



# AAYT EDUCATION AND PRACTICES STANDARDS FOR ACCREDITATION AND MEMBERSHIP

2021

## ***The 2020 AAYT EDUCATION AND PRACTICE STANDARDS FOR ACCREDITATION AND MEMBERSHIP***

### ***REVIEW OF THE AAYT STANDARDS July 2021***

The attached Standards have had wide-spread input from AAYT's well established Board of Advisors drawing in expertise from all over the World, from Specialists in Australia, Training Providers, AAYT Committee Members and Members. These were originally developed to identify key areas of learning for Yoga Therapists and as such they reflect key areas of knowledge to be covered as a minimum by an AAYT accredited Yoga Therapy Training Program. After numerous drafts and proposed changes, the key message we received was to ***adapt and comply with the IAYT Standards*** as the best International Benchmark that could be readily understood and recognised. Having another set of Standards would not be helpful. We have therefore adopted the 2019 IAYT with some small modifications that are culturally relevant.

In the process of our review, we aspired to maintaining the highest aspirations for quality learning in a field of education that is still evolving and seeking public recognition. In this respect, we have looked to preserve the wisdom from the ancient tradition of Yoga, together with the necessary knowledge from the modern-day health and wellbeing sciences, and we have incorporated culturally relevant examples as required.

The Standards contain important ethical codes that have stood fast over the years, the AAYT Scope of Practice and the AAYT Code of Ethics. Together, as a package the AAYT Education and Practice Standards offer a solid, quality education base for Training Programs recognised by way of Accreditation, in teaching at the highest levels of Yoga Therapy Education.

The language terminology that was originally devised has now been modified to reflect International Standards. An Accreditation process will apply solely to Programs submitted by Training Providers. A Yoga Therapist having qualified from an Accredited AAYT Training Program will be recognised as a Certificated Yoga Therapist, C-AAYT and will receive a logo designating this status. A Yoga Therapist having qualified from an Internationally recognised or affiliated School will also be eligible for consideration of Membership.

I would especially like to thank Georgina Green for her vast work in consulting with the sector and then re-drafting the document whilst remaining true to the international base. I would also like to express thanks to the Members of the Accreditation Committee for their support, tenacity and thoughtful reflections.

Yours Sincerely,  
KE Shellshear

Karine Shellshear  
*President 2015-2020*

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## 1. PREFACE

The Australasian Association of Yoga Therapists (AAYT) is an Asia-Pacific Regional Not-for-Profit association incorporated under Victorian State law and accountable to the regulator, Australian based 'Consumer Affairs Victoria' (CAV) a business unit of the Department of Justice and Community Safety, administering legislation under the Consumer Affairs Victoria Associations Incorporations Act 1981, Schedule 5.

The AAYT established the Member Education Standards in 2007, now referred to as the '*Education and Practice Standards*' for Accreditation and has continued to share intelligence and to work collaboratively with our affiliate, the International Association of Yoga Therapists (IAYT) since that time, to ensure Yoga Therapy Standards, competencies and practices are professional and up-to-date.

Within Australasia, AAYT aims to secure and expand the practice of Yoga Therapy as a legitimate and complementary therapeutic practice through a range of activities, affiliations and meaningful collaborations that promote industry recognition and professionalisation. It looks to increase the representation of Yoga Therapy across the health continuum. Ongoing support of Yoga Therapy evidence-based research and conferences continues and contributes to future practice.

The June 2020 AAYT Education and Practice Standards, competencies, policies and procedures supersede and replace all previous versions. This document offers correct and current information regarding AAYT Accreditation.

*AAYT is guided by the following:*

### **Purpose**

***The Australasian Association of Yoga Therapists (AAYT) is an industry organisation which seeks to promote the ancient science, art and practice of yoga as it contributes specifically to the management of disability, medical and health concerns.***

### **Vision**

*AAYT is a lead authority in Yoga Therapy charged with accrediting Training Providers and recognising qualified Yoga Therapists. Our vision is to maintain, communicate, protect and support the highest quality practice in Yoga Therapy, unifying and connecting with practitioners, locally and globally.*

### **Mission**

*AAYT is a professional body dedicated to its members, supporting them to deliver effectively through best practice education*

### **Philosophy**

*Independent, Not for Profit, Australasian and Yoga-Therapy centred, representing many traditions*

## 2. USING THE STANDARDS – Guidance on Requirements

### **Minimum Pre-requisite Requirement**

The AAYT Education & Practice Standards (the Standards) are regarded as minimum requirements for a Yoga Therapy Training Program achieving AAYT Accreditation, or as a pre-requisite for someone certified by an AAYT accredited training provider, in order to qualify for

AAYT membership, and be recognised as an AAYT Certificated (or C-AAYT) Yoga Therapist.

