

Letter of Reference GRADUATE PROGRAM



TO THE APPLICANT

Please print and complete this part of the form, and give the form to the person who will write this reference. The writer of this reference should be someone who knows you well, and can write about your academic ability, intellectual curiosity, and character.

Applicant's Name	<i>Last</i>	<i>First</i>	<i>Middle</i>
Address			
City	State		Zip
Phone	E-mail Address		

Federal law requires that references be made available to applicants upon enrollment unless they agree to waive their right of access. Applicants who do not waive their right will have access to their references should they enroll in DRBU.

☐ **I do** wish to waive my right of access to this letter

☐ **I do not** wish to waive my right of access to this letter

Signature	Date
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TO THE REFERRER

Thank you for taking the time to help the Admissions Committee in its evaluation of this candidate for admission. In your letter of reference, please assess the student's academic aptitude, character, personality, and any other information which you think may help the Admissions Committee to make an informed decision on the student's application.

Referrer's Name	<i>(Dr., Mr., Ms.) Last</i>	<i>First</i>	<i>Middle</i>
Address			
City	State		Zip
Phone	E-mail Address		
Title	Institution		
How long have you known the applicant?	In what capacity?		
If as Professor or Instructor, list subject(s) taught to applicant			
Signature	Date		

Please complete the other side →

EVALUATIONS

As a supplement to your letter of reference, please evaluate this student in terms of:

	No basis	Below average	Average	Good (above average)	Very Good (well above average)	Excellent (top 10%)	Outstanding (top 5%)	One of the very best (top 1%)
Academic achievement								
Intellectual promise								
Quality of writing								
Creative, original thought								
Productive class discussion								
Respect accorded by faculty								
Disciplined work habits								
Maturity								
Motivation								
Leadership								
Integrity								
Reaction to setbacks								
Concern for others								
Self-confidence								
Initiative, independence								
Curiosity and wonderment								
Overall								

☐ Check here if you would like to receive more information about Dharma Realm Buddhist University.

Please mail the completed form and letter of reference to the DRBU Office of Admissions and Financial Aid.

Office of Admissions and Financial Aid

Dharma Realm Buddhist University

4951 Bodhi Way

Ukiah, CA 95482



THE UNIVERSITY

Dharma Realm Buddhist University (DRBU) is a community dedicated to liberal education in the broad Buddhist tradition—a tradition characterized by knowledge in the arts and sciences, ethical reasoning, and contemplative insight. Its pedagogical aim thus, is twofold: to convey knowledge, and to activate an intrinsic wisdom possessed by all individuals. Developing this inherent capacity requires an orientation toward learning that is dialogical, interactive, probing, and deeply self-reflective. Such education makes one free in the deepest sense, as it is a liberation born of disciplined self-mastery rather than from desires unrestrained. This liberal education opens the opportunity to pursue the highest goals of human existence.

DRBU was established in 1976 by the Buddhist teacher, Venerable Master Hsuan Hua, and now has campuses at the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas in Ukiah, California, and at the Institute for World Religions in Berkeley, California.

LIBERAL ARTS LEARNING

A liberal education's aim is to free individuals from the weight of unexamined opinions and inherited biases, and in doing so, open them to a world of enlarged possibilities and new vistas. The goal of a liberating education is to learn how to think, not what to think. Never content simply to accept conventional truths and facile answers, liberally educated students strive to sharpen their minds, and gain the tools to inquire for themselves. Such learning implies a willingness to take up the examined life to fearlessly sift and winnow without, yet to equally challenge habituated patterns and afflictive tendencies within.

The pursuit of a liberal arts education means cultivating in oneself an ability to formulate important questions, and undertaking a search for honest answers, both through broad formal study and intimate self-knowledge. Thus the root word for education (L. *educere*) means “to draw or lead out” this latent tendency for understanding and wisdom. Such a broadening and deepening of the human mind and freeing of the human spirit was the original intent of a liberal education, and the enduring reason for pursuing it now.

TOWARD A CLASSICS CURRICULUM

What have come to be known as the “classics” represents humanity's rich legacy of thought, debate, and insight into the abiding issues that confront humankind. Far from being outdated or impractical, they are a bedrock that can provide students with a strong foundation for lifelong learning, discovery, and leadership in any field or specialty. The classical sources that form the heart of a liberal education encompass a diversity of approaches and experiences, a breadth and depth of knowledge and ways of knowing, that prepare students to engage the crucial issues of the day and thrive in a changing world.

These works do not so much impart “Truth,” as inspire a pursuit of truth, and convey the methods, pitfalls, and excitement of that search. The authors are often exemplars of the examined life, and remind us that genuine learning begins with curiosity and is sustained by questions. Searching for answers often entails doubt and a healthy unsettledness. While they may differ widely in views and beliefs, they share a common stance: an earnestness for serious probing and an uncommon quest for authenticity.

