



THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF YOGA THERAPISTS

July 1, 2012

Educational Standards for the Training of Yoga Therapists

Preface

Definition of Yoga Therapy

Competencies Profile

- Section 1: Yoga Foundations
- Section 2: Biomedical and Psychological Foundations
- Section 3: Teaching and Therapeutic Skills
- Section 4: Yoga Therapy Tools and their Application
- Section 5: Professional Practice
- Hours beyond the Minimum
- Definitions

Training Requirements and Definitions for a Yoga Therapy Training Program

- Section 1. Minimum Admission Requirements
- Section 2. Length of Program
- Section 3. Hours
- Section 4. Specialty Training
- Section 5. Distance Learning
- Section 6. Directors, Faculty Members, and Mentors
- Definitions

Other Topics



July 1, 2012

Educational Standards for the Training of Yoga Therapists

Preface

In developing the standards for the training of yoga therapists, the Educational Standards Committee took the following points into consideration:

- Our goal was to support the development of yoga therapists, who are well trained in the teachings and practices of yoga for health, healing, and wellbeing. We recognize that it is the prerogative of each school to teach from its own unique perspective, and have allowed for flexibility regarding which tools to emphasize within and beyond the required knowledge of certain subjects, such as asana, pranayama, meditation, and lifestyle.
- In addition to presenting and categorizing specific content, the Competencies Profile, as a whole, is intended to be a tool for understanding yoga therapy as a personal, individualized approach to healing and wellness, even when applied to a group context.
- By including extensive teachings in Section 1 of the Competencies Profile, Yoga Foundations, we sought to emphasize the importance of yoga as the ancient tradition in which yoga therapy is rooted and from which its innumerable healing applications have sprung.
- In determining the appropriate length of training as outlined in Training Requirements and Definitions for a Yoga Therapy Program, we considered not only the hours necessary to teach the competencies as a therapeutic discipline but also the time needed for students to integrate the depth and breadth of the teachings as a personal lifestyle and practice. The length of the program allows time to integrate knowledge and develop a skill set through contact hours, self-study, and practicum.
- To provide insight into the approximate length of time for adequate delivery and assimilation of the material, we included suggested guidelines for the number of training hours for each section and category in the Competencies Profile. However, these are not prescriptive and we recognize that the knowledge, skills, and abilities underlying the competencies can be taught and integrated into a training program in many different ways.
- Relevant theory from Ayurveda, the sister science of yoga, was included to offer an additional, congruent perspective on assessment, development of protocol, and evaluation of the effects of yoga tools when applied in a therapeutic context. We recognize that some schools, in keeping with their tradition, teach these perspectives as part of yoga therapy itself and other schools choose to include them in a separate unit on Ayurveda. In either case, the emphasis on ayurvedic theory will be determined by individual schools. Its inclusion here is meant as a support to the practice of yoga therapy and does not, in any way, imply a level of knowledge sufficient to function as an ayurvedic practitioner.
- To serve the clients of yoga therapy, yoga therapists must be grounded in the foundations of anatomy, basic physiology, and the common terminology of modern healthcare. Many clients will come to a yoga therapist under the care of a healthcare professional and will be informed by his or her perspective. Therefore, we have included a competency section to support a yoga therapist's knowledge of modern biomedical and psychological sciences.
- Developing a therapeutic relationship is the hallmark of person-centered yoga therapy. There are fundamental considerations and tools essential to any therapeutic relationship, as well as those relevant to the unique approach of each school. We have avoided being too prescriptive in this area, allowing each school the freedom to name, define, and develop its therapist/client format accordingly.
- As yoga therapists, we are in relationship with the business world and related professions. The competencies outlined in Section 5 of the Competencies Profile, Professional

(continued on page 3)



July 1, 2012

Educational Standards for the Training of Yoga Therapists

Preface

Practice, are guidelines for interpersonal, inter-business, and personal development skills.

- In developing terminology for the type of hours required, we turned to the academic language of private occupational schools. For example, in order to develop a common language for the training as well as the application process, we distinguished between the terms program, course, and workshop. We also used common definitions for the various modes of program presentation.
- We realize that whether a school is small or large, there are the functions of administration, program oversight, and teaching that are essential to the training it provides. To distinguish the functions, we turned, once again, to common academic terminology. We realize that not all schools will have these specific divisions, or some may use different titles. Nonetheless, it is important that each school knows who is fulfilling each function.