The pre-requisite to entering an AAYT accredited Yoga Therapist Training Program is the completion of a Yoga Australia registered (or equivalent) 350-hour Teacher Training Program and **2 years continuous experience** of actual yoga teaching, 1 year of which may be undertaken concurrently with Yoga Therapist Training. The pre-requisite 350 hours of Yoga Teacher Training should incorporate: Yoga Techniques; *Eastern* and *Western* Anatomy and Physiology; Yoga Philosophy Foundations, Teaching Methodology and; Practicum (practice teaching); as a minimum.

In addition, an applicant is expected to have at least one year of a personal practice, with specifics determined by the program.

A Yoga Therapy entry level Yoga Therapy Education and Practice Training Program must be a minimum total of **650 hours** and taught over a minimum of 2 years. This in addition to the pre-requisite entry level of **350 hours** of Yoga Teacher Training Totals **1000 hours** minimal training together with 2 years of Yoga Teaching Practice as a minimum requirement for the qualification of a Certificated Yoga Therapist in a Post Graduate Diploma.

Programs may allow more time for completion of the requirements at their discretion. The minimum 650 Yoga Therapy Training hours do not include the pre-requisite Teacher Training requirements. All hours beyond the minimum suggested in this document should expand upon one or more of the competencies included here. These hours are based on IAYT recommended hours.

### *The Curriculum*

- May draw upon a range of lineages an/or traditions, unified into an integrated, unified and cohesive philosophy that supports the practical application of the Yoga Therapy approach taught in the program
- Is delivered in a way that allows students to acquire knowledge and develop the skills outlined in the competencies table below, in a progressive and systematic manner
- Addresses various learning styles of students and includes didactic learning, experiential learning, practicum based skill building, personal development through mentorship, and sangha within the educational program
- The program is required to demonstrate a process whereby student learning is sufficiently assessed throughout the program to determine that learning objectives and competencies are met

### *The Hours*

- All program hours must be part of an integrated educational program that is documented in the syllabus and charted in the checklist table
- The minimum of 650 hours must include: 500 residential hours; and 150 practicum hours - which are documented by the student and reviewed by a practicum mentor; and in which a student provides either one-on-one or group Yoga Therapy sessions as a lead therapist in an appropriate setting as determined by a program director
- A minimum of 30 hours will be provided to the student by an assigned practicum mentor

- The minimum of 650 hours may include:
  - A maximum of 200 hours synchronous (real-time) distance learning
  - A maximum of 300 hours asynchronous distance learning
- Home-work and personal practice cannot be counted toward program hours

#### *Distance Learning*

- Hours must be pre-determined
- Format must be identified and described
- Must address competencies and be included in the syllabus
- Must demonstrate logical sequence of content in an academic format
- Must document mechanisms for student feedback and/or interaction with program faculty during distance learning
- Must describe how distance learning is assessed
- Documentation must demonstrate how it is integrated into the curriculum and aligns with the Philosophy, Vision and Mission of the Program

#### *Transfer of Credit Hours*

A Program may accept up to 450 transfer hours, at the discretion of the Director, for consideration, taking into account and identifying the assessment and evaluation processes required so as to integrate the total number of hours needed in meeting all the hours for qualifying and certifying individuals.

#### *Directors, Faculty Members and Mentors*

The School/or Training Program Director oversees the essential student records and data for which s/he is responsible, according to State law or school policy, and supervises all staff, aides and/or volunteers. In addition, they are expected to oversee the entire Yoga Therapy Educational program and must:

- Submit a Curriculum Vitae showing relevant qualification for directing a program
- Ensure the Educational Program focuses on Yoga Therapy and that all educational objectives are met
- Ensure curriculum integration of the program
- Evaluate student attendance, performance, completion of lessons, courses and/or all educational program requirements
- Supervise and advise Faculty members and assigned mentors
- Have a thorough understanding of the range and depth of the subject matter taught in the curriculum
- Have expertise to assess faculty qualifications for each course within the curriculum
- Have C-AAYT qualification or equivalent
- Have a minimum of 5 years practical experience in Yoga Therapy

#### *Faculty Members*

- Will need to demonstrate that they have well-established training, expertise and experience in the courses that they teach, including 3 years practical experience in that field
- Will be supervised by Program Directors

### *Mentors*

- Are required for practicum supervision - to supervise, support development and evaluate skills and abilities as identified in the competency table
- Will have skills related to supervision and expertise related to the field they are mentoring in, as supported by a CV demonstrating their knowledge skills and capacity in the delivery of Yoga Therapy

### *The Standards*

Consist of **5 key Fixed Sections** (in dark blue) with each section divided into **Fixed Topics** (in mid-blue), each topic identifying **the Standards** (in light blue) and highlighting competencies that define the Standard and **Flexible Benchmarks**, examples (in the far right hand side column) that indicate what information is used by the program to demonstrate how the competencies within the standard are being met.

