout the student journey.[50]

32.   The College has implemented a comprehensive student support system that is fully integrated into its academic governance framework. This includes a comprehensive, online, suite of study skills specifically designed to assist students returning to education after a number of decades. To ensure every student receives the academic support they need, the College funds, staffs and equips a Learning Enhancement Department whose effectiveness is monitored by a Learning Enhancement Committee. This reports to the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Monitoring Group and the Academic Board.[51] Student needs are recorded on the Student Support System and this information is circulated to academic staff, so that an individual approach can be tailored to meet those needs. Physical or mental health concerns are also picked up on through the process. If student needs are picked up pre-admission the College's Admissions staff will refer the matter to relevant members of staff. Student needs identified following registration are referred to the Learning Enhancement Coordinator who conducts a review and produces an individual learning plan and allocates one of the College's Learning Enhancement Volunteers, each of whom have considerable experience in education assisting students with learning needs. Monitoring and evaluation of the Learning Enhancement Department for 2021-22 showed that 70% of students and staff 'totally agreed' that the support it offered was 'useful and practical.'[52] Thus students receive excellent academic support.

SE6   Physical and virtual learning resources are tailored and used effectively to support outstanding teaching and learning.

33.   The NSS data relating to learning resources available for students is: Spurgeon's 86.3% compared to the benchmark of 84.1%, which is presented in the following table:

Spurgeon's College	86.3
Benchmark	84.1

34.   Despite being a small HEP, the College has a comprehensive and integrated range of physical and virtual resources, created, installed, maintained and updated to support outstanding teaching and learning. Once the Governors took the strategic decision to prepare and apply for DAPs in 2018, the Principal and the College's Chief Operating Officer, conducted a comprehensive review of the physical and virtual resource provision for students to ensure that the College's

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[50] DQB *Degree Awarding Powers Assessment* p64.
[51] Ibid., p60
[52] 'Monitoring and Evaluation of the Learning Enhancement Department July 2022', report submitted to Learning Enhancement Committee, November 2022.

intention would be aligned with its technical ability and capacity to deliver the experience students would expect of a degree awarding authority. As a consequence, the College's IT infrastructure was substantially upgraded so it could operate the software video capture system Panopto (described in para 23 above). This involved installing high-quality optical cameras, in every lecture room, that capture and live stream video at up to 1080p resolution, 60 frames per second (60fps). When students access recorded lectures, delivered live in College, the quality of the provision is outstanding. Since its introduction, Panopto has become an essential and vital component of the student experience. This may be evidenced by the 200 times a day during a semester, students access Panopto material on Moodle.[53] The College's virtual leaning environment is Moodle version 3.9; it is waiting for version 4.1 before updating it. To ensure that the College's VLE provides students with an excellent experience, which is tailored to meet student needs, the College has a full-time Digital Learning Officer. In every student induction the Digital Learning Officer delivers training for students as part of their introduction to the College. The DQB commented that, 'Students are supported in the development of skills to make effective use of the learning resources and the use of digital and virtual environments provided through sessions in orientation week, a study skills course and resources.'[54]

35.   Students have access to a substantial range of learning resources. For example, the College has 55,000 books in its physical library which students can access Monday to Saturday: 7am until 11pm. To ensure that students have access to contemporary resources, the College adds, approximately, 1,000 new books each year. In addition, the reference section of the Library contains over 120 current Journals, some dating back to 1806. Students also 'have access to Electronic Journals Databases (EBSCO) which includes the Atla Religion Database with Serials and the Religion and Philosophy Collection database via EBSCO.'[55] The Library Catalogue is fully computerised and can be accessed over the Internet and a wireless network operates throughout the Library.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, the College began to use the online library Perlego (+1 million books). This was well received by students. As a result the College has continued to offer this additional service and today students have individual licences to access this resource. The College has a computer suite that is well stocked, and students are given a personal Office 365 licence to assist them in fulling the requirements of their programme. Students also receive IT support and training when required. The DQB concluded that at the College the, 'Teaching spaces are well equipped and fit for purpose.'[57]

SE 7   The provider embeds engagement with its students, leading to continuous improvement to the experiences and outcomes of its students.

