



Buddhist Chaplaincy

University of the West offers one of only four accredited Master of Divinity programs specifically for Buddhists in the United States. The department offers three degrees, the Master of Arts in Buddhist Spiritual Care, 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

Students enrolled in all programs offered through the Department of Buddhist Chaplaincy are held to the highest standards of personal and professional conduct and ethics. By engaging in the study of Buddhist spiritual care, 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 Arts in Buddhist Spiritual Care

The Master of Arts in Buddhist Spiritual Care program (MABSC) provides students an opportunity to learn and contribute to the new field of professional Buddhist spiritual care. This program provides students and Dharma practitioners with a deeper understanding of how Buddhist philosophy, history, and teaching intersect with social and community engagement and are applicable to the contemporary world.

Earning the MA in Buddhist Spiritual Care can help further the clinical practices of social workers, psychotherapists, spiritual directors, Dharma teachers, temple leaders, and Buddhist scholar-practitioners. This degree also benefits those looking to complete the academic credit hours for APC Board Certification.

As a low-residency program, UWest's MA Buddhist Spiritual Care is designed to meet the needs of working professionals. Two-thirds of the curriculum is offered through synchronous remote coursework, with the remaining one-third offered through on campus, intensive courses. Students should be prepared to attend on campus for the duration of their second term, beginning with the winter intercession and running for ten weeks of the subsequent spring semester. The other three terms are offered through remote sessions, so students have the convenience of participating from any location that has reliable internet.

The MABSC program is designed to be completed in two years. Although this program can be completed on a part-time basis with approval from the department, 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 will extend their time to graduation.

All MABSC students are strongly encouraged to complete one unit of CPE before graduation. Those who complete the program with the optional one unit of CPE are eligible to apply to the Doctor of Buddhist Ministry program.

Students who seek to complete the MABSC as partial fulfillment towards chaplaincy certification or as a pathway towards the Master of Divinity in Buddhist Chaplaincy or doctoral work are required to meet with the academic adviser in order to plan out their course of study.

Program Learning Outcomes

Students who graduate with an MA in Buddhist Spiritual Care will be able to

- demonstrate in writing an understanding of theory and praxis of Buddhist spiritual formation.
- analyze how different expressions of Buddhist tenets and texts interact with theories and practices of Buddhist Spiritual Care and Counseling skills.
- apply history as well as the teachings and tenets of Humanistic/Engaged Buddhism to reflection on contemporary life.
- demonstrate skills necessary to integrate Buddhist sacred texts, frameworks, and ethics into a Humanistic/Engaged Buddhist work.

Program Requirements

Area	Required Units
Core Courses	24
Spiritual Formation	12
Buddhist Spiritual Care	12
Electives	12
Total	36

Program Outline

Students are advised to complete coursework to cover APC areas of Pastoral Care & Counseling, Sacred Literature, Ritual/Liturgy, Religious Education, Religious History/Culture, Comparative Religions, Theology/Philosophy, Spiritual Formation, Contemplative Practica. Below is a sample schedule; students' schedules will vary based on their specific needs.

Semester	Courses	Area	APC Area	Units
TERM 1	MDIV 640 Seminar in Buddhist Ministry	Core: Spiritual Formation	Sacred Literature	3
Fall (9 units)	MDIV 650 Pastoral Theology	Core: Buddhist Spiritual Care	Theology/Philosophy	3
	MDIV 655 Spiritual Formation	Core: Buddhist Spiritual Care	Spiritual Formation	3
WINTER INTERSESSION* (3 units)	BMIN 620 Engaged Compassion	Core: Buddhist Spiritual Care		3
TERM 2**	MDIV 645 Spiritual Care and Counseling	Core: Spiritual Formation	Pastoral Care & Counseling	3
Spring (9 units)	CORE ELECTIVE 1	Elective: Spiritual Formation		3
	CORE ELECTIVE 2	Elective: Spiritual Formation		3
TERM 3	ELECTIVE 1	History, Teachings, Tenets		3
Fall (9 units)	ELECTIVE 2	History, Teachings, Tenets		3
	ELECTIVE 3	History, Teachings, Tenets		3
TERM 4	BMIN610 Ethics in Buddhist Ministry	Core: Buddhist Spiritual Care		3
Spring (6 units)	ELECTIVE4	History, Teachings, Tenets		3

* 10-day Intensive Course

** On-campus, 10-week semester + 1 weekend intensive

NOTE: Each student completes their final Engaged Buddhist Project during the 2nd year within the supportive structure of two classes, BMIN 610 and BMIN 620.

Core Courses: 24 units required

Students complete 8 classes as indicated below.

