



## **Professional Standards for the Mindfulness Teachers Association of Ireland (MTAI) 2018**

This document offers a comprehensive and robust set of minimum requirements for members of the MTAI that uphold the ethical standards, promote integrity and uphold transparency for teaching MBSR and MBCT in Ireland.

The *International Framework for the Integrity of Mindfulness-Based Programmes* 2017 was published as we in Ireland were undergoing the process of developing standards for teachers of MBSR and MBCT. The document was used as the basis for the development of the standards for teachers and programmes in Ireland and the Association would like to acknowledge the huge amount of collaborative work that has gone into the creation of this invaluable framework.

**<https://www.pleine-conscience.be/www/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Ethics-and-Standards-for-MBP-Nov2017.pdf>**

### **Content**

- 1. Standards for Teachers of MBSR and MBCT**
- 2. Standards for Training Programmes of MBSR and MBCT**

# **1. Standards for Teachers of MBSR and / or MBCT who are MTAI Members**

## **1.1. Commitment to a Personal Practice**

Ongoing daily personal formal and informal mindfulness practice is essential. Teachers are expected to do no less than what is asked of participants in relation to formal and informal mindfulness practice. Teachers commit to regular dialogue and supervision around personal meditation practice

## **1.2. MTAI Recognised Programmes**

MTAI recognizes teachers who have successfully qualified with the following programmes;

MSc Mindfulness Based Interventions. University College Dublin, Ireland

[https://sisweb.ucd.ie/usis/!W\\_HU\\_MENU.P\\_PUBLISH?p\\_tag=PROG&MAJR=W323](https://sisweb.ucd.ie/usis/!W_HU_MENU.P_PUBLISH?p_tag=PROG&MAJR=W323)

Diploma in Teaching Mindfulness Based Interventions. The Mindfulness Centre for Professional Training Ireland, Dublin

<https://mindfulness.ie/trainingsupervision/>

MBSR Teacher Education. The Centre for Mindfulness in Medicine Healthcare and Society- University of Massachusetts Medical School, USA

<https://www.umassmed.edu/cfm/>

Teaching Mindfulness-Based Courses

The Centre for Mindfulness Practice and Research, Bangor University, Wales

<https://www.bangor.ac.uk/mindfulness/>

The Institute for Mindfulness-Based Approaches (IMA)

<https://www.institute-for-mindfulness.org/>

Applications for membership will also be considered from teachers who have not graduated from one of the recognized training programmes but can demonstrate equivalency to the training standards of the MTAI, or have developed significant experience delivering MBSR and / or MBCT programmes over a number of years. Please see below the training standards for programmes.

### **1.3. MTAI Members Should be Qualified to Teach MBSR and / or MBCT**

MTAI members are expected to adhere to the MBSR and MBCT curricula that they offer and neither add nor remove anything from the original programmes in order to respect the integrity of the curricula.

It is acknowledged that experienced and discerning teachers, may choose to exercise wise judgement to make minor adaptations to the programme(s) as recommended by Kabat-Zinn (2010) who states “There is a great deal of latitude and space built into the MBSR curriculum for the teacher to bring in himself or herself in critical ways, including, where appropriate, new information and practices. That latitude in creativity is essential for the curriculum to come alive”.

The Centre for Mindfulness UMass (2017) states “The essence of the MBSR program is not easily conveyed by a written document. The teaching of MBSR is less about following a class plan and more about a deep and personal experience of mindfulness and a concomitant knowledge and skill in knowing how best to convey the practice of mindfulness in a highly experiential learning environment. The person of the teacher plays a substantive role in this conveyance.”

Teachers need to be aware of the limitations of MBSR and MBCT. Participation in MBSR, MBCT is not a substitute for any necessary medical treatment or psychotherapy.

## **1.4. Supervision is Required**

Supervision is required, either individual or in a group, with a suitably qualified mindfulness supervisor, whilst teaching MBSR or MBCT programmes. The recommended number of hours of one to one supervision is 4 hours as a minimum per MBSR or MBCT programme taught for newly qualified teachers for the first 9 programmes and a minimum of 2 hours per programme for subsequent programmes.

For MTAI members who are teaching shorter mindfulness programmes, regular supervision is recommended.

It is imperative that MTAI members offering MBSR or MBCT to participants in a clinical setting have relevant clinical training experience and supervision which is separate to mindfulness supervision.

If an MTAI member feels s/he is not competent for a certain situation, s/he will inform the participant and refer him/her to a colleague.

When in doubt, a teacher commits to consulting with their supervisor and if necessary a medical or mental health professional.

