

Written by: The British Council for Yoga Therapy (BCYT)

Revisions are to be approved by members of the BCYT.

All rights reserved.

This document details the minimum additional curriculum, The British Council for Yoga Therapy (BCYT) considers, a proficient yoga teacher needs to successfully complete before becoming a yoga therapist who is able to give safe yoga therapy to individual members of the public in the UK.

CONTENTS

Section:	Pages
1. Introduction	2 – 3
2. Competencies for yoga therapists	4 - 10
A. The scope and models of yoga therapy	
B. The scope of yoga techniques applied for yoga therapy teaching	
C. The therapeutic relationship	
D. Knowledge and understanding of anatomy, physiology and pathology, as relevant to the work of a yoga therapist	
E. Practice and provision of yoga therapy	
F. Professional practice	
3. Guidance notes for accredited training organisations	11
4. Minimum Learning Hours for yoga therapy training	12
5. Assessment of trainee yoga therapists	13 - 14
6. References, abbreviations, Sanskrit glossary	15
7. Appendices	
A – Definitions for yoga therapy	16-17
B – Yoga values underpinning yoga therapy, the Yama and Niyama	18
C - BCYT and CNHC overview and membership	19
D - National Occupational Standards for yoga therapy	20
E – Guidance on updating training to meet UK educational levels	21-23
F – BCYT yoga therapy case study guidelines	24-29

1. INTRODUCTION

The core curriculum of the British Council for Yoga Therapy (BCYT) has been developed through consultation with various organisations offering training in, or involved with, the therapeutic application of yoga. It details the additional competences a proficient yoga teacher needs, to be able to safely provide yoga therapy to members of the public in the UK. It also describes how a yoga therapy training organisation may advance the knowledge and skills of a proficient yoga teacher to become a yoga therapist.

The BCYT, and this core curriculum, support voluntary regulation for yoga therapy through the Complementary and Natural Healthcare Council (CNHC). Appendix C gives an overview of these organisations. The core curriculum reflects the National Occupational Standard for Yoga Therapy as outlined in Appendix D.

Definitions for yoga therapy vary between recognised authorities and organisations throughout the world. Examples are given in Appendix A.

For the purposes of this document, requirements a) to c) below are essential.

a) Qualities of a yoga therapist

The skills and knowledge required in yoga therapy is in addition to that required for general yoga teaching. Time is required for the yoga therapy trainee to develop the breadth, depth, application, and confidence required. Professional training input is essential during the journey the yoga teacher takes to become a yoga therapist to be able to harness the qualities needed.

b) Safe practice

All yoga therapists must be competent in, and be able to give evidence of, the safe application and teaching of yoga therapy to members of the public, respecting the *yama* and *niyama* which are the values underpinning yoga and yoga therapy (see appendix B), and the CNHC Codes of Conduct, Performance & Ethics (found on www.cnhc.org.uk under Publications/Code of Conduct for Registrants).

c) Approaches to yoga therapy

It is accepted there are a range of yoga therapy approaches. The yoga therapy approach adopted by any individual yoga therapist / training organisation, however, is expected to:

- be anchored and held in the teachings of yoga
- tailor yoga therapy for each individual whether working one-to-one, or with small therapy groups
- be able to show established beneficial practices for members of the public
- honour an holistic view for each client and must be able to include at least:
 - a. the therapeutic and safe use of asana (posture work) as a tool
 - b. the use of the breath
 - c. methods to bring calmness and awareness.

A range of yoga models – for observation and data gathering, analysis, and goal setting, and a range of yoga tools for practices [which must be tailored for each client's therapy needs with the over-riding importance of avoiding harm], are possible within the framework of the CC. A yoga therapist is expected to be knowledgeable and competent in the way these tools are used within her/his approach to yoga therapy.

2. COMPETENCIES FOR YOGA THERAPISTS

This section gives the additional competencies which yoga teachers are expected to fully embrace - as a minimum - to become yoga therapists who are able to safely deliver yoga therapy to members of the public in the UK.

Additional depth and breadth of the yoga therapy approach adopted by the individual / training organisation is also expected.

Continuing personal practice and development are essential during the journey a proficient yoga teacher makes to become a yoga therapist, but this is not enough in itself. Technical and practical input from one or more yoga therapy trainers is also essential so that each potential yoga therapist fully understands and can demonstrate achieving the skills and competencies necessary to be a yoga therapist.

The competencies are described as learning outcomes in these sections:

- A. Scope and models of yoga therapy
- B. Scope of yoga techniques applied for yoga therapy teaching
- C. The therapeutic relationship
- D. Knowledge and understanding of anatomy, physiology and pathology, as relevant to the work of a yoga therapist
- E. Practice and provision of yoga therapy
- F. Professional practice

The levels used to describe the depth of each learning outcome are taken from the UK Education system's National Qualifications Framework (NQF). Level 3 normally equates to pre-university 'A' level and level 4 to the first year of a degree. Guidance on the type of evidence to meet these levels is in Appendix E.

Knowledge competencies:

Level 3: foundations level – an introductory knowledge sufficient to bring awareness of the existence and central essence of that subject and for the yoga therapist to be able to recognise when further knowledge is required for the practice of yoga therapy.

Level 3: specific knowledge – an overview and understanding of principles of the specific subject, including general awareness of its relevance to and/or potential use in the practice of yoga therapy.

Level 4: applied knowledge – have developed an understanding of all aspects of the subject and its specific applications to the practice of yoga therapy.

Level 4: analysis of applied knowledge – through study and practice have acquired a confident depth of knowledge in the practice of yoga therapy, including its multiple applications and potential

limitations. Have used research study e.g. into a particular pathology, to inform the practice of yoga therapy.

Practical competencies:

Level 3: demonstrated practical skills – in particular tasks associated with the work of yoga therapy.

