

UNIVERSITY OF CALCUTTA

Department of Buddhist Studies

SYLLABUS FOR M.A. IN BUDDHIST STUDIES

(Under NEP-2020 / SEP-2022 Guidelines)

1. Title of the Programme: Master of Arts (M.A.) in Buddhist Studies.

The M.A. Programme in Buddhist Studies will be structured in accordance with the provisions of the National Education Policy (NEP-2020), the guidelines of the University Grants Commission (UGC), and the academic regulations of the University of Calcutta, Kolkata, while also reflecting the pedagogical principles of the Indian Knowledge System (IKS). The curriculum is designed to ensure a balanced integration of śāstric traditions, textual study, and contemporary academic approaches, thereby fostering both disciplinary depth and interdisciplinary engagement.

2. Duration of the Programme

The M.A. Programme in Buddhist Studies will be offered in two modes:

(a) A Two-Year Programme comprising four semesters, intended for students who have completed a three-year undergraduate degree.

(b) A One-Year Programme comprising two semesters, intended for students who have completed a four-year undergraduate degree with Honours or Honours with Research. This one-year programme will be academically equivalent to the third and fourth semesters of the two-year M.A. programme, ensuring vertical mobility and curricular continuity.

Further, a student enrolled in the two-year M.A. programme will have the option to exit after successful completion of the first year (two semesters) with the award of a Postgraduate Diploma in Buddhist Studies.

3. Credit Requirements

The credit requirements for the programme shall be as follows:

(a) The Two-Year M.A. Programme shall require the completion of a minimum of 80 credits, distributed over four semesters.

(b) The One-Year M.A. Programme shall require the completion of 40 credits, corresponding to the advanced level courses of the third and fourth semesters of the two-year programme.

(c) Each semester will carry a credit load of 20 credits, in accordance with the University Grants Commission (UGC) and NEP-2020 guidelines.

4. Eligibility Criteria

Admission to the M.A. Programme in Buddhist Studies will be governed by the following criteria:

(a) Candidates who have successfully completed a three-year Bachelor's degree with the prescribed minimum credits will be eligible for admission to the first semester of the two-year M.A. programme.

(b) Candidates who have successfully completed a four-year Bachelor's degree (Honours or Honours with Research) with the prescribed minimum credits will be eligible for admission directly to the one-year M.A. programme (equivalent to the third semester of the two-year programme).

All admissions to the programme will be made in accordance with the rules, regulations, and guidelines framed by the University of Calcutta, as applicable from time to time.

5. Programme Educational Objectives (PEOs)

The Programme Educational Objectives (PEOs) of the M.A. in Buddhist Studies are designed to achieve the following:

1. To impart advanced and comprehensive knowledge of the Indian Knowledge System (IKS), with special reference to Buddhist philosophy, literature, history, and culture, thereby enabling students to develop a deep, critical, and contextually grounded understanding of the Buddhist tradition in both its historical evolution and global manifestations.
2. To develop proficiency in the classical languages of the Indian Knowledge System, namely Pāli, Sanskrit, and Tibetan, along with their associated textual, commentarial, and exegetical traditions (śāstric and paramparā-based knowledge systems), so as to enable students to engage directly with primary sources and canonical Buddhist literature in their original linguistic forms.
3. To promote interdisciplinary, analytical, and research-oriented learning, integrating perspectives from philosophy, history, archaeology, linguistics, and cultural studies, in alignment with the holistic and integrative approach of the Indian Knowledge System.
4. To train students in critical analysis, textual interpretation, translation, and philological methods, equipping them with the necessary tools for advanced academic research, manuscript-based inquiry, and scholarly writing within the framework of traditional and modern knowledge systems.
5. To enable students to apply Buddhist teachings, ethical principles, and contemplative practices to contemporary global issues, including social harmony, environmental sustainability, mental health, and human well-being, thereby fostering socially responsible and ethically grounded scholarship.

