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Educational Standards for the Training of Yoga Therapists

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Preface to the 2016 Edition of the *Educational Standards for the Training of Yoga Therapists*

When we implemented the accreditation process in the summer of 2013, we made a conscious decision not to change the *Educational Standards* for three years, which was the length of the accreditation cycle at that time. We felt it was important to maintain consistency in how the standards and competencies were applied for a defined and reasonable period of time, even though we knew that experience, especially early on, would tempt us to make changes sooner. We were new to the work of accrediting yoga therapy training programs and believed it was important to build a knowledge base grounded in experience upon which we could make thoughtful and realistic changes.

By late 2015, we believed we had sufficient experience to move forward with needed refinements that would continue to carry out the intention of the *Educational Standards* set by the Standards Committee and, in doing so, help to further mature our emerging field. In our nearly three years of accrediting experience, we saw clear patterns in areas where clarification, more freedom and flexibility, or stronger requirements were needed. These areas were practicum, distance learning, and the qualifications of the program director, respectively.

This 2016 edition introduces the following changes to the *Educational Standards for the Training of Yoga Therapists*:

- Replaces the concept of “contact hours” and “non-contact hours” with the concept of “residential hours” and “distance learning hours”, which are better aligned with contemporary modes of learning, particularly for adult learners.
- Provides new and revised definitions for key concepts related to distance learning and the practicum experience.
- Increases the number of possible hours of distance learning from 200 to 300, and removes restrictions to the competencies in which distance learning may be used.
- Allows for greater freedom and flexibility in the use of the growing modes of distance learning.
- Clarifies requirements for the practicum portion of a yoga therapy training program. This edition fully implements the expectation, set by the Standards Committee in 2012, that trainees complete 150 clinical delivery hours within their practicum in which they act as the lead yoga therapist in both one-on-one and group yoga therapy sessions.
- Establishes that the program director for a yoga therapy training program be C-IAYT.
- Places competencies related to developing the knowledge base of yoga therapy tools for therapeutic application in Category 3 of the competencies: Yoga Therapy Tools and Therapeutic Skills. Placing these tools—*asana* (postures); *pranayama* (regulated breathing); meditation and relaxation techniques such as *bhavana* (visualization), *mantra* (recitation), and ritualized activities such as *nyasa* and *mudra*; and *vihara* (lifestyle modifications) including basic yogic dietary concepts—in Competency 3 further emphasizes their importance in the skill set necessary to practice as a yoga therapist.

We encourage you to read through this edition of the *Educational Standards* closely and carefully, starting with the definitions as they form the conceptual basis for the competencies and standards that follow. We also encourage you to read the still relevant and educational preface to the 2012 edition of the *Educational Standards* on pages 5–6. This preface gives you the big picture of the philosophical underpinnings of the *Educational Standards* and the Standard Committee’s intention in formulating them. We believe we have stayed true to its intention, goals, and principles as we worked on the 2016 revisions.



We're grateful to the nearly sixty Member Schools who have entered into the accreditation journey with us to date and to the twenty-six Member Schools who have completed their journey to date. Together we continue to grow both our profession and our professionalism. We also wish to express our gratitude to each of the Member Schools who participated in the survey of the proposed changes to the *Educational Standards* in June. Your thoughtful and detailed comments helped us further refine our thinking and language. And last, but not least, we wish to express our gratitude to the IAYT Board of Directors and to Executive Director John Kepner for his and their ongoing support and encouragement of us to keep taking the next right steps for our profession, and to our fearless facilitator Dan Seitz for his expertise and advice and for continuing to help us successfully navigate the "groan zone" so that we can land in the place that is best for our profession at this time.

We look forward to the next phase of this great and noble journey as an emerging field within western healthcare, doing our part together to establish yoga as a recognized and respected therapy.

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Effective Dates of the 2016 Educational Standards for the Training of Yoga Therapists

New Applicants: October 15, 2016 *

Members Schools with Accredited Programs: January 1, 2018 *

Please Note:

- 1) If a school with an accredited program is in the middle of teaching its program to a defined cohort of students under the existing standards on or after January 1, 2018, it may complete teaching the program under the existing standards. The next time it begins to teach its program to a defined cohort of students, the school must demonstrate that the program is in compliance with new and revised standards. This will involve submitting a Program Change Notification according to the “Policy on Program Changes” in the *Accreditation Policies and Procedures* before it begins teaching the revised program.
- 2) If a school with an accredited program will begin teaching its program to a defined cohort of students on or after January 1, 2018, the program must demonstrate compliance with the new and revised standards. This will involve submitting a Program Change Notification according to the “Policy on Program Changes” in the *Accreditation Policies and Procedures*.
- 3) If a school with an accredited program allows for rolling admission, the school must demonstrate that its program is in compliance with the new and revised standards by January 1, 2018. This will involve submitting a Program Change Notification according to the “Policy on Program Changes” in the *Accreditation Policies and Procedures*.
- 4) In the interest of fairness, schools with accredited programs have the option of revising their programs anytime from October 15, 2016 onward. Any school that acts on this option will need to submit a Program Change Notification according to the “Policy on Program Changes” in the *Accreditation Policies and Procedures* before it begins teaching the revised program.

