

EBU Chaplaincy network annual report 2024/2025

by rev. Dario Doshin Girolami

During 2024/25 the Chaplaincy Network held regular meetings for the EBU chaplaincy network's members every month up to September.

In September the first EBU Chaplaincy course started: Thirty students, 144 hours of training, 50 hours of internship, 4 modules over 2 years. These are the numbers of the first Europe-wide course for Buddhist chaplains, the result of a collaboration between the European Buddhist Union (EBU) and the Dharma Gate Buddhist University in Budapest, with a generous grant from the Italian Buddhist Union.

The course is accredited by Dharma Gate Buddhist University as an "Adult Learning Program," and the EBU is committed to securing official recognition throughout Europe in the near future.

The pan-Buddhist training was jointly developed by the EBU Chaplaincy Network steering group: Rev. Dario Doshin Girolami, Kirsten DeLeo, Keith Munnings, three Dharma teachers and experienced Buddhist chaplains belonging to the main Buddhist traditions: Theravāda, Mahāyāna, Vajrayāna. Another first for Europe.

This is a highly experiential and practical course, strongly Dharma-based, providing students with the necessary skills and knowledge, as well as individual support, to serve in hospitals, hospices, and prisons.

The training is based on a modular approach that combines online and in-person meetings. Residential sessions take place in a spiritual retreat atmosphere at the Manfa Retreat Centre near Budapest.

Students from Belgium, Germany, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Poland, Portugal, the United Kingdom, Switzerland, and Hungary are meeting regularly for group classes, individual supervision, silent support, and meditation. Practicing and learning together across traditions, areas of specialization and nationalities, the training aims to build a strong and vibrant European chaplain sangha.

Module 1 "Introduction to Buddhist Chaplaincy - Entering the Mandala (30 hours)" was completed successfully in January 2025. These are the topics that have been studied:

Online sessions 3 x 3h

Residential session (18h)

Supervision 3 x one hour 1-1 supervision in-between sessions plus one peer supervision.

General introduction

Overview of the different public sectors

(prison, healthcare, hospice/palliative care)

Basic tools and skills needed for chaplaincy

Buddhist sangha care

Awareness of rituals/prayers in other Buddhist traditions

Case studies and reflective journaling

Written Assessment: Public Sector Profile Assignment

Module 2 "Chaplaincy Area Specialization (30 hours)" started in February 2025

These are the topic we are currently work on:

Students choose a public sector they wish to explore in more depth.

Online sessions 3 x 3h

Residential session (18h)

Supervision 3 x one hour 1-1 supervision in-between sessions plus one peer supervision session.

Offering basic spiritual care to other Buddhists, to people of other faith traditions or none

Gaining a clear understanding of what it means to work in a prison, hospital, or hospice/palliative care environment

Case studies and reflective journaling

Supervision and peer support

Written Assessment: Buddhist Formation Assignment - "How does my spiritual formation built on Buddhist wisdom and contemplative practice help me be with others during times of great suffering and distress?"

On completion of Module 1 and Module 2 students will be able to:

communicate their own understanding of the Buddhist approach to chaplaincy/spiritual care, apply key spiritual care practices of presence, compassion and non-judgmental listening, accompany ill, dying or grieving sangha members (sangha care), provide basic spiritual care to people who are experiencing suffering in prison or different healthcare settings (outreach), offer rituals, prayers or guided meditations in appropriate ways.