

University of the West offers one of only four accredited Master of Divinity programs specifically for Buddhists in the United States. The department offers two degrees, the Master of Divinity (MDiv) in Buddhist Chaplaincy and the Doctor of Buddhist Ministry (DBMin). The faculty, all of whom are engaged in the practice of Buddhist chaplaincy, specialize in preparing Buddhist practitioners for hands-on work in chaplaincy in interfaith settings, such as hospitals, hospices, police departments, prisons, and the military. The department collaborates closely with the Business Administration, Psychology, and Religious Studies departments. Religious Studies courses make up approximately half the coursework for chaplaincy students.

Philosophy & Objectives

Spiritual formation in Buddhist Chaplaincy is seen as the development of ethics, contemplative practice, and wisdom. The department is ecumenical, welcoming Buddhists from every branch of Buddhism as well as religious others. (Not all students identify as Buddhist or solely Buddhist.) Students are encouraged to engage in spiritual reflection and formation from within their own faith tradition and to share those reflections with their classmates. In addition, students learn about other faiths, such as Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Jainism, and Sikhism, to be of service to a wide variety of people in need.

The department upholds the standards of professional chaplaincy set forth by the Association of Professional Chaplains (APC) and the Association of Theological Schools (ATS). Students are encouraged to complete Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) or other clinical practicum experiences appropriate to their future work setting. These professional standards and trainings ensure that students gain hands-on experience in spiritual care and are ready to enter the world as professional Buddhist chaplains upon graduation.

Buddhist Chaplaincy Honor Code

Buddhist chaplaincy students are held to the highest standards of personal and professional conduct and ethics. By engaging in the study of interfaith chaplaincy or Buddhist ministry, students assume a role of spiritual leadership within the campus community. Serving in this role, it is essential that Chaplaincy students model respect for all others in ways informed by Buddhist wisdom and practices. Honoring the expression of differing opinions is not only a hallmark of good education, but also a requirement for genuine interfaith work.

Therefore, chaplaincy students are expected to engage in conduct that builds character, compassion, and community. Especially, they are expected to refrain from any conduct that would hurt, deride, or belittle another. Students who fail to uphold the values and code of conduct of the Buddhist Chaplaincy department or the university are subject to disciplinary action based upon the severity of the misconduct. Possible action may include suspension up to expulsion. Students may be placed on administrative leave for a specified period. During this time, students are expected to engage in self-reflection to decide if chaplaincy continues to be a good fit for their career aspirations. At the close of this period, students may petition for reentry into the program. Reentry is subject to university assessment and approval.

Students applying for ordination often request letters of recommendation from faculty. Students should understand that these letters reflect not only on their academic progress, but also on their general process of spiritual formation. Matters of individual conduct, participation in community life, and maturity in the academic setting are addressed in these letters.

Master of Divinity in Buddhist Chaplaincy

The Buddhist Chaplaincy program provides students with the knowledge and skills necessary to excel as Buddhist practitioners working in the field of professional chaplaincy. The program is designed to meet the needs of those who wish to engage in spiritual care and counseling work and to become properly trained and certified professionals.

The program incorporates the requirements of the Association of Professional Chaplains (APC) by offering 72 semester hours covering the nine core educational areas specified by the APC. These nine core areas are 1) ritual and liturgy, 2) comparative religions, 3) religious education, 4) pastoral care and counseling, 5) spiritual formation, 6) religious history, 7) institutional organization and administration, 8) sacred literature, and 9) theology/philosophy.

This program requires regular attendance on campus for classes, group processes, and other events. It is designed to serve local students and is not a low-residency or online program. Applicants should be prepared for long hours spent on campus and intense interaction with fellow students. Living near or on campus is highly recommended.

