

# MAITRIPA COLLEGE MASTER OF ARTS IN APPLIED BUDDHISM LOW-RESIDENCY PROGRAM GUIDE

MA in Applied Buddhism (Low-Residency) Degree\*

*\*For cohorts beginning Fall 2026\**

## Introduction

### Vision, Mission, and Lineage of Maitripa College

#### Vision

To cultivate transformative leaders who embody Buddhist wisdom and compassion, integrating a good heart, tolerance, and joy in service to the world.

#### Mission

*May Compassion and Wisdom Serve the World.* Maitripa College, a Buddhist institution rooted in the Nalanda tradition, offers graduate and lifelong learning programs in both physical and digital formats. Through the integration of contemplative practice, Buddhist scholarship, academic methodologies, and spiritual formation—grounded in three pillars of scholarship, meditation, and service—we cultivate wisdom, compassion, and ethical responsibility. Our students are empowered to serve their communities and the world with love, compassion, joy and equanimity.

#### Lineage

Maitripa College is grounded in the living lineage of Tibetan Buddhism as transmitted through the Nalanda tradition of India and preserved and taught within the Tibetan Buddhist world. Founded by Yangsi Rinpoche and Lama Zopa Rinpoche, Maitripa College draws from centuries of scholarship, contemplative practice, and ethical formation passed down through authentic lineages. The College maintains close relationships with eminent Tibetan teachers and lineage holders, including His Holiness the Dalai Lama, and integrates traditional methods of study, debate, meditation, and service with contemporary academic inquiry. This lineage-based foundation ensures that Maitripa's programs are not only academically rigorous, but spiritually grounded—rooted in teachings that have been tested through generations of practice and dedicated to the cultivation of wisdom and compassion for the benefit of the world.

## Purpose of the Low-Residency Model

Beginning Fall 2026, the Maitripa College Master of Arts in Applied Buddhism (MAAB) is offered in a low-residency hybrid modality, expanding access for students while maintaining the depth and integrity of applied Tibetan Buddhist education in our world. This shift reflects the College's Low-Residency Transformation Pathway, which re-aligns curriculum, governance, technology, assessment, and student support into a mission-centered, student-ready model.

The low-residency format is intentionally designed to:

- Preserve lineage-based contemplative formation
- Maintain rigorous academic standards
- Integrate online learning with in-person community practice
- Support working adults and students living beyond Portland, Oregon
- Meet accreditation standards for distance delivery

## Program Overview: Low-Residency Structure

The MAAB low-residency degree program include:

- **Online asynchronous coursework** each semester
- **Synchronous sessions** for faculty-led discussions, meditation, and community learning
- **On-site residencies** (once or twice per academic year) focused on contemplative and spiritual formation, community building, and intensive coursework
- **Service, ministerial, and/or chaplaincy formation requirements** appropriate to the degree
- **A capstone** or equivalent mastery demonstration

## Program Learning Design

### Pillars of Education at Maitripa College

The MAAB is grounded in Maitripa's three-pillar model:

1. Scholarship – rigorous study of Buddhist philosophy and history through Tibetan and Euro-American academic methods
2. Meditation – cultivation of contemplative discipline on a path of spiritual growth
3. Service – applying dharma through compassionate action in the world

*These pillars shape all courses and requirements.*

### Learning Modalities

- Asynchronous online learning: readings, discussion boards, recorded lectures, contemplative assignments, reflection essays, academic papers
- Synchronous online sessions: real-time class meetings guarantee regular and substantive interaction
- Residency learning: intensives in meditation, philosophy, ritual, service, interpersonal and communication skills, and community formation
- Self-paced Study and Practice: research, meditation retreat(s), service projects
- Capstone or practicum requirements

### Technology Requirements

- Learning management system: **Populi**
- Video conferencing platform: **Zoom**
- Students are responsible for reliable internet, webcam, and audio equipment

- All tools must meet ADA/UDL accessibility requirements

## **Academic Structure and Policies**

### **Academic Calendar**

The MAAB low-residency program follows the College's academic calendar, with:

- Online coursework for three terms (fall, spring, summer) per year
- Required residency periods scheduled annually (twice yearly in Fall and Spring)
- The College observes Federal, State, and Tibetan Buddhist holidays, which are published annually in the academic calendar online
- The academic year begins in July and ends in June
- The detailed academic calendar for the 2026-27 Academic Year will be published in January, 2026