Level 4: demonstrated advanced practical skills – of theory to practice in all therapy working.

A. SCOPE AND MODELS OF YOGA THERAPY

A1 Foundation knowledge (level 3) in the source, breadth, and depth of the yoga tradition and its relevance and application to yoga therapy through these texts:

- a) Yoga Sutras of Patanjali
- b) Hatha Yoga Pradipika
- c) Bhagavad Gita
- d) Upanishads related to the therapeutic application of yoga
- e) Traditional texts relevant to the yoga therapy approach adopted. These may come from supporting systems such as Samkhya, one or more of the above texts, other traditional yoga texts
- f) Selected modern day yoga/yoga therapy texts, research, and/or studies which are relevant to the yoga therapy approach adopted

A2 Applied knowledge (level 4) of at least one of the traditional texts a) to e) and its use as a reference and guide for yoga therapy.

A3 Foundation knowledge (level 3) in the use of yoga models, for **observation and yoga therapy diagnostics** in order to guide therapeutic assessment and analysis:

- i. *panca kosha* or *panca maya* – the holistic model showing five dimensions or domains (e.g. seeing an inter relationship between the domains for the client, understanding whether yoga therapy may help, whether referral is needed)
- ii. *asana* as a physical/physiological model (e.g. seeing how a person stands/sits/moves; the use of the spine as a reference)
- iii. models of energy systems (e.g. *prana vayu*, *nadi*, *cakra*) as a reference for possible imbalances
- iv. models of mental and emotional behavior (including as a minimum: *klesa* (causes of suffering), *abhyasa/vairagya*(practice/dispassion), *antaraya* (obstacles to a clear mind))

A4 Applied knowledge (level 4) in the models within the yoga therapy approach adopted in order to make detailed assessment and plans for a programme of practices.

A5 Foundation knowledge (level 3) of Ayurvedic principles relevant to yoga therapy.

B. SCOPE OF YOGA TECHNIQUES APPLIED FOR YOGA THERAPY TEACHING

B1 Analysis of applied knowledge (level 4) of a range of yoga tools/practices, with **benefits, limitations, and contraindications** for therapeutic application, including but not limited to:

- a) *asana* – including ranges of posture with their modifications, variations, use of breath
- b) *pranayama* – to also include simple breath awareness and development
- c) relaxation, and *dharana/dhyana* (concentration techniques/meditation), based on yoga philosophy. It may include techniques such as *bhavana* (visualisation), *mantra* (recitation), *mudra* (symbolic gesture), *nyasa* (generic gesture)
- d) *vihara* (lifestyle modification)

B2 Applied knowledge (level 4) of contraindications of yoga practices for specific conditions and circumstances.

B3 Demonstrated advanced practical skills (level 4) of:

- observation
- teaching in a therapeutic setting including how to adapt/modify techniques for an individual's specific needs

C. THE THERAPEUTIC RELATIONSHIP

C1 Applied knowledge (level 4) of professional boundaries as they relate to yoga therapy

C2 Applied knowledge (level 4) of effective communication, including:

- evaluation of boundaries/limits to the scope of practice
- competency in basic interpersonal skills including: listening, reflecting, summarising, challenging, 'mirroring' to bring rapport, developing trust.
- recognition and management of subtle dynamics inherent in the therapist/client relationship

C3 Applied knowledge (level 4) of various modes of communication appropriate to the practice of yoga therapy, including:

- verbal and non-verbal communication
- mutual positive regard
- confidentiality and mutual trust

C4 Demonstrated practical skills (level 3) of a sensitive and intuitive approach to clients and their needs, including skills needed to connect with the client from a quiet inner place where the therapist's own conditioning or disturbances are minimized.

C5 Demonstrated practical skills (level 3) in obtaining permission before touching the client as required, for example during diagnostic purposes during observation.

D. KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF ANATOMY, PHYSIOLOGY AND PATHOLOGY, AS RELEVANT TO THE WORK OF A YOGA THERAPIST

D1 Specific knowledge (level 3) of human anatomy and physiology as relevant to the practice of yoga and the work of a yoga therapist, covering the structure and function of the main systems of the body and their inter-relationships including:

skeletal, muscular, nervous, endocrine, cardiovascular, respiratory, skin, lymph and immunity, digestive, urinary, reproductive systems.

D2 **Specific knowledge (level 3)** of the mechanics of movement as they relate to the practice of yoga and the work of a yoga therapist.

D3 **Specific knowledge (level 3)** of common medical conditions of the major systems of the body, including: symptoms, management, prognosis, and contraindications, as relevant to the work of a yoga therapist.

D4 **Demonstrated practical skills (level 3)** of, or ability to find information on, medical conditions suspected or diagnosed in clients.

D5 **Specific knowledge (level 3) and Demonstrated practical skills (level 3)** of

- a. how to recognise when a medical diagnosis is needed to support their assessment of the client's needs
- b. the circumstances in which yoga therapy can be given as a first line of action without the need for medical interventions e.g. anxious breathing
- c. the circumstances in which yoga therapy may or may not be given alongside other treatments e.g. during cancer treatment
- d. the circumstances in which yoga therapy cannot be a first line of action e.g. traumatic blood loss, arrested breathing

D6 **Specific knowledge (level 3) and Demonstrated practical skills (level 3)** of how to work with a diagnosis given by a medical professional such as a G.P. or consultant.