Throughout the process of formulating the standards, we were always mindful of the need to respect the differing perspectives and

approaches of the traditions represented by the increasing number of yoga therapy training programs. Moving forward as a growing profession, we need to stay abreast of the many complexities and questions involved in establishing a vital profession. The next step is to establish a structure and process to implement these standards, including peer review. IAYT will establish a new committee for this work.

As members of this committee, we went through a stimulating, challenging, and rewarding process. As individuals, we appreciate having had the opportunity to refine and broaden our understanding of yoga and yoga therapy by working together so closely on this important, ground-breaking project. We offer thanks to the many program directors, healthcare professionals, and other IAYT members that provided written feedback and/or who attended the several meetings of schools on this work. We also offer our thanks to IAYT Executive Director John Kepner, MA, MBA, who played an important role in guiding this effort, the members of the IAYT Board of Directors, and to Daniel Seitz, JD, EdD, our facilitator and content expert on accreditation, for the support and encouragement that made this work possible.

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July 1, 2012

Educational Standards for the Training of Yoga Therapists

Definition of Yoga Therapy

Yoga therapy is the process of empowering individuals to progress toward improved health and wellbeing through the application of the teachings and practices of yoga.

Yoga is a scientific system of self-investigation, self-transformation, and self-realization that originated in India. The teachings of yoga are rooted in the Vedas and grounded in classical texts and a rich oral tradition. This tradition recognizes that the human being's essential nature is unchanging awareness that exists in relationship to and identification with the changing phenomena of the empirical world.

The yoga tradition views humans as a multidimensional system that includes all aspects of body; breath; and mind, intellect, and emotions and their mutual interaction. Yoga is founded on the basic principle that intelligent practice can positively influence the direction of change within these human dimensions, which are distinct from an individual's unchanging nature or spirit. The practices of yoga traditionally include, but are not limited to, *asana*, *pranayama*, meditation, *mantra*, chanting, *mudra*, ritual, and a disciplined lifestyle. Yoga therapy is the appropriate application of

these teachings and practices in a therapeutic context in order to support a consistent yoga practice that will increase self-awareness and engage the client/student's energy in the direction of desired goals. The goals of yoga therapy include eliminating, reducing, or managing symptoms that cause suffering; improving function; helping to prevent the occurrence or re-occurrence of underlying causes of illness; and moving toward improved health and wellbeing. Yoga therapy also helps clients/students change their relationship to and identification with their condition.

The practice of yoga therapy requires specialized training and skill development to support the relationship between the client/student and therapist and to effect positive change for the individual.

Yoga therapy is informed by its sister science, Ayurveda. As part of a living tradition, yoga therapy continues to evolve and adapt to the cultural context in which it is practiced, and today, it is also informed by contemporary health sciences. Its efficacy is supported by an increasing body of research evidence, which contributes to the growing understanding and acceptance of its value as a therapeutic discipline.



July 1, 2012

Educational Standards for the Training of Yoga Therapists Competencies Profile

Section I. Yoga Foundations

Suggested Guidelines: 120 hours minimum for this section

Category 1.1. Yoga Teachings and Philosophy

Suggested Guidelines: 35 hours minimum for this category

1.1.1 Familiarity with the evolution of the teachings and philosophy of the yoga tradition and its relevance and application to yoga therapy, including teachings from Vedic and post-Vedic periods, Samkhya, Yoga, Tantra, and Ayurveda.

Examples of concepts and models from the above teachings and philosophy relevant to yoga therapy, include but are not limited to,

- a. *tanmatra/bhuta/indriya* (subtle element/gross elements/senses);
- b. *purusha/prakrti* (consciousness/material world);
- c. *pancamaya kosha* (dimensions of the human system);
- d. *guna* (fundamental forces of nature); and
- e. *duhkha* (suffering/discomfort).

Category 1.2. Yoga and the Mind

Suggested Guidelines: 35 hours minimum for this category

1.2.1 Knowledge of yoga perspectives on the structure, states, functioning, and conditions of the mind, including, but not limited to,

- 1.2.1.1 *drashtṛ* (seer), *drshya* (seen);
- 1.2.1.2 *antabharana citta* (consciousness), *buddhi* (intellect), *ahamkara* (ego), *manas* (mind);
- 1.2.1.3 *citta vṛtti* (activities of the mind), *citta parinama* (structural changes in the mind), *vyutthana/nirodha* (mind's potential for distraction and focus);
- 1.2.1.4 *artha* (cognition), *bhava* (mood), *svabhava* (inborn nature), *vasana* (residue of experience), *samskara* (conditioned pattern of thinking and behavior); and
- 1.2.1.5 states of mind: *mudha* (stupefied/dull), *ksipta* (disturbed), *viksipta* (alternating between distraction and focus), *ekagrata* (one-pointed), *nirodha* (focus enveloped/held/ restrained), *vaishvanara* (waking), *taijasa* (dream), *prajña* (deep sleep), *turiya* (beyond).