For these reasons, at DRBU, deep engagement with primary texts from both the East and the West and an orthopraxic approach to learning constitute the core curriculum. These seminal texts of the world continue to shed light on the persisting questions, challenges, and possibilities of human existence. They come embedded with sophisticated methods of deep questioning, testing, and affirming. The highest inspirations and cautionary limitations of the human condition find their clearest and most thoughtful expression in these enduring works. Because they are both timeless and timely, when engaged deeply through close reading, genuine discourse, and embodiment, they tap into a deeper source that stimulates fresh insights into our contemporary problems and into ourselves.

To achieve the breadth and depth of a liberal arts education styled in this tradition, DRBU extends the Western classics legacy to include the wisdom traditions of Asia, with their special emphasis on orthopraxy—where “rightness” is measured less by belief than through integrated experience.

MASTER OF ARTS IN BUDDHIST CLASSICS

The Master of Arts program in Buddhist Classics provides an understanding and appreciation of Buddhism through close reading and careful analysis of its primary sources: sutras/suttas, abhidharma and shastras, and shila and vinaya texts. Using theoretical materials as well as critical strategies drawn from the tradition itself, the program seeks to give students access both to the letter and the spirit of the texts, so as to retrieve their intended meanings and explore their wider implications. This program explores the express interaction between the theoretical and applied aspects of Buddhism as conveyed through its classical sources.

Buddhist texts seek as much to convey knowledge as to promote realization. As such, they are spiritual and philosophical documents whose precise meanings can only be grasped through a combined rational and spiritual discipline. The Buddhist Classics program draws on and advances this emerging discipline—the scholar-practitioner—which encourages students to learn about, from, and through the texts.

Advanced study of the Buddhist classics can appeal to a diverse range of interests and professional fields. The conceptual systems and spiritual techniques embedded within these texts reveal possibilities beyond our familiar conceptions, and offer sophisticated treatments of the key issues central to a deeper understanding of ourselves, our society, and nature itself.

For students of culture and religion, Buddhist sources offer unique theoretical insights into the workings of religion in society, as well as the inner dynamics of spiritual experience. For those whose study includes ritual practices, doctrinal systems, images and iconography, literature, language, parables and myths, these sources suggest new ways to depict and interpret these phenomena. An intrinsic appreciation of Buddhist primary sources can stimulate fresh perspectives in the areas of psychology, education, the sciences, the arts, ecology, law, music, and medicine. Overall, they expand the range of human possibilities, and thus stimulate us to imagine new ways in which we might construct meaning, give purpose to our lives, and further our liberation.

The Master of Arts in Buddhist Classics consists of five primary strands: Buddhist texts, comparative hermeneutics, contemplative hermeneutics, language study, and thesis. The course of study can be completed in four semesters, and culminates with a thesis project undertaken in the last year.

COMMUNITY OF SCHOLAR-PRACTITIONERS

At DRBU, monastic and lay scholar-practitioners work and live together in a spirit of shared inquiry and the free exchange of ideas. Students pursue a balanced course of study and practice aimed at integrating the ethical, analytical, and contemplative dimensions of learning—time-honored hallmarks of a truly educated person. It is a vibrant community of faculty, students, monks, nuns, and laity all striving to actually ‘walk the Path,’ and to reanimate ancient, abiding teachings for a modern, changing world.

In DRBU tradition, wholesome fellowship is taught to come in two forms: friendship among peers, and friendship with mentors and teachers. These friendships encourage mutual aspirations and foster basic goodness and inherent wisdom. Peers encourage each other in a lifestyle of study and authentic living, creating a culture of collaboration and camaraderie congruent with earnest investigation. Mentors provide guidance and embodied examples of what students can learn and become.

These ideals of wholesome fellowship are upheld both inside and outside the classroom. Throughout the day, in discussions and interactions with fellow learners of every generation, students encounter values discussed in the classroom in a way that directly relates to their lives. This in turn infuses community life with a quality of genuine questioning that permeates student activities—inspiring service, work study, and volunteering, and informing the code of conduct shared by faculty, staff and students. Merely taking part in a community devoted to selfless living can itself be one of the most beneficial and inspiring experiences among all the opportunities at DRBU.

Each student’s relationship to the school’s community becomes an integral part of the DRBU educational process. As students progress through their own personal and intellectual development, the community provides a network of support through companionship, thoughtful conversation, and encouragement. Through student activities and work study, students contribute their own effort and unique gifts to support the school’s community. A sense of gratitude, teamwork and appreciation for interconnectedness is an invaluable result of a DRBU education.