Standards for Awarding the Bhakti Vaibhava Degree
Version 3.2 - August 2016

Any ISKCON center can apply for recognition by the Board of Examinations as a Bhakti Vaibhava degree-awarding center provided the center certifies that it will conduct its program according to the minimum standards specified below. The application must be accompanied by a description of the planned program that includes the following information as a minimum:

- The devotee community to be served. (From where, as a general rule, the enrolled students will come.)
- The language of instruction.
- The time frame of the course. (How many weeks or months of instruction, how it will be broken into modules, how it will be interspersed with breaks, how much total time from the beginning to the end of the course, and the various attendance options that will be offered to the students, if any.)
- The instructor(s) and their qualification.
- The administrator and his/her qualification.
- Physical location(s) where the students will attend.
- The admission, instructional, assessment, and other methods and policies to be followed by the center that meet the requirements spelled out below in this standard. (This document does not include standards for online courses or distance learning. Such standards will be spelt out in a separate document at a later date).

I. Admission

Individual centres shall have their own admission policies and procedures for admitting a candidate for the Bhakti Vaibhava degree. Such policies shall require, at a minimum, that all candidates meet the following requirements:

1. The candidate must have a Bhakti-sastri degree. It is recommended that they have demonstrated practical application of the Bhakti Sastri degree through at least one year's practical service before enrolling in the Bhakti Vaibhava course.
2. The candidate must be dedicatedly following Srila Prabhupada's teachings under supervision of an ISKCON authority. It is recommended that the center correspond directly with the ISKCON authority for confirmation. First initiation before enrolment is strongly recommended. However, if not first initiated before enrolment then the enrolee must be initiated before the degree may be awarded.
3. The candidate must certify that s/he chants 16 rounds of japa daily and follows the four regulative principles.
4. The candidate must have been recommended by an ISKCON authority who knows the candidate well as per the recommendation form prescribed by the BOEX, certifying that the candidate is engaged favourably in the preaching mission of Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu for at least the previous three years.

II. Learning Outcomes to be Assessed

a. Knowledge, understanding, and application of the philosophy contained in Srimad-Bhagavatam Cantos I to VI.
b. Knowledge and memorization of at least seventy verses found in Srimad-Bhagavatam Cantos I to VI.
c. Competence as a Bhagavatam speaker and preacher.
d. Personal behavior that reflects the principles and values found in the Srimad Bhagavatam.

e. Competency in evaluating peers and receiving evaluation from peers in regard to the above-mentioned outcomes.

III. Course Assessment

In order to ensure a basic minimum standard and at the same time allow a degree of flexibility, approved centres may establish their own assessment policies within the following boundaries:

Open book questions assessing students understanding, application and values in respect to the themes and content of the first six Cantos of the Srimad-Bhagavatam, requiring either essay answers or else answers of at least several paragraphs. The sum of the minimum required words for the answers should be at least 20,000. [Care must be taken by the centers to explain in their local curriculum descriptions that this 20,000 words will be divided up between various papers and essays.]	25-40 %
Closed book tests requiring: • The answering of at least two hundred short-answer questions. • Being able to recite from memory with proper pronunciation the original Sanskrit text and approximate English translation of at least seventy verses from Bhagavatam cantos I to VI, which may include Brahma-samhita verses quoted by Srila Prabhupada in the purports to cantos IV to VI.	30-40 %
At least four oral presentations of a minimum thirty minutes each	20-35 %
Personal Vaishnava behaviour, punctuality, sadhana, extra-curricular service, co-operative mood, and ability to function as part of a team.	5-10 %

The following shows the minimum requirement standard for being deemed as passing the course. Centers can set their minimum requirement for passing higher than this if they so desire:

Assessment Area	Minimum Passing Level	Remedy for Failure
Open book assessment	60% in each unit (see also Note 1 below)	Failed papers may be resubmitted
Closed book assessment	65% in each unit (")	The student can again sit for a (different) test. However, where student's scores are less than 50% or where the answers represent a serious lack of clarity in the subject matter, they should retake the classes and closed book assessments for the unit.
Sloka assessment	65% in each unit (")	The student may apply for a time extension of up to 18 months from the date of initial assessment for achieving a passing level, which may be granted at the discretion of the lead instructor.
Presentations	65% aggregate score for the four presentations	Presentations that are scored below 65% may be reattempted at the discretion of the local center.
Personal Behavior	Adequate	None
Attendance	75% for each unit (see also Note 2 below)	Retake the unit
Weighted aggregate	None specified (see also Note 3 below)	At discretion of center.

Note 1: "Units" for the Bhakti Vaibhava degree shall be determined and notified in advance by the examination center and shall be no more than 10 chapters of Srimad Bhagavatam each.

Note 2: This attendance requirement may be waived for senior devotees with the permission of the Board of Examinations.

Note 3: Weighted aggregate is not essential for pass/fail considerations under this scheme since minimum passing levels are given for each component. However, centers may have a required weighted aggregate level, either by unit or for the whole course, if they want. But even if weighted aggregate for the whole course is not used as part of the pass/fail determination of a candidate, it does give a useful indication of course performance in a single number. Thus it should be calculated and, at a minimum, provided to the candidate and to the BOEX for its permanent records of certificates issued.

Approved Bhakti Vaibhava centers may also opt to provide facility for senior devotees who are engaged in active preaching and service such that they are unable to attend the course directly to also qualify for Bhakti Vaibhava certification. The following rules will apply:

1. The center must get special approval from the Board of Exams for each such devotee to be enrolled in the program.
2. The center must provide a study guide, including a question bank.
3. The enrollees must be required to obtain and hear the recorded lectures from the Bhakti Vaibhava course.
4. The enrollees should give temple classes and send in video recordings.
5. The enrollees will need to come at least one time to the examination center venue for an assessment process.

IV. Other

There will not be any gradation within the Bhakti Vaibhava award. Local centers may issue their own certificates designating honors and high honors if they so desire, but these will not be reflected on the certificates from the Board of Examinations.

The Board of Examinations may assess each approved center's program to ascertain if the learning outcomes are being satisfactorily achieved. The Board retains the right to discontinue certification should it determine that the program has been significantly deficient.