

INITIATION GUIDELINES/FORMS



Version History – V.1.4_06_23_2019

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INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR KRISHNA CONSCIOUSNESS
Founder-Acarya: His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

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Document Versioning: 14

Scope: The scope of this document is to highlight the process and pre-requisites for taking Siksha (instruction) and Diksha (initiation) in ISKCON Seattle. 1st Initiates who aspire to take second initiation must review this document which would assist in their Spiritual planning process towards this very Important step in their Sadhana. Please remember that the process of developing a service relationship with an ISKCON guru is a **natural** one that stands the test of time.

Introduction:

This Document will first highlight Excerpts from ISKCON Law and then provide the process, pre-requisites and additional guidelines required for both 1st and 2nd initiation in ISKCON Seattle.

Excerpts from ISKCON Law on Discipleship in ISKCON

Excerpts from ISKCON Law on Discipleship in ISKCON

7.2.1. First (Harināma) Initiation

7.2.1.1. Qualifications for First Initiation

7.2.1.1.1. One year preparatory period

In order to receive first initiation one must have been engaged favourably in devotional service, strictly following the four regulative principles and chanting sixteen rounds a day, for at least one year without interruption.

7.2.1.1.2. First Six Month Period

During the first six months of following the four regulative principles and chanting sixteen rounds daily, a new devotee who is aspiring for initiation should not commit himself to a particular initiating *guru*. Rather, he should chant Srila Prabhupada's *praṇāma-mantra* and worship him as Founder-Ācārya of ISKCON and as his *śikṣā guru*.

7.2.1.1.3. Second Six Month Period

After successfully completing the first six-month preparatory period, and after passing the required examination, the candidate may choose his future *dikṣā guru*. Receiving permission from that *guru*, and notifying the local temple president, the candidate should take shelter and begin to worship that *guru* as his own spiritual master and chant his *praṇāma-mantra*. Actual initiation may take place only after a minimum six-month period from the date shelter was taken and the local temple president notified.

7.2.1.1.4. Devotees Residing Within Temple Communities

In addition to satisfying the above requirements, devotees residing in temple communities must, during the one-year preparatory period, regularly attend the full morning program.

7.2.3.1.1.5. Devotees Residing Outside of Temple Communities

Devotees who do not live in a temple community and who cannot come daily to the temple programs may be initiated provided they have regular morning programs at home or attend regular morning programs at the *nāma-haṭṭa* centre.

7.2.1.1.6. Pass Examination

Before a devotee can be permitted to formally take shelter of a particular ISKCON spiritual master and be subsequently recommended for initiation, he or she must demonstrate a basic understanding of Srila Prabhupada's teachings by answering an oral or written test administered by the temple president or other recommending authority.

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ISKCON Governing Board Committee Annual General Meeting 2014, [Resolution 317](#)

“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.”

Formal Process and workflow for taking 1st Initiation:

FIRST SIX MONTH PERIOD:

First Initiation Pre-Requisites (First Six Month period)	Status
1. Take shelter of Srila Prabhupada as your instructing guru and chant his Pranams	
2. Chant 16 rounds daily and strictly follow the 4 regulative principles	
3. Maintain steady sadhana and develop a steady service relationship with Srila Prabhupada	
4. Complete the reading of Srila Prabhupada Lilamrita (by Satsvarupa Dasa Goswami). This reading is compulsory from Gaura Purnima Mar 2 nd 2018	
5. Attend and pass the Founder-Acharya Course. This is mandatory from Jan 7 th 2018	
6. Complete the reading of Bhagavad-Gita As It Is (with purports). This reading is compulsory from the Advent of Bhagavad-Gita	
7. Attend and Pass the mandatory ISKCON Disciples course	
8. End of Six-month period send formal e-mail to Temple presidents and Head Pujari for intent to aspire	
9. Develop a relationship with the initiating spiritual master of your choice (If you are pressured into making a choice raise this promptly with the ISKCON Seattle Temple Presidents)	
10. Arrange for your Spiritual master to send written confirmation to the Temple Presidents of your acceptance of receiving shelter.	

