

Applying for an Assessment of Competency to Teach MBCT



Contents



Application Process in Summary	4
---------------------------------------	----------

Application Process in Detail	6
--------------------------------------	----------

The Assessment	14
-----------------------	-----------

Appendix 1	16
-------------------	-----------

Appendix 2	19
-------------------	-----------

Appendix 3	21
-------------------	-----------

Important notice on use of this handbook

We ask you please to respect these copyright materials and only use them for the purpose of your own application.

Kind regards,

Oxford Mindfulness Teaching and Administrative Teams

OMC-32 Version 3 – March 2025

Application Process in Summary

Preamble

This process is based on best practice in the assessment of Mindfulness Based Programmes in a range of teaching and research settings and builds on work collaboratively developed with colleagues at the Centre for Mindfulness Research and Practice, Bangor University. It may be reviewed and improved as necessary. In submitting your application, you will be expected to meet the requirements detailed on the website at the time of your application.

Application Process in Summary

Step 1:

You will be asked to supply a portfolio for assessment. This would typically include:

1. reasons for the application
2. summarised (and ideally evidenced) information demonstrating that you have fulfilled the prerequisites outlined in the [MBCT Training Pathway](#) (version 2.0 Segal et al., 2018)
3. evidence that your supervisor feels that you are ready to be assessed and supports your application
4. video recordings of all 8 sessions of the MBCT course you have run, with supporting documentation (see below)
5. a reflective commentary on your experience of teaching the course
6. the portfolio should include evidence of meeting the Good Practice Guidelines for MBCT teachers

The portfolio and recordings will then be passed on to an Oxford Mindfulness assessor. If you do not meet the pre-requisites the application fee will be refunded minus a processing fee of £50. If the portfolio meets all of the prerequisites, the recordings will then be assessed as below.

Step 2

If possible, the assessor will rate two whole sessions for competency in teaching MBCT using the Mindfulness Based Interventions Teaching Assessment Criteria (MBI:TAC). Normally this will be one session from the first half of the course (not session 1) and one from the second half of the course (not session 8). Your assessor may also sample parts of any other sessions to see further examples of your teaching – practices, didactic teaching or inquiry – if necessary. The approach to assessment of competency is set out in the [MBI:TAC Manual](#). A selection of assessments will be moderated by an independent moderator to ensure consistency.

Step 2 (Competency Met)

A Certificate of Competence to Teach MBCT is issued if you:

- Meet the criteria for competency ie. an average rating of 'Competent' or above in a minimum of five domains with no more than one domain rated at Advanced Beginner and none at Beginner.
- Have evidence of a commitment to ongoing mindfulness-based supervision.

Formative feedback will be provided that includes your teaching strengths and areas for development in mindfulness-based supervision, personal practice and continued professional development moving forward.

Step 3 (Competency Not Yet Met)

If you do not yet meet the competency criteria, formative feedback will also be provided that includes strengths, areas for development and what is required to meet competency. You can then come back to be reassessed at Step 2, providing a statement of how the feedback has informed further learning.

Application Process in Detail

Your application must include:

1. an application form
2. video recordings of an 8-week MBCT course which you have taught recently
3. a time-line synopsis of each session
4. your consent form
5. a page explaining your teaching context
6. a reflective commentary on your experience of teaching the course
7. payment of the fee of £595

1. Application Form

- a.** Please submit your application form online. The online application form can be found [here](#).

This must be in English and provide details of your readiness to be assessed. This will typically include:

- b.** reasons for your application and
- c.** summarised (and ideally evidenced) information demonstrating that you have fulfilled the requirements of the MBCT Training Pathway, version 2.0 (Segal et al., 2018) including the prerequisites and an apprenticeship with supervision. If you teach within the UK, the application should also include evidence of meeting the [Good Practice Guidelines for MBCT teachers](#) evidence that your supervisor feels that you are ready to be assessed and supports your application

2. Video Recordings

Your application must be accompanied by video recordings of all sessions of a recent 8-week MBCT course that you have taught. **It is your responsibility to send us recordings in which you are visible and both you and your participants are audible. Recordings which do not meet these criteria cannot be assessed.**

Our preference is that you upload the videos of your teaching to our secure storage platform. When you are ready to submit, please contact the Competency Assessment administrator at mbi.tacadmin@oxfordmindfulness.org to arrange this.

