Mindfulness-Based Supervision (MBS) and Reflective Teaching Support (RTS)

Guidance for BAMBA Supervisors

Mindfulness teachers benefit from a range of reflective and developmental support throughout their professional lives. At BAMBA, this support is broadly categorised as either **Mindfulness-Based Supervision (MBS)** or **Reflective Teaching Support (RTS)**.

As a supervisor, you may provide one or both forms of support, depending on your training, experience and areas of expertise.

Both contribute to safe, ethical and effective practice. Both support ongoing learning and development. The distinction lies in their purpose rather than their format.

Definitions

Mindfulness-Based Supervision (MBS)

Mindfulness-Based Supervision is a reflective partnership in which a mindfulness teacher and supervisor engage in mindful inquiry into teaching practice. Grounded in embodied awareness, mutual curiosity and professional responsibility, it offers a dedicated space to explore successes, challenges, ethical questions, practitioner wellbeing and ongoing development.

Its purpose is not to assess or direct, but to support learning, reflection and the deepening of mindfulness teaching practice.

Mindfulness-Based Supervision supports:

- Safe and ethical teaching practice
- Embodied mindfulness teaching
- Reflection on participant experience
- Professional accountability
- Alignment with BAMBA Professional Standards
- Ongoing teacher development

Reflective Teaching Support (RTS)

Reflective Teaching Support (RTS) is a broad term used to describe the range of support that may contribute to a mindfulness teacher's ongoing development.

This may include:

- Mentoring
- Programme development
- Innovation and new approaches
- Continuing Professional Development (CPD)
- Exploration of contemplative traditions and practices
- Business development
- Leadership development
- Professional development
- Personal reflection and growth

While distinct from Mindfulness-Based Supervision, RTS may sometimes be provided by a BAMBA-registered Mindfulness-Based Supervisor where they have the skills, knowledge and experience to support the teacher's area of inquiry.

Reflective Teaching Support complements, but does not replace, the Mindfulness-Based Supervision required for BAMBA registration and renewal.

A Balanced Approach to Professional Support

BAMBA recognises that teachers benefit from a range of support activities throughout their careers.

There is no prescribed ratio of Mindfulness-Based Supervision (MBS) to Reflective Teaching Support (RTS).

Some supervisees may require regular supervision conversations focused on teaching practice. Others may require greater levels of mentoring, innovation support, programme design guidance, leadership development or business support.

Supervisors are encouraged to support teachers in identifying and accessing the combination of support that best meets their needs.

Where BAMBA registration or renewal requirements apply, the required Mindfulness-Based Supervision must be maintained.

MBS and RTS: Understanding the Difference

Both Mindfulness-Based Supervision (MBS) and Reflective Teaching Support (RTS) may take place in one-to-one, group or peer-based settings.

The distinction lies not in the format of the interaction, but in its purpose.

MBS focuses on:

- Teaching practice
- Embodiment
- Professional responsibility
- Ethical conduct
- Participant welfare
- Reflective inquiry
- Professional standards

RTS focuses on:

- Professional development
- Programme innovation
- Leadership
- Business development
- Mentoring
- Career development
- Personal and professional growth

The same supervisor may provide both MBS and RTS where they possess the relevant knowledge, skills and experience.

When providing both forms of support, supervisors are encouraged to be explicit about the purpose of an interaction to ensure clarity for all parties.

BAMBA Registration and Renewal

Mindfulness-Based Supervision is a core requirement of BAMBA registration and renewal.

Teachers applying for initial registration or renewing their registration must engage in Mindfulness-Based Supervision and submit the required supervision documentation as part of the process.

As a supervisor supporting BAMBA registration or renewal, you may be asked to:

- Confirm that supervision has taken place.
- Confirm the nature and frequency of supervision.
- Support reflection on professional standards and ethical practice.
- Provide an annual supporting statement where required.

You do not need to be listed on the BAMBA Supervisors Register to support a BAMBA member in this way.

However, BAMBA would expect supervisors undertaking this role to possess:

- A substantial mindfulness background.
- Experience of mindfulness teaching and/or supervision.
- Familiarity with BAMBA Professional Standards.
- Familiarity with BAMBA Good Practice Guidelines.
- Familiarity with BAMBA's Ethics and Professional Conduct Framework.