36.   The NSS data relating to the student voice at Spurgeon's College is: Spurgeon's 82.35% compared to the benchmark of 68.55%, which is presented in the following table:

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[53] Data from internal review of the use of Panopto by students.
[54] DQB *Degree Awarding Powers Assessment* p64.
[55] Ibid., p62.

[57] Ibid. In September 2022, in response to a consultation with the student body, the name was changed from the Learning Support Department to Learning Enhancement Department.

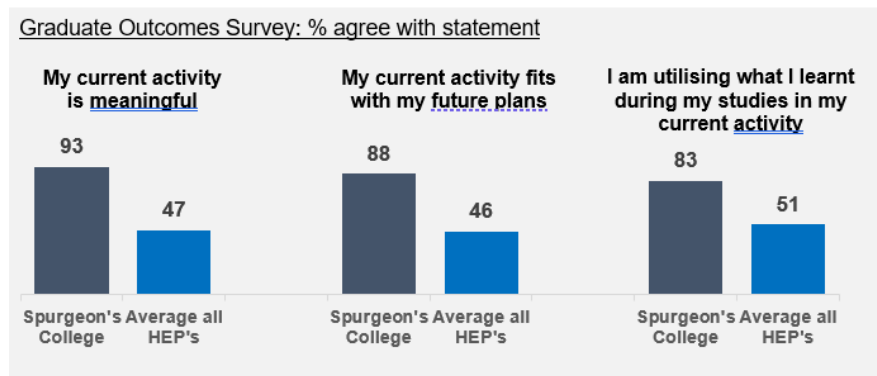| Spurgeon's College | 82.35 |
| Benchmark | 68.55 |

37.   The DQB concluded in regard to student engagement that the College,

has strong student representation at all governance levels and hears from students in a variety of formal and informal settings, such that students affirm their involvement in all aspects of the College's operation. The team thus concludes that the College develops its policy as a cohesive academic community including not only students but also staff and external stakeholders.[58]

38.   The College ensures that all students have opportunities to engage with the governance of the College; this allows for a range of perspectives to have influence. The Governors and SMT consider that it is important that students engage with, and participate in, a whole range of different aspects of College life. During each semester, representatives of the student body meet with the Principal and Chief Operating Officer at least twice to discuss issues relating to the student experience. This meeting is an important expression of student engagement in wider College life. In addition, the student body is represented on:

- The Board of Governors (one Student Governor)
- College Council (three representatives), the body that both approves the appointment of Governors and holds them to account
- Academic Board
- Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Monitoring Group
- Access and Participation Plan Monitoring Group
- Academic Quality Assurance Committee
- Undergraduate Programme Committee
- Postgraduate Programmes Committee
- Learning Support Committee
- Learning Resources Committee

39.   The median age of students at the College, and the reality that training for Christian ministry is frequently a second or third career, means that the College is able to draw upon an impressive and diverse range of expertise from within its student body. It is common for our student body to include, at any one time, business men and women, former Head Teachers and teachers from secondary schools, academics who held senior positions in universities, former uniformed Service personnel and people who worked in a vast array of settings and professions. The richness this diversity infuses the College with permeates almost every element of College life. In return, the College is able to offer students the opportunity to develop their governance skills and experience through serving in the various boards and committees detailed in para 38. This experience for ministers in training is often an invaluable part of a student's transition from a non-charity work experience to preparing to lead, manage and run a complex organisation (church) within the charity sector, which has an array of very specific demands and requirements.

2.   Student Outcomes

SO1   The provider deploys and tailors approaches that are highly effective in ensuring its students succeed in and progress beyond their studies.

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[58] Ibid., p18.

40.   The data from the Graduates Outcome Survey[59] relating to this measure is: 'my current activity is meaningful' Spurgeon's 93%, compared to the average of 47% for HEPs; 'my current activity fits with my future plans' Spurgeon's 88%, compared to the average of 46% for HEPs; and 'I am utilising what I learnt during my studies in my current activity' Spurgeon's 83% compared to the average of 51% for HEPs. This data may be presented in the following chart:

Graduate Outcomes Survey: % agree with statement

My current activity is meaningful	My current activity fits with my future plans	I am utilising what I learnt during my studies in my current activity
93 / 47	88 / 46	83 / 51
Spurgeon's College / Average all HEP's	Spurgeon's College / Average all HEP's	Spurgeon's College / Average all HEP's