1.2.2 Knowledge of yoga perspectives on distracted/disturbed conditions of mind and their expressions as expressed in such texts as the *Yoga Sutras*, the *Bhagavad Gita*, and other texts, including but not limited to,

- 1.2.2.1 *klesha* (affliction);
- 1.2.2.2 *lobha*, *krodha*, and *moha* (greed, anger, attachment);
- 1.2.2.3 *duhkha* and *daurmanasya* (suffering/discomfort and negative attitude/thinking), *sarupyam* (identification with the contents of the mind or seer taking the same form as the mind); and
- 1.2.2.4 *antaraya* (obstacles to progress in yoga).



July 1, 2012

Educational Standards for the Training of Yoga Therapists Competencies Profile

Category 1.3. Framework for Health and Disease

Suggested Guidelines: 50 hours minimum for this category

1.3.1 Knowledge of the basic perspectives on health and disease from yoga and Ayurveda relevant to the practice of yoga therapy, including the concepts of

- 1.3.1.1 *panca maya (kosha)* (fundamental structure of the human system);
- 1.3.1.2 subtle anatomy;
- 1.3.1.3 *tri-dosha* (effect of the elements on the physical body);
- 1.3.1.4 *tri-guna* (effect of *sattva* (equilibrium), *rajas* (activity), *tamas* [(inertia)]);
- 1.3.1.5 *prakrti/vikrti (dosha)* constitution at birth/imbalance of the *dosha* currently expressed in the body);
- 1.3.1.6 *ama* (undigested food, emotions, etc. accumulated in the body);
- 1.3.1.7 *agni* (internal fire(s) and their contribution to health);
- 1.3.1.8 *prana vayu (prana, apana, vyana, udana, samana)*;
- 1.3.1.9 *prana prakopa* (disturbance of the *vayu*);
- 1.3.1.10 *surya/chandra* (sun/moon);
- 1.3.1.11 *brmbhana/langhana* (expansion/contraction); and
- 1.3.1.12 *vyuha* model: *heya* (the symptoms), *betu* (the causes), *hana* (the goal), *upaya* (the tools).

1.3.2 Knowledge of categorizing illness, including

- 1.3.2.1 Development/evolution of disease (*samprapti* [pathogenesis], including but not limited to direction, intensity, onset, and duration and their influence on the ease or difficulty of healing and disease management.
- 1.3.2.2 Setting priorities: symptoms/pacification (*shamana* [short term]) and purification/strengthening (*shodhana* [long term]).

Section 2. Biomedical and Psychological Foundations

Suggested Guidelines: 155 hours minimum for this section

Category 2.1. Anatomy and Physiology

Suggested Guidelines: 90 hours minimum for this category

2.1.1 Knowledge of human anatomy and physiology, including all major systems of the body and their interrelationships, as relevant to the work of a yoga therapist.

2.1.2 Knowledge of biomechanics and movement as they relate to the practice of yoga and the work of a yoga therapist.

2.1.3 Knowledge of common pathologies and disorders of all the major systems, including symptoms, management, illness trajectories, and contraindications, as relevant to the work of a yoga therapist.



July 1, 2012

Educational Standards for the Training of Yoga Therapists Competencies Profile

Category 2.2. Additional Biomedical Knowledge

Suggested Guidelines: 15 hours minimum for this category

- 2.2.1 Familiarity** with commonly used drugs and surgical procedures, as relevant to the work of a yoga therapist.
- 2.2.2 Familiarity** with common medical terminology.
- 2.2.3 Knowledge** of how to reference current healthcare information relevant to the work of a yoga therapist, including pathologies, disorders, drugs, and surgical procedures, as relevant to the work of a yoga therapist.

Category 2.3. Psychology and Mental Health

Suggested Guidelines: 30 hours minimum for this category

- 2.3.1 Basic knowledge** of commonly occurring mental health conditions—from psychological distress to psychiatric conditions—their symptoms, and common approaches/interventions, as they relate to the work of a yoga therapist.
- 2.3.2 Basic knowledge** of psychological concepts and terminology, including mood, cognition, behavior, and personality, as relevant to the work of a yoga therapist.

