

# **Yoga Association of Alberta**

## **Equivalency Certification Guidelines**

Revised September 2023

*This program is funded in part by Alberta Tourism & Sport.*

**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 does not meet full requirements for YAA Certification, the applicant will be contacted and given assistance in creating a plan to complete any missing requirements.

**Please note that hatha yoga teacher training over a minimum of 2 years** as well as regular ongoing upgrading are two of the defining characteristics of YAA Certification. Therefore, applicants for Equivalency Certification must wait until 2 years after the start of their teacher training to apply and are expected to continue attending classes and/or workshops. Note that for programs not recognized by the YAA or the Yoga Alliance, the Certification Committee may request more hours than the minimum requirements in any component of the program.

**2. 200-Hour Equivalency Certification Summary**

Required Documentation is listed on the *Equivalency Certification Application*.

- **200 hours of yoga teacher training** from a YAA or Yoga Alliance recognized hatha yoga teacher training program. We request that online programs have been live-streamed and interactive rather than pre-recorded. Contact the Coordinator at [cert@yoga.ca](mailto:cert@yoga.ca) for program assessment.
- **A minimum of 2 years** since the start of first formal hatha yoga teacher training program.
- **A minimum of 10 hours** of teacher training, workshops or classes with a **YAA Senior Teacher** or a YAA sponsored Senior Teacher (one YAA Teaching Skills Workshop or two YAA Monthly TTP Classes recommended - see the Events page of our website or contact the Certification Coordinator at [cert@yoga.ca](mailto:cert@yoga.ca)).
- **A character reference letter** from a colleague or another teacher who has known the applicant for at least two years, that verifies that the applicant's professional conduct reflects the *yamas* and *niyamas*.
- **Current CPR Certification** (any level).

**3. 500-Hour Equivalency Certification Summary**

Required Documentation is listed on the *Equivalency Certification Application*.

- **500 hours of yoga teacher training** from a YAA or Yoga Alliance recognized hatha yoga teacher training program, or combination of programs. We request that online programs have been live-streamed and interactive rather than pre-recorded. Contact the Coordinator at [cert@yoga.ca](mailto:cert@yoga.ca) for program assessment.
- **A minimum of 2 years** since the start of first formal hatha yoga teacher training program.
- **A minimum of 10 hours** of teacher training, workshops or classes with a **YAA Senior Teacher** or a YAA sponsored Senior Teacher (YAA Teaching Skills Workshop or two YAA Monthly TTP Classes recommended - see the Events page of our website or contact the Certification Coordinator at [cert@yoga.ca](mailto:cert@yoga.ca)).
- **A character reference letter** from a colleague or another teacher who has known the applicant for at least two years, that verifies that the applicant's professional conduct reflects the *yamas* and *niyamas*.
- **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. If an applicant does not meet full requirements for YAA Certification, the applicant will be contacted and given assistance in creating a plan to complete any missing requirements. When the Certification 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 YAA 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 outlined 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 and Permanent Certification (available after 20 years of YAA Certification). 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](http://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 Svatmarama (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**

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

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

March 1<sup>st</sup> for May Certification, July 1<sup>st</sup> for September Certification, or November 1<sup>st</sup> 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 to [cert@yoga.ca](mailto:cert@yoga.ca):**

- Up-to-date YAA Full Membership must remain current for Certification to be valid. We highly recommend purchasing 3 years or a lifetime membership (\$30/year or \$350 lifetime) – attach cheque or pay online.**
- Equivalency Certification Fee (\$125) – attach cheque or pay online.**
- Copy of Certificate(s) from Teacher Training Program** from a YAA or Yoga Alliance recognized hatha yoga teacher training program, or combination of programs. We request that online programs have been live-streamed and interactive rather than pre-recorded. Contact the Coordinator at [cert@yoga.ca](mailto:cert@yoga.ca) for program assessment.
- A Character Reference Letter** from a colleague or teacher who has known the applicant for at least two years, that **verifies that the applicant’s professional conduct reflects the *yamas* and *niyamas*.**
- Copy of current CPR Certification** (any level).
- A Minimum of 10 hours** of teacher training, workshops or classes **with a YAA Senior Teacher or YAA sponsored workshop** (one YAA Teaching Skills Workshop or two YAA Monthly TTP Classes recommended). These hours may have been accumulated during or after your Teacher Training. Use extra sheets or back of page if needed.

Dates	YAA Senior Teacher Name	Class Details	# of Hours

See section I.2 above for details on requirements. Once documentation has been received and fees paid, the application will be assessed, and the applicant will be contacted. **If upgrading is required**, assistance will be provided in creating a plan to complete any missing requirements. If the applicant is dissatisfied with the results, the application fee may be refunded.

Please be advised that any applicant may be subject to an audit of submitted documentation at any time. This information is used to determine eligibility in YAA programs. The YAA does not sell databases to third parties.

**By signing below, I hereby affirm that all the information herein and all documents attached to this application are correct, complete and true to the best of my knowledge. Furthermore, I have read, understood and accept the stipulations of YAA Certification as outlined in the *YAA Equivalency Certification Guidelines* and I agree to adhere to the YAA Code of Ethics and Guidelines for YAA Certified Teachers (Appendix B).**

Signature of Applicant: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Your name and contact information may be listed in the YAA Teacher Directory which is published in Yoga Bridge and on the YAA website and you will receive commercial electronic emails from the YAA. Photographs taken at YAA workshops or supplied by you may also be used for publication purposes. All other information is kept confidential. **If you do not want your information published, please inform the YAA office in writing or by email.**