41.   The UG programme the College designed and delivers, has been deliberately tailored to meet the needs of, and in partnership with, the industry sector (churches and charities) it prepares graduates for. Our UG graduate programme ensures that graduates are equipped to meet the demands of the public roles they are appointed to (ministers in local churches in villages, towns and cities, as well as other Christian charities), and are also furnished with the knowledge, skills, and competencies necessary to make the most of their career opportunities. The past three years of the Graduate Outcomes Survey, shows that 86% of our graduates go into the workplace and that none of our graduates reported being unemployed.[60] Within 15 months of completing their studies, our graduates are very likely to involved in meaningful activity (93%) which fits with their plans for the future (88%). This is far more prevalent than is typically seen among graduates of Higher Education Providers. The College's UG programme is intentionally designed to ensure that students are well prepared for the day-to-day challenges of working in the community and that the syllabus covers key practical skills they will use on a daily basis embodying a careful relationship between theory and practical application in the crucible of the public gaze. This is clearly demonstrated by the fact that the vast majority of our graduates say they are utilising what they learnt during their time studying at Spurgeon's (83%). This is far higher than typically seen among graduates of Higher Education Providers, where only approximately half feel this to be the case (51%).
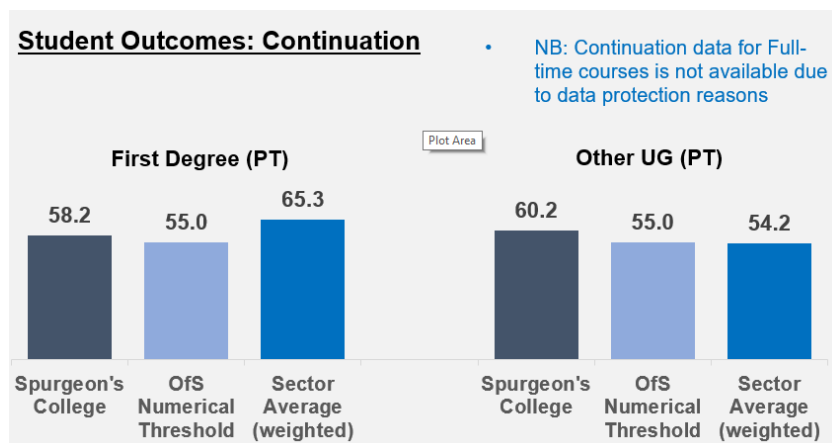
42.   Ministers in Training at Spurgeon's undertake their academic studies in the knowledge that graduation, ordination and receiving a 'call' to work in a church as the minister is only part of their professional journey. The College's UG programme runs seamlessly into the student's post-graduation part of their individual journey when they progress from being a Minister in Training to becoming a Newly Accredited Minister or NAM. The name of each NAM is added to the Baptist Union's Register of Nationally Accredited Ministers, but for a three-year period they are on probation. To become a fully accredited minister, NAMs must complete two sequential learning contracts with a Baptist college. Spurgeon's programme for NAMs has been intentionally designed to be a seamless continuation from its UG programme.

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[59] Source: HESA - Graduate Outcomes Survey data: Average across years and by provider / type among those who completed their studies during academic years 2017-18 to 2019-20.
[60] Source: HESA - Graduate Outcomes Survey data: Average across years and by provider / type among those who completed their studies during academic years 2017-18 to 2019-20.
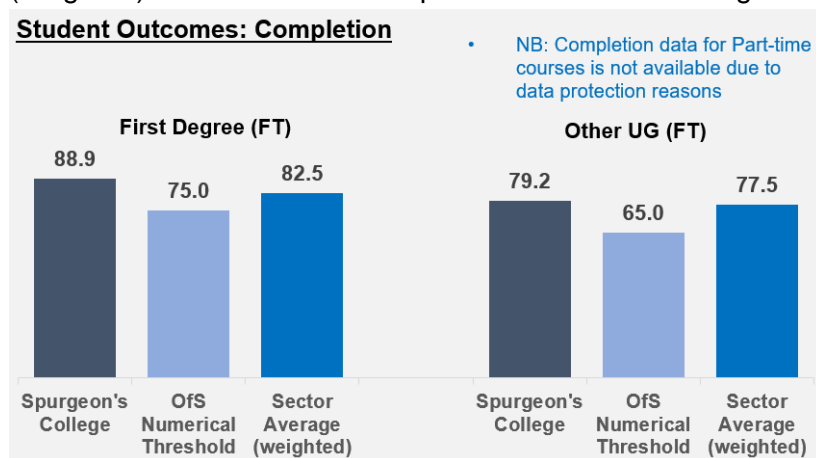
SO2   *There are outstanding rates of continuation and completion for the provider's students and courses.*