### *Guidance for Training Providers/Yoga Therapists/Assessors*

AAYT Assessors will work to support you through the application and assessment processes. Additional information is provided for applicants to guide their documentation. Please note that the process of Accreditation is one of working with Training Providers to ensure full understanding of the benchmarks for quality training and education in Yoga Therapy. The process may involve time in briefing, exchanging, submitting and possibly re-submitting until the training program is sufficiently refined to give quality assurance in the breadth and depth of course content, teaching and assessment methodology and understanding of the competencies required of a Yoga Therapist deemed to be qualified. The Accreditation process is evidence base and therefore to affirm that each Standard is being met and that the competencies are being addressed, the Training Provider is required to submit evidence in the form of timetables, content outlines, assessment tasks, for each Standard. Whilst the process of assessment may be time consuming and is certainly thorough, it assures that every Standard is met and that a student receives the highest of quality education.

Yoga Foundations

SECTION 1	YOGA FOUNDATIONS		Minimum 120 hours total
1.1	YOGA TEACHINGS AND PHILOSOPHY		Time 35 hours
	<b>Standard:</b> As relevant to the work of a Yoga Therapist		<b>Examples</b> of concepts and models from these teachings and philosophies include but not limited to:
1.1.1	Familiarity with the evolution of the teachings and philosophies 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	1.1.1.1	<i>Tantmatras/Bhutas/Indriyas</i> (subtle elements/gross elements/senses)
		1.1.1.2	<i>Purusha/Prakriti</i> (consciousness/material world)
		1.1.1.3	<i>Pancamaya</i> and <i>Kosha</i> (dimensions of the human system)
		1.1.1.4	<i>Guna</i> (fundamental forces of nature) and
		1.1.1.5	<i>Duhkha</i> (suffering/discomfort).

1.2	YOGA AND THE MIND	Time 35 hours	
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 to 1.2.1.5	1.2.1.1	<i>Drashtr</i> (seer), <i>Drshya</i> (seen)
		1.2.1.2	<i>Antahkarana Citta</i> (consciousness) <i>Buddhi</i> (intellect) <i>Ahamkara</i> (ego) <i>Manas</i> (mind)
		1.2.1.3	<i>Citta Vrtti</i> (activities of the mind), <i>Citta Pariama</i> (structural changes in the mind), <i>Vyutthana/Nirodha</i> (mind's potential for distraction and focus)
		1.2.1.4	<i>Artha</i> (cognition), <i>Bhava</i> (mood), <i>Svabhava</i> (inborn nature), <i>Vasana</i> (residue of experience), <i>Samskara</i> (conditioned pattern of thinking and behaviour) and
		1.2.1.5	States of mind: <i>Mudha</i> (stupefied/dull), <i>Kshipta</i> (disturbed), <i>Vikshipta</i> (alternating between distraction and focus), <i>Ekagrata</i> (one-pointed), <i>Nirodha</i> (focus enveloped/held/ restrained), <i>Vaishvanara</i> (waking), <i>Tajasa</i> (dream), <i>Prajña</i> (deep sleep), <i>Turiya</i> (beyond).
1.2.2	Knowledge of yoga perspectives on distracted/disturbed conditions of mind and their expressions as cited in the Yoga Sutras, the Bhagavad Gita and other texts including but not limited to: 1.2.2.1 - 1.2.2.4	1.2.2.1	<i>Klesha</i> (affliction)
		1.2.2.2	<i>Lobha</i> , <i>Krodha</i> , and <i>Moha</i> (greed, anger, attachment)



		1.2.2.3	<i>Duhkha and Daurmanasya</i> (suffering/discomfort and negative attitude/thinking), <i>Sarupyam</i> (identification with the contents of the mind or seer taking the same form as the mind) and
		1.2.2.4	<i>Antaraya</i> (obstacles to progress in yoga).
1.3	<i>A FRAMEWORK FOR HEALTH AND DISEASE</i>		<i>Time 50 hours</i>
1.3.1	Knowledge of the basic paradigms of health, well-being and disease from Yoga and Ayurveda relevant to the practice of Yoga Therapy, including the concepts of: 1.3.1.1 to 1.3.1.12	1.3.1.1	The <i>Pancamaya Kosha</i> (fundamental structure of the human system)
		1.3.1.2	<i>Prana Vayu</i> ( <i>Prana, Apana, Vyana, Udana, Samana</i> )
		1.3.1.3	<i>Prana Prakopa</i> (disturbance of the <i>Vayu</i> )
		1.3.1.4	<i>Vyuha</i> model: <i>Heyam</i> (the symptoms), <i>Hetu</i> (the causes), <i>Hanam</i> (the goal), <i>Upayam</i> (the tools)
		1.3.1.5	<i>Agni</i> (internal fire(s) and their contribution to health)
		1.3.1.6	Effects of <i>Brahmana/Langhana</i> (expansion/contraction)
		1.3.1.7	<i>Surya/Chandra</i> (sun/moon)
		1.3.1.8	Concept of subtle anatomy
		1.3.1.9	<i>Ama</i> (undigested food, emotions, etc. accumulated in the body)
		1.3.1.10	<i>Tri-guna</i> : effect of <i>Sattva</i> (equilibrium), <i>Rajas</i> (activity), <i>Tamas</i> (inertia)

