

# **Working arrangements**

## of the Public Preceptors' College

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## **A The Internal Organisation Of The College**

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### **A1 The College**

#### **1.1**

Public Preceptors collectively (the College) are responsible for their own internal arrangements, such as the appointment of officers, setting up of committees, delegation of responsibilities and powers. All such arrangements are to be agreed by consensus of the College and can be ended or rearranged by consensus of the College.

#### **1.2**

There will be at least one meeting of the full College each year at which all matters concerning the functioning of the College will be open to review and revision.

#### **1.3**

The College will review these working arrangements each year.

#### **1.4**

Since Public Preceptors will be operating in different countries and cultures, area meetings of the College may be called from time to time, to discuss matters of concern within their own area. Area meetings may evolve their own internal organisation, as they see fit, keeping the Chair and Deputies informed of developments.

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### **A2 Public Preceptors' kulas**

#### **2.1**

The working unit of the College will be the kula, consisting of at least five Public Preceptors.

#### **2.2**

Kulas may be formed on any basis their members think appropriate and kulas will not have exclusive responsibility for ordinations in any particular geographical area or Triratna Dharma Centre.

#### **2.3**

Some kulas will be teams that stay together for some time, while others may be put together in special circumstances, for instance to perform a single ordination in urgent circumstances.

#### **2.4**

Each Public Preceptor who is active in conducting Public Ordinations will belong to at least one kula that has some continuity: some may belong to more than one, especially to facilitate the formation of new kulas.

#### **2.5**

Kulas will make decisions on the basis of consensus and will organise themselves in whatever way

they see fit.

#### 2.6

Kulas may consist of Public Preceptors who are not working directly alongside each other, but all members will have sufficient understanding of how the others are working to be confident that those they are proposing to ordain are ready.

#### 2.7

Kulas may consist of members of both sexes when necessary and convenient but will be single-sex wherever possible.

#### 2.8

Each kula will appoint one member to sit on the Kula Representatives Forum (see under). It would be preferable if each representative were to serve for at least two years, so as to provide some continuity, but this will be left to the discretion of the kula.

#### 2.9

The kula's representative may or may not have other responsibilities, such as chairing meetings or coordinating the kula, at the kula's discretion.

#### 2.10

If a kula consists of both men and women then two representatives may be appointed, one of each sex.

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### **A3      The Kula Representatives Forum**

#### 3.1

The representatives of the kulas collectively constitute the Kula Representatives Forum.

#### 3.2

Any kula that is authorising ordinations or appointing Private Preceptors will have a representative who is attending all meetings of the Forum.

#### 3.3

The Forum will be responsible for ensuring common standards of ordination and selection of Private Preceptors and of maintaining harmony between the different kulas internationally.

#### 3.4

The Forum will provide training and information to assist Public and Private Preceptors in carrying out their duties.

#### 3.5

The Forum may decide to organise itself into area meetings, which will meet to discuss matters of concern within their area.

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## **A4 Chair and Deputy-Chairs of the College**

### **4.1**

A Chair of the College will be elected by the whole College and will normally serve for five years. The Chair can stand for re-election. The term of the chair should be no more than a total of ten years.

### **4.2**

The Chair is responsible for ensuring the unity and common standards of ordination and appointment of Private Preceptors for the College as a whole.

### **4.3**

The Chair will arrange the meetings of the whole College in consultation with, and with the assistance of, the Deputy-Chairs.

### **4.4**

The Chair of the College will chair, or arrange for the chairing of, meetings of the College, collecting items for the agenda and notifying all members of topics for discussion.

### **4.5**

The Chair will also call and chair, or arrange for the chairing of, meetings of the Kula Representatives Forum.

### **4.6**

The Chair will form the College Chair's Council to assist him or her in carrying out his or her responsibilities.

### **4.7**

The College will also elect two or three Deputy-Chairs, normally for a five year term. At least one of the Deputy-Chairs will be of the opposite sex to the Chair.

### **4.8**

The Deputy-Chairs will assist the Chair of the College in carrying out his or her function and will deputise for him or her when necessary.

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## **A5 The Chair's Council and other advisory meetings**

### **5.1**

The Chair and/or Deputy-Chairs may establish from time to time meetings to advise them and assist them in carrying out their responsibilities.

### **5.2**

Such meetings may consist of whomever the Chair or Deputy-Chairs consider suitable, whether members of the College or not, and shall meet on whatever basis they consider appropriate, with whatever terms of reference they choose.