*** Please Note:** Standard 6.2.2 requires the program director to be C-IAYT. For new applicants, the program director must have at least applied for C-IAYT status by October 15, 2016. For accredited programs, the program director must have at least applied for C-IAYT status by December 31, 2016.



Preface to the 2012 Edition

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 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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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 multi-dimensional 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 reoccurrence 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.

Definitions of Terms in the Competencies Profile and Training Requirements

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.

Blended Learning is an approach to learning that combines distance learning and residential learning.

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 an approach to learning that takes place when a faculty member is in one location and a student or students are in another location or in dispersed locations. Distance learning can be *asynchronous* or *synchronous*, depending on whether faculty-student interaction takes place in real time. See also **Modes of Distance-Learning Presentation**

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

Group Yoga Therapy is a session(s) in which a yoga therapist works with a small group of clients who have a similar condition or symptom(s), or with clients who have a variety of health or health-related conditions. A hallmark that differentiates group yoga therapy from group yoga teaching is the presence of an individual intake and assessment for each client in the group prior to commencing the class, personalization of the practice(s) based on the individual assessment, and reassessment at regular intervals throughout a series of classes.

Homework is any preparation for a course or any activity that supplements student learning.

Hours

Distance Learning Hours are the amount of time a student or students spend in curriculum studies or mentorship in which the faculty member or mentor is in one location and a student or students are in another location or in dispersed locations. Distance learning hours can be *asynchronous* or *synchronous*, and do not include homework or personal practice.

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 Preparation Hours are the amount of time spent preparing students to deliver yoga therapy, including learning case-taking skills, assessment, and protocol development. Teaching tools may include clinical observation of yoga therapy sessions, role playing, case study, and didactic learning. Practicum preparation addresses the competencies as addressed in Competency 3. Yoga Therapy Tools and Therapeutic Skills.

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. Practicum hours are divided into: **Practicum Delivery Hours** and **Practicum Documentation and Mentorship Hours** as addressed in Competency 4. Practicum.

Practicum Delivery Hours are the amount of time a student leads the delivery of one-on-one or **group yoga therapy** sessions in real time. During practicum delivery, a student takes responsibility for the full delivery of the yoga therapy session, whether observed or non-observed by mentors and/or classmates. Depending on when protocol development takes place, it can be counted under practicum delivery hours or **practicum documentation and mentorship hours**.



Practicum Documentation and Mentorship Hours are the amount of time a student spends with his/her mentor discussing cases, including support in protocol development, when necessary, documenting cases, and preparing reports for his/her mentor. Depending on when protocol development takes place, it can be counted under **practicum delivery hours** or practicum documentation and mentorship hours.

Residential Hours are the amount of time a student spends in the same physical location in face-to-face curricular studies with faculty. Residential hours do not include homework or personal practice.

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.

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

Asynchronous Learning is an approach to distance learning in which material specifically designed for a course is not presented to, accessed by, or responded to by students in real time.

Synchronous Learning is an approach to distance learning in which faculty interact with students in curricular studies in real time.

Supervised Independent Study Course is a competency-based course that a student completes on his or her own with supervision from a faculty member.

Practicum is 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.

Residential Learning is an approach to learning in which a student is in the same physical location in face-to-face curricular studies with faculty.

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.

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. *dubkha* (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 *drashtr* (seer), *drshya* (seen);

1.2.1.2 *antahkarana citta* (consciousness), *buddhi* (intellect), *ahamkara* (ego), *manas* (mind);

1.2.1.3 *citta vrtti* (activities of the mind), *citta pariama* (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), *kshipta* (disturbed), *vikshipta* (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 *dubkha* 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).

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: *beya* (the symptoms), *betu* (the causes), *bana* (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 (*sbamana* [short term]) and purification/strengthening (*sbodbana* [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.

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.



Section 3. Yoga Therapy Tools and Therapeutic Skills

Suggested Guidelines: 140 hours minimum for this section

Category 3.1. Yoga Therapy Tools

Suggested Guidelines: 60 hours minimum for this category

3.1.1 In-depth knowledge of the application of *yama* and *niyama* in the context of yoga therapy.

3.1.2 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,

3.1.2.1 *asana* (postures);

3.1.2.2 *pranayama* (regulated breathing);

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

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

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

Category 3.2 Basic Principles of the Therapeutic Relationship

Suggested Guidelines: 35 hours minimum for this category

3.2.1 In-depth knowledge of, and observed capacity for, well-developed communication skills: listening, presence, directive and non-directive dialogue.

3.2.2 Demonstrated ability to recognize, adjust, and adapt to specific client/student needs in the evolving therapeutic/professional relationship.

3.2.3 Demonstrated ability to recognize and manage the subtle dynamics inherent in the therapist/client relationship.

3.2.4 In-depth knowledge of the scope of practice of yoga therapy and how to assess the need for referral to other professional services.

Category 3.3 Principles and Skills for Educating Clients/Students

Suggested Guidelines: 35 hours minimum for this category

3.3.1 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.

3.3.2 In-depth knowledge of and demonstrated ability to transmit the value of self-awareness and self-responsibility throughout the therapeutic process.

3.3.3 In-depth knowledge of and demonstrated ability to develop and adjust appropriate practice strategies to the client/student.



Category 3.4 Principles and Skills for Working with Groups

Suggested Guidelines: 10 hours minimum for this category

3.4.1 Basic knowledge of and demonstrated ability to design, implement, and evaluate group programs.

3.4.2 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.

Section 4. Practicum

Suggested Guidelines: 205 hours minimum for this section

Category 4.1 Providing Yoga Therapy

Suggested Guidelines: 55 minimum practicum documentation and mentorship hours for this category, plus a minimum of 150 hours of practicum delivery

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

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

4.1.1.2 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.

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

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

4.1.4 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.

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

4.1.6 Demonstrated ability to apply knowledge of pacification, purification, and strengthening strategies.

4.1.7 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.

4.1.8 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.

4.1.9 Demonstrated ability to apply 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.

4.1.10 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.

4.1.11 Demonstrated ability to facilitate the client/student's experience of the practice, including

4.1.11.1 providing instruction, demonstration, education of the client/student using multimodal strategies of education such as auditory, visual, and kinesthetic learning tools; and

4.1.11.2 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).

4.1.12 Demonstrated ability to develop and maintain therapeutic relationships including

4.1.12.1 fostering trust by establishing an appropriate therapeutic environment through privacy, confidentiality, and safety; and

4.1.12.2 practicing effective, client/student-centered communication based upon a respect for, and sensitivity to, individual, familial, cultural, social, ethnic, and religious factors.

4.1.13 Demonstrated ability to provide follow up and re-planning, including

4.1.13.1 gathering feedback, re-assess, and refine the practice and to determine short-term and long-term goals and priorities;

4.1.13.2 addressing new and changing conditions, goals, aspirations, and priorities of the student/client and to provide appropriate support; and

4.1.13.3 providing appropriate closure for the therapy sessions.

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.

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.

Terms Used in the Competencies

The terms 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.



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 800 hours does not include the admission requirements.

Section 3. Hours

3.1 The total program must have a minimum of 800 hours.

3.1.1 Of the minimum 800 hours, 500 hours must be **residential hours** within the program.

3.1.2 Of the minimum 800 hours, 300 hours may be **distance learning hours**.

3.1.3 The practicum portion of the program includes **practicum documentation and mentorship hours** in which the student develops **competencies** addressed in section 4 of the Competency Profile.

3.1.4 The practicum portion of the program must include a minimum of 150 **practicum delivery hours** in which the student provides one-on-one or **group yoga therapy** sessions.

3.2 Homework and personal practice may not be counted toward program hours.

3.3 Practicum documentation and mentorship hours may be a combination of residential hours and distance learning hours.

3.3.1 Schools must designate **practicum documentation and mentorship hours** that help a student actively develop a clinical practice through a mentored experience.

3.4 Practicum delivery 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 All practicum delivery hours must be mentored and assessed.

3.5.1 A faculty member or assigned **mentor** is not required to be present at all yoga therapy delivery sessions.

3.5.2 Mentoring for **practicum** delivery is accomplished through oversight by an assigned **faculty member** or **mentor** who provides guidance and feedback to the student throughout their **practicum** delivery experience.

3.5.3 All mentored hours must be related to yoga therapy and the growth of the student and/or a review of **practicum** cases.

3.5.4 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.

3.5.5 One-on-one **practicum** mentorship offered via web-based tools or telephone may be counted towards **residential hours**, so long as they are conducted in real time.

3.6 Up to 300 **transfer hours** from another school **program** or course may be transferred at the discretion of the school.

3.6.1 Transfer hours must apply directly to a required **competency(ies)**.

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 addresses one or more **competency** in the core curriculum or fulfills hours within the **practicum** component of a **program**.

5.1.2 Distance-learning courses are facilitated by a **faculty member**.

5.1.3 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).

5.1.4 Distance learning hours are pre-determined.

5.1.5 Distance learning hours are assessed and evaluated.



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.

6.2.2 The **program director** is C-IAYT.

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**.