



# THE CHAPLAINCY INSTITUTE

An Interfaith Seminary & Community

## Frequently Asked Questions

Updated March 2020

### 1. WILL COMPLETING THIS PROGRAM MAKE ME A CHAPLAIN AND ENABLE ME TO GET A JOB?

Completing this program is one component of qualifying for professional chaplaincy work. Employment in health care chaplaincy usually requires additional preparations. Professional chaplains are trained and credentialed by several organizations; many employers require this further training and certification. More info is at [https://chaplaincyinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Chaplaincy-A\\_Brief\\_Intro.pdf](https://chaplaincyinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Chaplaincy-A_Brief_Intro.pdf)

### 2. WHERE DO I DO MY PRACTICUM?

Your practicum can be done either through a Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) site or at a location (or locations) of your choice. Possibilities include hospitals, places of worship, prisons, assisted living facilities, supporting activist groups, singing at bedsides, leading spiritual growth workshops, and many other settings. Choose a practicum that will help you build a ministry and skill set suited to your unique call to spiritual service. Some students create a blended practicum, allowing for exploration of multiple ministerial roles. Although ChI provides support for the discernment process in choosing a practicum, students are responsible for making their own practicum arrangements.

### 3. WHERE AND WHEN ARE THE COURSES HELD?

Most courses take place in Berkeley, California in the Babcock Room at Christ Church. The church is located at 2138 Cedar Street in Berkeley, 0.6 mile from the Berkeley BART station and a block from many bus lines' stops. Each month of the year, one to three different courses are offered. Students choose the attendance schedule that works best for them. For people traveling from other locations, taking two courses back-to-back can reduce the number of trips to Berkeley. Some students come to course intensives in Berkeley eight times in one year, while others spread out the visits over multiple years. In addition, we are offering a limited number of online courses, which can be taken from anywhere via Zoom videoconference.

### 4. WHAT HAPPENS AT A COURSE INTENSIVE?

Each course has a focus theme—world religions, basic skills of interfaith ministry or a deep focus on a special topic that relates to ministry or spiritual care. Class content flows between didactic and experiential, theological and psychological, artistic and reflective modalities. Although each is different, all of the courses contain elements related to ministry, chaplaincy and spiritual care skill-building. Foundational courses include contextual learning trips (site visits) to a center of worship for further learning about a faith tradition, such as attending a Mosque, a Hindu temple, a Buddhist monastery, or a Synagogue.

### 5. I AM A LICENSED CLINICIAN, SO CAN I GET CONTINUING EDUCATION UNITS?

We encourage you to approach your board and appeal to them for CEUs for our courses.

**6. I AM NOT SURE IF I WANT TO TAKE THE WHOLE PROGRAM. CAN I ATTEND AN OPEN COURSE OR ELECTIVE TO CHECK IT OUT?**

Yes. We appreciate that choosing to enroll in a program such as this is a considerable investment of time and resources. You may attend up to three electives without applying to and matriculating into this program. More info about enrolling for open courses and electives is at <https://chaplaincyinstitute.org/open-courses-electives/>

**7. HOW SOON CAN I START?**

Our Chaplaincy Program operates on semi-rolling admissions, with four months of the year offering a required first foundational course. In some cases, students begin at another time of year with an elective or two. In most cases, you can begin as soon as eight weeks after we receive all of your application materials, including letters of reference.

**8. HOW DO I ENROLL IN THE PROGRAM?**

By completing a written application and submitting it with other required documents. Acceptance into the program is based on a written application and interview via Zoom videoconference. The Chaplaincy Program application can be downloaded at: [https://chaplaincyinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Chaplaincy-Program-Application-2019-rev\\_03\\_2019.pdf](https://chaplaincyinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Chaplaincy-Program-Application-2019-rev_03_2019.pdf)

**9. CAN YOU HELP ME WITH A FOREIGN STUDENT VISA?**

No.

**10. WHAT ARE THE PREREQUISITES FOR ENROLLMENT?**

A Bachelor's degree. If you do not have a Bachelor's degree, you can apply for an Education Prerequisite Waiver.