### 5.3

In particular the Chair, with the advice of the Deputy Chairs, may establish a Chair's Council to advise him or her in the carrying out of his or her responsibilities and to help coordinate whatever other advisory or executive meetings the Chair may establish.

### 5.4

The Chair, with advice from the Deputies and Council, may form various committees, whether on a standing or temporary basis, to advise of particular issues, to liaise with various other bodies or institutions, or to carry out particular tasks. Such committees will be answerable to the Chair, supported by the Deputies and Council.

### 5.5

The Chair, Deputies, and Chair's Council will make reports to all College members three or four times each year and will submit in person a full report of their activities and decisions to the principal annual International College meeting. All College members will have the opportunity to question the report and to accept or reject it at each such plenary meeting of the College.

### 5.6

The Chair of the College, together with the Deputies and Chair's Council, is answerable to the College. The Chair, with the Deputies and Chair's Council, will sometimes need to make decisions on behalf of the College as a whole between College meetings. College members will put any objections or queries they may have to such decisions directly to the Chair, Deputies, or Council members, or to the Kula Representatives Forum, as quickly as possible. They will also take the opportunity to raise any issues about the decisions and functioning of the Chair, Deputies, and Council at plenary meetings of the College.

### 5.7

The Chair and two of the Deputy-Chairs of the Public Preceptors' College are ex-officio members of the Triratna International Council, and its Steering Group. The Chair of the Public Preceptors' College will be the Chair of the International Council, and the Steering Group, but may delegate the chairing and facilitating of meetings.

## **B Public Preceptors**

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### **B1 Duties of Public Preceptors**

#### **1.1**

Public Preceptors are responsible for conducting Public Ordination ceremonies, witnessing that the candidate is effectively Going for Refuge to the Three Jewels and is ready to join the Order.

#### **1.2**

This requires them to be confident that the candidate is ready, has been given an adequate training, and has been selected with the general consent of those Order members who know him or her. In addition Public Preceptors should be confident that the Private Preceptor is the appropriate person to carry out their Private Ordination.

#### **1.3**

Public Preceptors are also responsible for liaising with the Private Preceptor of the candidate to arrange for the two ceremonies to be conducted appropriately.

#### **1.4**

Public Preceptors are not expected to keep up a personal relationship with those they have ordained, or even to have personal dialogue with them, but should be able to be seen by them from time to time. They should therefore be willing to offer opportunities for those they have ordained to see them, for example on retreats, giving talks etc.

#### **1.5**

If for any reason the Private Preceptor is unable to keep up contact with the person they have ordained then the Public Preceptor should take their place, or ensure that it is taken.

#### **1.6**

Public Preceptors are responsible for the harmony of the College and for maintaining common standards of ordination and appointment of Private Preceptors, by cooperating with other Public Preceptors through the annual College meetings and their own kulas.

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### **B2 Qualifications Of Public Preceptors**

#### **2.1**

Public Preceptors will normally be Private Preceptors of at least five years standing.

#### **2.2**

Public Preceptors will only be appointed when there are people whom they could potentially ordain.

#### **2.3**

Qualifications to be looked for in Public Preceptors are:

a

proven effectiveness as kalyana mitras and Private Preceptors, especially able to deal with the complexities of kalyana mitrata, above all not being prone to inflation and able to work with other people's projections and expectations in an appropriate way.

b

good understanding of their own character, personality, and personal conditioning.

c

good skills in communication, especially being open to criticism and comment.

d

strong and deep spiritual practice, including meditation and ability to realise the Dharma in their experience.

e

consistently skilful ethical practice with all serious breaches from the past cleared up.

f

harmony with the spirit of the Order, active in its life, and no major unaddressed difficulties with other Order members, especially other Preceptors.

g

willingness to work with other Public Preceptors to ensure the unity of the Order and common standards of ordination.

h

willingness to attend meetings of the College, to participate in a kula, and to attend retreats and training with other College members.

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### **B3 Appointment Of Public Preceptors**

3.1

Public Preceptors will be appointed with the active consent of all members of the College.

3.2

Candidates to be Public Preceptors can be proposed by any kula of Public Preceptors, who will notify the Chair.

3.3

The Chair, after ascertaining that the candidate is willing to be a Public Preceptor and is open to comment from other Order members, will, in consultation with the Deputy-Chairs, determine the best way of testing and preparing the candidate, ensuring that their qualifications are thoroughly explored.

3.4

All College members will be notified, at a College meeting or in writing, that the candidate is being recommended by the College, and will have the chance to comment.