		1.3.1.11	<i>Prakriti/vikrti</i> ( <i>Dosha</i> constitution at birth/imbalance of the <i>Dosha</i> currently expressed in the body)
		1.3.1.12	<i>Tri-dosha</i> (Ayurvedic perspective on the effects of the elements on the physical body)
1.3.2	Knowledge of illness categories including 1.3.2.1 and 1.3.2.2	1.3.2.1	Development/evolution of disease <i>Samprapti</i> (pathogenesis), including but not limited to the direction, intensity, onset and duration and their influences on the ease or difficulty of healing and disease management
		1.3.2.2	Identifying and setting appropriate priorities: Short term - <i>Shamana</i> (pacification of symptoms) and Long term – <i>Shodhana</i> (purification/strengthening).
<b>SECTION 2</b>	<b>BIOMEDICAL and PSYCHOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS</b>		<b>Minimum 155 hours total</b>
2.1	<b>ANATOMY AND PHYSIOLOGY</b>		<b>Time 90 hours</b>
	<i>Standard: As relevant to the work of a Yoga Therapist</i>		

2.1.1	Knowledge of human anatomy and physiology, including all the major systems of the body and their interrelationships		
2.1.2	Knowledge of biomechanics and movement as they relate to the practice of yoga		
2.1.3	Knowledge of common pathologies and disorders of the major systems, including symptoms, management, illness trajectories and contraindications		
2.2	<b>ADDITIONAL BIOMEDICAL KNOWLEDGE</b>		<i>Time 15 hours</i>
	<i>Standard: As relevant to the work of a Yoga Therapist</i>		<i>Examples of evidence-based online references include but are not limited to:</i>
2.2.1	Familiarity with commonly used medicines and surgical procedures		
2.2.2	Familiarity with common medical terminology		
2.2.3	Knowledge of how to reference current healthcare information including pathologies, disorders, medication, and surgical procedures		
2.2.4	Knowledge of how to access and utilise scientific evidence	<b>2.2.4.1</b>	Pub Med database <a href="https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/">https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/</a>  Cochrane database <a href="https://www.cochrane.org">https://www.cochrane.org</a>
2.3	<b>PSYCHOLOGY AND MENTAL HEALTH</b>		<i>Time 30 hours</i>

	<i>Standard: As relevant to the work of a Yoga Therapist</i>		<i>Examples of evidence-based online references include but are not limited to:</i>
2.3.1	Basic knowledge of commonly occurring mental health conditions from psychological distress to psychiatric conditions, their symptoms and common approaches/interventions	2.3.1.1	Mental Health First Aid <a href="https://mhfa.com.au/mental-health-first-aid-guidelines">https://mhfa.com.au/mental-health-first-aid-guidelines</a>
2.3.2	Basic knowledge of psychological concepts and terminology including mood, cognition, behaviour and personality.		
2.4	<b>ADDITIONAL KNOWLEDGE OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL INFLUENCES</b>		<i>Time 10 hours</i>
	<i>Standard: As relevant to the work of a Yoga Therapist</i>		
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		
2.5	<b>BODY, BREATH and MIND INTEGRATION</b>		<i>Time 10 hours</i>
2.5.1	Knowledge of the interaction of the body, breath, mind, intellect besides emotions in health and well-being		

<b>SECTION 3</b>	<b>YOGA THERAPY TOOLS &amp; THERAPEUTIC SKILLS</b>		<b>Minimum 140 hours total</b>
3.1	<b>YOGA THERAPY TOOLS</b>		<i>Time 60 hours</i>
	<i>Standard: In the context of Yoga Therapy</i>		
3.1.1	In depth knowledge of the application of Yama and Niyama		
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	<i>Asana</i> (postures) and modifications
		3.1.2.2	<i>Pranayama</i> (regulated breathing)
		3.1.2.3	Meditation and relaxation techniques such as <i>Bhavana</i> (visualization), <i>Mantra</i> (recitation) and ritualized activities such as <i>Nyasa</i> and <i>Mudra</i>
		3.1.2.4	<i>Vihara</i> (lifestyle modifications where the mind abides) and <i>Ahara</i> anything we take into ourselves including basic yogic dietary concepts.
3.1.3	In depth knowledge of contraindications of yoga practices for specific conditions and circumstances.		
3.2	<b>BASIC PRINCIPLES OF THE THERAPEUTIC RELATIONSHIP</b>		<i>Time 35 hours</i>
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 service.		
3.3	<i>PRINCIPLES AND SKILLS FOR EDUCATING AND EMPOWERING CLIENTS/STUDENTS</i>		<i>Time 35 hours</i>
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.		