**11. DOES THIS COURSE QUALIFY FOR FINANCIAL AID FROM THE GOVERNMENT?**

No. However, if you choose to enroll in the Joint Program with Starr King School for the Ministry, financial aid and government grants may be available.

**12. DO YOU OFFER SCHOLARSHIPS?**

Yes. Please email [admissions@chaplaincyinstitute.org](mailto:admissions@chaplaincyinstitute.org) to learn more about qualifications and the financial aid application process.

**13. WHAT IS THE COST OF THE PROGRAM?**

The cost is \$17,595 for eight required courses, online classes and 12-13 days of elective courses. There are additional seminary and community fees. Payment can be made in installments. More info is at <https://chaplaincyinstitute.org/interfaith-chaplaincy-program-fees/>

**14. WHAT IF I HAVE STUDIED ELSEWHERE?**

If you have a theological degree from a seminary, graduate school, or the like, you may request a waiver of some of the course requirements. These are addressed on a case-by-case basis.

**15. CAN I GET ACADEMIC CREDIT FOR THIS COURSE?**

We are not an accredited school in the same manner of traditional denomination-centric seminaries. However, students enrolled at the Graduate Theological Union (GTU) have taken our courses for credit in their programs with prior approval from their academic advisors. The full Chaplaincy Program is valued at 21 graduate level units toward a Masters Degree at Starr King School for the Ministry. Also, the Association of Professional Chaplains assigns 24 graduate-level credits to people who have completed the program, helping to fulfill the requirements for board certification as a professional chaplain.

**16. CAN YOU TELL ME MORE ABOUT THE INTEGRATION OF CREATIVITY AND THE ARTS INTO THE CURRICULUM?**

The arts as a “second language” are emphasized at ChI because they are a primary mode through which we sense and express the Divine throughout our lives. Creative expression of the religious or spiritual experience has been part of all religions and faith traditions, dating back to prehistoric times. We hold, as a learning objective, the fostering of creative approaches to ministry as a universal, accessible pathway. Use of the arts in spiritual care connects people with meaning and with Source, whether or not they relate to the vocabulary of “God” or “the Divine.”

**17. HOW MANY PEOPLE ARE IN THE COURSES?**

Courses typically have from ten to twenty students. Small group size ensures a relaxed, intimate environment with a high level of interaction between faculty and other participants, with ample opportunity for dialogue and questions.

**18. HOW LONG IS THIS PROGRAM?**

The shortest amount of time to complete the course work is under a year, and all program requirements can be completed in under 18 months, from application to ordination (if approved). Often students extend their studies over multiple years; your course of study can extend up to three years. The courses do not need to be taken sequentially after the first foundational course, and the program calendar repeats itself each year.

**19. HOW MANY (IF ANY) COURSES ARE OFFERED LONG-DISTANCE OVER THE INTERNET?**

At this time, only one two-day elective is online only. Courses routinely involve online and independent work followed by two to seven days in person in the Berkeley classroom. Completing the Chaplaincy Program requires a total of 43 days in class in Berkeley, distributed over a minimum of eight trips.

**20. WHAT ARE THE COMPONENTS OF THE CHAPLAINCY PROGRAM?**

The Chaplaincy Program includes eight required courses plus 12 or 13 days of elective courses, all in-person in an intensive format. Independent homework includes online classes, reading and writing, field visits, personal spiritual practice, a 200- to 400-hour practicum, and vocational discernment.

**21. WHO IS THIS PROGRAM FOR?**

This program is designed for people who are called to serve in an interfaith capacity in our increasingly diverse world. Often people enroll either in open courses or the full Chaplaincy Program to satisfy a deeply held longing to live a meaningful, engaged life. Some of our graduates seek professional chaplaincy or other ministerial roles, while others evolve creative community ministries in many forms.

**22. WHO TAKES THIS PROGRAM?**

Our students come from a diverse range of backgrounds—from nurses to yoga instructors to business people to psychologists. They also come from a wide range of theological backgrounds—for example, Buddhists, Catholics, Pagan, New Thought, and many people who don't define their spirituality through a specific faith tradition.