

Boundary Awareness Training Policy
Metropolitan Boston Association
Massachusetts Conference of the United Church of Christ

Like many other Conferences and Associations, the Metropolitan Boston Association (MBA) has decided to require all authorized ministers to complete a program of Boundary Awareness Training. This policy was adopted by the MBA Committee on Ministerial Standing (COMS) on April 16, 2009. The MBA Council has endorsed Boundary Awareness Training for all authorized ministers.

I. Scope of Purpose

Boundary Awareness Training (BAT) is a professional development opportunity for ministers. Its goal is for participants to be exposed to ideas and concepts around the topic of appropriate relational boundaries within the ministry.

We are covenanted together as clergy to help and support one another, each of us knowing that when we are in isolation we are at our most vulnerable place. The resources for active, healthy and fruitful conversation are among us. During BAT sessions, we will be guided by trained facilitators as we seek to increase our awareness of the complicated boundaries we navigate as ministers.

BAT is part of our education and dialogue toward healthy ministerial relationships and self-care. It seeks to promote opportunities for discussion about the hard and gray areas that make up so much of the space within our profession.

II. Who Must Comply With the Policy?

Any minister who is authorized or seeking authorization from the MBA is required to complete BAT. This includes those who are ordained, licensed, commissioned, or in discernment, as well as those seeking dual standing and privilege of call. Retired ministers are also required to complete BAT unless exempted by the COMS.

III. Length of each BAT offering

BAT offerings will be two consecutive days in length, not requiring an overnight stay.

IV. Acceptance of Other BAT Programs as Authorized Substitutions

BAT programs offered by other Associations of the Massachusetts Conference shall be considered equivalent to the MBA BAT program. Substitution of any other BAT program shall be at the discretion of the COMS, with attention to the equivalency of the program.

A minister transferring into the MBA may seek a waiver from the COMS by providing written proof of completion of an equivalent program taken to fulfill a requirement by a covenantal partner (Conference, seminary, or Association) within the last four years.

V. Time Line of Roll Out

Within two months of the date of adoption of this policy, the MBA Office will provide written notification of the details of the BAT requirement to the following:

- **Authorized ministers.** Notification will include the dates of upcoming BAT opportunities, the method by which to register, and the costs for BAT. It will mention that all churches have been notified and encouraged to pay the costs of their minister's BAT.
- **Churches.** Notification will include encouragement for the church to pay the costs of BAT for their minister(s).
- **Ministers seeking authorization in the MBA.**

Thereafter, annual notification of the requirement for BAT training will be made to authorized ministers, churches, and ministers seeking authorization. The minutes of the COMS will articulate that this notification has occurred.

The first BAT program will be offered on June 18, 2009.

VI. Deadlines for Completing the BAT Requirement

Deadlines for completing the BAT requirement are as follows:

- All ministers currently authorized by the MBA have three years from the effective date of this policy to complete BAT.
- Any minister authorized by the MBA after the effective date of this policy must complete BAT within 18 months of the date they begin working or the date they are authorized by the MBA, whichever comes first.

VII. Cost

The cost of the two-day BAT program is \$75 per participant, which includes food, work materials, and a stipend for the trainers. A discounted rate of \$50 is available for in-care students and retirees.

VIII. Record Keeping of Compliance

In BAT administrative matters, the MBA Office acts on behalf of and with the authorization of the COMS. It shall be the responsibility of the MBA Office to maintain the records of the deadlines and qualification dates of all of its authorized ministers.

As each minister fulfills this requirement, the MBA Office will provide both the minister and (if the minister is active) the call setting (e.g., church, hospital, etc.) written validation of having completed a qualified BAT program.

IX. Consequences of Non-compliance

Each authorized minister is responsible for assuring that s/he fulfills this requirement in a timely way.

If an authorized minister has not completed the BAT requirement a year before her/his deadline, the MBA Office will notify her/him of the dates of upcoming BAT programs and remind him/her of the details of this requirement and the consequences of non-compliance.

If an authorized minister is not in compliance with this requirement, the COMS will engage in a Situational Support Consultation with said minister. Suspension of ministerial standing may be a consequence of this Consultation. The UCC Manual on Ministry details the consequences of suspension, such as inability to circulate a profile, contribute to a UCC pension, or claim a housing allowance.

X. Effective Date of This Policy

This policy becomes effective on June 1, 2009.