3.4	<i>PRINCIPLES AND SKILLS FOR WORKING WITH GROUPS</i>		<i>Time 10 hours</i>
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 (Mentored)		Minimum 180 hours for the Section in entirety (150 hours minimum on practicum delivery, plus 30 hours minimum of practicum mentorship)
4.1	PROVIDING YOGA THERAPY		Time 55 hours
	<i>Standard as relevant to the work of a yoga therapist</i>		<i>Indicator Knowledge included but not limited to:</i>
4.1.1	Demonstrated ability to conduct an intake and assessment of the client/student	4.1.1.1	Taking a history of the client and his/her condition(s) and 4.1.1.2
		4.1.1.2	Assessing their 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 integrate pacification, purification, and strengthening strategies into the practice		
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		
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 prioritise the use of yoga tools and techniques, including selecting, sequencing, adapting and modifying yoga practices appropriate to the needs of clients/students		
4.1.10	Demonstrated ability to teach and 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	Instructing, demonstrating and educating the client/student using multimodal strategies of education such as auditory, visual, and kinaesthetic learning tools

		4.1.11.2	Providing supportive and empowering 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, safety
		4.1.12.2	Practicing effective, client/student-centred 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, to 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
		4.1.13.3	Providing appropriate closure for the therapy sessions.

<b>SECTION 5</b>	<b>PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE</b>		<b>Minimum 30 hours total</b>
5.1	<b>ETHICAL PRINCIPLES</b>		<b>Time 15 hours</b>
	<i>Standard: As relevant to the work of a Yoga Therapist</i>		<i>Indicator Examples include but are not limited to:</i>
5.1.1	In depth knowledge of yoga practices and methods for self-inquiry related to establishing, practicing, and maintaining ethical principles	5.1.1.1	Concept of Vichara (self-enquiry) and awareness of own personal and professional values
5.1.2	In depth knowledge of generally accepted ethical principles of health care codes of conduct and yoga's ethical principles	5.1.2.1	State/National Healthcare Codes of Conduct AAYT Code of Conduct
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	5.1.3.1	AAYT Code of Ethics
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	5.1.4.1	AAYT Scope of Practice
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.		
5.2	<b>LEGAL, REGULATORY AND BUSINESS ISSUES PERTAINING TO YOGA THERAPY</b>		<b>Time 5 hours</b>

5.2.1	Knowledge of current relevant local, state, and national laws and regulations impacting the work of a yoga therapist	5.2.1.1	Privacy Act Health and Safety Anti-discrimination Legislation Working with Children
5.2.2	Basic knowledge of business practices relevant to the work of a yoga therapist, including record keeping, planning, and financial management		
<b>5.3</b>	<b><i>RELATIONSHIPS WITH PEERS, MENTORS, CLINICIANS AND ORGANISATIONS</i></b>		<i>Time 5 hours</i>
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 organisations		
5.3.3	Basic knowledge of how to develop and maintain ongoing collaborative relationships.		
<b>5.4</b>	<b><i>PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND CONTINUING EDUCATION</i></b>		<i>Time 5 hours</i>
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.		

## Terms Used in the Competencies

<i>Competency</i>	expected (required) measure of knowledge, skill and ability attained by completion of a training course
<i>Familiarity</i>	introductory knowledge of a subject sufficient to bring awareness to the central essence of a subject
<i>Basic Knowledge</i>	have an overview of the broad principles of a subject, including a general its relevance to and/or potential use
<i>Knowledge</i>	understand all aspects of a subject and its specific applications.
<i>In-Depth Knowledge</i>	through study and practicum, acquire a confident understanding of a as its potential limitations
<i>Demonstrated Ability</i>	able to provide evidence to undertake particular tasks associated with the yoga therapist.
<i>Demonstrated Ability to Apply Knowledge</i>	demonstrate/show evidence of the application of knowledge to specific
<i>Understanding</i>	comprehension, grasp, the ability to be aware of and recognise the
<i>In-Depth Understanding</i>	The power to make experience of the subject intelligible by applying
<i>Capacity</i>	Competence and mental/physical ability and or facility apply a skill to the yoga therapist.
<i>Ability</i>	Competence to enact/do something

### 4. SCOPE of PRACTICE

(Created in November 2015; amended in July 2021)