The Buddhist Chaplaincy program is designed to be completed in two and one-half years. Although this program can be completed on a part-time basis with approval from the department, full-time attendance is strongly recommended to facilitate the student's required spiritual formation. Courses are designed to be taken in a prescribed sequence, provided in the program outline below. Students who do not complete the full complement of courses each term can expect to extend their time to graduation

Program Learning Outcomes

Students who graduate with a MDiv in Buddhist Chaplaincy will be able to:

- demonstrate the intellectual and affective capacities to provide pastoral leadership in diverse settings.
- analyze how the different expressions of Buddhism interact with and affect historical, social, and cultural elements within their respective communities.
- apply their understanding of the interplay between Buddhism and other religions and cultures to their pastoral care-giving.
- describe how their ministry addresses social inequities and inequalities.

Program Requirements

Area	Required Units
Core Courses	51
Electives	21
Comparative Religions	6
Religious Education	3
Religious History	3
Sacred Literature	6
Theology/Philosophy	3
Total	72

Program Outline

All students are strongly encouraged to complete their coursework as outlined here.

Semester	Courses	Prerequisites	APC Area	Units
Term 1	CORE MDIV 510 Communication Skills for Chaplaincy	None	Pastoral Care/Counseling	3
Fall	CORE MDIV 525 Chaplaincy Roles & Competencies	None	Spiritual Formation	3
14 units	CORE MDIV GP 501 Group Process 1	None	Spiritual Formation	1
	CORE MDIV SL 501 Service Learning in Buddhist Chaplaincy	None	Comparative Religion	1
	ELEC Electives One & Two	Varies		6
Term 2	CORE MDIV 540 Sacred Abrahamic Texts in Spiritual Care & Counseling	MDIV510	Sacred Literature	3
Spring	CORE MDIV 645 Spiritual Care & Counseling	MDIV510	Pastoral Care & Counseling	3
14 units	CORE MBA 560 Managing Nonprofit Organizations	NONE	Institutional Organization	3
	CORE MDIV GP 502 Group Process 2	GP501	Pastoral Care/Counseling	1
	CORE MDIV SL 502 Service Learning in Buddhist Chaplaincy	SL501	Theology/Philosophy	1
	ELEC Elective Three	Varies		3
Summer 6 units	ELEC Electives Four & Five	Varies		6
Term 3	CORE MDIV 530 Interfaith Ritual	MDIV645	Ritual & Liturgy	3
Fall	CORE MDIV 655 Spiritual Formation for Buddhist Chaplains	MDIV645	Spiritual Formation	3
11 units	CORE MDIV 675 Advanced Topics in Professional Chaplaincy	MDIV645	Pastoral Care/Counseling	3
	CORE MDIV GP 503 Group Process 3	GP502	Pastoral Care/Counseling	1
	CORE MDIV SL 503 Service Learning in Buddhist Chaplaincy	SL502	Comparative Religion	1
Term 4	CORE MDIV 515 Privilege, Power, & Difference	MDIV655	Religious History	3
Spring	CORE MDIV 565 Buddhist Homiletics	MDIV655	Ritual & Liturgy	3
14 units	CORE MDIV 650 Pastoral Theology	MDIV655	Theology/Philosophy	3
	CORE PSYCH 600 Group Psychotherapy	MDIV675	Pastoral Care/Counseling	3
	CORE MDIV SL 504 Service Learning in Buddhist Chaplaincy	SL503	Theology/Philosophy	1
	CORE MDIV SL 505 Service Learning in Buddhist Chaplaincy	SL503	Comparative Religion	1
Term 5	CORE MDIV 640 Seminar in Buddhist Ministry	MDIV515	Sacred Literature	3
Fall	CORE MDIV 670 Spiritual Leadership	MDIV515	Religious Education	3
13 units	CORE MDIV SL 506 Service Learning in Buddhist Chaplaincy	SL504	Theology/Philosophy	1
	ELEC Electives Six & Seven	Varies		6
Total Units				72
Total Core				51
Total Elective				21

Core Courses: 51 units required

A minimum grade of B is required for each core course. Students who do not earn a B or higher in a core course may repeat that course one time only to achieve a passing grade.

Substitutions may be accepted with the approval of the student's advisor and department chair.

