

Introduction and background

The popularity of yoga within the Australian community has grown significantly in recent years. In line with this growth, there has been an increase in the availability of yoga teacher training courses. These courses range in duration from a few weeks intensive to four years part-time and are usually run face-to-face, but sometimes also by distance learning. There is great disparity in duration between teacher training courses, from less than 100 hours to more than 1000 hours, with varying degrees of face-to-face contact.

Yoga Australia is the peak national body for registration and representation of yoga teachers from all traditions and styles of yoga, independent from any one teacher-training provider. Yoga Australia has an important role in guiding the national direction of yoga teaching in Australia. As such, we have a responsibility to set standards for membership with care in order to protect both the public and the tradition of yoga. For the public, it is important to ensure that consumers trust that yoga teachers registered with Yoga Australia have at least a level of training and experience considered to be a reasonable minimum standard by their peers.

Yoga Australia believes that the minimum amount of time required for integration of the philosophy and techniques of yoga into a new teacher’s life is 12 months, whether the training undertaken is full-time, part-time or by distance learning. Yoga Australia also maintains a requirement of more than 350 hours yoga teacher training to become a full registered member of the association, a total which is then further broken down into specific hours required for each of its essential curriculum components. A minimum number of contact (face-to-face) hours is also required. In the case of distance learning courses, where face-to-face contact is limited, compensatory mentoring components must also be included.

We now also provide a provisional membership which will enable graduates of shorter 200 hour courses, many of which have been recognised by overseas organisations, to also join Yoga Australia whilst working to upgrade their training to the full membership standard. This change ensures that Yoga Australia remains relevant to the profession it represents, and in a position to ensure maintenance of its influence on the future standards and direction of yoga teaching in Australia.

Benefits of membership

All Yoga Australia members (other than Associate members) enjoy the full privileges of the association – they may vote, be elected to the committee, and as registered teachers, be included on the Yoga Australia website referral service.

Benefits of membership are described in more detail on the Yoga Australia website, but include:

- > Advocacy for yoga and Australian yoga teachers to the government, health insurance funds, media and wider community.
- > Representation by, and support from, a professional national association.
- > Well-packaged insurance options for yoga teaching, with cover for multiple modalities.
- > Discounts on workshops, seminars and conferences organised by Yoga Australia.
- > Access to first aid and cardio pulmonary resuscitation updates (CPR) via their state committees.
- > Regular state-based networking opportunities with other yoga teachers.
- > The quarterly “Yoga Today” magazine.
- > Access to the “Yoga Classifieds” on the Yoga Australia website.
- > Access to the “Calendar of Events” on the Yoga Australia website hyperlink.
- > A regular monthly newsletter with the latest news, events and training opportunities.
- > Use of the Yoga Australia member logo subject to the guidelines for use.

Further, a member who is a Yoga Australia Registered Teacher also benefits from:

- > Our “Find a Registered Teacher” website referral service to assist prospective students to find you.
- > Promotion as a Registered Teacher, by the association in its communication with agencies and organisations such as health insurance funds.
- > National and international recognition as a Registered Teacher.

Importantly, Yoga Australia members support the work of the association to further the cause of yoga as a professional discipline, promoting yoga to the public and supporting yoga-teaching standards in Australia.

Types of membership

Yoga Australia now provides five categories of membership:

- > A 200-hours of training “Provisional” category of membership.
- > Associate membership for non-teaching members.
- > Full membership (Registered Level 1 Teacher) i.e. 350 hours training.
- > Full membership (Registered Level 2 Teacher) i.e. intermediate, 500 hours training and 5 years/500 hours teaching.
- > Full membership (Registered Senior Teacher) i.e. senior, 1000 hours training and 10 years/1000 hours teaching.