If this is not possible, you may submit your recordings on a password protected USB stick. Please send your USB stick by secure courier or delivery service to the address on the online submission form and email the Competency Assessment administrator at mbi.tacadmin@oxfordmindfulness.org with the password. The USB will be returned to you at the address you give us on your submission form once the assessment is complete. If neither of the above methods are possible, please contact us to discuss an alternative.

2.1. Guidance on Making Video Recordings

What you need to submit:

1. You will need to submit video recordings of all 8 sessions of your course by uploading them to our secure storage platform or posting us a USB.
2. The camera must be trained on you (see below and Appendix 3) so that your face and as much of your body as possible are visible.
3. As far as possible your participants should not be visible.
4. Both you and your participants must be audible.
5. Recordings that are not clearly/adequately visible and audible cannot be assessed.

Your course can be run face-to-face or online.

The guide below will help you to produce good quality recordings for assessment purposes. If you are using an external camera, the following may be helpful:

Get some help. If you have not used a camera before, ask for help and advice from a friend or a colleague who has used a camera. Perhaps even borrow a camera to practise with.

Pick the right camera. If you are buying or hiring a camera or video camera, it needs to have good sound and a reasonably clear picture (don't worry too much about pixels – if it's a fairly recent digital camera it will be good enough). It is usually helpful to attach an external microphone to a camera. Don't forget to make sure your camera has all the connectors it needs to transfer your footage to the computer and copy onto a USB stick if you will be using one to submit your videos.

A video camera and some new cameras will record continuously for 2 hours; other cameras will record for a maximum of 30 minutes. If you have a camera that only records for 30 minutes, you will need to find a way to restart the camera after each 30-minute period, which could be difficult if you do not have a helper. It would also be easier to make sure that the SD card in the camera will take a 2-hour recording.

There is a lot of different software available to convert your media if required. In most cases, the computer will come with software to do this. You can also buy more advanced software packages.

Make sure the sound is as good as the picture. To be assessed properly, it is essential that we can hear both you and your participants clearly. Remember that the assessor may not be able to see the participants' faces, which makes the sound quality even more important. Make at least one test recording before you start teaching. As far as possible, make sure that there are no loud noises from inside the room such as air conditioning or a fan, or outside the room (e.g., construction work) which might make it difficult to hear what is being said on the recording (you may need to shut windows and doors). If the sound quality is doubtful, try using an external microphone.

Make sure there is enough light in the room to allow a clear picture.

Put the camera somewhere stable. You don't want the camera to fall over or tilt while you are filming. It might be worth purchasing a tripod. Otherwise make sure that there is a surface or table at the right height and in the right place for you to rest the camera.

Check where you are aiming the camera. It is really important to make sure that you are filming what needs to be seen. It is important to see the whole of your face and not just a side view. As much of your body as possible should be in camera view (so the assessor can see your body posture); at the same time, avoid having the camera so far away that your face cannot be seen clearly. As far as possible, your participants should not be in camera view for reasons of confidentiality. You may be able to position the camera between two participants (perhaps looking over their shoulders) on the other side of the circle to yourself. Putting the camera inside the circle is very intrusive, but too far outside makes the picture small and the sound too quiet. Find a balance that suits your situation.

It is important that you are audible all the time and visible most of the time. This includes being visible and audible whilst guiding practices lying down (body scan, mindful movement) and standing (stretch and breath). At times, you may be audible but lose some of the picture for short periods e.g., when transitioning between sitting and lying down, or when teaching walking meditation and you go out of sight of the camera.

