

Yoga Association of Alberta

Equivalency Certification Guidelines

December 2018

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YOGA ASSOCIATION OF ALBERTA
EQUIVALENCY CERTIFICATION GUIDELINES
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YOGA ASSOCIATION OF ALBERTA
EQUIVALENCY CERTIFICATION GUIDELINES

Section I - Equivalency Certification

1. Equivalency Certification Program - Introduction

The Yoga Association of Alberta (YAA) recognizes and certifies teachers from hatha yoga teacher training programs that provide systematic instruction first and foremost in the core body of *asanas*, then in the rudiments of *pranayama* and meditation, all supported by basic study of the textual background of hatha yoga. (See the *Definition of Hatha Yoga – Appendix A.*) The YAA recognizes that each particular tradition or school of hatha yoga may approach this training differently. If an applicant is missing any of the requirements for YAA Certification, partial credit towards the YAA Teacher Training Program (TTP) may be granted. For details on this program please see the Teacher Training page of our website.

Please note that a pre-requisite of at least 2 years of recent regular attendance in hatha yoga classes or endorsement by a YAA Senior Teacher before entering teacher training, in addition to hatha yoga teacher training for a minimum of 2 years are two of the defining characteristics of the YAA TTP. Therefore, applicants for Equivalency Certification should present training of similar standards. More than one teacher training program may be combined, and other classes and workshops led by experienced teachers may also be applicable. Ongoing apprenticeship with an experienced Senior Teacher takes precedence over any short-term training.

All teachers applying for YAA Certification are required to have an understanding of the YAA core curriculum, and must be able to teach the required *asana/pranayama* practices safely and effectively, in order to be eligible to apply for certification. See the *Equivalency Certification Checklist* for details. Note that depending on the student and their training, and at the discretion of the Certification Committee, this may necessitate more than the minimum requirements described in any component of the program.

2. 300-Hour Equivalency Certification Summary

Required Documentation is listed on the *Equivalency Certification Application*. A summary of the requirements for the 300-Hour Equivalency Certification is as follows:

- **A minimum of 2 years** since the applicant started his or her first formal hatha yoga teacher training program.
- **200 hours of yoga teacher training** from a recognized hatha yoga program which included a **minimum** of:
 - 100 hours of Techniques, Training & Practice,
 - 25 hours of Teaching Methodology,
 - 20 hours of Anatomy & Physiology,
 - 30 hours of Yoga Philosophy and Ethics for Yoga Teachers, and
 - 10 hours of Practicum (including 5 hours of Supervised Teaching).
- **100 additional hours** of yoga training in workshops and/or classes with experienced teachers. These hours must include the following **minimum** components, **if not already included in the above hours**:
 - **3 workshops** of at least 10 hours each, **led by 3 distinct Senior Teachers** besides their lead trainer(s),
 - **10 hours** of classes or workshop(s) **led by a YAA Senior Teacher** or a YAA sponsored Senior Teacher (YAA Teaching Skills Workshop or two YAA Monthly TTP Classes recommended),
 - **10 hours of Special Concerns** workshop(s) dealing with how to address the specific needs of individuals and special populations,
 - **10 hours of Meditation** workshop(s), and
 - **5 hours of Breath Awareness** workshop(s).
- Evidence of **written assignments** equivalent to YAA standards & curriculum (~20 hours).
- **Two reference letters**, one from a lead trainer or senior teacher with whom the student has studied or apprenticed, the second a character reference from a colleague or yoga teacher.
- **Current CPR Certification** (any level).

3. 500-Hour Equivalency Certification Summary

Required Documentation is listed on the *Equivalency Certification Application*. A summary of the requirements for the Hatha Yoga Teacher Training 500-Hour Equivalency Certification is as follows:

- **A minimum of 2 years** since the applicant started his or her first formal hatha yoga teacher training program.
- **500 hours of yoga teacher training** from a recognized hatha yoga program, or combination of programs, which included a **minimum** of:
 - 150 hours of Techniques, Training & Practice,
 - 30 hours of Teaching Methodology,
 - 35 hours of Anatomy & Physiology,
 - 60 hours of Yoga Philosophy and Ethics for Yoga Teachers, and
 - 40 hours of Practicum with Senior Teacher (including 10 hours of Supervised Teaching).
- **10 hours** of classes or workshop(s) **led by a YAA Senior Teacher** or a YAA sponsored Senior Teacher (YAA Teaching Skills Workshop or two YAA Monthly TTP Classes recommended), **if not already included in above hours.**
- **Two reference letters**, one from a lead trainer or senior teacher with whom the student has studied or apprenticed, the second a character reference from a colleague or another yoga teacher.
- **Current CPR Certification** (any level).