#### *An AAYT Certificated Yoga Therapist C-AAYT*

- Membership as an AAYT Certificated Yoga Therapist must meet the 2020 AAYT Education and Practice Standards.
- Members must adhere to the Scope of Practice as part of the AAYT 'Education and Practice' Standards reflecting the IAYT Accreditation Standards.
- Is an experienced Yoga Teacher certified by an AAYT accredited Yoga Therapy Training Provider, after having qualified in successfully completing a minimum of 650 hours (including 180 hours of practicum) in Yoga Therapy education and training over a minimum period of two years. Completing an AAYT accredited training program signifies that a graduate has met all

the competencies within the AAYT Standards, and has specialised skills, knowledge and experience in the application of Yoga within a therapeutic context.

- Draws from the 'Principles of Yoga' and the full range of Yoga practices, bio-medical knowledge and assessment skills to establish a professional relationship with the client. Together, the therapist and client will develop a self-empowering therapeutic program appropriate to the client's needs.
- Is recognised by AAYT as having undertaken accredited or recognised Yoga Therapy training, beyond a yoga teaching qualification and is committed to professional ethics, guidelines and codes relating to the practice of Yoga Therapy in Australia and/or Australasia.
- Furthermore, a certificated or C-AAYT Yoga Therapist adheres to all National, State and local legislative requirements of their country, state or territory including having necessary checks (such as police checks and Work Health and Safety (WHS) precautions to avoid spread of disease, such as SARS or Covid 19, particularly if working with vulnerable populations or in government subsidised venues such as hospitals.

### *Resumption of Practice*

Should there have been a discontinuation of practice due to ill-health, maternity leave, holiday, an issue in relation to a grievance, or other reasons lasting more than 12 (twelve) months, the Yoga Therapist is to inform the AAYT of such occurrence within that period and until such discontinuation is concluded. Application for Resumption of Practice will then be deliberated by AAYT pending citing of Professional Continuous Development, First Aid, CPR, and insurance certificates.

### *Touch*

To be only given after informed consent and then documented. It is to be socially and culturally sensitive and to be applied within therapeutic ethical guidelines with a policy of no harm. The therapist and client are to honour the position of trust and acknowledge and allow for the power disparity in the relationship. Though this consent applies to physical touch. It is important to recognise that the policy of no harm and adherence to ethics is carried out in the other modes of "touching" our clients – speech – eye contact – gesture – body language-props. *See more on this issue p.29.*

### *• A C-AAYT Yoga Therapist - may pursue any activity that falls within the Scope of Practice*

Currently, in Australia, Yoga Therapist Certification is based on verification of initial recognition of training qualifications by an accredited/or recognised provider and Approved Professional Development (APD) of competencies through professional bodies, recognised by the Australasian Association of Yoga Therapists (AAYT).

Additionally, the renewal of First Aid, CPR, Public Liability and Professional Indemnity insurance must be current at all times and is a critical component of membership and certification. Evidence of same must be provided.

Some Yoga Therapists will hold additional qualifications that complement the Scope of Yoga Therapy practice, which will permit such practitioners an extended Scope of Practice, for example being a qualified Psychologist, Physiotherapist, Social Worker, Doctor, Naturopath etc. Such extended scope is beyond normal Yoga Therapy practice and is to be regulated by the scope and codes of the professional registering body of other such disciplines. A Yoga Therapist's Duty of Care is to ensure the safety of a client at all times and to refer to a more specialised therapist or medical practitioner when the client presents with symptoms outside the expertise of the therapist. In more recent times duty of care also applies to control of infection,

use of mask and gloves where deemed necessary in risk reduction, to inhibit unnecessary spread of disease and to protect both client and therapist.

AAYT certificated, or C-AAYT yoga therapists are expected to understand the '**power differential**' between clients and therapists and to avoid the misuse and/or abuse of power for any type of exploitation or suppression. AAYT holds the right to withdraw AAYT Certification from any member or AAYT Accreditation from any Training Provider who does not confirm totally to these principles.

*YOGA THERAPY may occur in the following settings:*

- **Individualised Yoga Therapy consultations** that occur in a **one-on-one** setting, (taking into account respect for personal distance).
- **Note:** In such circumstances where the client is a child/or a member of a vulnerable population (as defined by the current legislation in that country, state or territory), a parent/guardian must be present. Alternatively a parent/guardian may provide written permission.
- A Yoga Therapist will only palpate the spine through clothing with the consent of the client and with appropriate WHS/hygiene considerations.