43.   The data from the OfS, Student Outcomes 'Dashboards' data export on continuation is: First Degree (PT), Spurgeon's 58.2%, OfS numerical threshold 55.0% and sector average (weighted) 65.3%; and Other UG (PT), Spurgeon's 60.2%, OfS numerical threshold 55.0% and sector average (weighted) 54.2%. This data is presented in the following chart:

Student Outcomes: Continuation

• NB: Continuation data for Full-time courses is not available due to data protection reasons

Plot Area

First Degree (PT)

58.2	55.0	65.3
Spurgeon's College	OfS Numerical Threshold	Sector Average (weighted)

Other UG (PT)

60.2	55.0	54.2
Spurgeon's College	OfS Numerical Threshold	Sector Average (weighted)

The data from the OfS, Student Completion 'Dashboards' data export on completion is: First Degree (FT), Spurgeon's 88.9%, OfS numerical threshold 75.0% and sector average (weighted) 82.5%; and Other UG (FT), Spurgeon's 79.2%, OfS numerical threshold 65.0% and sector average (weighted) 77.5%. This data is presented in the following chart:

Student Outcomes: Completion

• NB: Completion data for Part-time courses is not available due to data protection reasons

First Degree (FT)

88.9	75.0	82.5
Spurgeon's College	OfS Numerical Threshold	Sector Average (weighted)

Other UG (FT)

79.2	65.0	77.5
Spurgeon's College	OfS Numerical Threshold	Sector Average (weighted)

44.   The size of the undergraduate student community at Spurgeon's College means that its dataset is unavailable due to the OfS dataset practice of suppressing figures due to GDPR and statistical reasons. The first graph above for continuation contains part-time rates. This reflects that training for ministry is often a second or third career, which means that the part-time model is an attractive offer for students who wish to continue working while studying or have family commitments that makes full-time study more difficult. The continuation rate for those on their first UG programme reflects the average of the College's student body and the simple challenge of starting a university level programme after possibly leaving education 20 or 30 years previously. The strong completion rates for full-time students in the second graph above, is impressive and evidences our strength in helping our students succeed despite the practical demands involved in balancing academic study, work-based learning and experience, family life and running a church simultaneously. It is not uncommon for full-time students to try and also maintain paid employment

while balancing academic study, work-based learning and experience, family life and running a church.

SO3   *There are outstanding rates of successful progression for the provider's students and courses.*

45.   The size of the undergraduate student community at Spurgeon's College means that its dataset for progression is unavailable due to the OfS dataset practice of suppressing figures below 25.

46.   Although the College is unable to cite its successful progression data, it is abundantly clear from the responses in the Graduate Outcome Survey (para 40 above) that its students are using the knowledge and experience gained from their studies at the College in professional occupations as defined by the ONS.

47.   In the *Standard Occupational Classification 2010* the role of the CLERGY (2444) is categorised as being part of Major Groups 1, 2 or 3. Major Group 2 is classified: PROFESSIONAL OCCUPATIONS. The job description for this group is defined by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) as covering,

> occupations whose main tasks require a high level of knowledge and experience in the natural sciences, engineering, life sciences, social sciences, humanities and related fields. The main tasks consist of the practical application of an extensive body of theoretical knowledge, increasing the stock of knowledge by means of research and communicating such knowledge by teaching methods and other means.

> Most occupations in this major group will require a degree or equivalent qualification, with some occupations requiring postgraduate qualifications and/or a formal period of experience-related training.

48.   We know from our engagement with graduates that they work predominantly as leaders in churches, or as chaplains or within the wider charity sector. As noted earlier, Spurgeon's has historically trained, and continues to train, approximately 50% of ministers within the BUGB. This remains true regardless of whether or not the College is able to cite its progression data because of the legitimate OfS practice of suppressing figures.

