



**POSTGRADUATE MASTER OF STUDIES  
IN  
MINDFULNESS-BASED  
COGNITIVE THERAPY**

**A Two Year Part-Time Course  
Leading to an Award of the University of Oxford**

**PROSPECTUS 2010-2012**

University of Oxford Department for Continuing Education

*In collaboration with*

Oxford Mindfulness Centre  
Oxford University Department of Psychiatry  
The Warneford Hospital  
Oxford OX3 7JX



[www.mbct.co.uk](http://www.mbct.co.uk)

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## **Introduction**

This two year part-time course offers experienced clinicians from a range of professional backgrounds a unique opportunity to develop in depth specialist knowledge and skills in Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT). Our aim is to foster a community of practitioners with the expertise to deliver high quality MBCT to patients, and to contribute to the development and dissemination of this innovative approach to mental and physical healthcare.

The course is offered by the Oxford Mindfulness Centre at the Oxford University Department of Psychiatry, in collaboration with the Oxford University Department for Continuing Education, and will lead to an award of a Master of Studies by the University of Oxford.

## **The Rationale for the Course**

MBCT was developed by John Teasdale, Mark Williams and Zindel Segal as a manualised, class-based skills training programme for people with recurrent depression. It integrates elements of cognitive therapy with intensive practice of mindfulness meditation, with the aim of helping people to relate differently to pain and distress. Randomised clinical trials support its efficacy in preventing relapse in people who have experienced repeated episodes of depression, and it is now recommended in the guidelines of the National Institute of Clinical Excellence (NICE) as a cost-effective treatment of choice for this increasingly common problem.

Because its central principles are transdiagnostic, MBCT holds promise as a helpful intervention in a wide range of settings and with a broad range of problem areas, both physical and emotional. Preliminary research suggests that mindfulness-based approaches can be helpful to patients with problems as diverse as chronic pain, psoriasis, cancer, health anxiety, chronic fatigue syndrome, stress, generalised anxiety disorder, bipolar disorder where there is a history of suicidal thoughts or behaviour, and psychosis.

MBCT has attracted a great deal of interest within the mental health and behavioural medicine communities. However, while introductory workshops are relatively easily available, opportunities to extend preliminary learning and to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary for effective clinical practice are extremely limited. This means that practitioners wishing to use the approach with their clients have great difficulty in accessing appropriate training and supervision. The Oxford course is designed to address this need. It offers an opportunity for in-depth learning, and will create a body of clinicians with the knowledge and skills they require in order to develop and disseminate MBCT effectively.

## **Why Oxford?**

Oxford has been internationally recognised as a centre of excellence in cognitive therapy (CT) research, treatment development and dissemination for nearly 20 years. It has an unusually rich concentration of acknowledged experts in CT and a first class reputation for providing high quality training courses and clinical supervision. A growing team of Oxford clinicians and researchers now specialise in MBCT, and have successfully developed and delivered a range of short MBCT training events: 1- and 2-day introductory workshops, 5-day courses, and residential training retreats. The team includes Professor Mark Williams of the Oxford University Department of Psychiatry, one of the psychologists who first developed MBCT, and the founding Director of the Oxford Mindfulness Centre.

## **Course Aims**

The aims of the course are:

- ❖ To provide qualified clinicians with an understanding of theory and research and with practical experience, so that they can apply MBCT competently and effectively in clinical and other appropriate healthcare and educational settings
- ❖ To cultivate a body of practitioners trained to disseminate the approach, and educated to contribute creatively to further developments in the field.

## **Course Objectives**

The Master of Studies seeks to enable participants to:

- ❖ Develop in depth knowledge, understanding and critical appreciation of theory, empirical research and clinical literature relating to MBCT, appreciating how theory-building, research and clinical observation reciprocally inform one another
- ❖ Contribute creatively to theoretical understanding of the psychological processes underlying MBCT and to its application with clinical populations
- ❖ Develop and deepen their own personal mindfulness meditation practice and the capacity to reflect on practice in the light of theory, research and clinical knowledge
- ❖ Develop the knowledge and skills necessary to design and deliver a programme of MBCT competently with a particular client group, including producing appropriate instructional materials, evaluating the impact of the programme, and reflecting critically on its design and outcome in relation to theory, research and clinical literature

## **Organisation and Training**

The course takes full advantage of local expertise in MBCT, as well as inviting contributions from outside researchers and clinicians with experience at the cutting edge of MBCT development. All those who have leading roles in its design and organisation, and in supervision and training, have experience in the development and practice of MBCT and in related training and research.