Provisional membership

The Yoga Australia Provisional membership category is equivalent to the Yoga Alliance RYT200® standard and provides recognition in line with common overseas minimum requirements. Teachers with 200 hours training in the required curriculum areas are able to obtain Provisional membership with Yoga Australia, on condition that they continue their training to reach 350 hours of training (and therefore Full membership of the association) within a period of three years. Provisional members are able to teach yoga and qualify for yoga teaching public liability and professional risk insurance. New Provisional members who have spent less than 12 months training to become a yoga teacher are also required to enter into a mentoring agreement with a more senior recognised teacher to bring the length of time spent under supervision up to 12 months. *(Please see the Mentoring Guidelines document on the Yoga Australia website for further information).*

Full membership (Registered Level 1, 2 and Senior Teacher)

Teachers with at least 350 hours training in the required curriculum areas are able to join Yoga Australia as Full members (Registered Level 1 Teacher). *Please note:* A mentoring agreement is required if the time spent in teacher training is less than 12 months.

Registered Level 2 Teacher (Intermediate) and Registered Senior Teacher membership levels also involve further training. Level 2 (Intermediate) membership requires 500 hours of training (equivalent to the Yoga Alliance RYT500® standard). Registered Senior Teacher membership requires 1000 hours of training.

The definition of what constitutes as appropriate training hours for the purposes of increasing levels of membership is the same as the definition and application of CPD described in the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) document available on the Yoga Australia website. In simple terms, this refers to further training in yoga teaching. Such training is broken down into training that is core to yoga teaching, and training related to yoga teaching, and into contact (face-to-face) or non-contact training, with some activities earning more points than others.

Minimum hours of training in specific curriculum areas continue to apply to all levels of membership, to ensure that teachers have received sufficient training in essential components of yoga, such as yogic physiology, anatomy and physiology and teaching techniques. See the Curriculum Table later in this document for further information.

Special Entry membership

Special Entry membership allows for the fact that traditional training in yoga (often undertaken in a guru-disciple relationship) may have been informal and not certified, therefore not easily demonstrated. This membership category is especially relevant to teachers who gained their training and experience in the years before certification of teacher training became the accepted norm.

If you feel that Special Entry applies to you, please be aware that you will need to provide a detailed explanation of your reasons for applying for Special Entry and sufficient documentation to demonstrate the extent of your training and experience. Information regarding documentation required is available in the *Application for Membership* form. Requests for Special Entry are considered by the Committee of Management on a case-by-case basis.

Types of membership

Associate membership

Associate membership is available for:

- > People training to become yoga teachers (not yet teaching).
- > Yoga teachers who are no longer teaching.
- > Other people who wish to support the work of the Association.

As non-teaching members, Associates are not entitled to yoga teaching public liability or professional risk insurance.

Associate members do not have voting rights, i.e. they cannot vote at Yoga Australia meetings and cannot be elected to the Committee. They can however, have input into debates or other processes on which votes are cast, and may be invited to serve on working parties established by the Committee.

Associate members details are not listed on the Yoga Australia website.

Requirements of membership

All Yoga Australia members are required to:

- > Abide by the rules of Yoga Australia (available on the Yoga Australia website)
- > Abide by the Yoga Australia Code of Professional Practice and Statement of Ethics (available on the Yoga Australia website)

Further, to maintain their status as a Registered Teacher, members are also required to:

- > Maintain current first aid and CPR certification being Provide First Aid or equivalent. Currently, first aid has to be updated every three years.
- > Engage in and provide evidence of CPD.

Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

All Yoga Australia members (other than Associate members) must earn at least 12 CPD points each year of membership to continue to be listed as a Registered Yoga Teacher. Evidence of CPD undertaken is to be provided each year at the time of renewal. The CPD Policy and Forms document on the Yoga Australia website provides more details of this requirement. Training undertaken as CPD can also count towards increasing levels of membership – therefore, teachers are advised to keep good records of all training undertaken, along with records of actual teaching experience gained.

Members choosing not to complete the required CPD points can remain as members with Yoga Australia; however, they will not be listed as a Registered Yoga Teacher.

Upgrading of levels of membership

Teacher training hours required to increase your level of membership within Yoga Australia should be acquired within the categories specified for member CPD i.e. through workshops, seminars, conferences, retreats, or, at half value, through correspondence/online courses, program development, research, authoring, etc. For further information on these categories see the Yoga Australia CPD Policy.

For example, increasing your membership level from Registered Level 1 Teacher to Registered Level 2 Teacher requires the accumulation of an additional 150 training hours. These hours can be earned over a number of years as well as the required increase in hours of teaching, and number of years of teaching.

