

## **Oxford Mindfulness Centre Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT) Teacher Training Pathway**

### **Step 2 – Learning to teach**

#### **Developing Competency as an MBCT teacher**

There are three core training routes to developing competency offered by the Oxford Mindfulness Centre, once the prerequisites have been completed: the Master of Studies in MBCT or the Foundational training routes (and apprenticeship) which are described below.

##### **Academic Route:**

#### **Master of Studies in Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy - 2 years**

This unique course is offered by the Oxford Mindfulness Centre at the University of Oxford, Department of Psychiatry, in collaboration with the University of Oxford Department for Continuing Education. Successful completion of the course leads to an award of a Master of Studies by the University of Oxford. Over the two years, the course weaves together experiential embodied understanding of the structure, curriculum and intentions of MBCT with its theoretical basis, including relevant aspects of cognitive and clinical psychology, as well as aspects of Buddhist psychology and philosophy upon which MBCT draws. It provides the opportunity for students to develop the practical skills they need in order to translate knowledge and understanding into gaining competency as MBCT teachers. The Masters aims to provide the in-depth knowledge and skills needed to become a competent teacher and disseminator of high quality MBCT through access to some of the leading teachers and researchers in the world.

The course is taught, part-time, over two years, and is organised in nine three-day teaching blocks (held in Oxford) and two intensive practice residentials, and one residential foundational skills training, all of which aim to foster the embodiment and understanding that supports MBCT teaching. Teaching is assessed using the MBI-TAC and *summative* assessment of competency is provided (see below). Following the Masters training course participants who are rated as competent to teach will have fulfilled The UK Network for Mindfulness-Based Teacher Training Organisations' '[Good Practice Guidelines for Teachers of Mindfulness-Based Interventions](#)'.

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### Non Academic Routes:

- **Foundational Training in Teaching MBCT – 1 year**
- **Intensive Foundational Training in Teaching MBCT – 7 day Residential**

This training route is in three parts:

1. Foundational Training / Intensive Foundational Training in Teaching MBCT.
2. Beginning to teach MBCT and Apprenticeship.
3. Assessment of MBCT Teacher Competency.

Participants who complete all three stages of this training and who are rated as competent to teach, will fulfill The UK Network for Mindfulness-Based Teacher Training Organisations' [‘Good Practice Guidelines for Teachers of Mindfulness-Based Interventions’](#).

### Foundational Training in Teaching MBCT – 1 year

The Foundational Training Course in teaching MBCT is a largely skills based course offered by the OMC on an annual basis. Its intentions are to enable participants to understand the background, theory and structure of MBCT through taught days led by leading specialists in the field; to deepen personal mindfulness practice and experiential understanding of the MBCT course, including an embodied understanding of the process of change; to understand the intentions underpinning the various elements of the MBCT course, its scientific basis, ethical framework, structure and sequence of the curriculum. It also offers the opportunity to consider sensitivity to how MBCT is adapted in the context of childbirth and parenting (MBCP). The Foundational training facilitates the development of teaching skills through practicing teaching the curriculum in a safe setting with peers and provides a solid platform for developing further teaching skills to competency level which takes place through apprenticeship as described in the next section. *Formative* assessment of teaching skill is provided using the MBI-TAC.

The course is taught part-time over one year and is organised in three terms with teaching taking place usually one day per fortnight. A 4-day intensive practice residential (retreat) is included in term two.

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### Beginning to teach MBCT and Apprenticeship

The second part of training to teach competently involves trainee teachers beginning to teach the MBCT course to people within their own field/area of expertise, *having completed the Foundational Training*. Working towards competency through closely supervised teaching takes place over as long a period as necessary to enable enough space for preparation, teaching, supervision and reflection. Progression from one step to the next is an opportunity to pause and consider readiness to progress; sometimes a person will be ready and other times more work may be needed before progressing.

As students come towards the end of the *three terms*, their mentor will help to consider plans for completing these final parts of training to competency (i.e. the apprenticeship and later summative competency rating). This includes establishing co-teaching opportunities with a more experienced teacher or trainer of MBCT and engagement with an ongoing supervision process ideally involving regular reviewing of recordings, using the MBI-TAC as a supervision and learning tool.

Supervision can be organised either privately with an appropriately qualified and experienced individual or via the [Mindfulness Network Community Interest Company \(CIC\)](#). The UK Network for Mindfulness-Based Teacher Trainer Organisations [Good Practice Guidelines for Trainers of Mindfulness-Based Teachers](#) can help trainee teachers to identify which trainers might be qualified to provide them with supervision.

In the unlikely situation where it is not possible to identify a suitably qualified and experienced co-teacher, closer supervision and support will be required. All trainee teachers and qualified teachers should receive supervision, even when co-teaching. The OMC offers support to help identify a co-teacher by providing links with previous students and alumni, whenever possible. We have also produced guidelines for both the co-teacher and trainee teacher which are intended to clarify roles within such an arrangement.