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SECOND SIX MONTH PERIOD:

First Initiation Pre-Requisites (Second Six-month period)	Status
1. Chant your initiating Spiritual Master pranams (If applicable)	
2. Continue Chanting 16 rounds daily and strictly following the 4 regulative principles	
3. Increase Steady sadhana and develop a steady service relationship with your spiritual master	
4. Complete the reading of Srimad Bhagavatam Canto 1 (With purports) and Nectar of Devotion (Till Chapter 19 at minimum)	
5. Learn the Guru Ashtavakam (To be recited without help of a book as per ISKCON Law)	
6. Send formal mail to Temple Presidents and Head Pujari to appear for 1 st initiation interview (In-person)	
7. At the end of a successful interview sign the 1 st Initiation oath	
8. Receive formal recommendation letter from Temple presidents.	
9. Request 1 st initiation from your Spiritual master by sending the letter of recommendation	
10. If initiation is not conducted in ISKCON Seattle receive letter of approval from ISKCON Seattle Temple Presidents and update the Temple presidents once 1 st initiation is formally completed.	

Formal Process/workflow for requesting Second Initiation:

1. 1st initiates after meeting the basic pre-requisites must send mail to Temple Presidents and Head Pujari expressing their Intent to take second initiation.
2. Temple Presidents and Head Pujari will complete the [2nd Initiation Detailed Preliminary qualifications](#) evaluation for the candidate and reply to requested e-mail documenting next steps.
3. During the evaluation if there are gaps in pre-requisites Temple Presidents and Head Pujari will provide guidance on next steps with timelines such that a re-evaluation can be done at later date (Revised date as per discretion of Temple Presidents)
4. If all Pre-requisites are met the 1st initiates will be requested to appear for a formal interview where the detailed preliminary qualifications will be reviewed and discussed.
5. Upon Successful completion of the Interview Temple Presidents and Head Pujari will send the Official Recommendation Letter for Second Initiation to the initiating Spiritual Master.

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Second Initiation Candidate's Pre-requisite Checklist:

Second Initiation Pre-Requisites	Status
1. For at least Two years after first initiation, continues fulfilling all requirements for first initiation.	
2. Has performed Consistently direct, measurable/trackable services in the Deity Department assigned by the Head Pujari for a minimum of Two years .	
3. Has performed Consistently additional Temple Service/s (Non-Deity) as assigned by the Temple presidents for a minimum of Two years .	
4. Demonstrates the qualities of a Brahmana (Bg 18.42) and a tendency to continually improve in those qualities and is in good standing in the Temple community.	
5. Continually develops good relationships with devotees in the congregation and acts as a good role model for Inspiring other future Brahamanas.	
6. Practices the threefold austerity of the mode of goodness, as described in Bg 17.14-16	
7. Exemplifies religious principles to the public, representing ISKCON and Srila Prabhupada.	
8. Fits into and represents ISKCON's organizational structure; i.e., GBC to Regional Governing Bodies (and similar local councils), Temple Presidents.	
9. Has read the following Srila Prabhupada's books at a minimum : Bhagavad-gita As It Is, Srimad Bhagavatam, Nectar of Devotion, Nectar of Instruction and Isopanisad.	
10. Has formally attended a Bhakti Shastri course (Final Exam is optional) and can provide reference letter from Bhakti Shastri Tutor that he/she has just attended the course.	
11. Recommendations from 3 Brahmanas in the local congregation who are in very good standing with Local Temple and ISKCON Authorities.	
12. Recommendation Letter from Spiritual master for taking second initiation	
13. Has been actively assisting in some preaching or outreach activity for the past 6 months.	
14. Is currently visiting Temple at-least a minimum 5 times per week	
15. Is known to chant his/her 16 rounds daily and follow all the regulative principles sincerely.	
16. No major fall-down or non-adherence to any of the regulative principles in the past 2 years	
17. Does not offend Vaishnava's and does not engage in un-constructive criticism of devotees	
18. No Formal complaints registered to the Temple Authorities on the candidate	
19. If the above 18-point Checklist is successfully completed – In Person Interview/Discussion with Temple Presidents and Head Pujari.	
20. Temple Presidents send the Document with Temple recommendation to initiating spiritual master	
21. If initiation is not conducted in ISKCON Seattle receive letter of approval from ISKCON Seattle Temple Presidents and update the Temple presidents once 2nd initiation is formally completed.	