### **Credit-Hour and RSI Policy**

- One credit = 45 hours of student engagement
- Online instructional time includes regular and substantive interaction (RSI) between faculty and students, as defined by federal guidelines
- Residency hours contribute to instructional time where appropriate

### **Enrollment and Completion Timelines**

The MAAB Low-Residency program at Maitripa College is structured around a cohort-based model in which students progress through the curriculum together. Students typically enroll in two to three courses per term. This shared rhythm of study supports continuity, mutual accountability, and the development of a sustained learning community across the duration of the program.

The MAAB is designed to be completed in approximately two years, with students completing six to nine credits per term across three terms per year. Program sequencing, course availability, and degree milestones are intentionally aligned to support steady progress toward completion within these timeframes.

The cohort model is a foundational element of the pedagogy and is not optional. Learning at Maitripa College is understood as a relational and formative process that unfolds over time through shared inquiry, contemplative practice, and applied engagement. The cohort structure supports this approach by fostering deep intellectual dialogue, spiritual formation, and professional identity development within a consistent community of peers.

### **Satisfactory Academic Progress**

Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) at Maitripa College is a measure of a student's successful completion of coursework and steady advancement toward degree requirements. Students are expected to maintain a minimum cumulative grade point average of 3.0, complete courses within established timeframes, and demonstrate consistent engagement with academic, contemplative, and applied components of the program. Academic progress is reviewed at regular intervals to

ensure students are meeting program standards and learning outcomes. Students who do not meet SAP requirements may be placed on academic warning or probation and provided with guidance and support to return to good standing.

## **Student Support and Community Life**

### **Orientation**

All students participate in:

- Online pre-semester orientation (technology, study skills, program expectations, student services)
- Residency orientation (community guidelines, meditation hall protocols, library services, academic advisor, and mentor(s) meetings)

### **Academic and Advising Support**

- Students are assigned an academic advisor
- Additional advisors may support spiritual formation
- Research, writing, and independent study support available through the library and faculty mentorship

### **Community, Ritual, and Spiritual Life**

Community and spiritual life are central to Maitripa College’s mission and pedagogical approach, even as our programs move into a low-residency format. Onsite participation in ritual and contemplative life takes place primarily during required residencies, when students gather in person to engage in contemplative practices in the Jokhang (meditation hall). These intensive periods of embodied practice anchor the academic program in lived experience. Beyond residencies, the values and disciplines cultivated through communal practice—reflective awareness, ethical presence, and responsibility to community—are intentionally woven throughout coursework, online learning spaces, mentoring relationships, and service-based formation. Clear protocols guide conduct in ritual contexts, and students are supported in developing appropriate forms of participation and leadership over time. In this way, community, ritual, and spiritual life are not limited to your physical presence on campus, but function as a continuous formative thread shaping scholarship, meditation, and service across the program.

### **Accessibility and UDL Commitments**

Maitripa College is committed to accessibility and inclusive learning. The program design intentionally incorporates principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) to support multiple ways of engaging with course materials, demonstrating learning, and participating in community life. All digital platforms and instructional tools are selected and implemented with attention to ADA compliance, ensuring access for students with documented disabilities. Together, these commitments reflect Maitripa’s dedication to supporting diverse learners and creating an educational environment in which all students can participate fully and meaningfully in academic, contemplative, and applied dimensions of the program.

## **Preparation for the Program: PHL 600 Pre-Term Intensive**

**PHL 600 – Methods in Applied Buddhism** is delivered as a required 2-credit pre-term intensive prior to the first fall semester. The course orients students to the diverse ways Buddhism is studied, transmitted, and applied across traditional Tibetan contexts and contemporary academic and professional environments.

Through engagement with textual study, historical analysis, contemplative inquiry, and applied reflection, students examine how different methods of study shape understanding, practice, and action. The course emphasizes discernment—when and how to employ scholarly, contemplative, and applied approaches—and establishes shared expectations for graduate-level work at Maitripa College.

Students complete approximately 30 hours of direct instructional activity through synchronous seminars and guided workshops, in addition to approximately 60 hours of independent reading, writing, and research. Total learning time aligns with institutional and accreditation standards for graduate-level coursework.

