



Becoming a Buddhist Hospital Chaplain

Hospital chaplains have the time that hospital staff normally do not have, to go to patients who may need spiritual support or just a relaxed conversation. The time that a hospital chaplain gives can help the physical healing of the patient and can give support to their friends and family. Some chaplains also offer support to hospital staff.

The Buddhist Council of New South Wales (BCNSW) is responsible for appointing chaplains in accordance with the agreements and guidelines in place between the Civil Chaplaincies Advisory Committee (CCAC) and the Department of Health with its Area Health Services.

As the recognised body for Buddhist chaplaincy within NSW, the BCNSW has a duty of care and responsibility to ensure that Buddhist chaplains entering hospitals under the guidance and support of the BCNSW have been adequately trained and selected and provided with the necessary support.

Are you a hospital or healthcare institution and would like to know more about Buddhist Chaplaincy? Please [email](#) the Chaplaincy team. Hospitals are unique environments and chaplains need to be adequately trained.

Hospital Chaplaincy Selection Guidelines

These guidelines have been developed to provide a set of criteria for the selection of Buddhist chaplains practicing within hospitals. The Buddhist Council of New South Wales (BCNSW) is responsible for appointing chaplains in accordance with the agreements and guidelines in place between the Civil Chaplaincies Advisory Committee (CCAC) and the Department of Health with its Area Health Services.

To ensure candidates possess an adequate capacity and are of a suitable character and temperament to serve as a Buddhist chaplain, the BCNSW will evaluate each candidate against the following criteria:

- Completion of the 40 hour Introduction to Clinical Pastoral Education course
- Mandatory letter of reference verifying continuous Buddhist practice of three years under a recognised teacher
- Minimum age: 21 years
- Ability to provide pastoral care as a Buddhist chaplain
- Ability to cope with the demanding tasks of giving comfort to the sick and dying
- Caring and empathetic with good communications skills
- Able to follow strict patient confidentiality guidelines

Strongly recommended:

- Undertaken a course of meditation and regularly practicing meditation.

Additional qualification:

- Previous experience working in a caring profession e.g. counsellors, health care professionals, teachers etc.



Appointment Process

The process of appointment to a hospital includes the following steps:

1. After completion of CPE training, applicant completes and submits the Application for Chaplaincy form
2. Interview of the applicant
3. Identification of the potential hospitals with a need for a Buddhist chaplain
4. Letter of Recommendation from the Council for suitable applicants
5. Relevant criminal record and child protection checks
6. Interview by hospital chaplaincy team o Induction/orientation at the hospital

A chaplain is required to:

- Work in harmony within a multi-faith chaplaincy team
- Accept the procedures and protocols of Hospital Chaplaincy
- Provide spiritual care for Buddhists of all traditions and cultures, while avoiding proselytising and pressure to convert
- Learn and develop capabilities through in-service sessions arranged by the Buddhist Council

In addition to ensuring the above selection criteria are met, the BCNSW will ensure that new chaplains are supported within the Chaplaincy Program with:

- Written resources and material
- Guidance from more experienced chaplains
- Mentors who can be contacted in emergencies
- In-Service development training and workshops with other chaplains
- Ongoing support from the Buddhist Council NSW

The Buddhist Council of NSW is responsible for supporting all appointed chaplains by:

- Ensuring they have adequate training and material to meet the responsibilities of their position
- Representing the needs of Buddhist chaplains to the CCAC
- The availability of a stipend from hospital chaplaincy subsidy funding the available funding for hospitals to support chaplains in carrying out their duties



Buddhist Council of NSW

Working for the Buddhist Community

Information for Hospitals

The Department of Health recognises that patients, their families and staff in public hospitals and healthcare institutions have a basic right to spiritual care and to access Chaplaincy and Pastoral Care Services. A Memorandum of Understanding has therefore been signed between the NSW Department of Health and the Civil Chaplaincies Advisory Committee. The Memorandum of Understanding defines how chaplaincy services are provided to hospitals in New South Wales. [Download here.](#)

The Department of Health has a centralised arrangement with the Buddhist Council to cover the costs of Buddhist chaplains visiting hospitals. This means that the appointment of a new Buddhist chaplain does not financially impact the hospital that chaplain will visit.

The Buddhist Council is looking to appoint to hospitals more Buddhist chaplains who have completed the introductory course in Clinical Pastoral Education (5 day CPE course).

A hospital may contact the Chaplaincy Team at the Buddhist Council of NSW by [email](#).

Hospital Emergencies

While hospitals are free to contact Buddhist chaplains that they already know (especially for emergency or crisis situations), the BCNSW can be contacted to find a Chaplain in an emergency. The BCNSW will endeavour to assist in finding a chaplain of a particular Buddhist tradition, language, or cultural group, if requested. The emergency number is 0458 996 658.