## **1.5. Continuous Professional Development ( CPD) is Required**

In order to maintain best practice and standards, MTAI members are required to engage in ongoing training and continuing personal and professional development. This includes connection and collaboration within the mindfulness community as well as a commitment to ongoing personal development, support and reflection. Best practice also requires familiarity with current research for evidence based MBSR and MBCT and other areas emerging that are deemed significant for the teaching of MBSR and MBCT. The calculation and allocation of CPD is open to review and may be changed form time to time. Ten credits need to be fulfilled annually and can be made up in the following ways:

CPD Points

Attendance at AGM	2
Sub committee member (per year)	3
Board member (per year)	5
Residential workshop (2.5 days)	3
Residential retreat (5-7 days)	6
MTAI Day workshop	2
Supervision received (per 4 hours)	4
Attending conferences/Article submission	2
Member of / facilitator of drop in mindfulness.	2
Other relevant mindfulness workshops	2
Further mindfulness training of $\geq 7$ days. e.g. MBCL	6

As regular auditing of membership will take place the MTAI may ask members to produce evidence of the above. CPD requirements will be subject to occasional review.

### **1.6. Attendance at Retreats is Required**

MBSR and MBCT teachers are required to attend silent meditation retreats that reflect and serve as a foundation for MBSR or MBCT. Annual attendance at a 5 -7 days silent, teacher-led residential retreat is necessary to support ongoing best practice. Attending retreats supports the deepening of a teacher's capacity to embody mindfulness and is essential for competent and ethical teaching.

It is acknowledged that personal circumstances need to be taken into account when considering the frequency and duration of retreats attended. While the typical expectation (following training) is 5-7 days of silent retreat per year, personal circumstances such as family commitments or resources may require an alternate schedule e.g. 2 weekend retreats per year with one 5-7 day silent retreat every 3 years.

### **1.7. The Code of Ethics and Conduct of the MTAI and MTAI Constitution.**

MTAI members are required to abide by the MTAI Code of Ethics and Conduct and the MTAI Constitution.

### **1.8. Copyright**

Members are expected to respect copyright and ownership of ideas and products, to represent their own work honestly, and not to appropriate others' work as one's own without permission. This applies to websites, recordings, logos, quotes and any written material.

### **1.9. Use of MTAI Logo**

Members are permitted to display the MTAI logo on their advertising materials (printed and electronic.)

Members are not permitted to make changes to the MTAI logo.

Members are not permitted to use the MTAI logo on any materials intended for sale without permission from the MTAI administrator.

## 2. Standards and Criteria for MTAI Teacher Training Programmes.

These standards and criteria are the minimum recommended requirements for teacher training programmes to teach MBSR and MBCT. Successful graduates will be eligible to gain membership of the MTAI.

<b>Domain of Standards</b>	<b>Description of Domain</b>	<b>Range of Domain</b>
<b>Pre-requisites or foundational requirements to enter a training programme.</b>	MBSR or MBCT 8-week course as a participant	Completion of at least one 8-week MBSR or MBCT group based programme as a participant in person <sup>1</sup> , comprising 2-2.5 hours per week and including a 1-day retreat. The programme should be led by a qualified MBSR/ MBCT teacher.
	Meditation  Mindful movement practice  Personal development	A minimum of one year of personal mindfulness meditation practice is recommended and familiarity with mindfulness and the wisdom traditions underpinning it and this will be developed further during training.  A minimum of one year of mindful movement practice is recommended (e.g. Yoga, Chi Gong, Tai Chi) and a commitment to ongoing daily personal practice and personal development and this will be developed further during training.

<sup>1</sup> Note: This does not include completion of an online MBSR/MBCT programme.

	Retreat Experience	Minimum of one silent, teacher-led retreat of 5 - 7 days whose traditions closely reflect and serve as a foundation for the spirit, practice and attitudes of MBSR and MBCT is strongly recommended and is essential in the ongoing development of teachers. In exceptional circumstances, 2 x 2 ½ day retreats may be acceptable.
	Professional background	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In the interests of inclusion and diversity a professional graduate degree or equivalent life experience is required.</li> <li>• Completion of professional training programme or working experience in the field - typically health sciences, psychology, medicine, nursing or education - but other fields may also be accepted.</li> <li>• Experience of working in or with groups is recommended.</li> <li>• A minimum of three years' work experience in the field of one's profession is recommended.</li> <li>• Successful candidates will have undergone an in-depth application process</li> </ul>
<b>Teaching pathways</b>	The different parts of each training pathway fit together and form a comprehensive programme. Training can be undertaken in different ways, as	<p>All training programmes should offer in-depth training in the theory, rationale and intentions underpinning MBSR and MBCT. They should contain significant amounts of experiential learning, along with ample time to reflect, give and receive feedback from self, peers and instructors.</p> <p>A training programme includes supervision while teaching an 8 week MBSR/ MBCT as a student , either through the</p>