6. Programme Specific Outcomes (PSOs)

Upon successful completion of the M.A. Programme in Buddhist Studies, students shall be able to demonstrate a comprehensive, critical, and contextually grounded understanding of Buddhist doctrines, traditions, and their historical development across diverse regions and schools within the broader framework of the Indian Knowledge System (IKS). They will acquire the ability to engage with canonical, post-canonical, and śāstric literature through direct textual study, drawing upon their proficiency in classical languages such as Pāli, Sanskrit, and Tibetan, and situating these within their respective commentarial (aṭṭhakathā) and paramparā-based exegetical traditions. The programme shall equip students with appropriate research methodologies rooted in both traditional Indian epistemic frameworks and modern academic approaches, enabling them to undertake independent research, produce scholarly writing, and contribute meaningfully to the advancement of Buddhist Studies and IKS scholarship.

Further, students will develop expertise in Buddhist philosophy, doctrinal analysis, and philological inquiry, while engaging with interdisciplinary dimensions of knowledge, including history, archaeology, linguistics, and cultural studies, thereby reflecting the integrative nature of the Indian Knowledge System. The programme shall also foster an informed understanding of the applied and lived dimensions of Buddhist knowledge, enabling students to relate Buddhist ethical, contemplative, and philosophical principles to contemporary social, cultural, ecological, and global concerns.

In addition, students will gain deeper engagement with regional and transnational Buddhist traditions, particularly those of South and Southeast Asia, thereby situating Buddhist thought within a broader civilizational, intercultural, and global context.

8. Course Structure

The programme shall comprise a combination of Core Courses (CC), which are compulsory in nature and aim to provide foundational as well as advanced knowledge in Buddhist philosophy, literature, history, and culture within the IKS framework. In addition, Discipline-Centric Elective Courses (DCEC) shall enable students to specialize in specific domains such as doctrinal studies, textual traditions, Buddhist art, logic, and regional traditions, while Open Elective Courses (OEC) shall facilitate interdisciplinary learning by allowing students to engage with courses offered by other departments.

Further, the curriculum will include Skill Enhancement Courses (SEC) designed to impart practical and applied competencies such as academic writing, digital humanities, manuscriptology, and philological methods, in alignment with traditional knowledge transmission practices (*paramparā*) and modern research tools. Employability and Entrepreneurship Courses (EEC) will also be incorporated to enhance career-oriented skills and to promote the application of Buddhist knowledge in diverse professional contexts.

A significant component of the programme will be the Dissertation/Research work, which will involve independent and supervised research grounded in textual, field-based, or interdisciplinary

methodologies, integrating both traditional epistemic frameworks and contemporary research practices.

In accordance with NEP-2020 guidelines, a minimum of fifty percent of the total credits of the programme shall be allocated to Core Courses, thereby ensuring a strong disciplinary foundation while maintaining academic flexibility, choice-based learning, and intellectual diversity.

Course Components Overview

Course Type	Description
1. Core Courses (CC)	Compulsory courses providing foundational and advanced knowledge rooted in Buddhist studies and IKS traditions
2. Discipline-Centric Electives (DCEC)	Specialized courses focusing on specific areas within the discipline
3. Skill Enhancement Courses (SEC)	Courses aimed at practical skills, including academic writing, manuscriptology, and digital humanities
4. Employability Courses (EEC)	Courses designed to enhance career-oriented and applied competencies
5. Dissertation/Research	Independent research component based on textual, field-based, or interdisciplinary approaches

9. Semester-wise Course Structure (20 Credits per Semester)

The M.A. Programme in Buddhist Studies shall be structured on a uniform 20-credit per semester system. One credit shall correspond to 15 hours of teaching–learning activities (lecture/tutorial) or its equivalent in practical, field-based, or experiential learning, computed over a minimum of fifteen working weeks in a semester. Accordingly, a 4-credit course shall ordinarily involve 60 hours of academic engagement, distributed across lectures, tutorials, and practical/field-based components, depending on the nature of the course. The curriculum is designed to ensure a balanced progression from foundational knowledge to advanced specialization and research, integrating the principles of the Indian Knowledge System (IKS), including textual study, śāstric traditions, and applied knowledge.