E. PRACTICE AND PROVISION OF YOGA THERAPY

E1 Essential qualities and skills

- i. **Demonstrated advanced practical skills (level 4)** to provide yoga therapy in accordance with the approach of her/his yoga therapy training and the requirements and standards contained in this core curriculum.
- ii. **Demonstrated advanced practical skills (level 4)** to provide effective yoga therapy.
- iii. **Demonstrated advanced practical skills (level 4)** in treating every client as an individual.
- iv. **Demonstrated advanced practical skills (level 4)** in knowing when to refer a client to a medical practitioner or a more experienced yoga therapist
- v. **Demonstrated practical skills (level 3)** to communicate effectively when:
 - explaining to the client how yoga therapy will be provided
 - discussing the commitment of the client and the likely number of sessions needed.
 - checking the client's well-being during the session and give reassurance as needed
 - providing clear and accurate advice with regard to yoga therapy and any relevant after care and self-care

E2 Observation and evaluation of a client

- i. **Application of knowledge (level 4) and demonstrated advanced practical skills (level 4)** to analyse an individual client using:
 - a case history which includes recording:
 - personal details

- medical history of conditions and other factors conveyed by the client, together with the acute/chronic nature of each issue
 - observation through; dialogue, seeing physical aspects including posture, movement, safe and appropriate touch
 - the client's priority for improvement
 - assessment of current health issues using yoga models in an holistic manner
- ii. **Demonstrated practical skills (level 3)** in understanding the reasons for some caution in apparently minor complaints (e.g. dizziness; lack of balance) as these may mask an underlying disease.
 - iii. **Application of knowledge (level 3) and demonstrated advanced practical skills (level 3)** within medical situations when special care must be taken, e.g. medical emergencies where the client should be immediately referred to a medical practitioner (e.g. heart pain), acute situations where yoga therapy should be temporarily stopped e.g. violent sickness / diarrhoea; acute pain (e.g. migraine), extreme care situations where yoga therapy can only be practised in a greatly modified way (e.g. palliative care).

E3 Planning

- i. **Application of knowledge (level 4) and demonstrated advanced practical skills (level 4)** of how to identify priorities for a yoga therapy programme, including short and long term goals, and taking into account preferences and needs of the client, current abilities or limitations, potential for improvement, time constraints for practice, the needs of a home practice, choice of one-to-one, or a tailored practice within a therapy group setting.
- ii. **Application of knowledge (level 4) and demonstrated advanced practical skills (level 4)** in designing practices to begin to meet the needs of the individual and to develop, over several sessions, the prescribed practices and techniques in ways appropriate to the specific individual.
- iii. **Application of knowledge (level 4) and demonstrated advanced practical skills (level 4)** in understanding the reasons for caution in proposing or excluding yoga practices for clients with major health conditions, or when such conditions are suspected.

E4 Teach/deliver appropriate practices

- i. **Demonstrated advanced practical skills (level 4)** to teach or deliver the appropriate practices for an individual and individuals within therapy groups, taking into consideration assessment of conditions, limitations, and the overall practice direction and goals.
- ii. **Application of knowledge (level 4)** of actual and potential effects of yoga practices and techniques.
- iii. **Demonstrated practical skills (level 3)** to facilitate the client's experience of the practice including
 - a. Instruction, demonstration, education of the client using multi modes such as auditory, visual and kinaesthetic (use of appropriate touch and movement) to suit individual needs.
 - b. Design, provide and tailor support materials to help the client practise at home (e.g. written instructions, audio recording etc.).
- iv. **Demonstrated practical skills (level 3)** to encourage, motivate and support the client to practise regularly. (This may include review or other planned contact outside the main therapy sessions.)

E5 Follow up and re-planning

- i. **Application of knowledge (level 4)** and **demonstrated advanced practical skills (level 4)** in gathering feedback, evaluating the client's progress over time, re-assessing, and refining the practice and re-determining short term and long term goals and priorities.
- ii. **Application of knowledge (level 4)** and **demonstrated advanced practical skills (level 4)** to address additional/new/changing conditions and goals.
- iii. **Demonstrated practical skills (level 3)** to bring closure for the therapy sessions.

F. PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

F1 Essential skills:

- i. **Demonstrated practical skill (level 3)** in preparing her/himself appropriately to provide yoga therapy.
- ii. **Demonstrated advanced practical skills (level 4)** in creating an environment to meet the needs of each individual client and to ensure any equipment and materials used are safe and suitable for use.
- iii. **Demonstrated practical skill (level 3)** in completing and maintaining confidential records securely in accordance with professional and legal requirements
- iv. **Demonstrated practical skill (level 3)** in working within professional codes of conduct including holding appropriate insurance, first aid certification, and De-Barring Service (DBS) certification (replaced CRB for working with children) if required.

F2 Business skills:

- i. **Foundation knowledge (level 3)** of how to set up a practice, to meet accounting requirements, and to market the practice.
- ii. **Foundation knowledge (level 3)** of financial considerations in calculating charges for treatment.

F3 Ethical principles, legal, regulatory issues

- i. **Applied knowledge (level 4)** of CNHC Codes of Conduct, Performance & Ethics (found on www.cnhc.org.uk under publications) and yoga's ethical principles (see Appendix B).
- ii. **Demonstrated applied practical skills (level 4)** of CNHC codes of conduct, performance and ethics and related concepts from the yoga tradition to professional interactions and relationships.
- iii. **Analysis of knowledge (level 4)** of the scope of practice of yoga therapy, and limits of self-competence, training and expertise, resulting in the demonstrated ability to discern when to refer a client to a yoga therapist with more experience or other complementary / medical practitioners.
- iv. **Foundation knowledge (level 3)** of UK advertising standards requirements.
- v. **Specific knowledge (level 3)** of how to acknowledge and promote equality, diversity and individual's rights.
- vi. **Specific knowledge (level 3)** of legal and ethical responsibilities in relation to the client's health & safety.

- vii. **Demonstrated practical skills (level 3)** in communicating the role of a regulator (the CNHC) in protecting the public by providing a register of verified therapists, and a mechanism for handling complaints against a therapist.