S04   *The provider clearly articulates the range of educational gains it intends its students to achieve, and why these are highly relevant to its students and their future ambitions.*

49.   There are two distinct but complimentary strands in the College's approach to this essential component. The first strand is evidenced in the College's *Undergraduate Student Handbook 2022-2023 (BA (Hons) in Theology; BA (Hons) in Theology with Ministerial Formation; and BA (Hons) in Theology with Chaplaincy)* which is available in students' Moodle account and discussed with them in orientation week; this handbook clearly articulates the range of educational gains the College intends its students to achieve, and why these are highly relevant to its students and their future ambitions. Under the heading 'Programme aims' it states that,

> The Undergraduate (UG) programme at Spurgeon's College aims to develop competent and independent theologians and practitioners who have an adequate understanding of the academic discipline of theology and seek to develop and enhance skill sets that stretch beyond personal knowledge and understanding to the communication and application of such knowledge in appropriate ways within the Christian church, in pastoral and missional

contexts and in the wider world. The programme also seeks to lay good foundations that will enable progression to further academic study if appropriate.

50.   In the heading 'Programme Learning Outcomes' students read that 'the learning outcomes are expressed in terms relevant to the curriculum content of the Spurgeon's College programme; however, they comply with the expectations of both the FHEQ Level Descriptors and the Subject Benchmarks for Theology and Religious Studies (published March 2022).' The learning outcomes of the College's UG programme are mapped against FHEQ Level Descriptors and the Subject Benchmarks for Theology and Religious Studies. To ensure that students on our UG programme have a detailed understanding of the learning outcomes they will achieve and why these are relevant, the following categories are expanded and explained in easily accessible language: 'knowledge and understanding'; 'subject specific and intellectual skills'; and 'employability and transferable skills.' In orientation week, the College explains to students the learning gains they will receive from their programme; we also explain how the learning outcomes are related to each level within the UG programme so that students can understand the knowledge, employability and transferrable skills they will possess and have the ability and competency to demonstrate as they either exit with an award or progress to the next academic level.

51.   The second distinct strand is evidenced in its College's *Ministers in Training (MiTs) Accreditation Handbook 2022-2023* given to each new MiT. As noted earlier, approximately 80% of full and part-time students wish to prepare for ministerial accreditation at the College. To clearly articulate the range of educational gains MiTs can expect achieve (outlined in paras 7-10 above) and why this is relevant to employment as accredited ministers, the College created its *Ministers in Training (MiTs) Accreditation Handbook 2022-2023* which is given to each MiT and explained in detail by the College's Dean of Ministerial Formation. The handbook details Spurgeon's Philosophy of Ministerial Formation and the interaction between: knowledge, skills and character. To clarify what these three strands involve the College distinguishes six dimensions within them:

- **The personal and spiritual dimension**: This is concerned with growth in personal maturity and qualities, in the knowledge of God and as disciples of Christ.
- **The biblical and theological dimension**: This is concerned with the understanding of the content of Christian faith and practice.
- **The ecclesiological dimension**: This is concerned with knowledge of the Baptist and other church traditions.
- **The leadership and professional ethics dimension**: This is concerned with the art and discipline of leadership in the church and with the ways of living and behaving consistently with them.
- **The communication dimension**: This is concerned with the content and practice of Christian communication in evangelism, mission, preaching and teaching in various ministerial contexts.
- **The global mission and world awareness dimension**: This is concerned with living and working as people who share in God's work of redeeming and transforming the world.

52.   The College's BA (Hons) in Theology with Ministerial Formation, and BA (Hons) in Theology with Chaplaincy, have been mapped in detail against the BUGB's *Marks of Ministry*.[61] This BUGB document defines ministry by a set of characteristics, including professional

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[61] Spurgeon's College *UG Degree Programme Specification and Handbook*, Appendix 9.

competencies, that all accredited ministers, regardless of their setting, are expected to exhibit. The *Marks of Ministry* are explained in detail throughout a MiT's studies and workplace experience, while at College and beyond into their postgraduate NAMs learning contract.

SO5   The provider's approaches to supporting its students to achieve these gains are evidence-based, highly effective and tailored to its students and their different starting points.