To apply for an upgrade of membership level, you should complete the *Application for Upgrade* form and return it to the Yoga Australia office, attaching:

- > Evidence of the number of years of professional teaching.
- > An estimate of total teaching hours.
- > Evidence of additional training undertaken to bring you to the requirements of the more senior level. (In doing this, attention should be paid to establishing that the required minimum training hours have been reached for each criterion within the Curriculum Table.)

Mentoring guidelines

Mentoring (both being a mentor and being mentored) is to be encouraged at all levels of seniority in yoga teaching. Mentoring has been part of yoga for thousands of years, with teachers handing down knowledge to students on a one-to-one basis. Ongoing mentoring is not a formal requirement of association membership, but we encourage teachers at all levels of membership to see both mentoring and being mentored as a desirable and important part of ongoing personal and professional development in yoga. (*See the Mentoring Guidelines on the Yoga Australia website for more information.*)

Fees

For **Provisional and Full (Registered Level 1, 2 or Senior Teacher) members**, the annual membership fee is AUD \$120 (+GST). In addition, there is an application fee of AUD \$100 (+GST). Those who are graduates of Yoga Australia registered teacher training courses enjoy a discounted application fee of AUD \$50 (+GST).

Your membership will include a personal webpage, which can be accessed by the general public – e.g. <http://www.yogaaustralia.org.au/Member/YourName>

For **Associate (non-teaching) members**, the annual fee is AUD \$60 (+GST) + AUD \$30 (+GST) application fee.

Frequently asked questions about membership

What if I don't have a minimum of 12 months of teacher training?

Engage in a mentoring agreement with a more senior recognised teacher for a period of time to achieve the minimum 12-month period under supervision. Mentoring involves undertaking regular (at least weekly) supervised training in yoga teaching with a senior teacher and can be structured in a way to best suit both you and your mentor, e.g. teaching as a trainee teacher under supervision or assisting the teacher in class. At the conclusion of the mentoring period, your mentor should provide you with a letter confirming the length and nature of the mentoring period. See the **Mentoring Guidelines** on the Yoga Australia website.

What if I don't have enough hours of training in each of the curriculum areas?

In this case, you should engage in further training to achieve the required hours in each of the curriculum areas e.g. completing additional workshops or courses to complete all syllabus areas. See the Curriculum Table in this document for a breakdown of the training hours required by curriculum area.

There are a number of teacher training schools which provide short courses covering specific curriculum areas. Further training may also include formal mentoring with a more senior recognised teacher, e.g. teaching as a trainee teacher under supervision or assisting the teacher in class, in which case a letter will be required from the mentor teacher to confirm the curriculum areas taught and the hours completed. See the **Mentoring Guidelines** document on the Yoga Australia website for more information.

What if my training is not from a teacher-training course registered with Yoga Australia?

Yoga Australia will consider applications for membership from all yoga teachers, not only those whose teacher-training course is registered with the association. However, if your course of study is not registered with us (registered courses are listed on the Yoga Australia website), you will need to provide more extensive detail to enable us to understand that the nature of your training, the topics covered and number of hours of study undertaken for each of these meet the criteria outlined in the Levels of Membership Curriculum Table for the level of membership you are seeking. Testimonials from your teachers, colleagues or students regarding the extent or nature of your teaching should be included.

In cases where your statements regarding your training, experience or background cannot be substantiated through external documentation, the Yoga Australia Committee may require provision of a statutory declaration relating to this matter.

Frequently
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What if I don't have enough contact hours in my training?

Generally, at least 65 per cent (two-thirds) of the hours spent training to become a yoga teacher should be contact hours with face-to-face contact with your teacher (e.g. about 230 hours of 350 hours). The remaining hours can be completed as home study if compliance can be assessed. For example, if the teacher training course you attended required the completion of certain activities at home, a diary of those activities should be maintained. If the diary is checked and compliance is assessed as part of the course, then the home study component of the course may be counted towards your training hours. You must be able to provide documentation to demonstrate your eligibility for the home study (non-contact) component of the training.