F4 Relationships with peers, mentors, medical professionals, organisations:

Demonstrated practical skills (level 3) in liaising with other health professionals, and in the ability to work both independently and within a team.

F5 Personal and continuing professional development:

Specific knowledge (level 3) of the fundamental value of ongoing personal practice, long term mentorship/supervision and skills maintenance/development related to yoga therapy through continuing education.

3. Guidance notes for accredited training organisations

3.1 Competencies

Training organisations are required to include within their syllabus all competencies at the levels shown, and to provide evidence of trainees meeting the required levels as indicated in Section 5, Assessment.

3.2 Training organisations additions to the curriculum

The core curriculum gives minimum requirements. Training organisations are expected to add more depth and breadth in the approach they adopt for yoga therapy.

3.3 Minimum length of training – 18 months

It is accepted that some training organisations are able to offer training that meets this Core Curriculum requirement within 18 months. However, it is more likely that training will be a minimum of 2 years in order to allow each trainee to gain the required in-depth development and confidence, and to fully integrate their learning.

3.4 Trainee entry requirements

Yoga teachers who are able to provide evidence of the following are suitable for entry to yoga therapy training.

- i. a yoga teaching qualification from training of a minimum of 200 hours and 180 contact hours (for example the 200 hour yoga alliance training)
- ii. teaching as a yoga teacher for a minimum of 120 hours over 1 year
- iii. continuous professional development, once qualified as a yoga teacher, of at least 15 hours per year
- iv. commitment to their own regular personal yoga practice for a minimum of 3 years

Whilst entry requirements are mandatory for training which is accredited, on a case by case basis the training school may determine the suitability of a candidate who does not fulfil the criteria above, but can be shown to have the equivalent of it based on the candidate's past experiences within the field of yoga training, teaching, and personal practice.

It is advisable that training schools have a documented Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL) procedure within their initial assessment process to assess such candidates.

3.5 BCYT Accreditation

Training organisations able to demonstrate they meet all aspects of this core curriculum are invited to apply for their yoga therapy qualification to be accredited by the BCYT.

Please follow contact details on www.bcyt.co.uk.

Graduates of accredited training may apply for direct entry to the CNHC's register as a yoga therapist.

4. MINIMUM LEARNING HOURS for yoga therapy training

Each proficient yoga teacher is expected to take, as minimum, additional yoga therapy training of 550 learning hours which includes 300 hours of direct contact (face to face) learning with yoga therapy trainers and 250 hours of non-contact learning, plus 6-8 hours per week of recommended home study.

4.1 minimum 300 direct contact hours – these shall include:

- 30% theory minimum
- 50% practicum (practical experience) minimum
- 20% either theory or practicum

Practicum must include observation of yoga therapy being delivered by experienced yoga therapy practitioner(s). At least 5 hours of such observations must be written up.

Direct contact hours are when the trainee is directly with a tutor approved by the training organisation, and may include:

- classroom based teaching
- practical workshops
- mentoring on therapy aspects of the course - face to face, including Skype & telephone (NB skyping is not considered appropriate for practical working)
- individual tutorials
- observations of yoga therapy being delivered by experienced practitioners
- supervised clinical practice

4.2 minimum 250 non-contact hours – these shall include:

- a. assignments
- b. peer group work – without tutor present
- c. own clinical practice
- d. **minimum 50 non-contact hours** for conducting and writing up as case studies at least 3 of the range of clients the trainee has seen under supervision

4.3 An additional 600 hours guided learning is advised for home study

Between 6 and 8 hours of home study per week is considered necessary in order to explore the breadth and depth of yoga therapy. Guided learning hours may include:

- **home study** – experiential learning; the application of yoga therapy
- **guided reading** – relevant to topics taught
- **research** – through the web or reading – for example, internet researching medical conditions.

5. ASSESSMENT OF TRAINEE THERAPISTS

Throughout the training on-going tutor and peer assessment are required. Trainee therapists are to be assessed on an individual basis and in groups to demonstrate their knowledge, skill, and experience; to provide a basis for feedback, and to identify aspects which need improvement.

5.1 INITIAL ASSESSMENTS to be carried out by the trainer prior to, and at the beginning of training, to assess the suitability and motivation for the individual to train as a yoga therapist. This should include an assessment of the quality of the trainee's practice and depth of engagement with yoga.

5.2 ASSESSMENTS DURING TRAINING to be carried out by the trainer to ensure each trainee meets **all** aspects of the requirements of the core curriculum. An appropriate range of assessment evidence is required. Tasks set must include 30% written work and 30% practical work, with the remaining 40% set at the training organisation's discretion. Oral assessment e.g. interview, discussion, may be included in the 40%. For a specific trainee, on a needs only and case by case basis, some oral assessment may be included in the practical and written work categories.

Trainees must successfully complete sufficient assessments to show they meet the required educational level for each competency specified in Section 2. Guidance for the required levels, together with examples, is shown in Appendix E. Written work to meet level 4 is to be well referenced and at least one 'research' project on a yoga therapy related topic must be presented with a reference list. Harvard is the suggested referencing method.

5.3 WRITTEN ASSESSMENTS (minimum 30%) – shall include:

- a. **Compulsory** - 3 written case studies taken from the range of clients the trainee has seen under supervision.
 - two case studies are to be one-to-one, and the third either one-to-one or a small therapy group (max 6 clients).
 - each case study is to include an initial and at least four subsequent sessions.
 - each case study is to include a client testimonial, suggested wording in Appendix F.
 - reflective practice is required to be demonstrated throughout.

All requirements and outcomes shown in Appendix F, BCYT yoga therapy case study guidelines, must be given in the write up – even if the layout adopted by the therapist differs from the template shown.

- b. **Other assessed written work** may include: worksheets, answers to set questions, essays, multiple choice questions, presentations, hand-outs (e.g. for presentations), projects, practice or case journal and research work.