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### **Intensive Foundational Training in Teaching MBCT – 7 day Residential**

The intention of this 7-day training is to provide participants who have met all the prerequisites for training to be a teacher with an opportunity to directly experience the 8-session programme of Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT) and learn about the theoretical underpinnings of MBCT. You will practise teaching elements of MBCT to one another in pairs, with supervision and feedback from the instructors and peers. The training is an introduction to teaching MBCT.

This training provides participants with direct experience of the 8-session programme of Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT), and offers opportunities to practise teaching elements of MBCT to one another, with supervision from the trainers and each other. Participants are expected to have some prior knowledge and experience of mindfulness and of cognitive therapy, and to have a serious interest in bringing MBCT into their lives and work.

Participants should already have attended an 8-week course on mindfulness-based approaches, and should have a regular, established mindfulness meditation personal practice.

The programme reflects the integration of personal practice and professional application that is central to the approach. It includes a blend of didactic, experiential and small group work. Specific themes and areas of focus will include:

- The seamless cultivation of mindfulness throughout the workshop, through formal and informal practices, both in silence and in conversation and dialogue.
- An overview of the development of MBCT and the theory underpinning it, and a review of research supporting its clinical value.
- Mindful approaches to the experience and expression of pain, depression, stress and anxiety within ourselves and those with whom we work.
- Discussion about the importance of experiencing enough mindfulness meditation practice and self-inquiry to starting to work with mindfulness as a clinician.
- Opportunities to practice teaching key meditation practices, with feedback from fellow participants and from the instructors.

The training is an introduction to teaching MBCT, and a platform for developing further teaching skills through an apprenticeship. Attendance will not necessarily mean that you can now teach MBCT, but is an integral part of a pathway to developing competency and ethical practice as described by the Good Practice Guidelines for teachers.

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### **Beginning to teach MBCT and Apprenticeship**

If you choose this training route you may need to undertake further structured training in teaching MBCT, in order to develop competency as described by the MBI-TAC criteria, depending upon your skills and prior experience/training. Some of this might be gained through attending workshops in core MBCT skills eg: Enquiry, C in MBCT. In keeping with the Good Practice Guidelines and the International Training Pathway, it is recommended that you attend a residential mindfulness retreat of at least 4 days as part of your teaching journey. You may also need to undertake a longer period of supervision with an MBCT trainer/highly experienced teacher.

### **International Training**

If you are not resident in the UK and wish to access the Oxford Mindfulness Centre's Teacher Training Pathway, there are two options:

- Attending the 'Intensive Foundational Training in Teaching MBCT – 7 day Residential' in the UK as described above and organising your own extended apprenticeship with our guidance.
- The OMC may be able to offer organisations an 'Intensive Foundational Training in Teaching MBCT – 7 day Residential' in your country. Please contact us for further details.

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### **Assessment of MBCT Teacher Competency**

Trainee teachers can arrange for their teaching to be formally rated for competency when their supervisor agrees they are ready. If the rater concurs that they meet the criteria across all domains of the MBI-TAC, they will receive a certificate of competency to teach MBCT from the Oxford Mindfulness Centre.

As part of the summative feedback, the OMC will help to consider what further training, experience and/or personal development might be appropriate.

Once the trainee teacher and their supervisor have agreed readiness for formal assessment, the following steps are usually followed:

1. The applicant will be asked to supply a portfolio outlining their readiness to be assessed. This would typically include (1) reasons for the application and (2) summarised (and ideally evidenced) information demonstrating that they have fulfilled the prerequisites as outlined in the Oxford MBCT Training Pathway. The portfolio should also include evidence of meeting the GPG's for MBCT teachers.
2. Once the portfolio has been reviewed as meeting the pre-requisites, the applicant will be asked to supply recordings of all the 8 sessions of the MBCT course, along with a page explaining the teaching context, to an independent assessor. This should be someone different from their supervisor, and be an MBCT trainer from the OMC core team or an Associate Trainer.
3. The assessors will always rate two whole sessions (and more if required) for competency in teaching MBCT using the MBI-TAC. Normally this will be one from the first half of the course (not session 1) and one from the second half of the course (not session 8). The approach to assessment of competency is set out in the MBI-TAC Manual. Where a person has been co-teaching, assessment will include their teaching of the core meditation practices and a sample of psychoeducation exercises.

An independent moderator will moderate both the competency assessment and the feedback. This may include further review of the recordings and discussion with the assessor. Also over time, the moderator will have a good sense of the congruence *between* the assessors in the use of the MBI-TAC. Moderation normally takes approximately one hour

4. A certificate of competence is issued if the applicant meets criteria for competence on ALL six domains of the MBI-TAC. Summative feedback will be provided that includes strengths and areas for development

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If the person **does not** yet meet competency across the domains, feedback will also be provided that includes strengths, areas for development and what is required to meet competency. The person can then come back to be reassessed at Step 2, providing a statement of how the feedback has informed further learning.

NB: This process is an integral part of the Master of Studies in MBCT