	<p>different training schools have different formats – for example, a continuous training over a certain length of time, a modular training or a combination of trainings through different teaching schools. All pathways will lead the trainee to accreditation/ certification with a particular training institution.</p>	<p>trainers themselves or through external qualified supervisors.</p> <p>Qualification as an MBSR or MBCT teacher indicates readiness to teach the particular programme one has trained in but does not qualify the teacher as a teacher-trainer.</p>
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<p><b>Crucial components of teacher training programmes</b></p>	<p>Training Content</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Familiarization with and analysis of curriculum elements (themes, practices, presentational elements, learning activities and group process) both in individual classes and in the program as a whole.</li> <li>• The programme should be for a minimum of 18 month's duration and have a minimum of 150 hours group-based contact hours in person.</li> <li>• It is recommended that training should be delivered by a variety of senior teacher trainers</li> <li>• Training content incorporates experiential learning which supports participants in cultivating the embodiment of mindfulness.</li> <li>• The skill and art of guiding formal and informal practice.</li> <li>• The theory and practice (skill development) of delivering psycho-educational elements of MBSR and MBCT.</li> <li>• The theory and practice of facilitating inquiry.</li> <li>• Theoretical underpinnings of the programme including relevant current scientific and/or clinical understanding as well as from relevant spiritual, philosophical and wisdom traditions, including the Buddhist psychological underpinnings to mindfulness practice and teaching.</li> <li>• Theory and practice of holding a safe group learning environment and theory of adult learning and group</li> </ul>
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		<p>dynamics.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A process of self-reflection to develop teacher awareness and the development of the skills necessary for reflective practice appropriate to life long learning. Self-reflection may include writing, video, audio, and other means of expression.</li> <li>• Giving and receiving feedback with peers and instructors.</li> <li>• Supervision of teaching to include a minimum of 4 hours one to one supervision of an 8 week MBSR/ MBCT programme as a trainee.</li> <li>• Ongoing assessment of individual student's learning needs in order to support teacher development and readiness to teach MBSR and MBCT. This includes all 6 domains of the Mindfulness Based Interventions: Teaching Assessment Criteria (MBI:TAC, Crane et al 2016)<sup>2</sup>.</li> <li>• On-going formative feedback and assessment on teaching practice and development from more experienced teachers. Formal assessment should be based on the Mindfulness Based Interventions: Teaching Assessment Criteria (MBI TAC).</li> <li>• Audio recordings of all guided formal practices as they are produced for program participants.</li> <li>• Video recordings of class teaching (as required by</li> </ul>
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		<p>individual training schools) or observed directly by senior/training teacher.</p>
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- Preparation of all teaching materials (handbook and/or home practice assignments, class plans, audio-files etc.)
- The training programme should incorporate a quality assurance process which could include input from a suitably qualified independent external assessor.

## Resources

The *Framework for the Integrity of Mindfulness-Based Programmes* (2017) was used as basis for the development of the MTAI Standards for Teachers and Educational Programs.

Goldstein A, Hudasch G, Heijke L, Kenny M, Koerbel L, Lück P, Phillips C, Taravajra. (2017).

*Framework for the Integrity of Mindfulness-Based Programmes*

<https://www.pleine-conscience.be/www/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Ethics-and-Standards-for-MBP-Nov2017.pdf>

## Other Resources

Crane, R.S., Kuyken, W., Hastings, R.P., Rothwell, N. and Williams, J.M.G., (2010). Training teachers to deliver mindfulness-based interventions: Learning from the UK experience. *Mindfulness*, 1(2), pp.74-86.

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Egger-Büssing,, et al. (2013). European Associations for Mindfulness Based Approaches (EAMBA). *Ethical Guidelines for MBSR and MBCT Teachers* <http://eamba.apps-1and1.net/about>

Evans, A., Crane, R., Cooper, L., Mardula, J., Wilks, J., Surawy, C., Kenny, M. and Kuyken, W., 2015. A framework for supervision for mindfulness-based teachers: A space for embodied mutual inquiry. *Mindfulness*, 6(3), pp.572-581.

Kabat-Zinn, J., (2010) in McCown, D., Reibel, D. and Micozzi, M.S. Teaching mindfulness. *A practical guide for clinicians and educators*. US: Springer. pp xv

Kabat-Zinn, J., Santorelli, S.F., Blacker, M. and Brantley, J., Meleo-Meyer, F., Kesper-Grossman, U., Reibel,D., Stahl, B., (2017). *Training Teachers to Deliver Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction - Principles and Standards*. Center for Mindfulness in Medicine, Healthcare, and Society – University of Massachusetts Medical School. <http://www.umassmed.edu/cfm/training/principles--standards/>

Mindfulness Teachers Network of Ireland. (2015). *Good Practice Guidelines for Teaching Mindfulness-based Courses*.

<http://www.mindfulnesssteachersnetworkireland.ie/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Irish-Teacher-Guidelines-April-20-2015-1-1-1.pdf>

UK Network of Mindfulness Teacher Training Organisations. (2015). *Good Practice Guidance for Teachers*. <https://mindfulnesssteachersuk.org.uk/pdf/UK%20MB%20teacher%20GPG%202015%20final%202.pdf>