Category 2.4. Additional Knowledge

Suggested Guidelines: 10 hours minimum for this category

- 2.4.1 Familiarity** with models of human development, including developmental stages, lifecycles, and personality, and their importance to medical and psychological health and well-being.
- 2.4.2 Familiarity** with the influence of familial, social, cultural, and religious conditioning on mental and medical perspectives of health and healing.

Category 2.5. Body and Mind Integration

Suggested Guidelines: 10 hours minimum for this category

- 2.5.1 Knowledge** of the interaction of the body, breath, mind, intellect, and emotions in health and well-being.



July 1, 2012

Educational Standards for the Training of Yoga Therapists Competencies Profile

Section 3. Teaching and Therapeutic Skills

Suggested Guidelines: 80 hours minimum for this section

Category 3.1. Basic Principles of the Therapeutic Relationship

Suggested Guidelines: 35 hours minimum for this category

- 3.1.1. **In-depth knowledge** of, and observed capacity for, well-developed communication skills: listening, presence, directive and non-directive dialogue.
- 3.1.2. **Demonstrated ability** to recognize, adjust, and adapt to specific client/student needs in the evolving therapeutic/professional relationship.
- 3.1.3. **Demonstrated ability** to recognize and manage the subtle dynamics inherent in the therapist/client relationship.
- 3.1.4. **In-depth Knowledge** of the scope of practice of yoga therapy and how to assess the need for referral to other professional services.

Category 3.2. Principles and Skills for Educating Clients/Students

Suggested Guidelines: 35 hours minimum for this category

- 3.2.1. **In-depth knowledge** of and **demonstrated ability** to implement effective teaching methods, adapt to unique styles of learning, provide supportive and effective feedback, acknowledge the client's/student's progress, and cope with unique difficulties/successes.
- 3.2.2. **In-depth knowledge** of and **demonstrated ability** to transmit the value of self-awareness and self-responsibility throughout the therapeutic process.
- 3.2.3. **In-depth knowledge** of and **demonstrated ability** to develop and adjust appropriate practice strategies to the client/student.

Category 3.3. Principles and Skills for Working with Groups

Suggested Guidelines: 10 hours minimum for this category

- 3.3.1. **Basic knowledge** of and **demonstrated ability** to design, implement, and evaluate group programs.
- 3.3.2. **Familiarity** with group dynamics and techniques, including communication skills, time management, and the establishment of priorities and boundaries, as well as techniques to address the specific needs of individual participants, to the degree possible in a group setting.



July 1, 2012

Educational Standards for the Training of Yoga Therapists Competencies Profile

Section 4. Yoga Therapy Tools and their Application

Suggested Guidelines: 265 hours minimum for this section, including a minimum of 150 practicum hours

Category 4.1. Yoga Practices

Suggested Guidelines: 60 hours minimum for this category

4.1.1 In-depth knowledge of the application of yama and niyama.

4.1.2 In-depth knowledge of the range of yoga practices and their potential therapeutic effects for common conditions. Practices may include, but are not limited to,

4.1.2.1 *asana* (postures);

4.1.2.2 *pranayama* (regulated breathing);

4.1.2.3 meditation and relaxation techniques such as *bhavana* (visualization), *mantra* (recitation), and ritualized activities such as *nyasa* and *mudra*; and

4.1.2.4 *vihara* (lifestyle modifications) including basic yogic dietary concepts.

4.1.3 In-depth knowledge of contraindications of yoga practices for specific conditions and circumstances.

Category 4.2. Provide Yoga Therapy

Suggested Guidelines: 55 minimum instructional hours for this category, plus a minimum of 150 hours practicum

4.2.1 Demonstrated ability to conduct intake and assess the client/student, including

4.2.1.1 Taking a history of the client and his/her condition(s); and

4.2.1.2 Assessing the current condition using the tools relevant to the yoga therapist, including an evaluation of the physical, energetic, mental, emotional, and spiritual dimensions of well-being.

4.2.2 Demonstrated ability to elicit the goals, expectations, and aspirations of the client/student.

4.2.3 Demonstrated ability to integrate information from the intake, evaluation, and observation to develop a working assessment of the client's condition, limitations, and possibilities.

4.2.4 Demonstrated ability to apply knowledge of how to determine which aspects of the client/student's conditions, goals, and aspirations might be addressed through yoga therapy.