53.   The number of Spurgeon's graduates in ministerial, chaplaincy, church leadership positions and in high profile roles within the charity sector is evidence of the historic and current effectiveness of the College's approach to supporting its students achieving the intended educational and learning gains.

Student feedback received at the end of each unit, at the end of each academic year, and through other means such as exit interviews, provides solid evidence for the success of student support mechanisms. This is seen, for example, in the consistently positive assessment of the student experience by the twice-yearly Academic Quality Assurance Committee meetings.[62]

54.   Before a student commences their studies at Spurgeon's, the Learning Enhancement Department conducts an educational needs assessment to ensure than every student has the best opportunity, at the start of their personal academic journey, to set the conditions whereby they can reach their potential. As noted earlier, the DQB observed that the College 'focuses on holistic personal development in a safe but challenging environment, motivating students to engage in learning in a supportive and diverse community.' Part of this holistic approach is evidenced in practice embedded within our approach to the student as a 'whole person', that all students on the Spurgeon's UG programme are part of a pastoral group and has a nominated pastoral tutor. Throughout their studies at College, each student has the opportunity to meet and speak with their pastoral tutor and discuss any aspect of their studies or any area of personal concern. This is a practical approach that facilitates students from a rich and varied range of educational and personal backgrounds to feel part of the learning community at Spurgeon's, while being treat as a unique and distinct individual. We feel that this approach is reflected in the NSS data on students' overall satisfaction which shows the response from Spurgeon's students at 94.1% compared with the benchmark of 87.9%, which is represented in the following chart:

| Spurgeon's College | 94.1 |
| Benchmark | 87.9 |

55.   The College's approach to providing workplace opportunities for Ministers in Training draws from a long and distinguished history. As noted earlier, 5,000 churches worldwide have been served by Spurgeon's ministers and its trained ministers are active in over 35 countries. Prospective students have the opportunity to read through the College's *Placement Guide for Church, Chaplaincy or Missional Opportunities*. This document sets out clearly the types of placements available for students and why this type of practical experience is essential in preparing students to succeed in their course and post-graduation. It also carefully explains the expectations upon the placement and how this will provide sufficient opportunities for the MiT to gain experience and grow. Students are informed that whether a MiT is working in a local church, missional opportunity, or chaplaincy, the College expects the MiT to undertake a broad range of

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[62] See the College's AQAC minutes. Unpublished. Held in the College's document management system.

ministerial activities. Taking this approach enables students to translate ministerial theory into practice. Their placements, in active churches give them the opportunity to evidence (to potential employers) that they have the knowledge, skills, and competencies expected of someone, who is suitable to become an accredited minister in a recognised profession. The College, working with in partnership with placement churches, creates an individually tailored and bespoke context for individual MiTs to:

- have regular opportunities to lead worship;
- have regular opportunities to preach;
- have opportunities to be engaged in mission/outreach;
- be involved in working in small groups;
- be engaged in the pastoral care of the church or missional opportunity;
- be involved in the spiritual life of the church;
- manage any changes the MiT may have introduced;
- learn how to be involved in church governance and lead business-type meetings (e.g., deacons' or church members').

56.   The College is aware that academic study and workplace experience are, without exception, very demanding. Section 4.2 of the Placement Guide for Church, Chaplaincy or Missional opportunities specifically addresses this point:

> Church and non-church settings are encouraged to assist and work closely with their MiT in keeping a healthy and appropriate balance between their studies at College, their ministry in their church, chaplaincy setting or missional opportunity, their family life and their physical health.

The College's Dean of Ministerial Formation and Head of Placements meet regularly to discuss the individual placements of MiTs, to ensure that the placement is working well and that students are getting the experience and opportunities they need to succeed.

SO6   The provider evaluates the gains made by its students, and demonstrates its students are succeeding in achieving the intended gains.