If at all possible, have someone else operate the camera for you. This is particularly helpful when you are recording for summative assessment, so that your attention can be fully on your teaching (not on the camera) and you can be kept 'in shot' at all times. It is important that your helper is also a participant in the class and not a passive observer. This could be someone who has done the course before and is happy to do it again and operate the camera for a reduced fee or free course.

Practice where to place the camera before the start of each session and decide how to position the camera when you move from your chair – e.g., to the flip chart, a body scan or a movement practice. If moving the camera would interrupt the teaching process or distract the group, e.g., in a walking practice, it is possible to point the camera towards the floor or a wall and to have the sound only recorded for short periods (but remember to point the camera at you afterwards).

Be aware of the effects of recording on yourself. If you are worrying about whether the camera is working, it can distract you from your teaching. Also, you may feel initially uncomfortable about being recorded. It is helpful to practice recording yourself as early as possible in your teaching (before you come to make the recordings for assessment) so that it begins to feel more comfortable. Watching your recordings will give you a greater sense of familiarity and ease. Your mindfulness practice, especially grounding yourself in your body, will be a support with any feelings of anxiety or self-consciousness. *Remember that recorded teaching is very helpful indeed for you to watch, learn from and give yourself feedback on and is part of the supervision process.*

Be aware of the possible effects of recording on the group members. You will need to tell your participants in advance about being recorded and ask for their consent (see consent form in Appendix 1). Talking it through in a matter of fact and reassuring way is helpful, as is being clear that recording is for supervision or assessment purposes only and that the recordings will only be seen by you and your supervisor and assessor. It is important to be clear with participants about whether they will be in view or not, and that it is only you being filmed and not them. Remember that inadvertent recording of participants often occurs e.g., when they forget about the camera or when they are doing movement or walking. Usually as long as you are relaxed about the camera and process of recording, your participants will accept it as part of the furniture and will be supportive of your work, seeing it as part of ensuring high standards in teaching.

Practice! This is the most important thing of all. Test out the functions and settings on your camera before you start the recording sessions. Remember to take the lens cap off and press all the right buttons to start the recording. Make sure your memory cards record for long enough. The amount of recording time each card can hold will depend on the type of camera and size of the card. Check before you start (sometimes the remaining time will be shown on the screen). Make sure your speaking voice is loud enough and the light is sufficient.

Online Groups: When teaching online, options include:

- **Using an external camera**

Using an external camera placed behind the screen and following the guidance for in-person group recording above.

- **Recording in the online platform**

Recording in the digital platform can be done by recording a 'spotlight' view of the trainee, or with participants in view. This will be accepted for submission provided full relevant consents have been obtained from participants including consent for the participant's chosen name to appear on screen where this will be the case. You should discuss with participants whether to use initials or just first names on screen and the process to do this to further safeguard confidentiality.

Our assessors understand that it may not be possible for the teacher's whole body to be visible on the screen when you are recording directly into a digital platform. Please ensure that as much of yourself is visible as possible. The minimum being the whole torso, arms, shoulders, head and full face.

If you record with an external camera or in 'spotlight' please ensure that participants can be clearly heard on the audio recording. Assessors will be understanding of minor technical glitches, particularly with reflections submitted that explain the context - see [Addendum for online MBP teaching by Sansom et al.](#)

Trainees should ensure they have good internet connectivity and use online platforms with good functionality. We recommend you use a wired connection if possible. If in any doubt about the stability of your connection, record a back up on a second device.

We strongly suggest that you record yourself teaching before you submit a recording for assessment, for example recording some of the first course you teach and showing your recording to your supervisor. You will then know how to adjust the picture, sound etc., so that your recordings are audible and visible.

2.2. Guidance on Recording While Co-Teaching

The requirements for co-teaching are given in Domain 2 (Relational Skills) of the [MBI:TAC Manual](#).

Please note that your relationship with your co-teacher will have a strong influence on the quality of the teaching process for participants. Domain 2 will assess your co-teaching relationship as well as your teacher-participant relationship.

If you are recording yourself co-teaching with another teacher, you must have explained the requirements to your co-teacher in advance and have their written consent.

