

THE ORDER OF BARDS, OVATES & DRUIDS



Please read through these notes before you begin studying the course:

You can work with the course in the way that best suits you. Remember that it is you yourself who chooses to take this journey, and that at any time you can finish it or lay it aside for a while. Proper development does not involve 'doing everything' or following a linear sequence of exercises blindly - it involves doing the right thing at the right time.

If you have been studying or practicing a different spiritual path (as many members have), try approaching the course with 'Beginner's Mind', as it is known in Zen. Approach the exercises and material with a fresh perspective and open mind, and until you have a good feel for Druid practice, be wary of mixing practices from other traditions, otherwise the sometimes subtle effects of the course may not be recognised. Later, once you are familiar with the work, you may well find you can creatively combine approaches.

On your journey through the Bardic grade, many sources of help and companionship are available to you:

THE DRUID HEARTH - is the official OBOD online community where you'll be able to find everything in one place. Here you can access & download membership resources, administer your details, access your online course (*if enrolled on the online version*), view upcoming events, search the Seed Group & Groves directory, as well as connect with other members to share experiences, exchange ideas and kindle new friendships in one of the many circle forums.

At enrolment, you will be sent an email with your login details to: <https://hearth.druidry.org>

We recommend you watch the 3-minute video guide when you first log in to the Hearth which will show you around all of the many features – just click on the '?' icon on the right-hand side of the top bar.

TECHNICAL SUPPORT - If you encounter any technical issues, have any questions or need assistance, please contact our support team by emailing: online_support@druidry.org or call us by telephone on: **+44 1444 645043** (Mon to Thurs 10am-4pm UK time).

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DISCUSSION CIRCLES IN THE DRUID HEARTH - As a member, you can now join the many discussion groups that you can find in the Circles Section of the website.

COMPANION MEMBERSHIP - To add and register a course companion (friend or family member to share your course materials with) - please visit: enrol.druidry.org/more

YOUR BARDIC MENTOR - OBOD Mentors are invited members of the Druid Grade who give their time voluntarily to correspond with you one-to-one about your experiences on the course. Some Bards find it useful to write to a Mentor from time to time. Others prefer a solitary path. Others like discussing their experience of the course with fellow members in the Discussion Circles.

APPLYING FOR A BARDIC MENTOR – Follow the link in the Druid Hearth.

APPLYING FOR OVATE - When you come to the end of your Bardic course, if you want to continue your studies into the Ovate grade, you will need to complete an application to enter the Ovate Grade and send this to your Mentor, (or the Mentor Co-ordinator if you do not have a Mentor). Entry to the Ovate grade is not automatic, and after sending your application, you may be asked for more information about your experiences with the Bardic course, and what effect these had on you and your life. This is to help you benefit as much as possible from the course, and to ensure that everything is in place and ready for the deeper work that the Ovate Grade entails. Guidance on what your Ovate application needs to include is given in the final Gwersi of the Bardic course.

SEED GROUPS & GROVES - To meet members who live near you, you may be able to join a local Grove or Seed Group. Or you may want to set up a Grove or Seed group of your own. See the directory in the Druid Hearth.

CAMPS, GATHERINGS, RETREATS AND WORKSHOPS - Details of events are announced in *Touchstone* and in the Events section of the Druid Hearth.

MONTHLY PODCASTS, WEEKLY VIDEOCASTS – See the links in the Druid Hearth.

THE LIBRARY - The Order has an extensive archive and library on its website at druidry.org You are welcome to contribute articles and essays. Send submissions to: library@druidry.org

MAGAZINES - The Order's English-language magazine *Touchstone* appears monthly and can be accessed in the Druid Hearth. Contributions of artwork, poetry, articles and essays are always welcome. Please send these to: touchstone@druidry.org
The French language magazine *Menhir*, and the German language *Druidenstein* can also be accessed via the Druid Hearth.

THE STORE - The online store can be reached via the Druid Hearth or at: store.druidry.org The store sells a range of complimentary books & music, as well as course extras.

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MEMBERSHIP, ADMIN & ENQUIRIES - The Order office in Sussex can help with any queries about administrative aspects of your membership and the Order.

Please contact the OBOD Office: email office@druidry.org

or by phone Monday to Thursday between 10am – 4pm UK time

UK Tel: **+44 (0)1273 470888**

US Tel: **+1 857-293-6468**

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Finally, just a few safety announcements for you:

As you will have probably realised from your reading and research about the Order and the course, the exercises given in the course are gentle and safe, and are designed to stimulate your spiritual development, psychological growth and creativity.

If you receive a 'message' or 'vision' in a meditation or dream always use common-sense. Do not take it as 'gospel' simply because it was seen with the inner eye or heard with the inner ear. Remember that such messages may have arisen from wishful thinking, or your own subconscious. The inner world is vast and complex and many of such things reflect only part-truths. Ask yourself: does this information accord with my own ethical code? And: does it have a practical application to my life?

Only undertake the exercises if you are feeling stable and well-balanced. If at any time you feel unwell, disoriented, confused, or emotionally unstable, leave the exercises alone until you have a measure of equilibrium.

Since Druidry encourages us to open to the beauty and power of Nature and her changing seasons, many of the practices suggested in the course can be stabilising and nourishing to the heart and soul if you are going through a major period of change, such as a pregnancy, separation or bereavement.

Many people go through difficult times in their life, and the course can be very helpful and supportive at such times. But - as stated in the FAQ on the Order's website - you should not follow the course if you have ever been diagnosed as suffering from schizophrenia or a psychotic condition. The reason for this is that while much of the course material can be instructive and helpful to anyone, the course does offer meditations, visualizations and rituals which are designed to 'open people up' to their unconscious states and potentially other levels of perception. For those who haven't suffered from such a condition this process can be helpful, but if you have, these exercises have the potential to be counter-productive. If the training was undertaken in a face-to-face situation the exercises could be paced and adjusted to suit the individual, but since the course is administered from a distance, such adjustment and monitoring isn't possible. For this reason, if this applies to you, please contact us at: office@druidry.org to arrange a full refund. Although the distance-learning program is not suitable if you have had these challenges, Druidry can still be followed as a spiritual way by making use of the many resources available on the web and in books. **It is important to note that this policy refers only and specifically to a diagnosis of schizophrenia or a psychotic condition given by a medical practitioner/psychiatrist. We have found that members who have received other diagnoses can benefit from the course.**