MDiv Core Courses

Comparative Religion (3 units required)

Courses	Prerequisite(s)	Units
MDIV SL 501 Service Learning in Buddhist Chaplaincy	None	1
MDIV SL 503 Service Learning in Buddhist Chaplaincy	MDIV SL 502	1
MDIV SL 505 Service Learning in Buddhist Chaplaincy	MDIV SL 503	1

Institutional Organization (3 units required)

Course	Prerequisite(s)	Units
MBA 560 Managing Nonprofit Organizations	None	3

Pastoral Care & Counseling (14 units required)

Course	Prerequisite(s)	Units
MDIV 510 Communication Skills for Chaplaincy	None	3
MDIV 645 Spiritual Care & Counseling	MDIV 510	3
MDIV 675 Advanced Topics in Professional Chaplaincy	MDIV 645	3
MDIV GP 502 Group Process 2	MDIV GP 501	1
MDIV GP 503 Group Process 3	MDIV GP 502	1
PSYCH 600 Group Psychotherapy	MDIV 675	3

Religious Education (3 units required)

Course	Prerequisite(s)	Units
MDIV 670 Spiritual Leadership	MDIV 515	3

Religious History (3 units required)

Course	Prerequisite(s)	Units
MDIV 515 Privilege, Power, & Difference	MDIVD 655	3

Ritual & Liturgy (6 units required)

Course	Prerequisite(s)	Units
MDIV 530 Interfaith Ritual	MDIV 645	3
MDIV 565 Buddhist Homiletics	MDIV 655	3

Sacred Literature (6 units required)

Course	Prerequisite(s)	Units
MDIV 540 Sacred Abrahamic Texts in Spiritual Care & Counseling	MDIV 510	3
MDIV 640 Seminar in Buddhist Ministry	MDIV 515	3

Spiritual Formation (7 units required)

Courses	Prerequisite(s)	Units
MDIV 525 Chaplaincy Roles & Competencies	None	3
MDIV 655 Spiritual Formation for Buddhist Chaplains	MDIV 645	3
MDIV GP 501 Group Process 1	None	1

Theology/Philosophy (6 units required)

Courses	Prerequisite(s)	Units
MDIV 650 Pastoral Theology	MDIV 655	3
MDIV SL 502 Service Learning in Buddhist Chaplaincy	MDIV SL 501	1
MDIV SL 504 Service Learning in Buddhist Chaplaincy	MDIV SL 503	1
MDIV SL 562 Service Learning in Buddhist Chaplaincy	MDIV SL 504	1

Elective Courses: 21 units required

Students must complete at least the designated number of units from each elective area for a total of 21 elective units.

A minimum grade of C is required for each elective course applied to graduation. Students who do not earn a C or higher in an elective course may repeat that course one time only to achieve a passing grade.

Applicable courses are listed below. Students may also fulfill elective requirements by taking applicable classes with partner institutions such as the Claremont School of Theology (CST) under a cross-registration agreement. Substitutions and classes from partner institutions must be preapproved by the student's advisor and department chair.

Elective Options

Comparative Religion Electives (6 units needed)

Courses	Prerequisite(s)	Units
CONT 510 Topics in Comparative Contemplative Practice*	None	3
PSYCH 651 Buddhist Psychology & Addiction	Waived	3
REL 515 Religions of China	Waived	3
REL 520 Religions of India	Waived	3
REL 590 Comparative Study of Religion	Waived	3
REL 640 Topics in Comparative Religion*	Waived	3
REL 660 Seminar: Buddhist-Christian Dialogue	Waived	3

Religious Education Electives (3 units needed)

Course	Prerequisite(s)	Units
CONT 540 Contemplation: Pali Canon	None	3
CONT 550 Contemplation: Chinese Canon	None	3
CONT 560 Contemplation: Tibetan Canon	None	3
REL 521 Buddhist Meditation Practicum	Waived	3
REL 530 Topics in Buddhist Meditation	Waived	3

Religious History Electives (3 units needed)