Following a one-on-one Assessment, Yoga Therapy may also take the following forms particularly as the therapeutic value of the *sanga* (group) becomes more widely understood and supported by evidence-based research:

- **Specialist groups**, such as *Yoga for people with breast cancer* and *Yoga for post-traumatic stress syndrome*. In such settings, with small numbers, the Yoga Therapist recognises that, while there are similarities within the group, individual differences need to be taken into account and that a "one size fits all" approach is not Yoga Therapy. In such situations, individual assessment will occur prior to class entry and be monitored and reviewed throughout the sessional period
- **A group therapeutic yoga class** consisting of people with a variety of illnesses and/or conditions. Again, individual modifications will be given, and individual assessment must be provided prior to class entry.

In the following sections AAYT has outlined a Yoga Therapist's SCOPE of PRACTICE, what they are and are not qualified to do as Yoga Therapists. For example, under the training *Standards*, a Yoga Therapist's accredited training will include at least 30 hours of exposure to psychological conditions. This however does **not** qualify a Yoga Therapist to take the place of a qualified Psychiatrist, Psychologist or specialised Social Worker. Rather the training may allow a Yoga Therapist to identify an issue needing to be referred on to fully specialised workers in an allied field. At best, a qualified Yoga Therapist with no other qualifications may complement a specialised professional in their field.

The Scope of Practice forms an excellent guide to provide clients and members of the general public with an outline of what a Yoga Therapist can and cannot do, without having other specialised qualifications.

AAYT also has simple brochures to explain what a Yoga Therapist does and the qualifications attained over five years minimal training.

See Brochure on '[The C-AAYT Yoga Therapist](http://www.yogatherapy.org.au)' on the AAYT Yoga Therapy Website; at [www.yogatherapy.org.au](http://www.yogatherapy.org.au)



<p><i>A Yoga Therapist is qualified to work from a holistic yoga framework of health to:</i></p>	<p><i>A Yoga Therapist is NOT qualified to:</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work within the Scope of a Yoga Therapy qualification with a variety of health conditions impacted by the alignment of the Body, Mind and Spirit.</li> <li>• Offer an integrated set of practices aligned to the needs of the individual and according to yoga models of health such as, but not confined to, the <i>pancamaya kosha</i> (dimensions of the human system) the <i>tri-guna</i> (fundamental forces of nature); and Cakras.</li> <li>• Include yoga practices such as <i>asana</i> (postures), <i>pranayama</i> (breath-work), relaxation, meditation, <i>mudra</i> (energetic gestures and seals), <i>banda</i> (energy locks), <i>mantra</i> (sacred sounds), <i>bhavana</i> (imagery), <i>sankalpa</i> (affirmation/intention), yogic lifestyle and nutritional advice according to a Yoga Therapy framework, education in yoga philosophy, and other practices steeped in the yoga tradition and for which the therapist has received appropriate competency training, and Certification.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with clients presenting with issues outside the therapists' areas of competence</li> <li>• Advertise themselves as a medical practitioner</li> </ul>
<p><i>A Yoga Therapist is qualified to:</i></p>	<p><i>A Yoga Therapist is NOT qualified to:</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have an appropriate understanding of health and health systems</li> <li>• Have insight into and an understanding of different diseases, the effects of medications, and contraindications, which helps to inform what is recommended as a suitable practice for each individual</li> <li>• Provide timely review and modification of the practice to refine its impact</li> <li>• Be informed by diagnosis provided by other health professionals qualified to do so</li> <li>• Have a basic understanding of different treatments and procedures from a variety of sources, or, can identify and source credible and relevant information, as required</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diagnose a medical condition</li> <li>• Make false claims about yoga's therapeutic and healing capacities</li> <li>• Advise about ceasing prescribed medication.</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have a basic understanding of health reports from various sources</li> <li>• Have a basic understanding of transference and countertransference.</li> </ul>	
<p><i>A Yoga Therapist is qualified to liaise with other health professionals to:</i></p>	<p><i>A Yoga Therapist is NOT qualified to:</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Receive and provide referrals from and to other appropriate healthcare providers</li> <li>• Be part of a multi-disciplinary team when appropriate</li> <li>• Engage with medical or allied health professionals (as appropriate) and use best practice referral/ feedback processes to optimise client health and wellbeing outcomes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advise about other health treatment modalities other than referring clients to appropriate personnel or services</li> <li>• Request diagnostic tests or procedures unless suitably qualified</li> <li>• Interpret raw diagnostic test results</li> <li>• Prescribe medication, nutritional supplements or herbs from Western or traditional medical methods such as Chinese medicine or Ayurveda, unless suitably qualified</li> <li>• Perform any invasive procedures</li> <li>• Judge or make recommendations about any other form of advice or treatment from another healthcare professional*.</li> </ul>
<p><i>A Yoga Therapist is qualified to provide assessment and treatment by:</i></p>	<p><i>A Yoga Therapist is NOT qualified to:</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assessing each individual client according to a holistic procedure from a Yoga Therapy framework, including qualitative and quantitative assessment tools and maintaining records according to statutory requirements</li> <li>• Using the assessment process to identify any risk factors or contraindications to ensure the safety and appropriateness of the Yoga Therapy intervention</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Perform physical adjustments**, manipulations or massage, unless suitably qualified</li> <li>• Undertake individual or group psychological counselling, unless suitably qualified</li> <li>• Recommend specific lifestyle changes outside a Yoga Therapy framework or give</li> </ul>