3.5

If there is no objection from Public Preceptors within a month of notification, the Chair will give all Order members the opportunity to comment on the candidates suitability, especially by a notice in Shabda, and will seek out views from their chapter and past and present colleagues, as well as

those they have privately ordained or been kalyana mitra to. Although it may not always be possible to have a complete consensus on their suitability from Order members, a thorough attempt will be made to resolve any objections that are raised before submitting the proposal to the College, including checking with another senior Order member that the consultation has been effectively completed.

### 3.6

Once the candidate has the backing of other Order members, the Chair of the College will notify all College members, asking them to respond approving or objecting to the appointment. Any College member can ask for the proposal to be deferred to an area or full meeting of the College. Any College member who is out of contact for more than one month will be deemed to have consented.

### 3.7

Once all College members have signified their consent in writing or at a minuted meeting, the Chair will announce the appointment in Shabda.

### 3.8

The Chair, with the advice and assistance of the Deputy-Chairs, will arrange for the new Public Preceptor to be trained in his or her responsibilities and to join a kula.

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## **B4      Review Of Public Preceptors**

### 4.1

Seven years after their first appointment as a Public Preceptor, the suitability of a Public Preceptor will be subject to review.

### 4.2

The Chair, in consultation with the Deputy-Chairs, will determine the best way of reviewing the Public Preceptor, ensuring that their qualifications are thoroughly explored. If the Chair or Deputies are themselves to be reviewed, they will hand this responsibility to another member of the College.

### 4.3

All College members will be notified by e-mail that the Public Preceptor is being put forward for review and will have the chance to comment.

### 4.4

If there is no objection from Public Preceptors within a month of notification, the Chair will give all Order members the opportunity to comment on the Public Preceptors suitability, especially by a notice in Shabda, and will seek out especially views from their chapter and past and present colleagues, as well as those they have ordained, privately and publicly, or been kalyana mitra to. Although it may not always be possible to have a complete consensus on their suitability from Order members, a thorough attempt will be made to resolve any objections that are raised before submitting the proposal to the College, including checking with another senior Order member that the review has been effectively completed.



#### 4.5

Once the Public Preceptor under review has the backing of other Order members, the Chair of the College will inform all College members, asking them to respond as soon as possible, approving or objecting to them continuing to act as Public Preceptors. Any College member can ask for the proposal to be deferred to a regional or full meeting of the College. Any College member who is out of contact for more than one month will be deemed to have consented.

#### 4.6

Once all College members have signified their consent in writing or at a minuted meeting of the College, the Chair will announce in Shabda that they will continue to act as Public Preceptor.

#### 4.7

Public Preceptors will be presumed to be suitable to continue conducting ordinations until the College decides otherwise, so they will be free to continue while the review is in progress, unless specifically asked by the Chair not to do so.

#### 4.8

If the Chair, in consultation with the Deputy-Chairs, considers that valid objections have been raised and have not been resolved, he or she will notify other College members, asking them to agree whether or not the Public Preceptor under review should continue to conduct Public Ordinations. Any College member can ask for a decision to be deferred to a regional or a full meeting of the College. Any College member who is out of contact for more than one month will be deemed to have consented.

#### 4.9

If approval to continue is not given, the Order will be notified in Shabda that they will not be conducting ordinations for the time being.

#### 4.10

If it is not thought appropriate that the person continues to conduct ordinations, they remain Preceptors to the people they ordained. At the discretion of the other members of the College, they will still be eligible to attend meetings of the College.

#### 4.11

At any point they can submit themselves for review again, following the same procedure.

#### 4.12

If any Public Preceptor raises objections to a Public Preceptor continuing to conduct ordinations at any point, then the Chair of the College will submit the matter to the College as a whole, and the rest of the College will decide by consensus whether they are to continue or not. The Chair may ask the Public Preceptor not to continue while this is being considered.

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## **B5 Retiring from the College**

5.1. Public Preceptors will retire from active membership of the College at latest when they reach the age of 75. Where circumstances make it necessary that a Public Preceptor remains active after 75, their membership of the College can be extended by up to a year at a time, with the full agreement of the others in their Kula, and the agreement of the Chair and Deputies.

5.2. When a Public Preceptor retires they no longer attend full College meetings, perform any Public Ordinations, or function as one of the quorum of five Public Preceptors making a formal decision about ordinations.

5.3. They obviously remain Public Preceptor to all those they have ordained. Depending on age and health some of the responsibilities involved with this may in time devolve to the Chair and Deputies, or another Public Preceptor agreed by them.