If your contact hours make up for less than two-thirds of your training and the contact hours and home study compliance was not assessed, please discuss this with the membership officer to determine eligibility for membership. This may be the case after undertaking a distance learning or correspondence course. You may be able to enter into a mentoring agreement as described above to achieve the required contact hours. Please note: Some distance learning courses have been registered by Yoga Australia, and graduates of these courses will automatically be admitted to Yoga Australia membership. However, special consideration of your membership application will be required in the case of non Yoga Australia registered courses.

What is required of a fitness professional wanting to teach yoga in a fitness setting?

Fitness professionals wanting to teach (or continue teaching) yoga in a fitness setting must first have their prior training and experience in yoga teaching assessed by Yoga Australia before they can register with Fitness Australia as a yoga instructor. Please contact Fitness Australia for the requirements for registration as a yoga instructor. Such training should comprise a minimum of 200 hours of training. Further training beyond this level is also encouraged.

If you are not sure how your training or experience will meet Yoga Australia requirements, please contact Yoga Australia on 1300 881 451 or send an email to enquiries@yogaaustralia.org.au for assistance. Please see the Fitness Professionals and Yoga Teaching document on the Yoga Australia website for more information.

How can I use the Yoga Australia member logo?

Yoga Australia members can and should use the Registered Teacher (or member) logo in their advertising and promotional materials. Use of the logo is limited to advertising, promotional materials and pages of your website directly related to your teaching, e.g. the logo cannot be used in such a way as to suggest that Yoga Australia has recognised any other aspects of your business – only your yoga teaching. Your right to use the logo remains always at the discretion of the Yoga Australia National Management Committee.

Levels of membership curriculum table

This is a guide to levels of individual membership of Yoga Australia. For training school registration, please see the *Application for Registration of a Yoga Teacher Training Course* document on the Yoga Australia website.

Curriculum area	Description and examples	Yoga Australia Levels of Membership			
		Provisional member	Full member (Registered Level 1 Teacher)	Intermediate member (Registered Level 2 Teacher)	Senior member (Registered Senior Teacher)
Teacher Training	Minimum hours of yoga specific teacher training required for entry to each membership level. This can include further training after becoming a yoga teacher.	200 hours	350 hours	500 hours	1000 hours
Personal Practice	Minimum years of personal yoga practice, with commitment to ongoing professional development.	1 year	2 years	5 years	12 years
Professional Teaching	Total minimum years and minimum hours of professional yoga teaching.	n/a	n/a	5 years and 500 hours teaching.	10 years and 1000 hours teaching.
Mentoring	Mentoring involves undertaking regular (at least once weekly) supervised training in yoga teaching with a more senior teacher and can be structured in a way to best suit both you and your mentor, e.g. teaching as a trainee teacher under supervision or assisting the teacher in class.	If the length of time you spent training to become a yoga teacher was less than one year, mentoring is required. (*see note below)	If the length of time you spent training to become a yoga teacher was less than one year, mentoring is required. (*see note below)	Ongoing mentoring (both as a mentor and mentee) is recommended.	Ongoing mentoring (both as a mentor and mentee) is recommended.
Special Conditions	Conditions relevant to membership level.	Provisional on qualifying for Full membership (Level 1) within 3 years. (*see note below)	n/a	n/a	n/a
Anatomy and Physiology	Study of the anatomy and functional physiology of bodily systems.	30 hours Minimum 5 hours must be spent applying A&P to yoga teaching.	30 hours Minimum 5 hours must be spent applying A&P to yoga teaching.	50 hours Minimum 10 hours must be spent applying A&P to yoga teaching.	90 hours Minimum 20 hours must be spent applying A&P to yoga teaching.
Yogic Physiology	Study of subtle yogic physiology and energy fields, such as: nadis, koshas, chakras, gunas. etc. (study of Ayurveda not counted)	Minimum 5 hours must be spent on yogic physiology.	20 hours	30 hours	50 hours