5.4 PRACTICAL ASSESSMENTS (minimum 30%) - shall include:

- i. **Compulsory:** 3 hours assessed teaching in a therapeutic setting, with written feedback. The trainee is to be assessed by an experienced yoga therapist whilst teaching their own, or borrowed, or specially constituted therapy group class, or teaching in a one-to-one setting which is appropriate and safe.
Assessment of the trainee teaching one-to-one is to include the trainee assessing the needs of a previously unknown client, analysing the client's needs and setting priorities, devising a yoga programme (initial and over time), teaching a yoga therapy practice, and providing appropriate aftercare. This is to ensure the student is capable of independent professional practice with the public.
- ii. **Other assessed practical work**
This may include observation of the trainee giving yoga therapy: to fellow trainees one to one or in small groups, to members of the public, in demonstrations in class or to trainer/mentor, in role play, and through presentations which includes practical demonstrations.

5.5 OTHER EVIDENCE of the trainee meeting aspects of the core curriculum may come from client testimony/evaluation, professional discussion, etc.

5.6 FEEDBACK to trainees is essential:

- **on formal assignments, assessments, and case studies** - this is to be in writing (or by electronic means), and given promptly.
- **on progress** made, together with areas for development and how to achieve them.

5.7 TRAINEE PORTFOLIO - Trainees are to maintain a portfolio of work to include:

- marked assessments with tutor feedback
- personal reflective journal evidencing personal practice
- record of observation of experienced therapist
- observation records from tutors of trainee within a clinical setting
- clinical practice records

5.8 FINAL ASSESSMENT of the trainee should ideally be carried out by assessor/s who have not been tutors closely involved in the training and education of the trainee they are assessing. This assessment may be made at appropriate points during the training when specific aspects, e.g. a topic area, are complete.

6. REFERENCES AND ABBREVIATIONS

BCYT – British Council for Yoga Therapy - See www.britishcouncilforyogatherapy.org.uk

Client – the individual seeking yoga therapy.

CNHC – The Complementary and Natural Healthcare Council – www.cnhc.org.uk

CPD – Continuous Professional Development. Compulsory when qualified.

NOS – National Occupational Standards – from Skills for Health – www.skillsforhealth.org.uk

T.O. - Training organisation – in this document, providing training in teaching yoga therapy.

Sanskrit glossary terms

Abhyasa – practice

Ahimsa - consideration to all living beings embracing the value of non-harming

Antaraya – obstacle to a clear and stable mind

Asana – yoga posture

Bhavana – visualisation

Cakra – energy centre(s)

Dharana - concentration

Dhyana - meditation

Klesa – causes of suffering

Mantra – a sound often used as a focus during meditation

Mudra – symbolic gesture

Nadi – subtle passage in the body through which life force moves

Nyasa – generic gesture

Niyama – personal discipline

Panca kosha/maya – 5 'sheaths'/dimensions or domains of an individual's being

Prana – life-force energy

Pranayama – regulating breathing technique

Samkhya – one of the oldest philosophical systems of India, with a close connection to yoga

Vairagya – detachment, letting go

Vayu – air, breath, wind, energy

Vihara - lifestyle

Yama – discipline concerning our dealings with society and the world

APPENDIX A - Definitions of yoga therapy

Definitions for yoga therapy vary between organisations and recognised authorities throughout the world. Below are some examples.

Yoga therapy is the adaptation of yoga practices for people with health challenges. Yoga therapists prescribe specific regimens of postures, breathing exercises, and relaxation techniques to suit individual needs.

Medical research shows that Yoga therapy is among the most effective complementary therapies for several common ailments. The challenges may be an illness, a temporary condition like pregnancy or childbirth, or a chronic condition associated with old age or infirmity.

*-Yoga Biomedical Trust (England)
Robin Monro, Ph.D.*

Yoga comprises a wide range of mind/body practices, from postural and breathing exercises to deep relaxation and meditation. Yoga therapy tailors these to the health needs of the individual. It helps to promote all-round positive health, as well as assisting particular medical conditions. **The therapy is particularly appropriate for many chronic conditions that persist despite conventional medical treatment.**

*-Yoga Therapy and Training Center (Ireland)
Marie Quail*

Yoga therapy, derived from the Yoga tradition of Patanjali and the Ayurvedic system of health care refers to the adaptation and application of Yoga techniques and practices to help individuals facing health challenges at any level manage their condition, reduce symptoms, restore balance, increase vitality, and improve attitude.

*-American Viniyoga Institute
Gary Kraftsow*

Yoga therapy is of modern coinage and represents a first effort to integrate traditional yogic concepts and techniques with Western medical and psychological knowledge. Whereas traditional Yoga is primarily concerned with personal transcendence on the part of a "normal" or healthy individual, Yoga therapy aims at the holistic treatment of various kinds of psychological or somatic dysfunctions ranging from back problems to emotional distress. **Both approaches, however, share an understanding of the human being as an integrated body-mind system, which can function optimally only when there is a state of dynamic balance.**

--Georg Feuerstein, Ph.D.

Yoga therapy adapts the practice of Yoga to the needs of people with specific or persistent health problems not usually addressed in a group class.

– Samata Yoga Centre (USA)

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.

*The International Association of Yoga Therapists (IAYT) July 1, 2012
Educational Standards for the Training of Yoga Therapists - Definition of Yoga Therapy ©*

Appendix B - Values underpinning the practice, study, & teaching of yoga and yoga therapy

Yoga texts refer to the values for a teacher and person rooted in yoga. One such text, The *Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*, refers in chapter 2 verses 29 to 45 to the *yama* and *niyama* which are listed and translated below. The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali is a brief yet precise text believed to be at least two thousand years old. It has been acknowledged as the ultimate source of reference on yoga.