Initial Guidelines post 2nd Initiation:

- After Second Initiation Devotees are requested to wait for 6-7 months (minimum) before they can be engaged directly on Altar Service. During this period, newly Second initiated devotees use this as a settling period. Wait period can be longer as per discretion of Temple Presidents and Head Pujari.
- Service allocation is done based on Availability and wait-listed sequence, there will be a formal orientation meeting conducted by Temple President and Head Pujari where the details of the Service and progression will be discussed.
- While smaller absences and details are covered in the orientation meeting any break in Altar related services which exceed more than 5 months will result in a re-orientation and re-assignment of the services again subject to availability and wait-listed sequence.
- For any Break's exceeding greater than 1 month there should be a formal E-mail/Request to the Temple Presidents and Head Pujari indicating the reason for Break.
- Resuming services after breaks exceeding greater than 5 months or Switching of Services is still subject to Availability and wait-listed sequence and also a cooling period (minimum of 3 months) at the discretion of Temple Presidents and Head Pujari.

Guidelines to Re-Instating Your Candidature After a Falldown

- If you have stopped chanting or following the 4 regulative principles please formally update your Spiritual Master, Temple Presidents and Local Temple Authorities.
- Candidates for 1st initiation must chant 16 rounds daily and follow the 4 regulative principles for at least **12 months** to become re-eligible for initiation. You must log at least 12 months standard sadhana practice (verified by Temple presidents) before you may be recommended for initiation.
- Candidates for 2nd initiation must chant 16 rounds daily and follow the 4 regulative principles for at least **24 months** to become re-eligible for initiation. You must log at least 2 years standard sadhana practice (verified by Temple presidents and Head Pujari) before you may be recommended for initiation.

Bg 9.30-34

Even if one commits the most abominable action, if he is engaged in devotional service he is to be considered saintly because he is properly situated in his determination. He quickly becomes righteous and attains lasting peace...Therefore, having come to this temporary, miserable world, engage in loving service unto Me. Engage your mind always in thinking of Me, become My devotee, offer obeisances to Me and worship Me. Being completely absorbed in Me, surely you will come to Me.

PURPORT (to Text 31): This should not be misunderstood. In the Seventh Chapter the Lord says that one who is engaged in mischievous activities cannot become a devotee of the Lord. One who is not a devotee of the Lord has no good qualifications whatsoever. The question remains, then, 'How can a person engaged in abominable activities—either by accident or by intention—be a pure devotee?' This question may justly be raised. The miscreants, as stated in the Seventh Chapter, who never come to the devotional service of the Lord, have no good qualifications, as is stated in the Srimad-Bhagavatam. Generally, a devotee who is engaged in the nine kinds of devotional activities is engaged in the process of cleansing all material contamination from the heart. He puts the Supreme Personality of Godhead within his heart, and all sinful contaminations are naturally washed away...Therefore, the chanting of Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare/ Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare should be continued without stoppage.

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HARI-NAMA INITIATION CANDIDATE PRE-REQUISITES COVER SHEET –
FORM-1

<Intentionally Left Blank – Tables in Page-4 and Page-5 will be referenced: Temple Presidents and Head Pujari will use this sheet to make additional notes for Interview discussions>

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OFFICIAL RECOMMENDATION FOR HARI-NAMA INITIATION – FORM-2

For office use only

Center: _____

Date: _____ To (Name of Diksa

Guru): _____ Please

accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada. It is my pleasure to recommend:

_____ for first initiation by you. I find that he/she has fulfilled the necessary qualifications for initiation to the best of my understanding. Specifically, for the last twelve months he/she has been engaged in favorable devotional service, has chanted sixteen rounds of japa daily, and has adhered to the four regulative principles. He/she is sufficiently knowledgeable in the philosophy of Krishna consciousness and the structure and purpose of ISKCON for initiation, as evidenced by passing an examination as prescribed under ISKCON Law. The candidate has accepted your shelter for at least six months. These qualifications have either been observed by me personally or I have heard of them from sources I know to be reliable. Your servants,