You must record the whole of each session and the camera must be trained on you throughout, even when your co-teacher is teaching.

You must record yourself teaching each of the following, from any of the relevant sessions:

1. Raisin exercise (and inquiry)
2. At least 1 body scan (and inquiry)
3. At least 1 mindful movement practice (and inquiry)
4. At least 2 main sitting practices in different sessions (and inquiry)
5. At least 2 didactic sessions/exercises (e.g. 'walking down the street'; teaching on depression or stress; 'office scenarios')
6. At least 2 different breathing spaces (and inquiry)

You must teach at least two whole sessions on your own – one from the first half of the course, but not Session 1, and one from the second half of the course, but not Session 8 – so that your assessor can see how you manage the time, hold the group, etc. Your co-teacher can be present. For the remaining sessions, you must be teaching the group for a minimum of 50% of the time.

3. Time-Line Synopsis of Each Session

On the application form you will be asked to upload a time-line synopsis of each session which includes each curriculum component timed from the beginning of the recording.

Here is an example of one session:

Session 2: Living in Our Heads	Date: Duration of session: 2 hrs 10 secs
Body Scan	0:00 – 31:05
Inquiry - Body Scan	31:05 – 41:30
Home Practice Review	41:30 – 1 hr 10 mins 28 secs
Thoughts and Feelings Exercise	1:10:28 – 1:33:10
Sitting Meditation: Mindfulness of Breath	1:33:10 – 1:43:03
Inquiry - Sitting (Popcorn)	1:43:03 – 1:47:10
Home Practice Assignment Explain Pleasant Experiences Calendar	1:47: 10 – 1:57:17
Short Sit to End Class	1:57:17 – 2:00:10

4. Participant Consent Form

All participants on your course must have given their consent for the sessions to be recorded and assessed and you must provide evidence of their consent. It is important that you gain their consent before the course starts and recording begins. Appendix 1 contains a sample consent form which you can use if your teaching context does not already have a way of asking for consent. Please ask all participants of your course to sign the participant consent form or gain consent from them in another way that meets this criteria. We do not ask you to upload your participants consent forms, only the consent form at Appendix 2 which you yourself have signed. The consent form includes an additional optional consent for you and your participants to consent to the recordings being securely filed and used for future training of new assessors.

You will be asked to upload this consent with your application form.

5. Your Consent Form

You must give your consent for the recordings to be assessed and confirm that your participants have given their consent. A template for this form can be found in Appendix 2. The consent form includes an additional optional consent for you and your participants to consent to the recordings being securely filed and used for future training of new assessors. You will be asked to upload the consent form with your application form.

6. Teaching Context

Please submit one A4 page describing the teaching context of the course you have recorded. This should include a description of your participant group and any associated vulnerabilities or challenges; the context in which you are teaching (hospital, therapy centre, school, privately, etc.) and any adaptations you have made to the MBCT curriculum with an explanation of the rationale behind your changes.

7. Reflective Commentary: 1000 Words Approx.

When we assess your teaching, we see your observable behaviour. This piece of writing is your opportunity to reflect on your teaching process, and tell us about your actual experience while teaching. This commentary will not be assessed, but is intended to support and inform our assessment of your teaching. Please include any observations or reflections that you consider to be relevant, for example:

- a. Were you facing any particular internal or external challenges (e.g., illness, difficulties at work or at home) as you taught each session of this course and if so, how did you work with them?
- b. How did you respond to any difficulties within the session (e.g., someone who becomes angry or distressed; someone who dominates the group; someone who says nothing and appears disengaged)?
- c. How has your personal practice supported or enriched your teaching?
- d. Did you have any concerns about ethics or the safety of your participants? If so, how did you work with them?
- e. How did you deal with absences or drop outs?
- f. What have you learned from teaching this course? Have any key issues or questions emerged for you?
- g. How will you take this learning forward?
- h. How did you respond to teaching online and what preparations or adaptations were required from in person teaching?
- i. We invite you to tell us if your writing is influenced by anything that may affect your communication (such as English not being your first language or dyslexia) so that this can be taken into account. We are not marking the quality of your writing here; the purpose is to help the assessor understand context.