In the context of the BCYT core curriculum, trainers, trainees, and yoga therapists are urged to work within *yama* and *niyama* and to especially respect *ahimsa*, avoiding harm to the client.

- Consideration to all living beings embracing the value of non-harming (*Ahimsa*)
- Right communication (communicating clearly in a way that does not cause or promote harm)
- The ability to resist taking that which is not ours
- Moderation in our actions.
- Absence of greed.
- Keeping ourselves and our environment clean and orderly.
- Being content in our lives.
- Exercising discipline in our habits and lifestyles.
- An ongoing study of oneself, and the necessity to review and evaluate our progress.
- Actions done as service, rather than for personal profit.

Appendix C – BCYT and CNHC overview and membership

The British Council for Yoga Therapy (BCYT) is a professional forum for yoga therapy operating in the United Kingdom, Channel Islands and the Isle of Man. It is made up of professional yoga therapy training organisations and professional associations whose members are yoga therapists. Contributions from individuals and other organisations involved with yoga therapy are welcomed and will usually be through specific working and/or consultation groups.

The BCYT, which is a non-profit making body, supports voluntary regulation through the Complementary and Natural Healthcare Council (CNHC). BCYT member training organisation may apply for accreditation for their yoga therapy training.

More details of may be found on www.bcyt.co.uk.

The Complementary and Natural Healthcare Council (CNHC) is a regulatory body for complementary healthcare therapies operating in the UK. It holds a voluntary register of complementary therapists who meet the CNHC requirements for safe practice.

There is no compulsory regulation for those teaching yoga therapeutically or defining themselves as a yoga therapist.

Suitably qualified individuals who teach yoga therapeutically may apply to join as a yoga therapist. Some yoga therapy qualifications allow direct entry and some professional associations / yoga therapy training bodies are able to directly verify their members and/or graduates who wish to join the CNHC register as a yoga therapist. Other suitably qualified individuals may complete a portfolio application route.

Please refer to www.cnhc.org.uk for further information

Appendix D

National Occupational Standards for Yoga Therapy

National Occupational Standards (NOS) are statements of the standards of performance individuals must achieve when carrying out functions in the workplace, together with specifications of the underpinning knowledge and understanding. They describe what an individual needs to do, know and understand in order to carry out a particular job, role or function.

NOS for yoga therapy were written by Skills for Health in conjunction with representatives from yoga therapy organisations and were last updated in 2011. They comprise 3 (only) CNH documents:

CNH1 - Explore and establish the client's needs for complementary and natural healthcare.

CNH2 - Develop and agree plans for complementary and natural healthcare with clients.

CNH14 – Yoga Therapy to clients.

These documents are available on www.skillsforhealth.org.uk

- i) use 'quick link' and select Competences/NOS
- ii) select Completed competences/NOS
- iii) click on 'search all competences'
- iv) launch the competences search tool
- v) put into search: Complementary Healthcare (or Yoga therapy for CNH 14)
- vi) CNH competences come up, labelled on the right hand side with CNH1, CNH2 etc.

BCYT wish to see the NOS for yoga therapy updated.

Appendix E

Guidance on updating training to meet UK educational levels

The knowledge and skills a competent yoga therapist trainee needs to demonstrate are considered to be between levels 3 and 4 of the UK educational National Qualifications Framework (NQF). These competencies are detailed in section 4 of the BCYT core curriculum together with the minimum educational levels required. Competencies specifying application for therapy needs are at level 4.

The National Qualifications Framework defines work at level 4 and level 3 as:

- “Level 4 qualifications recognise specialist learning and involve detailed analysis of a high level of information and knowledge in an area of work or study. Learning at this level is appropriate for people working in technical and professional jobs, and/or managing and developing others. Level 4 qualifications are at a level equivalent to Certificates of Higher Education.”
- “Level 3 qualifications recognise the ability to gain, and where relevant apply a range of knowledge, skills and understanding. Learning at this level involves obtaining detailed knowledge and skills. It is appropriate for people wishing to go to university, people working independently, or in some areas supervising and training others in their field of work”

The same competency may be taught and assessed at different levels, for example:

Level 2 *Identify* the use of modifications for a range of asanas

- asks for limited explanation of modifications for each asana, does not allow the trainee to explore reasons for modifications.

Level 3 *Evaluate* the use of modifications for a range of asanas

- asks the trainee to determine the use of modifications and encourages the trainee to reflect on why asanas are modified in different ways. Gives scope for the trainee to state whether they found the modification effective.

Level 4 *Analyse* the use of modifications for a range of asanas

- asks the trainee to explore further through research. *Justify* could be used instead of analyse to encourage the trainee to determine for her/himself whether or not the modifications are appropriate.

- asks the trainee to look at why modifications are used, and gives scope for inclusion of wider research to validate own analysis.

Assessment using multiple choice questions

The use of multi-choice questions can provide quick answers, enabling tutors to determine the progress of a trainee. They do not provide assessment of a deeper understanding of knowledge, skills and attitude. Multi-choice questionnaires can be used at levels 2, 3 and 4. When designing multiple choice questions determine what exactly you are assessing.

Level 2 provides an assessment of trainee knowledge, memory, and gives a superficial assessment on the day they are taken.

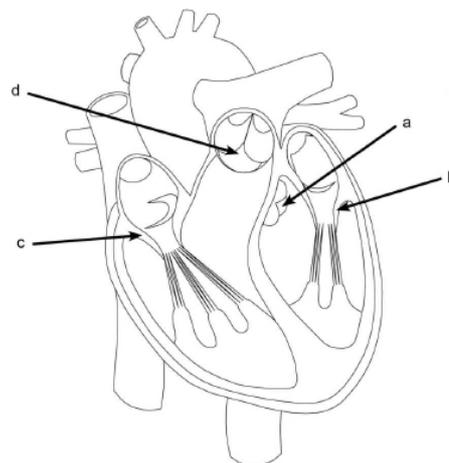
E.g. which of the following muscles is not in the leg:

A. rectus femoris B. vastus lateralis C. inferior extensor retinaculum D. adductor longus

Here, trainees have a 1 in 4 chance of success!