4. Certification Procedure

Submit required documentation to the YAA office by one of the following due dates: March 1st for May Certification, July 1st for September Certification, or November 1st for January Certification. When the TTP Coordinator confirms that all documentation and references are in order, the application is presented to the Certification Committee and Executive for review and approval. Upon final approval, a YAA Certificate, valid for a 3-year period, is sent to the applicant.

Certification requirements are subject to review and change. All certifications are contingent upon continued membership renewal in the YAA and are only valid as long as the applicant is a full YAA member in good standing. In any case where the applicant is dissatisfied with certification decisions, an appeal for clarification and reevaluation may be directed to the Executive.

5. Recertification and Additional Levels

YAA Certified Teachers meet professional upgrading standards and maintain regular attendance in both classes/workshops and teaching hours, and must apply for Recertification every three years in order to maintain certification status. With further training and requisite experience, YAA Certified Teachers may also qualify for 500-Hour Level, 750-Hour Level (Intermediate Teacher Status), and 1,000-Hour Level (Senior Teacher Status). Requirements are on the Recertification page of the website. It is highly recommended that all YAA Certified Teachers maintain ongoing affiliation with at least one YAA Senior Teacher, as reference letters are required for status approvals. YAA Certified Teachers may also obtain discount insurance rates under the umbrella of the YAA's insurance policy. For details see the Insurance page of our website at www.yoga.ca.

YOGA ASSOCIATION OF ALBERTA

DEFINITION OF HATHA YOGA

HATHA YOGA, also called *hatha-vidya* (science of hatha), is a branch of yoga that historically refers to a "vast body of doctrines and practices geared toward Self-realization by means of perfecting the body" (Georg Feuerstein, *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Yoga* [EDY]). As such, hatha yoga sees the body itself as the primary vehicle for personal transformation. Its central practices include ritual techniques to purify the body and yogic postures (*asana*) and breath control practices (*pranayama*) to progressively culture and transform the body.

While all schools practise *asana* and *pranayama* while applying the *yamas* (moral principles) and *niyamas* (moral restraints), some contemporary schools of hatha yoga still retain a strong emphasis on the practice of purification techniques while others direct their teachings almost exclusively toward *asana* and *pranayama* as sufficient tools for mental and physical purification.

The literal meaning of the word "hatha" is "force" or "forceful," which derives from the intended difficulty and austerity of the practices. The word has further significance in that "its two component syllables, "ha" and "tha" are frequently explained as standing for the microcosmic "sun" (*surya*) and "moon" (*chandra*) respectively, while yoga is the "union" between these two principles." (EDY)

Hatha yoga is sometimes contrasted with *raja yoga* and *kriya yoga*; the former being directly associated with Patanjali's eightfold path (ashtanga yoga) as expounded in his Yoga Sutras. Many schools of hatha yoga adopt the higher stages of ashtanga yoga practice – concentration (*dharana*), meditation (*dhyana*) and absorption (*samadhi*) – and see the emphasis on practising the first five limbs (*yama* and *niyama*, *asana*, *pranayama* and *pratyahara* / sense withdrawal) as a stepping stone to *raja yoga*.

The teacher credited as its inventor is Goraksha (9th century C.E.). The two main texts that describe its principles and characteristics are the *Hatha-Yoga-Pradipika* (Light on Forceful Yoga) by Svatamarama (mid-14th century C.E.) and the *Gheranda Samhita* (Gheranda's Collection) by the sage Gheranda (late 17th century C.E.).

Among western practitioners hatha yoga is identified primarily with the yoga postures. All initial levels of teaching in hatha yoga concentrate first on *asana* practice, leading the student gradually toward breathing and meditation techniques.

MISSION STATEMENT AND CODE OF ETHICS

Mission Statement

The Yoga Association of Alberta (YAA) is a non-profit organization that offers yoga activities to the public for the purpose of providing self-development opportunities. In order to develop yoga on a provincial level, the Association has representation from different regions of the province. This ensures that the Association can address the different needs of members through Alberta. The Association will establish the number of regions deemed appropriate from time to time to meet its goals. Initially, there will be three regions: Northern (Edmonton & north), Central and Southern (Calgary & south).