### **Course Directors**

Professor Mark Williams, Dr Melanie Fennell

### **Tutors**

Dr Christina Surawy, Dr John Peacock,

### **Course Administrator**

Mrs Wendy Swift

### **Course Development Team**

Dr Ann Hackmann, Dr Thorsten Barnhofer,  
Dr Catherine Crane, with other Oxford-based mindfulness teachers

## **Course Participants**

We are looking for qualified and experienced clinicians in physical and mental healthcare and related fields, who have experience of carrying out evidence-based psychological treatments under supervision, and a wish to develop specialist knowledge and skills in MBCT.

We plan to offer places to around 12 applicants. They are normally expected to have:

- ✓ A degree or equivalent educational qualification
- ✓ A professional qualification in mental healthcare, behavioural medicine or another appropriate field
- ✓ A minimum of 3 years of post-qualification experience
- ✓ Knowledge and experience of cognitive therapy (CT) or an equivalent evidence-based psychological therapy (including supervised clinical practice)
- ✓ Knowledge of mindfulness-based approaches; at minimum, attendance at an introductory day and personal experience of insight meditation practice
- ✓ Experience of working with groups, clinically or as a teacher or trainer
- ✓ Access to suitable patient/client groups for supervised practice during the course
- ✓ Proficiency in English as defined in the University's Application Guide.
- ✓ The ability to provide assurance that they are in a position to finance the course (including college fees), and that they have the support of their employing organisations in attending it

Application for places is made by means of a University of Oxford application form, which can be downloaded - see [www.mbct.co.uk](http://www.mbct.co.uk). To facilitate completion of the form, you will find 'Application Brief Guidelines' on the web site. These refer specifically to the Master of Studies in MBCT, and detail the supporting documentation that must accompany applications. *Please consult the notes when completing the form.*

The *closing date for applications* is *12<sup>th</sup> March 2010*. When you submit your application, please e-mail Wendy Swift ([wendy.swift@psych.ox.ac.uk](mailto:wendy.swift@psych.ox.ac.uk)) to let her know it has been sent. This will help us track your application. Short-listed candidates will be *interviewed in the week beginning 17<sup>th</sup> May 2010*.

### Course Format

The course is taught, part-time, over 2 years, and is organised in ten 3-day teaching blocks (held in Oxford) and two residential training retreats (5 days in Year I and 7 days in Year II). In addition to the taught component, students will need to set aside 6-7 hours per week for private study, personal practice of MBCT, completion of written assignments, etc. Participants on courses with similar demands confirm that this time is crucial to completing the course successfully.

The *provisional* timetable is:

Year I		Year II	
Block	Dates	Block	Dates
1	11-13 October 2010	6	11-12 October 2011
2	6-8 December 2010	7	12-14 December 2011
3	17-19 January 2011	8	16-18 January 2012
4	28-30 March 2011	9	19-21 March 2012
5	9-11 May 2011		<b>Residential Training Retreat</b> 12-19 May 2012
	<b>Residential Training Retreat</b> 18-23 September 2011	10	25-27 June 2010

On successful completion of the taught components of the course and associated assignments, the award of the Master's degree is made by the University of Oxford, under the aegis of its Continuing Education Board.

### Course Content

The course addresses the theoretical basis of MBCT, including relevant aspects of cognitive and clinical psychology, as well as aspects of Buddhist psychology and philosophy on which MBCT draws. It also provides opportunities for students to develop the practical skills they need in order to translate knowledge and understanding into competent MBCT practice, that is,

students are expected to develop for themselves the understanding and skills they will be teaching to patients. (This is analogous to the requirement for experience of personal therapy in the education of psychodynamic psychotherapists.)

It covers four main topic areas:

- ❖ **Theory**, including: relevant cognitive science (e.g. attention, memory, judgement, metacognition, executive function); clinical theory (e.g. cognitive theories of the development and maintenance of emotional disorder and the principles underlying MBCT); relevant aspects of Buddhist psychology and philosophy and their contribution to MBCT
- ❖ **Research** related to the ongoing development of MBCT, and investigating the areas of theory outlined above
- ❖ **Clinical applications** in a range of problem areas, for example, depression, chronic fatigue, pain, psychosis and borderline personality disorder
- ❖ **Practice** including the development of personal experience of mindfulness meditation, the capacity to relate this experience to theory and research, and the skills needed to instruct patients/clients in MBCT, drawing on relevant theory, research and clinical literature

## **Learning Methods**

Teaching is mostly highly interactive and experiential. Each teaching block covers a range of topics drawn from the four main areas outlined above, weaving together personal practice, theory/research and clinical applications. We envisage the following format for blocks in each year.