Levels of membership curriculum table

Curriculum area	Description and examples	Yoga Australia Levels of Membership			
		Provisional member	Full member (Registered Level 1 Teacher)	Intermediate member (Registered Level 2 Teacher)	Senior member (Registered Senior Teacher)
Techniques	Theory and practice of yoga techniques in traditional areas of yoga study. Yoga techniques such as: asana, pranayama, meditation, bandha, mudras, kriyas, shatkarma, etc, relaxation, chanting, and other traditional yoga techniques. Substantial emphasis must be given to both the theory and guided practice of, in a dedicated teacher training environment.	100 hours Minimums: Asana 20 Pranayama 20 Meditation 20 At least 5 hours of Bandha and Mudra must be included in the Asana and Pranayama above.	150 hours Minimums: Asana 30 Pranayama 30 Meditation 30 At least 5 hours of Bandha and Mudra must be included in the Asana and Pranayama above.	200 hours Minimums as for Level 1	300 hours Minimums as for Level 1
Teaching Methodology	Study and practice of teaching methodologies such as: principles of demonstration, observation, communication, assistance, correction, adjustments, instruction, teaching styles, learning styles, etc.	30 hours, of which at least 10 hours must be specific to the teaching of yoga. Business skills cannot be counted here.	30 hours, of which at least 20 hours must be specific to the teaching of yoga. Business skills cannot be counted here.	50 hours, of which at least 20 hours must be specific to the teaching of yoga. Business skills cannot be counted here.	90 hours, of which at least 40 hours must be specific to the teaching of yoga. Business skills cannot be counted here.
Integrative Practice and Teaching (Practicum)	Such as: supervised teaching practice, observation of teaching, assistance in classes taught by a qualified teacher, receiving and giving feedback. This includes professional on-going mentoring and supervision under a more senior teacher.	10 hours	40 hours	50 hours	70 hours
Remaining Hours/ Specialities	May be distributed among the categories above or in an area of specialisation such as: therapeutic use of asana, pranayama, relaxation, meditation, cleansing practices, yoga for special needs groups such as children, pre/post natal, etc.	nil	30 hours	50 hours Suggested 30 to 50 hours per modality of specialisation.	300 hours Suggested 30 to 50 hours per modality of specialisation.
Overall Contact Hours		65% contact hours across all levels of membership and curriculum categories. (see note below)			
Total Hours		200 hours	350 hours	500 hours	1000 hours

Notes to accompany the curriculum table

General guidelines

The Curriculum Table provides guidelines as to minimum requirements in training and experience for membership of Yoga Australia. These are not absolute rules, and the descriptions given are examples only. Membership is considered on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of the National Management Committee.

Your actual training in yoga teaching may vary as required by style or tradition of yoga and may not have come from a single source – you may have acquired your expertise in different ways, from different teachers with different learning models. However, overall your training and experience must largely cover the curriculum areas and time requirements shown in the table, and you must be able to provide documentation to demonstrate this. In instances where no certificate is available, you must get testimonials, which confirm the fact that you have the training, and experience that you claim.

If you have any questions about your eligibility for membership, please contact Yoga Australia on 1300 881 451 or send an email to enquiries@yogaaustralia.org.au for assistance.

Provisional membership

Teachers with 200 hours training in the required curriculum areas are able to obtain Provisional membership with Yoga Australia, on the condition that they continue training in order to reach 350 hours training (and therefore Full membership of the association) within three years. Provisional members are able to teach yoga and qualify for yoga teaching public liability insurance.

Mentoring

For those who have spent less than 12 months training to become a yoga teacher, there is a requirement to enter a mentoring agreement with a more senior recognised teacher to bring the length of time spent under supervision up to 12 months. Mentoring involves undertaking regular (at least weekly) supervised training in yoga teaching and can be structured in a way to best suit both you and your mentor, e.g. teaching as a trainee teacher under supervision or assisting the teacher in class. See the Mentoring Guidelines on the Yoga Australia website for further information.

Contact hours

A guideline of 65 per cent contact hours for training applies across all levels and curriculum areas of Yoga Australia membership. However, applications are assessed on a case-by-case basis and may fall outside this guideline if approved by the National Management Committee. For example, some recognised distance learning courses may, by necessity, have lower contact hours, but such courses will usually have substantial documented mentoring and home learning requirements.