Code of Ethics

The YAA views its activities as promoting increased public knowledge and availability of yoga. All individuals in the association are encouraged to participate in these activities in an atmosphere of cooperation. The Code of Ethics as adopted at the 1979 annual meeting of the Association is:

- To treat others with dignity, respect and consideration of their circumstances
- To act in such a manner so as to maintain and honour the traditions of yoga
- To study, practice and expand the knowledge of yoga
- To improve the standards of yoga within the community

Guidelines for YAA Certified Teachers based on the above Code of Ethics

- Teachers agree to adhere to the Code of Ethics and these Guidelines with their YAA Certification and recertification. Failure to abide by these Guidelines may result in revocation of YAA Certification and membership, in accordance with the YAA Policies on Harassment and Abuse, Conflict of Interest, Dispute Resolution and Appeals.
- Teachers support the YAA in carrying out its Mission, Goals and Role of the Association.
- Teachers adhere to the policies of the YAA.
- Teachers provide accurate information regarding their credentials and training.
- Teachers deepen their knowledge, keep up to date with new developments in yoga and maintain and improve their teaching skills. This is a requirement for both receiving recertification and for maintaining Permanent Certification.
- Teachers adhere to traditional yoga principles as written in the yamas and niyamas and refrain from making any comment, gesture, or contact that is likely to cause offence or humiliation.
- Teachers conduct themselves in a professional and conscientious manner, follow all local and national laws that pertain to their yoga teaching and business, and act with ethical and financial integrity.
- Teachers refrain from making exaggerated claims about the benefits of yoga, acknowledge the limitations of their skills and scope of practice, and where appropriate, refer them to other teachers, suitable practitioners, or to the YAA office.
- Teachers do their best to create and maintain a safe, clean and comfortable environment for the practice of yoga.
- Teachers inform students of their personal yoga philosophy and style, practice tolerance and acceptance of the views of others, and encourage critical thinking and self-inquiry within their students.
- Teachers do not malign other yoga professionals.
- Teachers respect the rights, dignity and privacy of all students, and are respectful, compassionate and truthful with all practitioners of yoga – fellow students and teachers alike.
- Teachers avoid words and actions that constitute sexual harassment or harassment based on other legally protected characteristics.
- Teachers encourage diversity and do not discriminate against students based upon their race, religion, nationality, gender, sexual preference, age or physical ability (except in the interests of providing a yoga class suitable to the student's needs).
- Teachers practice some form of karma yoga (selfless service) based upon their skills.

Guidelines for YAA Members based on the above Code of Ethics

- Members of the YAA should be aware of the Code of Ethics and Guidelines, which will be published annually in the Fall issue of the Yoga Bridge.
- Members of the YAA should adhere to the Code of Ethics on an honour basis.
- Members are aware of and support the Mission, Goals and Role of the YAA.
- Members adhere to the policies of the YAA.
- Members with suggestions or input may convey their ideas in writing to the YAA for consideration by the Executive.
- Members with specific concerns regarding the conduct of a YAA certified teacher can convey these specifics in writing to the YAA Executive.
- Members interested in becoming teachers should familiarize themselves with the YAA Teacher Training Syllabus.

EQUIVALENCY CERTIFICATION APPLICATION FORM

YOGA ASSOCIATION OF ALBERTA
11759 Groat Road, Edmonton AB T5M 3K6

Phone: 780.427.8776; Fax: 780.422.2663; Website: www.yoga.ca; E-mail: cert@yoga.ca

* Applicants must maintain full YAA membership and be in good standing. *

* Applications must be received by one of the following due dates:

March 1st for May Certification, July 1st for September Certification, or November 1st for January Certification. *

Name: _____ E-mail Address: _____
Address: _____
City/Province: _____ Postal Code: _____
Phone Number: (Home) _____ (Alternate) _____

Please submit this form and the following documentation to the Coordinator at the above address or email:

- Up-to-date YAA Full Membership (\$30/year or \$350 lifetime) – attach cheque or pay online through the website.
Equivalency Certification Fee (\$125) – attach cheque or pay online through the website.
Copy of Certificate(s) from Teacher Training Program (TTP). Minimum of 2 years since start date.
TTP Syllabus or Course Outline with curriculum and required assignments listed, if available.
Equivalency Certification Checklist signed by TTP Lead Trainer or authorized representative.
Letter of Recommendation from TTP Lead Trainer or a Senior Teacher with whom the student has studied or apprenticed. Details outlined on the Equivalency Certification Checklist.
A Character Reference Letter from another yoga teacher or a colleague who has known the applicant for at least two years, that verifies that the applicant’s professional conduct reflects the YAA Code of Ethics and the Guidelines for YAA Certified Teachers based on the Code of Ethics (available on the website).
Copy of CPR Certification (any level).
Equivalency Hours Worksheet - listing all additional classes or workshops in hatha yoga taken after and outside of a formal teacher training program taught by experienced teachers. Please highlight the following:

For Graduates of 200-Hour Teacher Training Programs, these hours must include the following minimum components, if not already included in your Teacher Training Program:

- 3 workshops of at least 10 hours each, led by 3 distinct Senior Teachers besides their lead trainer(s),
10 hours of classes or workshop(s) led by a YAA Senior Teacher or a YAA sponsored Senior Teacher (YAA Teaching Skills Workshop or two YAA Monthly TTP Classes recommended),
10 hours of Special Concerns workshop(s) dealing with how to address the specific needs of individuals and special populations,
10 hours of Meditation workshop(s), and
5 hours of Breath Awareness workshop(s).