_____ (Name) (Temple President -1)

_____ (Name) (Temple President-2)

_____ (Place)

_____ (Date)

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INITIATION ACCEPTANCE OATH – FORM-3

(To be Completed by Candidate)

It is my sincere, voluntary and loving desire and request to be accepted by His Holiness (disciple of His Divine Grace Srila A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada) as his initiated disciple. To clarify what this signifies to me and to all concerned, I make the following declarations and I HEREBY SOLEMNLY MAKE THE FOLLOWING VOWS:

- 1. I accept His Holiness to be my initiating (diksa) and instructing (siksa) spiritual master (guru) forever, even life after life.
2. It is my desire and commitment to help His Holiness..... in his devotional service to His Divine Grace Srila A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada and the previous acaryas in the guru-parampara.
3. I vow to follow throughout my life the instructions, etiquette, and principles prescribed according to Srila Prabhupada's instructions, Bhagavata-dharma sastras (Bhagavad-gita, Srimad Bhagavatam, Caitanya Caritamrta, etc.) and ISKCON Law in my dealings with my spiritual master.
4. I vow to follow the four regulative principles of avoiding the following sinful activities: (a) Eating meat, fish, eggs, onion, garlic and any non-vegetarian food products; (b) Taking all forms of intoxication including alcohol, drugs, tobacco, caffeine, coffee, tea, etc.; (c) Engaging in gambling, highly speculative business investments and frivolous sports; (d) Engaging in illicit sex in any form.
5. I vow to chant 16 rounds (16 x 108 mantras) of Hare Krishna Maha-mantra japa every day.
6. I vow that I shall follow the general and specific individual instructions given to me by my spiritual master His Holiness.....I accept these instructions as representing Srila Prabhupada's and Lord Krishna's will.
7. As an initiated disciple I understand that I am accepted as a member of and under the eternal shelter of the Brahma-Madhva-Gaudiya-(ISKCON) disciplic succession coming through His Divine Grace Srila A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada and I vow to accept my further spiritual instructions and initiation from His Holiness and in such circumstances where he is not present in this world to give them I shall accept the same only from bona fide ISKCON spiritual master representing Srila Prabhupada.
8. I shall always remain loyal to ISKCON (International Society for Krishna Consciousness) as an extension of Srila Prabhupada and I shall avoid doing anything detrimental to the mission of my spiritual master and to ISKCON. Name of Initiate: _____

Signature of _____
Initiate: _____ Place of _____
Initiation: _____ Date: ____/____/____ Two
Witnesses: (1) _____ (2) _____

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SECOND INITIATION CANDIDATE PRE-REQUISITES COVER SHEET FORM-4
For office use only

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OFFICIAL RECOMMENDATION FOR SECOND INITIATION – FORM-5

Center:.....

Date:.....

To (name of guru):.....

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada. It is my pleasure to recommend.....for second initiation by you. I find that he/she has fulfilled the necessary qualifications for this initiation to the best of my understanding. Specifically, for the last Two years he/she has been engaged in favorable devotional service, rendered regularly Deity related services assigned by the Head Pujari, Non-Deity related services assigned by the Temple presidents and has chanted sixteen rounds of japa daily, and has adhered to the four regulative principles. It has been more than two years since he/she received first initiation. These qualifications have either been observed by me personally or I have heard of them from sources I know to be reliable. Your servant,

.....(name) (Temple President-1)

.....(name) (Temple President-2)

.....(name) (Head-Pujari)

Dated:

Place:

DEFERRAL OF SECOND INITIATION – FORM-6

<Intentionally Left Blank –Temple Presidents and Head Pujari will use this sheet to provide detailed reasoning for Deferral of Second Initiation and a timeline for re-evaluation>

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Document Versioning:

1. Initial Document draft Version 1.0 – Sep 30th 2018
2. Document review with Seattle GBC/Temple Board Version 1.1 – April 28th 2019
3. Document updates/revision based on #2 feedback Version 1.2 – May 19th 2019
4. Minor updates from Temple presidents Version 1.3 – May 24th 2019
5. Minor updates/feedback from GBC corresponding secretary Ver 1.4 – June 23rd 2019