## **C Private Preceptors**

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### **C1 Duties Of Private Preceptors**

#### **1.1**

Private Preceptors are responsible for conducting Private Ordination ceremonies, witnessing that the candidate is effectively Going for Refuge to the Three Jewels in the same sense as they do, and is ready to join the Order.

#### **1.2**

This requires them to be confident, by direct experience, that the candidate is effectively Going for Refuge to the Three Jewels and ready to join the Order.

#### **1.3**

To have that confidence they should be closely involved in the candidate's preparation for ordination over a number of years.

#### **1.4**

Private Preceptors should keep regular contact with those they have ordained for at least the first five years after they have been ordained and thereafter as appropriate. This means that they should be careful that they have sufficient time and should therefore take on only as many ordines as they can keep in appropriate contact with. Before taking on a new ordinand for training, the Private Preceptors should discuss each one with his chapter, and with a Public Preceptor who knows the Preceptor and the ordinand.

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### **C2 Qualifications Of Private Preceptors**

#### **2.1**

Private Preceptors will normally have been Order members for at least ten years before entering the consultation process to become a preceptor.

#### **2.2**

Private Preceptors will only be appointed when there is at least one person approaching ordination who would like them to be their Private Preceptor.

#### **2.3**

Qualifications to be looked for in Private Preceptors are:

##### **a.**

proven effectiveness as kalyana mitras, especially able to deal with the complexities of kalyana mitrata, above all not being prone to inflation and able to work with other people's projections in an appropriate way.

##### **b.**

good understanding of their own character, personality, and personal conditioning.

- c. good skills in communication, especially being open to criticism and comment.
- d. strong and deep spiritual practice, especially in terms of meditation and ability to realise the Dharma in their experience.
- e. consistently skilful ethical practice with all serious breaches from the past cleared up.
- f. harmony with the spirit of the Order, active in its life, and no major unaddressed difficulties with other Order members, especially other Preceptors.
- g. willingness to work with the Public Preceptors to ensure the unity of the Order and common standards of ordination.
- h. willingness to attend meetings of Private Preceptors and special retreats organised by the College.

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### **C3 Appointment of Private Preceptors**

#### **3.1**

Any Order member who has been ordained for more than ten years, who is asked to be a Private Preceptor by anyone of the same sex as them who has asked for ordination and who is willing to carry out the responsibility should apply to a Public Preceptor who is willing to put forward their candidacy. No Private Preceptor, potential or actual, should approach anyone, offering to be their Preceptor.

#### **3.2**

The Public Preceptor will initiate consultation with other Order members as to their suitability to act as a Private Preceptor by placing a notice in Shabda and by writing to the candidate's chapter, kalyana mitras, Preceptors, people they have been kalyana mitra to, and other close colleagues or associates. At this stage the candidacy is put forward without any decision from the College about its suitability.

#### **3.3**

Once the Public Preceptor responsible for the consultation is satisfied that all parties have been given adequate time to respond, and have checked with another senior Order member that that is the case, he or she should put the proposal to their own College kula.

#### **3.4**

The kula will ensure that all proper steps have been taken by the correspondent for the Private Preceptor, including checking with another senior Order member that that the consultation has been effectively completed. If the kula is satisfied that the candidate will be a suitable Private Preceptor, the kula may make the appointment. A member of the kula, usually the correspondent, will announce the appointment in Shabda, and inform all other College members of the appointment.

### 3.5

The kula that made the proposal will induct the new Private Preceptor into the performance of his or her duties.

### 3.6

The Chair will try to develop ways of testing and training Private Preceptors, with the help of the Deputy-Chairs, and will train other College members in this work.

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## C4 Review of Private Preceptors

### 4.1

Seven years after their first appointment, the suitability of a Private Preceptor will be subject to review. Further reviews will be discretionary.

### 4.2

The Chair, in consultation with the Deputy-Chairs, will determine the best way of reviewing the Private Preceptor, ensuring that their qualifications are thoroughly investigated.

### 4.4

The kula will ensure that all proper steps have been taken by the correspondent for the Private Preceptor, including checking with another senior Order member that the review has been effectively completed. If the kula is satisfied that it is appropriate for the Private Preceptor to continue doing ordinations, a member of the kula, usually the correspondent, will inform all other College members of the decision.

### 4.5

If no College members have signified an objection, the correspondent will announce in Shabda that they will continue to act as Private Preceptor.