### **Year I:**

The first year of the course is designed to develop student's knowledge of theory and research, and to use this as a foundation for the development of their own mindfulness meditation practice.

**Day 1:** Developing personal mindfulness meditation practice via direct experience of the 8-week MBCT programme. This includes opportunities for reflection, and a requirement for regular meditation practice between teaching blocks

**Day 2:** Cognitive science and clinical practice

**Day 3:** Buddhist roots of MBCT; mindfulness meditation in practice

### **Residential training retreat:**

This 5-day retreat offers an intensive opportunity to deepen personal practice and to practise teaching elements of MBCT with immediate feedback from other participants and from instructors.

## **Year II:**

The second year covers the theory and practice of applying MBCT with different client groups, and equips students with the knowledge and skills they need to become competent MBCT instructors.

**Day 1:** Learning to be an MBCT instructor

**Day 2:** Clinical applications: Theory and practice

**Day 3:** Buddhist Foundation for Application of Mindfulness

### **Residential training retreat:**

This 7-day retreat focuses on intensive practice of mindfulness meditation.

Teaching sessions and training retreats are led by practitioners experienced in mindfulness-based approaches, mostly from Oxford. Outside speakers with particular specialist expertise are also invited to contribute to the course.

In addition to formal teaching, students should expect to spend 6-7 hours weekly in private study. It is essential to meeting the demands of the course to be able to set this time aside. Students should also be prepared in Year II to design and deliver a course of MBCT to an appropriate client group in their own place of work, with supervision from course tutors.

## **Assessment**

Assessment has been designed as much to provide opportunities to consolidate and extend learning as to evaluate knowledge and skill. Assignments are evaluated by internal assessors and examiners and by an external examiner appointed by the University.

### **Essays**

In Year I, appreciation of theory, research and clinical literature are assessed through two 4000 word essays.

### **Reflective Analysis**

Also in Year I, the development of students' mindfulness meditation practice and their reflective capacity are assessed through a written reflective analysis, relating personal experience to theory, research and clinical principle

### **Dissertation**

In Year II, students are required to complete a 10,000 word dissertation on a topic chosen by themselves, demonstrating in depth knowledge of theory, research and clinical principle in an area they find of particular interest, and relating these to the practice to MBCT. Course tutors will provide supervision and guidance in dissertation development, both one-to-one and in small group seminars.

## **MBCT Project**

Also in Year II, the capacity to apply theoretical and research knowledge and clinical principle in practice is assessed through a written project (4000 words excluding references, appendices, etc.) describing the design, delivery and evaluation of a course of MBCT classes in an appropriate clinical setting, and in a problem area with which they are familiar. This includes producing appropriate guided meditation CDs, written handouts, etc.

## **Adherence to Protocol and Clinical Competence**

Adherence to the MBCT protocol and competence in delivering MBCT to patients are assessed by evaluating video recordings of actual classes.

## **Resources**

Students hold University of Oxford Student Cards which offer access to University of Oxford libraries. This includes remote electronic access to a very wide range of journals. Students also benefit from access to the library services of the Warneford Hospital, which include access to the Internet, literature searches, and inter-library loans.

Students pursuing the Master of Studies must be matriculated members of an Oxford college. Unless students have specific affiliations to other colleges, the course strongly recommends membership of Kellogg College ([www.kellogg.ox.ac.uk](http://www.kellogg.ox.ac.uk)), which is associated with the University Department for Continuing Education and has a very good understanding of the needs of mature, part-time students.

## **Fees**

Fees for the course are set so as to guarantee that it will be self-financing. The annual fee for the Master of Studies will be £7500\* for each year for UK/EU students, and £9,750 for overseas (non-EU) students. In addition, students will be required to pay fees to the colleges of which they are members. The fee for Kellogg College is approximately £1150 for each year.

*We hope that this prospectus has told you everything you need to know about the Master of Studies in Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy. However, if you would like further information, please contact:*

*Mrs Wendy Swift, Course Administrator, Oxford University Department of Psychiatry, The Warneford Hospital, Headington, Oxford OX3 7JX*

***Tel: 01865 613141***

***Email: [wendy.swift@psych.ox.ac.uk](mailto:wendy.swift@psych.ox.ac.uk)***

\* The rise in fee since 2008 is due to the UK Government's decision to withdraw financial support for post-graduate students who already have equivalent academic qualifications. This means that universities now have to charge actual total costs for each of their courses.