



GBC Resolution from 2014

317: ISKCON Disciple Course Mandate

Whereas there is a need for standardized training of new devotees about the:

- a. Preeminent position of Srila Prabhupada
- b. Duties of a disciple regarding the guru and other ISKCON authorities
- c. Appropriate selection of a *diksa-guru*
- d. Importance of initiation vows
- e. Service to our parampara and the mission of ISKCON
- f. Other relevant matters

Whereas ISKCON does not have a standard training system or course for new members in regards to the specific duties of initiated disciples;

Whereas such a course would promote shared vision, unity, and cooperation among ISKCON devotees around the world;

Whereas an ISKCON Disciple Course was created under the auspices of the GBC Guru Services Committee, the Mayapur Institute, and ISKCON Communications with the input of senior devotees, *diksa-* and *siksa-gurus*, and educators from around the world;

Whereas the Disciple Course was taught and tested for two years in many diverse countries evoking positive results and feedback from new and senior devotees;

Whereas the Disciple Course is translated into major languages including Hindi, Bengali, Spanish, German, Portuguese, Italian, Russian and Chinese, and is also available online in English via the Bhaktivedanta College, Radhadesh;

Whereas the Guru Services Committee is working with ISKCON Desire Tree to create online versions of the Course in several Indian languages;

Whereas ISKCON leaders have requested the Disciple Course be mandatory before initiation and ideally before devotees select a *diksa-guru*

RESOLVED:

That the ISKCON Disciple Course, as developed by the GBC Guru Services Committee, shall be a mandatory pre-requisite for all devotees accepting first or second initiation by an ISKCON guru, effective Janmastami, 2015. After that date, no guru may initiate a disciple who has not first completed the Disciple Course. This is in addition to current requirements of new initiates.



Furthermore, all GBC Members and Temple Presidents shall ensure that within their respective areas of authority, no later than Janmastami, 2015:

1. Devotees shall be advised and encouraged to complete the Disciple Course before selecting a *diksa-guru*
2. Devotees shall have reasonable access to enroll in the Disciple Course
3. A sufficient number of teachers shall be identified and facilitated to teach the Course
4. No devotee shall be allowed to accept initiation before completing the Course (subject to exemptions below)

Teachers/facilitators of the ISKCON Disciple Course must:

- Be initiated for at least 5 years
- Have completed the ISKCON Disciple Course
- Be recommended by their Disciple Course facilitator
- Have completed the VTE Teacher Training Course 1 (TTC1)* or have equivalent training or experience
- Have the approval of their local GBC representative
- Teach from the official curriculum, manuals and other materials as approved by the GBC Guru Services Committee

Illiterate devotees are welcome to participate in the Course. Upon completion they shall be required to undergo a minimal oral examination at the discretion of the teacher.

In rare cases of the infirmity or terminal illness of a prospective disciple the requirement for completing the Disciple Course may be waived by the local Temple President.

GBC members who find a specific area within their jurisdiction needs more time for implementation due to exceptional circumstances, may request an extension of up to one year by submitting a request no later than July 31, 2015, to the GBC Executive Committee for approval.

**An exemption for the requirement of the TTC1 may be granted by the local GBC Zonal Secretary based upon an assessment of the potential teacher's maturity and teaching skills. The Mayapur Institute shall provide to the GBC a list of criteria by which such evaluations should be made.*