The word limit of 1000 words is for guidance only. Please present your commentary in a clear and concise form, and you can include lists or bullet points. Please note that you must maintain your participants' confidentiality at all times. You will be asked to upload your reflective commentary with your application form. Please outline if you covered any key elements of group process in your orientation, for example, introductions or establishment of guidelines.

8. Payment of the Fee

On submission of your application form you will be required to pay the fee of £595 online. If for any reason you have not fulfilled all the requirements of the MBCT Teacher Training Pathway and your application is not accepted, your payment will be returned to you minus a £50 processing fee.

The Assessment

The recordings of your teaching will be assessed by one of the Oxford Mindfulness' team of trained competency assessors.

Where possible, your assessor will rate two whole sessions for competency 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). Your assessor may also sample parts of any other sessions to see further examples of your teaching – practices, didactic teaching or inquiry – if necessary. The approach to assessment of competency is set out in the [MBI:TAC Manual](#).

An independent moderator will moderate a random selection of both the competency assessment and the feedback. This may include further review of the recordings and discussion with the assessor. If the tapes are in a language other than English, the moderator will not review the tapes but will ask the assessor for greater detail in the moderation discussion about the observed MBCT teaching.

What Happens Next?

Competency Met

If you meet the competency requirements, a 'Certificate of Competence' will be issued (please see criteria on page 5). On the issuing of the certificate, it is expected that you will commit to engaging with, and adhering to, the Good Practice Guidelines (or equivalent for your national association), and at the minimum have regular supervision and retreat experience.

The formative feedback that you will receive with your assessment can provide a framework for this supervision and inform any direction in Continuing Professional Development (CPD).

Competency Not Met

If you do not yet meet the competency criteria, we will provide formative feedback that will highlight your strengths, areas for development and what you might need to meet competency. You can then come back to us to be reassessed, providing a statement of how the feedback we have given you has informed further learning.

Security

Your videos will be stored securely on an Oxford Mindfulness server and your USB stick will be returned to you when the assessment process is complete.

If you have given your consent for your recordings to be used for further assessor training, they will continue to be stored securely for up to 5 years. If you have not given this consent, your recordings will be deleted from the server 6 months after your assessment is completed.

The assessor and moderator will access your recordings via a secure Oxford Mindfulness file transfer system. All the assessors have signed an agreement to abide by strict confidentiality guidelines when viewing the recordings.

Complaint/Appeals

If you have a concern about your assessment and it cannot be dealt with on a one-to-one basis with the Competency Assessment Lead and resolved, you should follow Oxford Mindfulness' policy for handling complaints which is on our website [here](#).

Appendix 1

Assessment of Competency to Teach MBCT Sample Participant Consent Form

- I understand that my MBCT teacher is applying to Oxford Mindfulness for an Assessment of Competency to teach MBCT.
- I understand that sessions will be recorded and viewed by an assessor and moderator and briefly checked by the Competency Assessment administrator, and that the purpose of this is not to record the participants, but to record the work of my teacher. There will be no identifying written material. Where the recordings are made on an online platform, although my voice may be recorded and my on-screen name is likely to be visible, the teacher will do everything possible to ensure that faces of participants are not visible. In summary, teachers will take all reasonable steps to make sure that the camera is focused solely upon themselves during the sessions.
- I understand that these recordings will remain confidential and will only be seen by my teacher and their assessors. The Oxford Mindfulness administrative team processing the application will briefly check the recording for visibility and audibility.
- To help ensure high standards of practice, I understand my teacher may also share parts of these recordings with their professional mindfulness supervisor during their supervision sessions so that they can monitor skills, give feedback and provide useful supervision.
- These recordings will be stored under secure conditions and destroyed after they have served their educational purpose.
- I have been given a copy of this information to keep.