While a BAMBA-listed supervisor is recommended, teachers may choose another appropriately experienced mindfulness-based supervisor who meets the expectations outlined in this guidance.

The Role of a Mindfulness-Based Supervisor

The role of a Mindfulness-Based Supervisor is to provide a safe, reflective and appropriately challenging environment in which mindfulness teachers can explore their work.

Supervisors support teachers to:

- Reflect upon their teaching practice.
- Deepen embodied awareness.
- Explore ethical questions and dilemmas.
- Consider participant wellbeing and safeguarding matters.
- Celebrate strengths and successes.
- Identify learning edges and developmental opportunities.
- Maintain safe and effective practice.
- Remain aligned with professional standards.

- Develop and maintain a collaborative and trusting supervisory relationship
- Consider diversity, inclusion, culture, identity and context in supervision conversations and relationships.
- Offer constructive feedback that supports learning, development and accountability.
- Raise concerns and appropriately challenge unsafe, unethical or ineffective practice where necessary.
- Consider the organisational, professional and practice context within which a supervisee is teaching.

Supervisors should recognise the limits of their competence and refer supervisees to alternative sources of support where appropriate.

Where appropriate, supervision may include direct observation of teaching, recorded teaching sessions, participant feedback or other evidence that supports reflective inquiry and professional development.

Supervisors should always establish clear agreements (contracting) regarding the purpose, boundaries, confidentiality and practical arrangements of supervision.

Mindfulness-Based Supervision is characterised by curiosity, mutual inquiry, reflection and embodied presence rather than instruction, performance management or assessment.

Forms of MBS and RTS

One-to-One

Individual sessions between a teacher and a supervisor or support provider.

One-to-one sessions may be used for either MBS or RTS, depending on the focus of the conversation.

Group-Based Support

Group supervision and facilitated developmental groups can provide valuable opportunities for shared reflection, learning and growth.

Where the focus is teaching practice, embodiment, ethics and professional responsibility, this constitutes MBS.

Where the focus is professional development, innovation, leadership or mentoring, this is likely to constitute RTS.

Peer-Based Support

Peer relationships provide valuable opportunities for mutual learning, reflection and support.

Peer supervision may contribute towards annual supervision activity in accordance with BAMBA Professional Standards but should not replace formal supervision arrangements.

Peer-based RTS can also support teachers through shared learning, programme development, reflective dialogue and professional growth.

Providing Reflective Teaching Support

Where supervisors possess relevant expertise, they may also provide Reflective Teaching Support (RTS) in areas such as mentoring, programme development, innovation, leadership, business development, contemplative practice, professional development and personal growth.

The availability and boundaries of additional support should be discussed and agreed between supervisor and supervisee.

BAMBA Supervisors Register

Supervisors listed on the BAMBA Supervisors Register have demonstrated that they meet BAMBA's eligibility requirements for mindfulness-based supervision.

To remain on the register, supervisors must:

- Remain in good standing on the BAMBA Register.
- Maintain their own supervision arrangements.
- Continue professional development.
- Adhere to BAMBA's Professional Standards, Good Practice Guidelines and Ethics and Professional Conduct Framework.
- Meet any ongoing registration requirements specified by BAMBA.

If a supervisor's BAMBA teacher registration lapses, they will automatically be removed from the Supervisors Register. To return to the Supervisors Register, a new application, payment of the applicable fee and completion of due diligence requirements will be required.

Summary

Mindfulness-Based Supervision (MBS) and Reflective Teaching Support (RTS) are complementary forms of professional support.

Mindfulness-Based Supervision focuses on reflective inquiry into teaching practice, professional responsibility, ethical conduct and professional standards.

Reflective Teaching Support provides wider opportunities for learning, development and growth across professional, educational, organisational and personal domains.

Supervisors may provide one or both forms of support. The key distinction is not how support is delivered, but why it is being offered.

By maintaining clarity of purpose and appropriate boundaries, supervisors play a vital role in supporting safe, ethical, reflective and flourishing mindfulness teaching practice.