Level 3 below are examples of multiple choice questions which give assessment of more detailed knowledge / memory:

- o Which one of the valves a. to d. in the diagram prevents backflow of blood into the left ventricle?
- o How can the vascular system increase blood flow to a specific area of the body?
 - i. By vasoconstriction of arterioles leading to that area?
 - ii. By vasodilation of venules leading to that area?
 - iii. By vasoconstriction of venules leading to that area?
 - iv. By vasodilation of arterioles leading to that area?



Other assessment example:

Level 3 assessment: An early assignment to encourage reflection

The questions relate to competencies in the BCYT core curriculum

Write a reflective account of your observation of a clinical session held by an experienced yoga therapist:

- Evaluate the therapists approach to the client's well-being.
- Reflect upon your observations of the client / therapist relationship.
- After discussion with the therapist:
 - Identify the session number, date, time, how many sessions the therapist has planned with the client and the therapist's reasons for designing the programme.
- Describe how the client responded to the session.
- Discuss how the therapist has adapted the programme to enhance the well-being of the client.
- Describe how the therapist created a nurturing and safe environment for the client to enable the practice of yoga therapy.

Word count 2000

Level 3 assessment example - to meet competences D5 a-d

Taking, for example, a condition such as chronic asthma

Describe symptoms which may be presented by the client, identifying symptoms that are acute and chronic. (These May be physical, emotional or mental)

Determine how these symptoms impact on the safe practice of yoga therapy.

Identify symptoms which may need you to seek further support in the design of a yoga therapy plan, include any symptoms that are unsuitable for a yoga therapist to address.

Discuss how you would work with the client to refer for further medical diagnosis (assuming this is necessary), include a range of referral choices.

Discuss the individual needs of the client and identify in a short summary the contra indications of practice for the client

Word count 1000

Level 3 assessment example - Role play assessment activity

Aim: to assess communication skills of trainees working on a one to one basis

In groups of 3: One client - One therapist - One observer

Role of the Client:

Client is quite flexible. S/he suffers with fibromyalgia. The client has a bit of an attitude about being told what to do and often decides to do things his/her way.

Client becomes defensive if pushed too far.... How far is relative though.

Client needs to be coaxed into doing things often relating things back to when his/her father shouted when he/she didn't achieve and therefore reach the fathers expectations at school.

Client is sulky and often reverts to child mode.

Role of the therapist:

To use an effective communication model to work with the client effectively and create a plan that the client will be able to work with for a number of weeks.

Role of the observer

To observe how the therapist uses effective communication skills to allow the client to take responsibility for his/her practice.

To feedback to each of the participants her/his observations of the activity.

This is a peer assessment activity that promotes honest constructive feedback and enables the tutor to observe how well trainees communicate.

Appendix F BCYT yoga therapy case study guidelines

Please submit **THREE** carefully chosen, detailed, and if possible contrasting case studies:

- Case studies should be within your scope of practice.
- Two case studies should be one-to-one, the other may be either one-to-one or a small therapy group (max 6 clients).
- Each case study should be complete with an initial and at least four subsequent sessions.
- Client testimonials are needed - suggested wording is below.
- Copies, **without any identifiable names/words**, of case history forms, practices set, hand-outs given, and any other client material are to be included.
- **In the write-up, you need to:**
 1. Demonstrate your knowledge, understanding, and skill as a yoga therapist.
 2. Demonstrate reflective practice throughout.
 3. Use the following case study guidelines (or equivalent) for one-to-one or groups.
 4. Present your information in a clear and concise way using for example: bullet points, tables.
 5. Use appropriate technical language.

Suggested minimum word count for each case, 2500

Guideline for client testimonial – a testimonial is to be attached with each case study.

CLIENT TESTIMONIAL

This is to confirm that I received Yoga Therapy from.....on the following dates:

Date: Comment for this session:

Overall comments:

Signed

dated

Case study template for an individual

You are required to evidence how you meet the National Occupational Standards (NOS) for yoga therapy and the British Council for Yoga Therapy (BCYT) core curriculum.

Ensure client confidentiality in all material submitted. Please use the following headings.

YOUR NAME:

CASE STUDY NUMBER 1, 2 or 3

Section 1

Explore the client's needs for yoga therapy

- A. Complete a synopsis of current presenting symptoms; include a portrait of your client at the first meeting.
- B. Evidence your consultation methods used e.g. questionnaire, dialogue, observation, touch. Include the client's wishes, and referral data from healthcare professionals - if appropriate.
- C. Create an assessment profile of the client applying yoga models. Describe your own objective assessment and analysis of the client's situation – you may also refer to medical and ayurvedic models.
- D. Write a rationale for your proposed yoga therapy programme – giving short term and long term goals. Identify options you offer the client, including any potential risks from following the options given.
- E. Complete appropriate records as a professional considering consent and confidentiality.

Section 2

Develop and agree plans for yoga therapy

- a) Discuss how you explained your assessment and yoga therapy options with the client, including the commitment needed from the client for each proposed option to be effective.
- b) Discuss your choice of therapy models and rationale with your supervisor prior to the start and during the delivery of yoga therapy.
- c) Evaluate how you modified and developed your plan in light of feedback from the client – discuss effects of these changes to your rationale / therapy programme.
- d) Complete ongoing records of review, discussion and evaluation of client's progress.

Section 3

Provide yoga therapy

I. Initial yoga therapy practice

- 1. Design the direction for the initial yoga therapy practice – taking into account your understanding of the client's needs, and how the initial practice will be developed over time to help the client.