4.2.5 Demonstrated ability to identify priorities and set both long- and short-term goals with the client/student.



July 1, 2012

Educational Standards for the Training of Yoga Therapists

Competencies Profile

- 4.2.6 Demonstrated ability to apply knowledge** of pacification, purification, and strengthening strategies.
- 4.2.7 Demonstrated ability to apply knowledge** of strategies that address common disorders and pathologies of the major human systems and common mental health conditions, as well as other goals and aspirations of the student as relevant to the work of a yoga therapist.
- 4.2.8 Demonstrated ability to apply knowledge** of how to combine intake, evaluation, observations, and working assessment to develop an appropriate practice or session strategy for individual clients/students as well as group classes, taking into consideration the holistic nature of the individual.
- 4.2.9 Demonstrated knowledge** of how to choose and prioritize the use of yoga tools and techniques, including selecting, sequencing, adapting, and modifying yoga practices appropriate to the needs of clients.
- 4.2.10 Demonstrated ability** to teach or deliver the appropriate practices for individuals as well as groups, taking into consideration the assessment of their conditions, limitations, possibilities, and the overall practice strategy.
- 4.2.11 Demonstrated ability** to facilitate the client/student's experience of the practice, including
- 4.2.11.1** providing instruction, demonstration, education of the client/student using multimodal strategies of education such as auditory, visual, and kinesthetic learning tools; and
 - 4.2.11.2** providing supportive strategies for the client/student to actively participate in his/her practice, such as a means to remember his/her practice (e.g., auditory and visual tools).
- 4.2.12 Demonstrated ability** to develop and maintain therapeutic relationships including
- 4.2.12.1** fostering trust by establishing an appropriate therapeutic environment through privacy, confidentiality, and safety; and
 - 4.2.12.2** practicing effective, client/student-centered communication based upon a respect for, and sensitivity to, individual, familial, cultural, social, ethnic, and religious factors.
- 4.2.13 Demonstrated ability** to provide follow up and re-planning, including
- 4.2.13.1** gathering feedback, re-assess, and refine the practice and to determine short-term and long-term goals and priorities;
 - 4.2.13.2** addressing new and changing conditions, goals, aspirations, and priorities of the student/client and to provide appropriate support; and
 - 4.2.13.3** providing appropriate closure for the therapy sessions.



July 1, 2012

Educational Standards for the Training of Yoga Therapists Competencies Profile

Section 5. Professional Practice

Suggested Guidelines: 30 hours minimum for this section

Category 5.1. Ethical Principles

Suggested Guidelines: 15 hours minimum for this category

- 5.1.1 **In-depth knowledge** of yoga practices and methods for self-inquiry related to establishing, practicing, and maintaining ethical principles.
- 5.1.2 **In-depth knowledge** of generally accepted ethical principles of health care codes of conduct and yoga's ethical principles.
- 5.1.3 **Demonstrated ability to apply knowledge** of generally accepted ethical principles and related concepts from the yoga tradition to professional interactions and relationships.
- 5.1.4 **In-depth knowledge** of the scope of practice of yoga therapy, resulting in the demonstrated ability to discern the need for referral to other modalities.
- 5.1.5 **Knowledge** of the extent of one's own individual training, skills, and evolving experience in yoga therapy, and **knowledge** of the importance of practicing within such parameters.

Category 5.2. Legal, Regulatory, and Business Issues Pertaining to Yoga Therapy

Suggested Guidelines: 5 hours minimum for this category

- 5.2.1 **Knowledge** of current relevant local, state, and national laws and regulations impacting the work of a yoga therapist.
- 5.2.2 **Basic knowledge** of business practices relevant to the work of a yoga therapist, including record keeping, planning, and financial management.

Category 5.3. Relationships with Peers, Mentors, Clinicians, and Organizations

Suggested Guidelines: 5 hours minimum for this category

- 5.3.1 **Basic knowledge** of other healthcare fields and their potential role in and relevance to the work of a yoga therapist.
- 5.3.2 **Basic knowledge** of how to establish, maintain, and utilize a referral network of peers and related healthcare practitioners and organizations.
- 5.3.3 **Basic knowledge** of how to develop and maintain ongoing collaborative relationships.



July 1, 2012

Educational Standards for the Training of Yoga Therapists Competencies Profile

Category 5.4. Personal and Professional Development and Continuing Education

Suggested Guidelines: 5 hours minimum for this category

5.4.1 Knowledge of the fundamental value of ongoing personal practice, long-term mentorship, and skills maintenance/development through continuing education.

5.4.2 Knowledge of when and how to seek advice and support for case consultation, educational advancement, and personal practice.

Hours Beyond the Minimums

To bring a program to the required minimum total of 800 hours, all hours beyond the minimums suggested in this document should expand upon one or more of the competencies included herein. For programs currently consisting of more than 800 hours, the hours beyond 800 may expand on the competencies or include other competencies relevant to the practice of yoga therapy.

Definitions

The definitions below are used in the competencies outlined above.

Familiarity Acquire introductory knowledge of a subject sufficient to bring the student's awareness to the existence and central essence of that subject and for the student to know when further knowledge is required for the practice of yoga therapy.

Basic Knowledge Acquire an overview of the broad principles of a subject, including a general awareness of its relevance to and/or potential use in the practice of yoga therapy.

Knowledge Develop an understanding of all aspects of a subject and its specific applications to the practice of yoga therapy.

In-Depth Knowledge Through study and practicum, acquire a confident, in-depth knowledge of a subject and its multiple applications as well as its potential limitations in the practice of yoga therapy.

Demonstrated Ability Demonstrate the ability to undertake particular tasks associated with the work of a yoga therapist.

Demonstrated Ability to Apply Knowledge Demonstrate the application of knowledge to specific cases.



July 1, 2012

Educational Standards for the Training of Yoga Therapists

Training Requirements and Definitions for a Yoga Therapy Training Program

Listed below are the *minimum* requirements for a yoga therapy training program. Schools may choose to have additional requirements. It is recommended that schools develop an application form that includes a summary of the applicant's previous training and experience. Definitions essential to understanding the requirements for training entry-level yoga therapists follow the requirements outlined below. Defined terms are in boldface font throughout both the requirements and definitions.

Section 1. Minimum Admission Requirements

- 1.1 To ensure that students have a basic foundation in yoga teaching, the minimum admission requirement for a yoga therapy training **program** is a 200-hour teacher training, such as a Yoga Alliance 200-hour registered school **program** (RYS 200) or its equivalent.
- 1.2 In addition to minimum yoga teacher training, students must have completed the following, which can be accomplished concurrently:
 - 1.2.1 one year of teaching experience, with specifics to be determined by the school; and
 - 1.2.2 one year of personal practice, with specifics to be determined by the school.

Section 2. Length of Program

- 2.1 An entry-level yoga therapy training **program** must be at least 800 hours total and taught over a *minimum* of two years. Schools may choose to allow more time for completion of the 800 hours.
 - 2.1.1 The hours must include a **practicum**. The **practicum** must be a *minimum* of 150 hours. It can be a combination of **contact** and **non-contact hours**.
 - 2.1.2 The 800 hours does *not* include the **admission requirements**.
 - 2.1.3 The **program** may include up to 300 **transfer hours** from **courses** that relate directly to the **competencies** profile.

Section 3. Hours

- 3.1 The total **program** must have a minimum of 600 **contact hours**. **Contact hours** may include time spent in a classroom, on the telephone, in electronic format, completing a classroom or **distance-learning course**, or in **mentorship** during the **practicum**.
 - 3.1.1 Basic reading and homework assignments are not considered **contact hours**.
- 3.2 Schools must pre-assign the number of **non-contact hours** that are considered appropriate for the completion of a **course**.
 - 3.2.1 **Non-contact hours** must be supervised by an assigned **mentor** or **faculty member**.
 - 3.2.2 Basic reading and homework assignments are not considered **non-contact hours**.



July 1, 2012

Educational Standards for the Training of Yoga Therapists

Training Requirements and Definitions for a Yoga Therapy Training Program

- 3.3 Up to 300 **transfer hours** from another school **program** or **course** may be transferred at the discretion of the school.
- 3.3.1 **Transfer hours** must apply directly to a required **competency(ies)**.
- 3.4 A maximum of 200 **distance-learning** hours may be included in the total 800 hours. The **distance-learning** hours may, at the school's discretion, be distributed between **instructional hours** and **mentorship** during the student's **practicum**.
- 3.5 **Practicum hours** may be conducted in an in-house clinic/classroom, community setting, or other approved location under the **mentorship** of a **faculty member** or assigned **mentor**.
- 3.5.1 **Practicum hours** can be a combination of **contact hours** and **non-contact hours**.
- 3.5.2 Schools must pre-assign the number of **practicum hours** that are considered appropriate for helping a student actively develop a clinical practice through a mentored experience.
- 3.6 All **practicum hours** must be mentored. A **faculty member** or assigned **mentor** is not required to be present at all qualifying yoga therapy sessions.
- 3.6.1 The mentored status is accomplished through the student's relationship with a **faculty member** or assigned **mentor** who provides guidance to the student regarding the **practicum** experience throughout the **practicum**.
- 3.6.2 All **mentored hours** must be related to yoga therapy and the growth of the student and/or a review of **practicum** cases.
- 3.6.3 Hours spent in communication, either in person or at a distance, between a student and an assigned **mentor** regarding the student's yoga therapy studies or yoga therapy cases must be documented.

Section 4. Specialty Training

- 4.1 **Specialty training** has a yoga therapy foundation and relates directly to one or more of the required competencies.
- 4.1.1 A **specialty training course** is taught by a qualified individual(s).
- 4.1.2 The acceptance of a **specialty training course** is at the discretion of the school.

Section 5. Distance Learning

- 5.1 **Distance learning** is supervised and delivered by the **program's faculty members**.
- 5.1.1 **Distance learning** presents and assesses a **competency** or fulfills hours within the **practicum** component of a **program**.
- 5.1.2 **Modes of distance learning** include **distance-learning courses**, online learning, and **supervised independent study**.



July 1, 2012

Educational Standards for the Training of Yoga Therapists

Training Requirements and Definitions for a Yoga Therapy Training Program

- 5.2 Distance-learning courses** can be offered to meet a **competency** requirement(s) only in the following areas: yoga foundations (except yoga practices), biomedical and psychological foundations, and professional practices.
- 5.2.1 Distance-learning courses** may vary in scope and length and are facilitated by a **faculty member**.
- 5.2.2** Material for **distance-learning courses** is prepared in a logical sequence and delivered to the student in an academic format (e.g., reading assignments with study guides, instructional DVDs, online prerecorded material).
- 5.2.3** Credit for a **distance-learning course** is given when a student completes the prescribed material, including an assessment by a **faculty member** or assigned **mentor** that indicates the student has met the educational **competency (ies)** for the **course**.
- 5.2.4** Credit hours for a **distance-learning** or correspondence **course** are predetermined by the school based on the average hours the material would be presented in a **contact-hour** format, regardless of the length of time a student takes to complete the material.
- 5.3 Online course** material, for both interactive and non-interactive **courses**, is presented specific to **competency (ies)** and must include an assessment process.
- 5.3.1 Online course** hours are predetermined by the school, based on the average hours the material would be presented in a **contact-hour** format, regardless of the length of time a student takes to complete the material.
- 5.3.2 Online interactive course** hours are determined by the time spent online.
- 5.4 A supervised independent-study course** is a **non-contact hour course**.
- 5.4.1 A supervised independent-study course** meets the criteria of a **distance-learning course**.
- 5.5** No **competency**, except the **practicum**, can be more than 25 percent fulfilled by **distance learning**.
- 5.6** Up to 90 percent of the **practicum** may be fulfilled by **distance learning** and **mentorship**.
- 5.7** The option to allow credit for **distance learning** will be at the discretion of the school.



July 1, 2012

Educational Standards for the Training of Yoga Therapists
**Training Requirements and Definitions for a
Yoga Therapy Training Program**

Section 6. Directors, Faculty Members, and Mentors

- 6.1 The **school director** determines educational objectives and activities of any **course** or **program** area, including, but not limited to, measures; assessments; records; reports or evaluation of students' attendance; and achievement or completion of lessons, **courses**, or training **program**.
- 6.1.1 The **school director** oversees the essential student records and data for which he or she is responsible, according to state law or school policy, and exercises technical and functional supervision over instructional staff, aides, or volunteers.
- 6.1.2 If there is no **school director**, the responsibilities of the **school director** are merged into the responsibilities of the **program director**.
- 6.2 The **program director** oversees the total training **program**, regardless of the amount of time in the classroom.
- 6.2.1 The **program director** supervises and advises **faculty members** and assigned **mentors**, and is supervised by the **school director** when one exists.
- 6.3 **Faculty members** have well-established expertise and experience in the **course(s)** they teach, including training, certification, or a diploma in the field in which they teach, along with a minimum of two years practical experience.
- 6.3.1 **Faculty members** are employed or contracted by a school to provide either a classroom or **distance-learning course/program** for the purpose of delivering instruction or training necessary to meet the stated objectives of the **course/program**.
- 6.3.2 **Faculty members** are supervised by the **school director** or the school's **program director**.
- 6.4 **Mentors** are approved by the school to supervise a student(s) in training, whether in person, on the telephone, or through other electronic media formats, such as computer, as determined by the school.
- 6.4.1 **Mentors** are appointed by the **program director**.
- 6.4.2 **Mentors** are supervised by the **program director** or a **faculty member**.



July 1, 2012

Educational Standards for the Training of Yoga Therapists

Training Requirements and Definitions for a Yoga Therapy Training Program

Definitions

Admission Requirements are the specific criteria a school uses when accepting a student into the yoga therapy **program**. A school may have requirements in addition to IAYT's minimum admission requirements.

Competency is the expected, measurable knowledge, skills, and abilities at the completion of a training **course** or **program**.

Course A **course** provides depth and breadth in an area of study, such as anatomy and physiology, within the full training **program**.

Distance Learning is a mode of presentation for **courses** within the **program**, including the **practicum**. **Distance learning** varies in presentation format and may include online and other electronic media formats, **supervised independent study courses**, and correspondence **courses**. See also *Modes of Distance-Learning Presentation*

Faculty Member is a teacher of the **program**, **course**, or **workshop**.

Hours

Contact Hours are the amount of time a student spends in *direct contact* with a **faculty member** or assigned **mentor**. **Contact hours** include instructional and **mentored hours**.

Instructional hours are the amount of time allocated for the presentation of educational material to fulfill a **competency**.

Non-Contact Hours are the amount of time a student spends in *independent* study through a **distance-learning course** or the **practicum**.

Mentored Hours are the amount of time a student spends, either in person or at a distance, with a **faculty member** or assigned **mentor** who supports and/or tutors a student's curriculum studies and guides his or her personal growth in relation to maturing as a yoga therapist.

Practicum Hours are the amount of time a student spends in the practical application of previously studied yoga therapy theory as it relates to the competencies under the **mentorship** of a **faculty member** or assigned **mentor**.

Transfer Hours are hours completed in another yoga therapy training **program** or educational institution that can be applied to total hours for a yoga therapy **program** a student is completing.

Mentor is a person who supervises a student(s) in training and advises a student(s) in the **practicum** and his or her personal and professional growth throughout training.



July 1, 2012

Educational Standards for the Training of Yoga Therapists

Training Requirements and Definitions for a Yoga Therapy Training Program

Mentorship is guidance provided to a student by a **faculty member** and/or assigned **mentor**, either in person, or at a distance with respect to the student's studies and management of his or her yoga therapy cases.

Modes of Distance-Learning Presentation

Online Course is **non-contact-hour**, computer-based instruction delivered without the presence of a teacher.

Online Interactive Course is computer-based instruction in which a student has **contact hours** with a **faculty member(s)**, and possibly with other students, via the Internet.

Supervised Independent Study Course is a **non-contact hour course** that a student completes on his or her own.

Practicum A **course** of study designed to provide practical application of previously studied yoga therapy theory, as it relates to the competencies, under the **mentorship** of a **faculty member** or **mentor**.

Program is the full curriculum for the yoga therapy training. It includes a group or series of organized **courses**, lessons, or units of instruction pursued to attain a yoga therapy certification.

Program Director is the person who oversees the total yoga therapy training **program**.

School Director is the person who determines educational objectives and activities and oversees the administration of the yoga therapy **program**.

Specialty Training is a **course** that has a yoga therapy foundation and pertains to a specific topic (e.g., specific diseases, health conditions, health need, such as back care) or a specific tool of yoga (e.g., yoga nidra).

Workshop is a learning format that focuses on a topic of study within a yoga therapy-related **course**.

Definitions of Additional, Related Terms

Continuing Education is a **course** that leads to an occupational objective, enhances education in a specific **program** area, or is required for renewal of a certification.

Co-requisite is a **course** or **workshop** that can be taken concurrently with a **program** or with another **course** or **workshop**.

Elective is a **course** that is offered in the **program** hours but is not required for completion of the yoga therapy training **program**.

Prerequisite is a **course** or topic of study that must be completed before another **course** or topic of study can be started.



July 1, 2012

Educational Standards for the Training of Yoga Therapists

Other Topics

1. Implementation

A timeline for an implementation process has not been developed. Once standards are adopted, schools will have time to adjust their programs to accommodate the Standards.

2. Grandparenting

Grandparenting applies to individual practitioners rather than schools. As a field develops standards, grandparenting is typically addressed in a generous way, respecting original training, continuing education and experience.

3. Other Topics

We realize there are other issues that may need to be addressed, including specialty programs, electronic media, and faculty qualifications. We welcome suggestions for other important topics that are of concern to you.