<p>and to then develop an appropriate treatment without fostering dependency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developing a treatment plan and/or providing advice within a Yoga Therapy framework with appropriate follow-up procedures and review at regular intervals, while maintaining records according to statutory requirements</li> <li>• Using practices of yoga within their Yoga Therapy training which are shown to be safe and effective, to support the client and help that client manage their physical, emotional, mental and spiritual wellbeing</li> <li>• Providing suitable modifications of practices appropriate to each individual client</li> <li>• Making physical adjustments** to postures only by verbal instruction or gentle touch to the area of the body that needs a change, but only after permission has been sought and given</li> <li>• Providing clear goals for each Yoga Therapy session</li> <li>• Providing clear instructions for any home-practice that is given, with appropriate feedback mechanisms</li> <li>• Providing a program that suits the individual client's needs, learning style and access to resources, such as time and equipment.</li> <li>• Providing clear processes for client feedback</li> <li>• Providing guidance for lifestyle changes to create improved wellbeing; this may include basic nutritional recommendations according to a yoga nutrition framework as provided in Yoga Therapy training</li> <li>• Using basic methods of touch to guide a movement or to suggest how a client can change their position.</li> </ul>	<p>dietary advice beyond the yoga nutrition framework, unless suitably qualified.</p>
<p><i>As part of their professional practice, a Yoga Therapist is required to:</i></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have successfully completed Certificated postgraduate training in Yoga Therapy, recognised by a professional association that has clear membership standards consistent with worldwide Yoga Therapy practice, such as AAYT and IAYT</li> <li>• Maintain all qualifications and continuing professional development (APD) requirements</li> <li>• Maintain membership registration with their professional body</li> <li>• Be familiar with current yoga evidence-based research</li> <li>• Maintain confidentiality</li> <li>• Maintain professional practice by having respectful, clear communication; by following the ethical standards of relevant Yoga Therapist/Yoga Teacher organisations and by displaying their qualifications in a suitably visible location</li> </ul>	

- Adhere to all legal, regulatory and business issues relating to the administration of a professional practice, including basic protection and WHS requirements for Covid 19
- Hold the required documentation for working with minors if applicable in their work.
- Have parents or guardians present when providing Yoga Therapy for minors or other vulnerable groups, unless written permission has been given if applicable in their work
- Hold the required documentation for working with vulnerable people if applicable in their work
- Hold the required documentation (such as Police Checks, First Aid and CPR) for working in Government subsidised facilities such as hospitals, nursing homes, retirement villages etc if applicable in their work.

### **Scope of Practice:**

AAYT has chosen to use a wide, principle-based Scope of Practice to describe the **purpose, values and boundaries** of a Certificated C-AAYT Yoga Therapist rather than include a specific list of tasks. It is recognised that a C-AAYT Yoga Therapist will apply their individual skills and knowledge, drawing on both traditional and innovative practices while remaining aware of new innovations and treatment trends within the healthcare environment whilst adhering to all legislative requirements of Allied health care workers such as holding relevant documents for working with children, other vulnerable community members or government subsidised facilities such as hospitals, nursing homes, retirement villages etc when applicable in their work. This approach ensures that the Scope of Practice for Yoga Therapy will continue to be relevant in a continually changing healthcare system and that beneficial outcomes will be obtained for each individual seeking the services of a fully qualified or AAYT- Certificated Yoga Therapist.

\*At times the Yoga Therapist may be offering **complementary options** which provide the client with new possibilities and practices than those offered by the medical practitioner, enabling the client to make an informed choice, without the Yoga Therapist transgressing into the decision-making of the medical practitioner.

\*\***Adjustment** - In Yoga Therapy it may be necessary to guide the client into improved alignment of the physical body. This may be given through instruction or asking the individual to feel the area of incorrect alignment. At times, it may require the therapist to modify the client's physical alignment by gently guiding the required change through touch, which will only occur after permission has been sought and given in a safe environment without any abuse of power, or transgression of health and safety considerations.

## **5. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ACCOMPANYING THE AAYT STANDARDS**

- I. Scope of Practice
- II. Code of Ethics
- III. A Touching Issue
- IV. Policy and Procedures for Grievances
- V. AAYT Education and Practice Standards For Accreditation And Membership
- VI. Yoga Therapy Training Provider Application Policy and Process
- VII. Membership for Self-Assessment Application