BAMBA | British Association of Mindfulness-based Approaches

Registered charity 1211302

Good Practice Guidelines for Mindfulness Teachers

These guiding principles promote good practice in teaching mindfulness-based courses, programmes, or approaches. They apply to secular mindfulness-based programmes, approaches, and curricula taught in mainstream settings that are:

- Rooted in a clear theoretical framework
- Teacher-led
- Potentially scalable
- Clearly committed to evidence-based practice, while remaining rooted in the contemplative wisdom traditions from which mindfulness has evolved

A qualified mindfulness teacher is expected to:

Have completed appropriate preparation to teach mindfulness-based approaches via a quality assessed affiliate teacher training organisation or a route that meets the BAMBA requirements of registration under the 'equal to or exceeds' route, which in all cases must:

- represent a supervised teacher training programme lasting at least 12 months.

  and

- includes a minimum of five days of extended mindfulness practice (commonly retreat) within a 12-month cycle during or following initial teacher training, ideally in a setting that supports connection with the classical teachings and wisdom traditions of mindfulness.

  and

- includes the delivery of 2 courses | curricula (e.g., MBSR, MBCT, MBCTL) under supervision; with a minimum of 3 hours of supervision per course.

  or

  if training to teach a mindfulness-based approach (as opposed to a set curricula) undertake a minimum of 6 hours of supervision over a minimum period of 4 months | 16 weeks

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- Have direct personal experience with the programme, curriculum, or approach they intend to teach, including an in-depth, lived familiarity with all core meditation practices and their contemplative roots.
- Hold a professional qualification in mental or physical health care, education, or social care, **or** possess equivalent life experience recognised by their training organisation.
- Have knowledge and experience of the populations they will teach including relevant teaching, therapeutic, or care provision in group and/or individual settings.
- Have clinical training if wishing to teach clinical populations / settings (NHS / private practice) or as a minimum, work alongside an experienced colleague with clinical training.

Applicants who are unable to meet these criteria are encouraged to read sections below: *Open Access to the BAMBA Register, Routes to Meeting Professional Standards, How to Meet BAMBA's Professional Standards & refer to the detailed guidance in the GPG appendix.*

Open Access to the BAMBA Register: Routes to Meeting Professional Standards

BAMBA is committed to ensuring open, transparent, and accessible entry to the Teacher Register for a diverse range of experienced professionals from the field. This is balanced with maintaining the highest standards of integrity, safeguarding our charitable objectives, and protecting the quality of mindfulness teaching in the UK, Europe, and globally.

Our approach supports multiple routes to meeting the professional standards, enabling teachers from varied backgrounds and training pathways to demonstrate their competence. Through this approach, we partner in joint understanding with the wider field to uphold shared standards and ensure all BAMBA-registered teachers are equipped to teach mindfulness safely, skilfully, and ethically in ways that are contemporary, inclusive, and grounded in the contemplative traditions and classical teachings of mindfulness.

Applicants may demonstrate eligibility for the BAMBA Teacher Register through:

• successful completion of a BAMBA Quality Assessed Affiliate teacher training pathway

• successful completion of a recognised mindfulness-based teacher training programme outside the Affiliate network supported by a BAMBA-recognised MBI:TAC competency assessment

• an alternative pathway through which applicants demonstrate the route taken is equal to or exceeds BAMBA's professional standards through their learning, personal practice,

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teaching experience, supervision, retreat participation, ongoing professional development and embodied understanding of mindfulness.

How to Meet BAMBA's Professional Standards

In this section, members are supported to identify and understand how they might meet professional standards in various ways.

We recognise that mindfulness teaching is a diverse field, with members employing a wide range of skills, contexts, and creative approaches to meeting the standards.

We also recognise that mindfulness teachers may develop the knowledge, skills, embodiment and experience required for safe and effective teaching through different pathways. BAMBA therefore values both recognised teacher training programmes and other routes through which applicants can demonstrate that they meet the minimum professional standards required for registration.

A *GPG appendix* is provided which outlines established routes to meeting the professional standards but is not exhaustive. We welcome members' input on additional ways they meet these standards through their own application of the professional standards and interpretation of the Good Practice Guidelines. For example, members may suggest adaptations to achieving professional standards through inclusive practice examples. Such suggestions will be reviewed by BAMBA to ensure they uphold standards, integrity, and the charitable objectives, and may be added to BAMBA Good Practice guidelines where appropriate.

Innovative Equivalence

We recognise that the path of teaching mindfulness is a living practice shaped by the seasons of life, the wisdom of experience, and the diversity of contexts in which teaching unfolds. We also recognise that excellence can sometimes be innovative in new or adaptive ways that do not fit neatly within traditional linear routes of meeting professional standards.

Innovative Equivalence describes our commitment to inclusivity, flexibility, and trust in the professionalism of our members. It provides a framework through which teachers can demonstrate ongoing integrity and competence via best practice and creative innovation.

This approach supports broader inclusivity in those wishing to register and become recognised by BAMBA whilst acknowledging alternative, traditional wisdom-based or contextually appropriate pathways through which applicants can demonstrate BAMBA's minimum professional standards.

The Equal To or Exceeds route enables applicants to demonstrate that they meet BAMBA's minimum professional standards through learning, practice, teaching experience,

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supervision and professional development gained outside recognised BAMBA teacher training programmes.

These pathways may include combinations of formal and informal learning, contemplative practice, retreat participation, supervision, teaching experience, community leadership, mentorship and ongoing professional development.

BAMBA also welcomes applications from teachers who have completed training outside the Affiliate network where that training is in a recognised mindfulness-based pathway, approach or curriculum and has been supported by a BAMBA-recognised MBI:TAC competency assessment.

Specific Mitigating Circumstances

We recognise that teachers may experience periods where they are temporarily adapting their engagement with mindfulness due to life circumstances, change and transition. We therefore offer examples of mitigating circumstances or contexts that may lead to the approval of BAMBA membership renewal to include (but not limited to):

- Acting as a recognised primary carer for a dependent adult or child.
- Parental or adoption leave.
- Long-term illness, recovery, or disability that affects teaching rhythm or retreat participation.
- Bereavement or significant life transitions.
- Development of new, equivalent models of reflective teaching support, extended practice, or CPD that maintain alignment with BAMBA's standards, wisdom traditions, and contemplative roots.

Specific Mitigating Circumstances – Policy and Process for Consideration

1. **Initiation:** Members are encouraged to contact BAMBA as early as possible if they wish to explore an alternative route or anticipate circumstances that affect their engagement with the professional standards.
2. **Dialogue:** BAMBA will engage in an open, reflective conversation with the member to understand their context, intentions, and proposed approach.

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3. **Review:** The BAMBA Professional Standards Advisory Board will consider each case individually, assessing how the proposed approach upholds the quality, integrity, and contemplative depth of mindfulness teaching.
4. **Agreed Pathway:** Where appropriate, a bespoke plan will be developed to recognise and support the member's ongoing engagement with BAMBA's standards, either through innovative equivalence or a gradual return to full compliance.

This approach embodies BAMBA's values of care, openness and integrity and demonstrates wisdom in action. It ensures that we hold both our *roots and standards* ethically, while remaining open to contemporary expressions of excellence that reflect the evolving nature of mindfulness in the modern world.

For further guidance or to discuss your individual circumstances, contact **register@bamba.org.uk** to arrange a reflective conversation with the Register Manager or referral to the Professional Standards Advisory Board.

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