## **Onsite Intensives: Low-Residency Learning Model**

### **Purpose of Onsite Intensives**

Onsite intensives are a central component of the MAAB low-residency model, providing opportunities for embodied learning, contemplative depth, and community formation that cannot be replicated online. These short, high-impact residencies are paired with online coursework and are designed to support integrative learning across scholarship, meditation, and service.

### **Learning Outcomes for Onsite Intensives**

Across the two-year sequence, onsite intensives enable students to:

1. Deepen contemplative skill and discipline through guided practice labs aligned with program meditation outcomes.
2. Demonstrate integrative learning by connecting philosophical study with contemplative experience and ethical application.
3. Strengthen formation for service through structured self-reflection, dialogue, and community-based ethical inquiry.
4. Advance scholarly method and communication through writing studios, research design support, peer review, and faculty advising.
5. Build and sustain a learning community through cohort rituals, collaborative inquiry, and mentorship.

## **Program Specific Outcomes, Curriculum, and Degree Pathways**

### **Program Overview, Purpose and Goals**

The MAAB at Maitripa College is a 2-year, 44-credit graduate degree grounded in the Tibetan Buddhist tradition and oriented toward the practical application of Buddhist philosophy,

contemplative practice, and ethical wisdom in contemporary life. Rooted in Maitripa College's mission, lineage, and long-standing commitment to contemplative education, the program integrates rigorous academic study with sustained meditation training, reflective self-awareness, and compassionate engagement. The MAAB forms scholar-practitioners who approach Buddhist study not only as an intellectual discipline, but as a lived path that informs how one understands experience and engages the world.

The purpose of the MAAB is to emphasize applied Buddhist practice—learning how Buddhist teachings function as practical tools for responding skillfully to suffering, cultivating wisdom and compassion, and acting ethically in complex modern contexts. Students develop the capacity to translate Buddhist philosophy and meditation into meaningful action in professional and vocational settings such as education, leadership, nonprofit and community work, and other forms of socially engaged practice. Teaching and leadership are understood as expressions of applied practice rather than ends in themselves, grounded in clarity, presence, and ethical responsibility.

As Maitripa College's core degree for applied Buddhist learning, the MAAB serves students seeking deep formation without pursuing professional chaplaincy credentials. The program is designed for those who desire both intellectual depth and lived integration—serious study alongside embodied contemplative practice—while cultivating discernment, ethical clarity, and spiritual grounding. Graduates are prepared to bring the Dharma into everyday work and service, to support lifelong practice and further study, and to participate in emerging pathways in Buddhist education, leadership, and applied contemplative work in the world.

## **Program Learning Outcomes**

### *Scholarship*

#### **1. Applied Buddhist Knowledge**

Students will demonstrate foundational and integrative knowledge of Tibetan Buddhist philosophy, history, ethics, and practices, and apply this knowledge to contemporary personal, professional, and social contexts.

#### **2. Critical Inquiry & Communication**

Students will employ critical thinking and appropriate research methods to produce clear written and oral work that interprets and communicates Buddhist teachings for academic, professional, and public audiences.

### *Meditation*

#### **3. Contemplative Practice & Understanding**

Students will engage with the Tibetan Buddhist meditative tradition, demonstrating understanding of multiple contemplative methods for cultivating wisdom, compassion, and ethical awareness.

#### **4. Reflective Integration**

Students will critically reflect on their own contemplative practice and articulate how meditative experience informs insight, discernment, and embodied understanding.

### *Service*

#### **5. Compassionate & Ethical Engagement**

Students will articulate and enact how spiritual formation and contemplative insight inform compassionate, ethical service, leadership, or community engagement.

6. **Self-Reflection, Identity & Social Responsibility**

Students will integrate ongoing self-reflection to examine identity and social location, recognizing these as sources of both challenge and strength in inclusive and responsible service to others.