57.   The DQB in its conclusion in Criterion D1 - Enabling student development and achievement, on the College performance observed that:

> The College has in place, monitors and evaluates arrangements and resources which enable students to develop their academic, personal and professional potential. This is because its strategic approach to student development and achievement is to provide excellent and continually improving levels of education, formation and learning resources for all students. This aim can be seen throughout the Academic Governance Committee structure and throughout the student journey.[63]

The College's structures enable continuous evaluation of students' educational gains. The senior academic authority, the Academic Board, meets twice yearly and receives reports from its constituent sub-committees, including the Undergraduate Programme Committee which monitors the delivery of the BA degree. The Senior Management Team meet most weeks and monitor the day-to-day running of the institution. They are held to account by the Board of Governors which

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[63] DQB *Degree Awarding Powers Assessment* p64.

meets approximately six times a year and receives reports from each SMT member at each meeting.[64]

58.   The College undertook a comprehensive review and evaluation of its UG programme before it formally applied for degree awarding powers. The Senior Management considered the process an apposite opportunity to engage with key stakeholders in the main employment sector (churches and charities),[65] to ensure that the learning gains outlined to students were aligned with expectations of potential employers. The results of which are evidenced in the document *The shape of ministerial formation – stakeholder consultation.*[66] In the document the College comments that,

> It is with this in mind that we have embarked on reviewing our own BA programme to reshape the way we form ministers to meet the changed context of our times. The question facing us is how to incorporate this new thinking into our programmes of ministerial formation at undergraduate level…
> At this stage we want to consult our stakeholders with whom we work closely to create the ministers needed for the challenges outlined. Before we draft the final course documents, we would like to hear your thoughts on the shape and mix of training that ministers should undertake.

Every element of the College UG programme has been analysed, assessed and evaluated, in partnership with the PSRB, regional and local employers, students, faculty and external academic subject matter experts, to ensure that graduates from Spurgeon's College can succeed in achieving its intended educational / learning gains.

59.   The strategic approach taken in designing an UG programme aligned with the various expectations of students and those of employers in the 21st century, but this is only part of the College's approach. Student handbooks are a critical part of explaining what students will receive at College. The encounter with educational delivery, however, and in the context of the demands already articulated in this submission, can result in students feeling overwhelmed at different parts or stages of their individual journeys. This can be especially true for mature students looking to prepare for a new career, in a demanding and stressful profession. To ensure that the College provides the best opportunity for its students to succeed, it has an additional layer of pastoral and professional support in place, in addition to pastoral groups and tutors. Ministers in Training have a yearly Personal Spiritual Development (PSD) interview and an Annual Review. In the first semester, pastoral tutors conduct a PSD interview with each MiT in their pastoral group. This is designed to assist the MiT to identify personal areas for development (academic, practical, personal and spiritual) and progress. The College's *Ministers in Training (MiTs) Accreditation Handbook* explains that each MiT is expected to fill in and submit a PSD form before the interview takes place with the pastoral tutor. To supplement this on-going work of assisting MiTs with their personal development and preparation for ministerial accreditation, in the second semester

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[64] See minutes from the Principal and Heads of Department meetings, Academic Board minutes, and Undergraduate Programme Committee minutes. Unpublished. Held in the College's document management system.

[65] This involved BUGB Regional Ministers and Team Leaders form five Associations, the BUGB Ministries Team, current and former students, professional staff, faculty and senior management form the College.

[66] This document is referenced numerous times in the DQB *Degree Awarding Powers Assessment* and forms part of the Strategic Approval document, which is one part of the College's UG programme validation process. Unpublished. Held in the College's document management system.

towards the end of the academic year, pastoral tutors conduct a longer and more detailed annual review. In this review the MiT's ministerial progress is evaluated against the BUGBs *Marks of Ministry* and the core competencies expected of a professional minister. This review also includes reports from a MiT's ministerial supervisor (i.e., from their workplace setting) and their field placement tutor's reports, which are discussed with the student. For students preparing for Baptist accredited ministry, Baptist MiTs are prepared for the settlement process towards the end of their second year. This process is designed to facilitate churches and ministers as they seek new ministries.

Summary

60.   The Designated Quality Body, stated in its report on Spurgeon's College application for Full Degree Awarding Powers that, 'The College has in place, monitors and evaluates arrangements and resources which enable students to develop their academic, personal and professional potential. This is because its strategic approach to student development and achievement is to provide excellent and continually improving levels of education, formation and learning resources for all students.'[67] The NSS results and the College's success in delivering the educational gain its students will receive, by training approximately 50% of ministers in the BUGB, demonstrates that Spurgeon's delivers an excellent experience and outcomes for students on its undergraduate programme.

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