Spiritual Formation Core: 12 units required

Students complete the following courses (6 units)

Courses	Units
MDIV 645 Spiritual Care & Counseling	3
MDIV 655 Spiritual Formation for Buddhist Chaplains	3

Students select two of the following courses (6 units)

Courses	Units
MDIV510 Communication Skills for Chaplaincy	3
MDIV 515 Power, Privilege, & Difference	3
MDIV 530 Interfaith Ritual	3
MDIV 540 Sacred Abrahamic Texts in Spiritual Care & Counseling	3
MDIV 565 Buddhist Homiletics	3
MDIV 670 Spiritual Leadership	3

Buddhist Spiritual Care Core: 12 units required

Students complete the following courses

Courses	Units
BMIN 610 Ethics in Buddhist Ministry	3
BMIN 620 Engaged Compassion	3
MDIV 640 Seminar in Buddhist Ministry	3
MDIV 650 Pastoral Theology	3

Electives: 12 units required

Students select 4 courses (12 units) from the areas of History, Teachings and Tenets of Humanistic/Engaged Buddhism, and Ministry. Students may also fulfill elective requirements by taking applicable classes with partner institutions such as the Claremont School of Theology (CST) under a recognized cross-registration agreement.

Substitutions and classes from partner institutions must be preapproved by the student's advisor and department chair.

Course Options	Units
BMIN 600 Buddhist Issues & Frameworks	3
REL 505 Women in Buddhism	3
REL 636 Seminar: Buddhist Texts in Translation	3
REL 641 Topics in Buddhist Studies	3
REL 645 Regional Buddhist Traditions	3

Categorical Options Approved Courses

Buddhist Meditation: 3 units allowed

Buddhist approaches to & paradigms of meditation & the training of the mind.

- REL 521 Buddhist Meditation Practicum (3 units)
- REL 530 Topics in Buddhist Meditation (3 units)

Canonical Language: 3 – 6 units allowed (up to 2 courses)

Introduction to the script as well as the phonology, morphology, and syntax of the Pali/Sanskrit language with the goal of developing a reading knowledge of Pali/Sanskrit.

- PALI 500 A/B First Year Pali (@3 units)
- SNSK 500 A/B First Year Sanskrit (@3 units)

Comparative Religious Studies: 3 units allowed

Comparative study of the complex religious developments within India or China.

- REL 515 Religions of China (3 units)
- REL 520 Religions of India (3 units)

Contemplative Practice: 3 – 6 units allowed (up to 2 courses)

Select up to two courses from topical seminars in specific area of interest in the study of contemplative practice or investigations of Buddhist contemplative methods, views, and practices as they are articulated within the Tibetan, Chinese, and Pali canon.

- CONT 510 Topics in Comparative Contemplative Practice (3 units)
- CONT 520 Topics in Contemplative Practice (3 units)
- CONT 540 Contemplation: Pali Canon (3 units)
- CONT 550 Contemplation: Chinese Canon (3 units)
- CONT 560 Contemplation: Tibetan Canon (3 units)

Service Learning: 3 units allowed

- Approved courses: MDIV590 Service Practicum (3 units)
- MDIV SL 501-506 Service Learning (1 unit each)

Psychology: 3 units allowed

With program advisor's approval, students may select one 500- or 600-level Psychology course relevant to their area of interest.

Research Methods: 3 units allowed

Develop essential skills for engaging in research at the doctoral level.

BMIN 607 Research Methods (3 units): Focuses on quantitative and qualitative research methods relevant to the student's area of research.

REL 607 Research Methods (3 units): Covers the full process of writing a research paper through final presentation of research results. Introduces library-based and electronic resources and relevant software applications.

Other programs: 3 units allowed

With program advisor's approval, students may select one 470 or higher English course or one 500-level MBA course relevant to their area of interest

Graduate Project

Buddhist Spiritual Care students complete a graduate project, submitted at the end of their final term. This project is a final paper based on their engaged Buddhist project or ritual. Details regarding this requirement are provided by the program advisor.

Contemplative Hours

MABSC students are required to complete 108 contemplative hours per semester. The program advisor provides details regarding the parameters of contemplative hours and reporting requirements each term.

Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) (optional)

While not required, all students are encouraged to complete one unit of CPE during their enrollment in the MABSC program. One unit of CPE is required for admission to the Doctor of Buddhist Ministry program, so students who may wish to apply to the DBMin after earning their MA in Buddhist Spiritual Care should plan accordingly. CPE units are not applicable to graduation. The program advisor has information regarding CPE opportunities.

Graduation Requirements

Students may choose full- or part-time enrollment and are expected to complete graduation requirements in a timely manner appropriate to the enrollment selected. Students must maintain good standing.

Students must complete course and program requirements as listed for a total of 36 units with a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0. A minimum grade of B is required for all courses applied to graduation. Students who do not earn a passing grade may repeat that course one time only to achieve a passing grade.

Students may apply no more than 6 units (two courses) of Directed Research and 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 academic 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 graduate project 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.