Semester I (Total Credits: 20)

Course Code	Course Title	Credits
BS-CC-101	A General Survey of History of Buddhism in India	4
BS-CC-102	Outline of Early Buddhist Literature	4
BS-CC-103	Readings in Buddhist Pali and Sanskrit Grammar (Elementary)	4
BS-CC-104	Select Buddhist Texts in Pali and Sanskrit	4
BS-SEC-105	Academic Writing and Communication	4

Semester II (Total Credits: 20)

Course Code	Course Title	Credits
BS-CC-201	Transition of Buddhism: Mahāyāna	4
BS-CC-202	Buddhist Art and Architecture	4
BS-CC-203	Buddhism and Other Traditions	4
BS-CC-204	Buddhism Outside India	4
BS-EEC-205	Buddhism and Contemporary Society	4

Exit Option

A student who successfully completes Semester I and Semester II (total 40 credits) shall be eligible for the award of a Postgraduate Diploma in Buddhist Studies, in accordance with the provisions of NEP-2020.

Semester III (Total Credits: 20)

(This semester shall also constitute Semester I of the One-Year M.A. Programme)

Course Code	Course Title	Credits
BS-CC-301	Readings in Pāli and Buddhist Sanskrit Grammar	4
BS-CC-302	Buddhist Ethics and Ecology	4
BS-DCEC-303	Discipline-Centric Elective I	4
BS-DCEC-304	Discipline-Centric Elective II	4
BS-SEC-305	Digital Humanities / Manuscriptology	2
BS-INT-306	Internship / Field Work	2

List of Discipline-Centric Electives (DCEC)

Students shall choose any two of the following:

- Theravāda Buddhism in Southeast Asia
- Mahāyāna Philosophy
- Buddhist Logic (Hetuvidyā)
- Pāli Nīti Literature
- Epigraphy and Buddhist Inscriptions
- Select Texts on Buddhist Logic and Epistemology
- Select Texts on Tantric Buddhist Thought
- Tantric Buddhist Icons

Semester IV (Total Credits: 20)

(This semester shall also constitute Semester II of the One-Year M.A. Programme)

Course Code	Course Title	Credits
BS-CC-401	Research Methodology in Buddhist Studies	4
BS-DIS-402	Dissertation / Project	16

Note

The One-Year M.A. Programme shall comprise Semester III and Semester IV of the Two-Year Programme, carrying a total of 40 credits. This structure ensures academic equivalence, vertical mobility, in accordance with the provisions of NEP-2020 and the broader framework of the Indian Knowledge System (IKS).

10. Assessment Method

The assessment of students in the M.A. Programme in Buddhist Studies shall be conducted in accordance with the guidelines of the University of Calcutta. The evaluation shall be continuous, comprehensive, and designed to assess both theoretical understanding and applied competencies.

1. Components of Assessment

The assessment for each course shall consist of the following components:

- Internal Assessment (IA): 20%
- End Semester Examination (ESE): 80%

2. Internal Assessment (20%)

The Internal Assessment shall be based on continuous evaluation through a combination of the following:

- Class tests / written assignments / Seminar presentations / term papers / Textual analysis and translation exercises (where applicable) / Fieldwork reports / project work (for relevant courses)
- Class participation and attendance

The Internal Assessment shall aim to evaluate analytical ability, clarity of expression, engagement with primary sources, and research aptitude.

3. End Semester Examination (80%)

The End Semester Examination shall be conducted by the University at the end of each semester and shall typically consist of:

- Descriptive and analytical questions
- Short notes and critical essays
- Text-based interpretation (for language and textual courses)

The duration of the examination shall be two (2) hours, unless otherwise specified by the University.

4. Dissertation Evaluation

The Dissertation/Project (Semester IV) shall be evaluated as follows:

- Evaluation of written dissertation: 80%
- Viva Voce examination: 20%

The dissertation shall be assessed on the basis of originality, methodological rigor, use of primary and secondary sources, analytical depth, and clarity of presentation.

5. Passing Criteria

A candidate shall be declared to have passed a course if he/she secures:

- A minimum of 40% marks in each course
- A minimum of 40% in aggregate, as per University regulations

6. Grading System

The evaluation shall follow the CBCS/NEP grading system adopted by the University of Calcutta, based on a 10-point CGPA scale, as prescribed from time to time.