For Graduates of 500-Hour Teacher Training Programs, these hours must include the following minimum components, if not already included in your Teacher Training Program:

- 10 hours of classes or workshop(s) led by a YAA Senior Teacher or a YAA sponsored Senior Teacher (YAA Teaching Skills Workshop or two YAA Monthly TTP Classes recommended),

- Employment / Teaching Hours Worksheet listing all teaching/employment hours since certification, if applicable.

If upgrading is required, please follow the same procedures as above with the information available. Once the application has been assessed, the applicant will be contacted for assistance in creating a plan to complete any missing requirements.

The information on this form is used to determine eligibility in YAA programs and may be made available to the Executive, Certification Committee, yoga teachers and staff at the YAA. By signing below, I affirm that the information herein and all documents attached to this application are correct, complete and true to the best of my knowledge. I have read, understood and accept the stipulations of YAA Certification as outlined in the YAA Equivalency Certification Guidelines and will adhere to the YAA Code of Ethics – Guidelines for YAA Certified Teachers (Appendix B). As well, I agree to have my name, phone number, and training program listed in the YAA Teacher Directory which is published in Yoga Bridge and on the YAA website. All other information is kept confidential. The YAA does not sell databases to third parties. I agree to receive commercial electronic emails from the YAA. I also give permission for photographs of myself taken at workshops to be used for publication purposes. Be advised that any applicant may be subject to an audit of submitted documentation at anytime.

Signature of Applicant: _____ Date: _____

EQUIVALENCY CERTIFICATION CHECKLIST

YOGA ASSOCIATION OF ALBERTA
11759 Groat Road, Edmonton AB T5M 3K6
Phone: 780.427.8776; Fax: 780.422.2663; Website: www.yoga.ca; E-mail: cert@yoga.ca

Applicant Name: _____

Teacher Training Program and Dates Attended: _____

- Please attach a TTP Syllabus or Course Outline for your teacher training program(s) with a description of the curriculum of techniques, methodology and philosophy and any written assignments required, if available.
Or provide a link to a website with the above details: _____

To the Lead Trainer of the TTP noted above,

The Yoga Association of Alberta (YAA) is a provincially funded, registered charitable organization that coordinates the work and activities of yoga practitioners and teachers province-wide. The YAA is an umbrella organization founded by dedicated local yoga teachers, governed by an elected Board of volunteers, and works in co-operation with yoga studios and groups practicing all recognized yoga disciplines. It promotes yoga as a holistic system of fitness and health for Albertans, and encourages high standards of yoga teacher training in the province. All yoga teachers in Alberta are encouraged and invited to join the YAA family, a thriving community of mutual inspiration and cooperative peer support. Please consider becoming a YAA member or a YAA Certified Teacher if you are not already involved.

The YAA Equivalency Certification Program has been established to allow for recognition and credentialing of local yoga teachers who have completed yoga teacher training through a diversity of styles, lineages and programs. Each application is assessed individually to ensure a high quality of training, with a standard curriculum of postures and other elements common to most physical styles of yoga. Initial Certification is granted at the 300-Hour Level and advanced training levels are recognized at the 500-Hour, 750-Hour and 1,000-Hour Levels. For more information on our programs or standards please see our website or contact us directly at the address above.

Your student noted above has requested an assessment of their training in order to qualify for YAA Certification. In order to properly assess their background, we would request that you please provide the following information for the above named student and return to the student for submission, or submit directly to the address or email above.

- A breakdown of the hours included in your Teacher Training Program as follows:
___ hours of Techniques, Training & Practice, (including approx. ___ hours on breath work, ___ hours on meditation)
___ hours of Teaching Methodology,
___ hours of Anatomy & Physiology,
___ hours of Yoga Philosophy and Ethics for Yoga Teachers, and
___ hours of Practicum (including ___ hours of Supervised Teaching).
___ hours of Modifications for the Specific Needs of Individuals and Special Populations (if any).
Please also provide a Letter of Reference for the above named student (may be attached or sent directly to cert@yoga.ca). Please include the following information in your letter:
• How might the student’s character and qualities benefit him or her as a yoga teacher? Do they conduct themselves with integrity and follow the yamas and niyamas?
• Any comments or reservations that you think are relevant or might assist us in awarding a certificate.

The information on this form is used to determine eligibility in YAA programs and may be made available to the Executive, Certification Committee, and staff at the YAA. By signing below, I affirm that the information herein and all documents attached to this application are correct, complete and true to the best of my knowledge.

Name of Training School/Program: _____ Date: _____

Authorized Representative: _____ Signature: _____
(Print Name)