### 4.6

Private Preceptors will be presumed to be suitable to continue conducting ordinations until the College decides otherwise, so they will be free to continue while the review is in progress, unless specifically asked by the Chair not to do so.

### 4.7

If the Chair, in consultation with the Deputy-Chairs, considers that valid objections have been raised and have not been resolved, he or she will notify other College members, asking them to agree whether or not the Private Preceptor under review should continue to conduct Private Ordinations. Any College member can ask for a decision to be deferred to a regional or a full meeting of the College. Any College member who is out of contact for more than one month will be deemed to have consented.

### 4.8

If it is not thought appropriate that the person continues to conduct ordinations, they remain Preceptor to the people they ordained.

#### 4.9

At any point they can submit themselves for review again, following the same procedure.

#### 4.10

If any Public Preceptor raises objections to a Private Preceptor continuing to conduct ordinations at any point, then the Chair of the College will submit the matter to the College as a whole, and the College will decide by consensus whether they are to continue or not. The Chair may ask the Private Preceptor not to conduct ordinations while this is being considered.

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## **D Preparation, Selection, and Ordination of New Order Members**

### **1.1**

Any kula of Public Preceptors may make the final decision about an ordination, including who acts as Private Preceptor, and will be free to organise preparation for and conducting of the ordination in whatever way they think appropriate.

### **1.2**

The members of the kula are not all expected to know the candidate for ordination personally or to have been involved in their preparation. Their duty is to ensure that preparation has been sufficiently thorough and that proper consultation has taken place with other Order members.

### **1.3**

Ordination requests may be directed to any member of the Order. The requester should be directed to a Public Preceptor, who will explain the procedure to them.

### **1.4**

Candidates for ordination will be free to prepare for ordination with and be ordained by any Private Preceptor they choose, if the Preceptor is willing to accept them. Public Preceptors would usually be proposed by the Public Preceptors' kula and agreed with the candidate for ordination. Private Preceptors, however, may only ordain members of their own sex and Public Preceptors may only ordain members of the opposite sex under exceptional situations of emergency, such as terminal illness, and may only do so with the approval of the Chair, in consultation with the Deputies.

### **1.5**

Names for new Order members should, for the time being, be in Pali or Sanskrit and not reproduce ones already given at any time. Proposed names should be checked by the Private Preceptor with a scholar and checked against the list maintained on the Triratna Buddhist Order Names website. Any variation in these arrangements will be authorised by the Chair or a Deputy Chair.

### **1.6**

It is the responsibility of the Public Preceptor to notify the Order registrar of new ordinations and to publish them in Shabda.

### **1.7**

Kalyana mitra ceremonies for mitras may be carried out by any Public Preceptor, or any Private Preceptor with the agreement of a Public Preceptor. The Public Preceptor is responsible for making sure that the celebrant has checked that the criteria for kalyana mitras have been properly met.

**1.1**

Since it is the Public Preceptor's witnessing of Going for Refuge in the ordination ceremony that introduces someone into the Order, it is for a person's Public Preceptor to declare that they are no longer a member of the Order if they resign or if, after following proper procedures, they are found to have acted in ways incompatible with membership of the Order.

**1.2**

When someone resigns from the Order, the Public Preceptor will accept it at his or her discretion – although a resignation cannot truly be refused, but sometimes it can be usefully delayed to give more time for consideration.

**1.3**

When an Order member speaks or acts in a way that is incompatible with membership of the Order and refuses to confess or make amends, then the Public Preceptor may no longer be able to recognise them as a member of the Order. Before declaring them to be expelled or suspended, however, the Preceptor will discuss with their kula of Public Preceptors, the Private Preceptor and with the Chair's and Deputies' meeting. Those Order members who know the person, especially in their chapter and region, will also need to be consulted and to support the action.

**1.4**

Suspension should be for a clearly defined period, with clear goals about what needs to be resolved to let us make the decision whether or not to reinstate the Order member who has been suspended.

**1.5**

All such acceptances of resignations, suspensions, and expulsions will be notified to the Order through the appropriate channels with as much of the circumstances spelled out as is appropriate and full details of the process whereby the decision has been reached.

**1.6**

If someone has been suspended from the Order, their Public Preceptor, together with their Private Preceptor, should decide when to reinstate them to the Order, if he or she has fully cleared up the issue that led to their suspension, having consulted Order members in the region to ascertain that they are willing to accept them back, and other Order members who know the person or were affected directly by whatever caused the suspension.

**1.7**

If the Public Preceptor is no longer available, through death or other circumstances, then the Chair or a Deputy Chair of the College will act in their place.