Optional Additional Consent

The Centre for Mindfulness at Brown University, USA, Oxford Mindfulness and the Centre for Mindfulness Research and Practice (CMRP) are building a bank of teaching practice recordings of teachers and students which can be used within training collaborations.

The recordings will be used in carefully selected ways in i) training assessors to reliably use the Mindfulness-Based Interventions: Teaching Assessment Criteria (MBI:TAC) and ii), mindfulness-based teachers who train with CMRP, Brown and Oxford.

All participants in trainings where recordings are used will agree to utmost confidentiality regarding the identity of teachers they see. The viewing of such recordings is conducted respectfully with an emphasis on the teaching process rather than the teacher. It is understood that the recordings are of one moment in time, and do not reflect more broadly on the teacher. So, for example, in any recordings shared, trainees will be aware that this may be one of the first times that person has taught. As far as possible recordings will be selected to ensure that participants in trainings do not know the teacher they see. All recordings will be stored securely and used with sensitivity and confidentiality.

What Am I Consenting To?

You can consent to recordings of your MBCT sessions being used for assessment, supervision and training. Consent can be withdrawn at any point without a reason being given. If you agree to participate, please complete the consent form showing which purpose(s) you consent to. Please ask your teacher to explain anything that you need clarity on.

Participants' Consent for Course to be Recorded / Used for Training

Name	Signature	Course to be Recorded	Recording Used for Training

Name of MBCT Teacher: _____

Course Date: _____

Signature of MBCT Teacher: _____ Date: _____

Appendix 2

Your Consent Form

Assessment of Competency to Teach MBCT - Applicant Consent Form

I give my consent for the recordings of my teaching to be viewed by an administrator, the Competency Assessment Lead, assessor and moderator of Oxford Mindfulness' assessor team. I understand that the recordings will not be viewed by anyone other than the administrator, the Competency Assessment Lead, assessor and moderator of the programme. If I have given my consent, trainers of assessors may also view specific segments.

The original recordings will be returned to me or destroyed within the specified time frames i.e., where consent has not been given for the recordings to be used for training purposes, this will be 6 months after the assessment process is complete. Where consent has been given to retain the recordings for training purposes, this will be 5 years after the assessment process is complete.

I confirm that I have gained the consent of all participants in the MBCT group that I have recorded for use in:

- Supervision
- Assessment of my competency
- Training purposes (as specified in the participant consent form)
- I consent to the use of my assessment grades and comments being used anonymously for training purposes. This information will only be held for the time it is being used or for 5 years (whichever is the shorter). I understand that I can withdraw this consent at any time.

Name of MBCT Teacher: _____

Course Date: _____

Signature of MBCT Teacher: _____ Date: _____

Additional Consent (Optional)

Assessment of Competency to Teach MBCT - Applicant Consent Form

I give my consent for the recordings of my teaching to be securely filed by Oxford Mindfulness and used for training new assessors. In this case the recordings will be viewed only by those on a recognised training in competency assessment offered by the Centre for Mindfulness at Brown University, USA, Oxford Mindfulness and the Centre for Mindfulness Research and Practice (CMRP). The recordings will be stored securely and used with sensitivity and confidentiality. I confirm that all the participants in the recorded MBCT course have given additional consent.

Signed by: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix 3

Videoing your course: Good and not so good views...

Online course



Zoom / Teams camera: Not enough body visible



This is okay, as most of upper body is visible



Using an external camera is best



View obscured

In-person course



Not enough face & body in view



No face – sorry no good



The best – full face and whole body

Video file sizes: Please make sure that your video files are **MP4** format. Please save them in **low bit-rate** format. If you are using Zoom or Teams they record in MP4 – you just have to check the bit-rate. It is quite difficult to convert the bit-rate securely so please ensure that your camera or Zoom/Teams is recording as an MP4. Thank you!

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Oxford Mindfulness Centre is a collaboration between the University of Oxford and the Oxford Mindfulness Foundation. The Oxford Mindfulness Foundation (known as Oxford Mindfulness) is a registered charity which delivers mindfulness teaching and training within the collaboration.

oxfordmindfulness.org