Course	Prerequisite(s)	Units
REL 505 Women in Buddhism	Waived	3
REL 645 Seminar: Regional Buddhist Traditions*	Waived	3
REL 670 Spread of Buddhism to Central Asia/China	Waived	3

Sacred Literature (6 units needed)

Course	Prerequisite(s)	Units
PALI 500/501 Pali Language		3
REL 630 Seminar: Buddhists Texts in Canonical Languages*	Proficiency in given language	3
REL 636 Seminar: Buddhist Texts in Translation*	Waived	3
SNSK 500/501 Sanskrit Language		3

Theology/Philosophy (3 units needed)

Course	Prerequisite(s)	Units
CONT 520 Topics in Contemplative Practice*	None	3
REL 540 Buddhist Hermeneutics	Waived	3

*Topics announced each semester. Topical courses may be taken a maximum of three times for credit. Approval required.

Dossier Requirement: Rather than completing a thesis, Buddhist Chaplaincy students are required to submit a dossier that includes copies of the following course assignments:

1. MDIV 565 Buddhist Homiletics dharma talk paper
2. MDIV 645 Spiritual Care & Counseling verbatim
3. MDIV 650 Pastoral Theology ministry paper
4. MDIV 655 Spiritual Formation autobiography paper
5. MDIV 675 Advanced Topics in Professional Chaplaincy project, paper, or power point.

These items should be submitted to the department when a student is registering for the final term.

Internship/Clinical Education Requirement: Students are required to participate in a clinical internship during their studies. This requirement is typically met by completing one unit of Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE). However, another kind of internship may be appropriate depending on the clinical setting in which the student would like to specialize. Military chaplain candidates, for example, have their own unique training. The internship is done under the supervision of the institution the student serves.

That institution may report back to UWest on the student's progress. Students are solely responsible for locating, applying to, and completing their internship but may receive advice and guidance from their advisor. This requirement is in addition to the 72-unit graduation requirement.

Contemplative Practice Requirement: Students are expected to be engaged in some form of meditation, contemplative, religious, or spiritual practice for as many hours a week as they are taking units that semester. (For example, 12 units = 12 hours of practice per week.) Students should check in with their advisor every semester to ensure their spiritual practice supports their spiritual formation as chaplains. Students should also seek the services of professional psychotherapists, dharma teachers, and spiritual counselors to support them through the chaplaincy program.

Other Considerations: While ordination, endorsement, or certification is not required to graduate, it is helpful for students to seek Dharma relationships in order to fulfill these credentials prior to completing the program. Some employers require these credentials. Students are encouraged to have a plan in place for meeting the requirements for ordination, endorsement, or professional certification with whatever chaplaincy organization serves and supports spiritual care work in their chosen work setting. By the time of graduation, for example, students are encouraged to form a relationship with a Sangha who will provide ordination or endorsement from their respective senior Dharma teachers, community, or lineage. UWest does not provide ordination or endorsement as part of the chaplaincy program.

Graduation Requirements

Students are expected to complete graduation requirements in a timely manner and to maintain good standing.

Students must complete course and program requirements as listed for a total of 72 units with a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0. A minimum grade of B is required for core courses and a minimum grade of C or P for all other courses applied to graduation. Students who do not earn a passing grade as specified may repeat that course one time only to achieve a passing grade.

With the approval of the chair, up to 6 units of 400-level undergraduate coursework may be applied to graduation.

Students may apply no more than 6 units (two courses) of Directed Research & Reading and 6 units (two courses) of independent study towards graduation. Students are allowed no more than 12 units of unfinished coursework (i.e. incompletes and withdrawals) over the duration of the program.

Up to 6 units may be fulfilled through the transfer of credit from another institution. Graduate courses previously applied to a bachelor's degree cannot be applied to graduation.

Degrees are awarded at the close of the semester in which all degree requirements have been completed, the dossier has been accepted by the department, the Petition to Graduate form has been filed with the Registrar's office, and the graduation fee has been paid.