## **Degree Structure and Credit Distribution**

*Total Credits Required: 44*

*Applied Buddhist Foundations (14 credits)*

- **PHL 600** – Methods in Applied Buddhism (2)
- **PHL 601** – Tibetan Buddhist Philosophy I (3)
- **PHL 602** – Tibetan Buddhist Philosophy II (3)
- **PHL 603** – Tibetan Buddhist Philosophy III (3)
- **HIS 601** – History of Buddhist Thought (3)

*Meditation (9 credits)*

- **MDT 601** – Tibetan Buddhist Meditation I (3)
- **MDT 602** – Tibetan Buddhist Meditation II (3)
- **MDT 603** – Tibetan Buddhist Meditation III (3)

*Service & Applied Buddhism (15 credits)*

- **ABS 601** – Buddhism in Action (3)
- **SRV 601** – Self-Awareness and Social Engagement (3)
- **SRV 602** – Compassionate and Ethical Service (3)
- **SFL 601–606** – Spiritual Formation Lab (6 total)

*Research & Final Mastery (6 credits)*

- **ARP 601** – Action Research Project: Design (3)
- **ARP 602** – Action Research Project: Implementation & Results (3)

## **Curriculum Alignment Philosophy**

The MAAB curriculum is intentionally scaffolded to support students' movement from foundational knowledge toward integrative mastery. Courses are sequenced to cultivate increasing depth in scholarship, meditation, service, and reflective formation, culminating in an applied Action Research capstone that synthesizes all Program Learning Outcomes.

This progression is informed by Maitripa College's contemplative and lamrim-based developmental approach, which emphasizes ethical grounding, identity clarity, contemplative stabilization, and compassionate engagement. Across the program, students revisit core teachings and practices with increasing nuance and maturity, allowing intellectual understanding, contemplative experience, and lived application to mutually inform one another.

The integrated design reflects the recursive nature of the Buddhist path itself. The Action Research Project serves as the culminating expression of this integration, inviting students to bring academic rigor, contemplative insight, and ethical responsiveness together in a concrete applied project.

## Two-Year Course Schedule Overview

### *Year 1 – Pre-term*

- PHL 600 – Methods in Applied Buddhism (online intensive)

### *Year 1 – Fall*

- PHL 601 Tibetan Buddhist Philosophy: Foundations
- MDT 601 Tibetan Buddhist Meditation I: Foundational Practice
- SFL 601 Spiritual Formation Lab
- Early October onsite intensive

### *Year 1 – Spring*

- HIS 601 History of Buddhist Thought
- SRV 601 Self-Awareness and Social Engagement
- SFL 602 Spiritual Formation Lab
- Early May onsite intensive

### *Year 1 – Summer*

- PHL 602 Tibetan Buddhist Philosophy II: Intermediate Topics
- MDT 602 Tibetan Buddhist Meditation II: Intermediate Practice
- SFL 603 Spiritual Formation Lab

### *Year 2 – Fall*

- ABS 601 Buddhism in Action
- ARP 601 Action Research Project: Design
- SFL 604 Spiritual Formation Lab
- Early October onsite intensive

### *Year 2 – Spring*

- PHL 603 Tibetan Buddhist Philosophy III: Advanced Topics
- MDT 603 Tibetan Buddhist Meditation III: Advanced Practice
- SFL 605 Spiritual Formation Lab
- Early May onsite intensive

### *Year 2 – Summer*

- SRV 602 Compassionate and Ethical Service
- ARP 602 Action Research Project: Implementation & Results
- SFL 606 Spiritual Formation Lab

## Two-Year Onsite Calendar (Illustrative)

### *Year 1*

- **Early October (4 days):** Program orientation; methods and reading retreat; contemplative practice intensive; advising and degree planning; community-building rituals.
- **Early May (5 days):** Text and seminar intensives; practice labs; integrative applied learning workshop; optional public colloquium; capstone readiness checkpoint.

## Year 2

- **Early October (4 days):** Mid-program synthesis; research and writing refresh; peer review studio; capstone framing and planning.
- **Early May (5 days):** Culminating integration retreat; applied project presentations; oral reflection and assessment; closing rituals and transition planning.

*These windows are designed to minimize conflicts with U.S. federal holidays and may shift slightly to honor major Buddhist observances when appropriate.*

## **Final Word on the MAAB**

The MAAB at Maitripa College reflects best practices in graduate education while remaining deeply rooted in Tibetan Buddhist pedagogy and contemplative formation. Through integrated coursework, sustained meditation practice, ethical service, onsite intensives, and applied research, the MAAB prepares graduates to bring Buddhist wisdom skillfully and compassionately into the worlds they serve.