2. Justify your choice of yoga tools (e.g. posture, breathing) to help this particular client.
3. Evidence details of your initial practice. Include each tool used together with modifications, the flow of practice, length of holds, sequences, length of practice, frequency of practice, etc. Attach the written programme given to the client.
4. Discuss how the client managed learning and performing the practice.
5. Evaluate how the planned programme will enable the client to work within her/his current ability and limitations, taking into account any existing medication, treatments and intervention also being used.
6. Describe how you enabled the client to fully comprehend and incorporate the practices into her/his life, enabling practice to be taken at home and as directed by you.
7. Provide evidence of how you recorded the session and the practice taught.

II. Lifestyle advice

Justify, with reference to your rationale, any lifestyle changes recommended.

III. Ongoing evaluation / reflection

On completion of the session evaluate your effectiveness. Discuss potential changes and preparation needed for the next session.

IV. Follow on sessions

Evaluate the following:

- The client's feedback and effectiveness in practicing over a set period of time.
- The health of the client, include any new issues.
- Any changes to existing practices and/or new practices given.
- Any changes to the direction and/or overall programme.
- Whether there is a need to refer to a health practitioner or another complementary therapist. The need and appropriateness of writing to the client's GP or consultant.
- How you kept records for the above.

V. Ongoing evaluation / reflection

On completion of each session evaluate your effectiveness. Discuss potential changes and preparation needed for the next session.

VI. Conclusions and reflections

Discuss the effectiveness of yoga therapy. Comment on the dialogue and observations of the client, and the development of client practitioner relationship.

VII. Referencing

In all sections, include references to theory within the text, where appropriate, and submit the corresponding reference list at the end of the document.

Total word count:

Case study template for a small group of individuals

You are required to evidence how you meet the National Occupational Standards (NOS) for yoga therapy and the British Council for Yoga Therapy (BCYT) core curriculum.

Ensure client confidentiality in all material submitted. Please use the following headings.

YOUR NAME:

CASE STUDY NUMBER 1, 2 or 3

Section 1

Explore the client's needs for yoga therapy

- A. Identify the focus of the group e.g. back care, cancer treatment support.
Include number of clients in the group, group dynamics, and environment.
- B. Identify the range of conditions and any special considerations, e.g. wheelchairs.
- C. Complete a synopsis of current presenting symptoms for each client, including a portrait at the first meeting. Include:
 - your consultation methods and results e.g. questionnaire, dialogue, observation, touch.
 - the client's wishes, and referral data from healthcare professionals - if appropriate.
- D. Create an assessment profile of each client applying yoga therapy models. Describe your own objective assessment and analysis of the client's situation – you may also refer to medical and ayurvedic models.
- E. Write a rationale for your proposed group yoga therapy programme – giving short term and long term goals. Identify options you offer each client, including any potential risks from following the options given.
- F. Demonstrate how the needs of each individual in the group will be addressed.
- G. Complete appropriate records as a professional considering consent and confidentiality.

Section 2

Develop and agree plans for Yoga Therapy

- a) Discuss how you explained your assessment and practice options with the group taking into account each client's needs
- b) Discuss your choices of therapy models and rationale with your supervisor prior to the start and during the delivery of yoga therapy to each individual within the group.
- c) Evaluate how you gained commitment from clients for their part in the programme (e.g. one client agreeing to use a chair during practice; agreement to take specific home practices).
- d) Evaluate how you modified/developed the programme in light of feedback from each client in the group – discuss effects of changes to your rationale / therapy programme.
- e) Discuss how you gained final agreement with the group.
- f) Complete on going records of review, discussion and evaluation of the group and individual progress.

Section 3

Provide Yoga Therapy

I. Initial yoga therapy practice

1. Design the direction for initial yoga therapy practice - taking into account your understanding of each client's needs, and how the initial practice will be developed over time to help each client.
2. Justify your choice of yoga tools (e.g. posture, meditation on the sun) for the group.
3. Evidence details of the initial practice, preferably in diagrammatic form. Include each tool used together with modifications, the flow of practice, length of holds, sequences, length of practice, frequency of practice, etc.
4. Discuss how you modified/alterd the practice for each client.
5. Identify how each client coped with learning and performing the practice.
6. Provide a copy of all practices given for home use, including modifications or alterations for specific clients.
7. Evaluate how the practices and planned programme will enable each client to work within her/his current abilities taking into account existing medication, treatments or interventions
8. Discuss how you enabled each client to fully comprehend and incorporate the practices into her/his life.
9. Discuss whether you wrote to any medical professional with an update as appropriate.
10. Provide evidence of how you recorded the session and practices taught.

II. Lifestyle advice

Justify, with reference to your rationale, any lifestyle changes recommended to each client.

III. Ongoing evaluation / reflection

On completion of the session evaluate your effectiveness. Discuss potential changes and preparation needed for the next session.

IV. Follow on sessions

Evaluate the following:

- the health of each client; including any new issues
- each client's feedback to the previous group session
- each client's feedback to any home practices set
- any changes to the direction and/or overall programme
- any changes to the direction and/or overall programme.
- practices taught at this session to the group with all modifications/alterations for each client.
- any changes made to existing home practices and/or new practices given
- whether there is a need to refer any client to another healthcare practitioner
- whether you wrote to any medical professional with an update as appropriate
- how you kept records for the above

V. Ongoing evaluation / reflection

On completion of each session evaluate your effectiveness. Discuss potential changes and preparation needed for the next session.

VI. Conclusions and reflections

Discuss the effectiveness of yoga therapy. Comment on the dialogue and observations of the client, and the development of client practitioner relationship.

VII. Referencing

In all sections, include references to theory within the text, where appropriate, and submit the corresponding reference list at the end of the document.

Total word count: