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Preface to the 2017 Edition

As IAYT moves into our fifth year as an accreditor, we continue to see tremendous growth in the professionalization of yoga therapy training programs and the Schools that teach them. Schools with existing accredited programs remain engaged in a continuous process of refinement and new programs continue to emerge, all in response to the recognition of the valuable contributions that yoga therapy makes to the restoration and optimization of health.

The Accreditation Committee and the IAYT Board of Directors have decided that keeping the bar high on requirements for yoga therapy training programs supports the broader acceptance and integration of the work of yoga therapists within the western healthcare system. To this end, the IAYT Board of Directors has approved revisions to the Educational Standards recommended by the Accreditation Committee in the following areas:

- Requirements for program director
- Requirements for faculty
- Curriculum integration
- Use of electives

Requirements for Program Director and Faculty

In 2012, the Standards Committee set modest expectations for the education, training, and experience of the Program Director and faculty of a yoga therapy training program in order to give IAYT Member Schools time to cultivate and mature individuals in these key roles. The expectation was that, within a reasonable period of time, these initial requirements would increase as the profession matured under IAYT accreditation.

The Accreditation Committee and the IAYT Board decided to increase requirements for the program director and faculty now for a number of reasons. The number of accredited yoga therapy training programs increases every year as does the number of Member Schools developing these programs. Over the past four years, Member Schools with accredited programs have had time to refine their programs in keeping with the expectations of the Educational Standards, including cultivating the expertise of the program director and faculty. In support of this, the Accreditation Committee and staff have provided considerable education to the School community on the Educational Standards and what is needed to demonstrate compliance with them at each of the Meetings of Schools since the Board approved them in 2012, not to mention to individual Schools during the Letter of Intent and the application review processes. These past nearly five years have been a time of change and adjustment for the School community, and the Accreditation Committee and staff have seen the tremendous progress that has been made with respect to compliance with the requirements for program director and faculty and the positive impact on the quality of yoga therapy education that this progress has had.

In addition to the impact of accreditation, IAYT certification of individual yoga therapists has also been a factor in increasing requirements for the program director and faculty. With the successful conclusion of IAYT’s grandparenting process earlier this year, the ranks of certified yoga therapists are also increasing steadily as graduates of accredited programs become eligible for certification, not to mention program directorships and faculty positions in training programs. The increased requirements for program director and faculty recognize the important role the C-IAYT credential plays. Along with this credential, the Accreditation Committee and IAYT Board determined that substantive experience on many fronts—providing yoga therapy, developing yoga therapy curriculum, teaching it, and overseeing other faculty teaching it—is also necessary to provide the level of leadership required to meet the intent of the Educational Standards.

Given the program director’s responsibility for oversight of the entire program and supervision and advise- ment of the faculty, the Accreditation Committee determined that the best course of action was to increase the requirements for the education, training, and experience of the Program Director more significantly than those of faculty (see Training Requirements 5.2–5.2.5 on p. 21). This includes a new requirement that she or he have a minimum of five years practical experience as a yoga therapist. Faculty requirements for practical experience in the area of teaching increase to a minimum of three years from two years (see Training Requirement 5.5 on p. 22).

Curriculum Integration

When the Standards Committee developed the Educational Standards, it intended that the curriculum for yoga therapy training programs be integrated. This meant that each course or module within the curriculum would be woven together to create a unified whole that when delivered to students gave them the knowledge base and skill set to practice as an entry-level, generalist yoga therapist. This intention extended to the yoga philosophical foundation on which the curriculum was built. While many schools teach from a single lineage, others teach from a foundation that combines or blends a number of lineages or traditions. The expectation for an integrated curriculum and a cohesive philosophical foundation, however, was implicit rather than explicit in the Educational Standards. The Accreditation Committee has reviewed a number of applications whose curriculum lacks integration in both of these areas.
To redress this problem, the Committee decided the best course of action is to make the expectation of curriculum integration explicit in the *Educational Standards*. To this end, two changes have been made to the *Educational Standards*:

1) Standards related to curriculum integration and yoga philosophic cohesion have been added (see Training Requirements 3.1–3.1.2 on p. 19). The intention is to support Schools in providing students with a unified, cohesive perspective on working yoga therapeutically (holistically) with an individual or group.

2) Standards for specialty trainings have been deleted (former Training Requirements 4.1–4.1.2). The presence of these standards miscommunicated how the Standards Committee intended them to be used in minimum 800-hour programs. Their deletion does not preclude a School from incorporating this type of content in its curriculum. The onus, however, is on the School to demonstrate how this content is woven in to the program from both yoga philosophic and curriculum standpoints.

**Use of Electives**

*Elective* is a term used in academia to indicate a course that is not required to complete a program of training or study but which may be chosen as part of a student's program to further her or his interest in a particular subject related to the program. As defined, the term *elective* in the 2012 and 2016 editions of the *Educational Standards* has led to considerable confusion for applicants and required clarification to them over how such courses may be used in a yoga therapy training program. Student specialization in particular conditions, such as depression or cancer, is outside the scope of the *Educational Standards*, which are intended to support preparing entry-level yoga therapists who are generalists with a basic foundation of knowledge and skills in providing yoga therapy. To this end, the definition of elective has been revised (see “Definitions of Additional, Related Terms” on p. 11) and guidelines for using electives have been developed (see “The Use of Electives in Yoga Therapy Training Programs Considered for Accreditation” on p. 18).

This revised definition is intended to help strengthen the base of knowledge and skills upon which a yoga therapist can specialize post-graduation. In addition, it is not meant to preclude a student from focusing on a particular population or condition in her or his practicum work, unless the program’s practicum requirements delineate specific populations and/or conditions with which its students must work.

We encourage you to read through this 2017 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 7 and 8. This 2012 preface gives you the big picture of the philosophical underpinnings of the *Educational Standards* and the Standard Committee’s original intent. These 2017 revisions have stayed true to those original intention, goals, and principles.

We’re grateful to the more than 70 Member Schools who have entered into the accreditation journey with us to date and to the twenty-eight Member Schools who have successfully completed the accreditation process. The journey continues for all of us together as 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 July. 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 ongoing support and encouragement to keep taking the next right steps for our profession. 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.

**Accreditation Committee**

Molly McManus, Accreditation Committee Chair, 2017–2018
Sue Tebb, Accreditation Committee Vice-Chair, 2017–2018
Hansa Knox, Accreditation Committee Secretary, 2017–2018
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**With**

Robin Rothenberg, Accreditation Committee Chair, 2016–2017

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Effective Dates of the 2017 Educational Standards for the Training of Yoga Therapists

New Applicants: October 15, 2017 *
For 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 in either its Biennial Report or Application for Re-Accreditation, which ever comes first, that the program is in compliance with new and revised standards as of January 1, 2018.

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 in either its Biennial Report or Application for Re-Accreditation, which ever comes first, that the program is in compliance with new and revised standards as of January 1, 2018.

3) If a school with an accredited program allows for rolling admission, the school must demonstrate in either its Biennial Report or Application for Re-Accreditation, which ever comes first, that the program is in compliance with new and revised standards as of January 1, 2018.

4) In the interest of fairness, schools with accredited programs have the option of revising their programs anytime from October 15, 2017 onward. Any school that acts on this option will need to demonstrate in either its Biennial Report or Application for Re-Accreditation, which ever comes first, that the program is in compliance with new and revised standards as of October 15, 2017.
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 *vibhara* (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.

**Accreditation Committee**
Robin Rothenberg, Accreditation Committee Chair
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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 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 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**.

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**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.

**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.

**Elective** is a course within a yoga therapy training program that a student may choose to take to complete the requirements of the 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. dukkha (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 drstr (seer), drsbya (seen);

1.2.1.2 antabkarana citta (consciousness), buddhi (intellect), abamkara (ego), manas (mind);

1.2.1.3 citta vrtil (activities of the mind), citta parima (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 (stupified/dull), kshipta (disturbed), vikshipta (alternating between distraction and focus), ekagrata (one-pointed), nirodha (focus enveloped/held/restrained), vaishvanara (waking), taitajas (dream), prajna (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 dukkha 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 *tridosha* (effect of the elements on the physical body);

1.3.1.4 *triguna* (effect of *sattva* (equilibrium), *rajas* (activity), *tamas* [inertia]);

1.3.1.5 *prakriti/vikriti* (*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 *brmbana/langbana* (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 (*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.

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 vibara (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.

The Use of Electives in Yoga Therapy Training Programs Considered for Accreditation
A School that applies for accreditation of its yoga therapy training program is not required to offer electives as part of its curriculum. When a School chooses to provide electives as part of its curriculum, these electives may not be used to fulfill hours within the suggested guidelines hours (650 hours) in the Competencies Profile. Electives may be used to fulfill hours beyond the suggested guidelines hours. Elective courses offered must support graduating entry-level yoga therapists as competent generalists and must be aligned with all IAYT accreditation standards, policies, and procedures. It is further understood that any elective course offered addresses competencies in the Competencies Profile, is consistent with the mission of the School, and is integrated into the complete curriculum. Any elective course offered must be so identified in the School's syllabus and in any curriculum information provided to students or prospective students in print or electronic form. For the purposes of the accreditation application, the School is expected to provide all required syllabus information for any elective course, as it would for any other course in the curriculum.

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. Curriculum and Hours in the Program
3.1 The curriculum addresses all competencies in the Competencies Profile

3.1.1 The curriculum may draw upon a range of yoga perspectives from different lineages and/or traditions; however, these perspectives must be integrated into a unified, cohesive perspective that is clearly reflected in the program. This perspective formulates the philosophical foundation for the practical application of the yoga therapy approach taught in the program.

3.1.2 The curriculum is delivered in such a way that allows students to acquire knowledge and develop the skills outlined in the Competencies Profile in a progressive and systematic manner, enabling them to design individualized yoga therapy protocols.
3.2 The total program must have a minimum of 800 hours.

3.2.1 Of the minimum 800 hours, a minimum of 500 hours must be residential hours in the accredited program’s curriculum.

3.2.2 Of the minimum 800 hours, a maximum of 300 hours may be distance learning hours.

3.2.3 The practicum portion of the program must be a minimum of 205 hours.

3.2.3.1 Of the 205 practicum hours, practicum delivery hours must total a minimum of 150 hours in which the student provides one-on-one or group yoga therapy sessions.

3.2.3.2 Of the 205 practicum hours, practicum documentation and mentorship hours must total a minimum of 55 hours.

3.2.3.3 Practicum delivery hours may be conducted in an in-house clinic/classroom, community setting, or other appropriate location.

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

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

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

3.3 All practicum delivery hours must be mentored by a faculty member or assigned mentor and assessed.

3.3.1 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.

3.3.2 All practicum delivery hours must be documented and reviewed by the mentor.

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

3.3.4 All mentored hours must be related to yoga therapy, the preparation for and review of practicum cases, and the growth of the student’s ability to deliver yoga therapy.

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

3.4.1 The practicum documentation and mentorship hours contribute to a student’s development of the competencies addressed in section 4 of the Competency Profile.

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

3.4.2.1 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.

3.4.2.2 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.
Section 4. Distance Learning

4.1 Distance learning is supervised and delivered by the program's faculty members.

4.1.1 Distance learning presents and addresses one or more competency in the core curriculum or fulfills hours within the practicum component of a program.

4.1.2 Distance-learning courses are facilitated by a faculty member.

4.1.3 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).

4.1.4 Distance learning hours are pre-determined.

4.1.5 Distance learning hours are assessed and evaluated.

Section 5. Directors, Faculty Members, and Mentors

5.1 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.

5.1.1 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.

5.1.2 If there is no school director, the responsibilities of the school director may be met by the program director.

5.2 The program director(s) oversees the total training program, regardless of the amount of time in the classroom.

5.2.1 The program director(s) supervises and advises faculty members and assigned mentors, and is supervised by the school director when one exists.

5.2.2 The program director(s) is a CAE.

5.2.3 The program director(s) has a thorough understanding of the range and depth of the subject matter to be taught in the curriculum.

5.2.4 The program director(s) has the expertise with which to assess faculty qualifications for each course within the curriculum.

5.2.5 The program director(s) has a minimum of five years practical experience in yoga therapy.
5.3 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 three years practical experience in the field in which they teach.

5.3.1 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.

5.3.2 Faculty members are supervised by the school director or the school’s program director.

5.4 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.

5.4.1 Mentors are appointed by the program director.

5.4.2 Mentors are supervised by the program director or a faculty member.