CERTIFICATION AND ASSESSMENT GUIDELINES

July 2020

Ramāmaṇi Iyengar Memorial
Yoga Institute

It is relatively easy to be a teacher of an academic subject, but to be a teacher in art is very difficult, and to be a yoga teacher is the hardest of all, because yoga teachers have to be their own critics and correct their own practice.

— B.K.S. Iyengar

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Introduction

> *Don't be exclusive, be inclusive…*
> *not only in asana but every walk of life.*
>
> – B.K.S. Iyengar

Guruji was a believer in tradition but at the same time, he was a great revolutionary. He discovered new paths for imparting objective knowledge of a philosophical subject like yoga. Paramparā was important to him but he recognised that as the community grew larger, a different framework for teaching and assessment would be needed.

Over the past few years, Geetaji and Prashantji repeatedly pointed out that assessments are losing their basic purpose and teacher training is becoming a business. Their observation and criticism have immense value in Iyengar Yoga.

Their concerns have motivated us to dig deeper into the process of yoga teaching worldwide.

On behalf of RIMYI, we elicited feedback on the current methodology of teaching and assessment. The response was overwhelming. Letters, mails, What's apps, messages….every corner of the world had something to contribute.

We, at the institute, have taken cognisance of every conceptual contribution offered.

We acknowledge, teaching is not easy, assessment is not simple and finding balance is not a superficial task. But none of it means the processes have to be difficult.

This document, which has its firm roots in Pune constitution, lays the outline for changes in the certification levels, in the assessment format and syllabi for assessments.

It intends to embrace Guruji's vision of inclusion.

> *May this act as a key point for the growth of happiness and unity amongst us all and may yogic discipline grow under your capable and skillful cultivation of friendliness, compassion and gladness.*
>
> – B.K.S. Iyengar in the Pune Constitution

Words Of Wisdom

An Iyengar Yoga Teacher . . .

- Should be an Iyengar yoga student and remain a yoga student.
- Should have a clear understanding of the subject and be able to demonstrate and express effectively.
- Should observe Yamas and Niyamas prudently.
- Should be honest and compassionate.
- Should teach responsibly.
- Should come prepared for the class.
- Should teach from the heart, not from the brain alone.

. . . Should be a good human being.

> *Learning and teaching this art demands a sensitive discriminatory approach.*
>
> — B.K.S. Iyengar

Section A
Certification Structure

The eligibility for a certain level of certification depends upon:

- Is the candidate ardent about the practice?
- How intense is the zeal to undertake this journey?
- What feeling does the candidate bear towards practice?
- Is practice the essence of candidate's life or is it a peripheral object?

Table 1. Overview of Certification Levels

Current Certification Level	Certification Level in effect from July 1, 2020	MINIMUM time gap between certification levels
Introductory 1	**Level 1**	
Introductory 2		
Intermediate Junior 1	**Level 2**	2 years
Intermediate Junior 2		
Intermediate Junior 3	**Level 3**	2 years
Intermediate Senior 1		
Intermediate Senior 2		
Intermediate Senior 3		
Advanced Junior 1	**Level 4**	2 years
Advanced Junior 2		
Advanced Junior 3		
Advanced Senior 1		
Advanced Senior 2		
	Level 5	Candidate's discretion

Guidelines

All teachers according to the previous syllabus should ascertain that they are well versed with the NEW SYLLABUS OF THE CORRESPONDING LEVEL.

Level 1 Certification

Eligibility Criteria: Minimum 3 years of study of Iyengar Yoga with a certified Iyengar Yoga teacher.

Assessment body: Respective Associations.

What Level 1 certified teachers can do? Level 1 teachers can conduct general classes.

Level 2 Certification

Eligibility Criteria : Level 1 certificate for at least 2 years and conducting general classes.

Assessment body: Respective Associations.

What Level 2 certified teachers can do? Level 2 teachers can conduct general classes.

Important note:

- Candidates certified at Intermediate Junior 2 in or before 2009 and have been conducting therapeutic classes may continue these classes.

Applying for Level 2 from current certification

Introductory 1 and 2	2 years from July 01, 2020

Level 3 Certification

Eligibility Criteria : Level 2 certificate for at least 2 years and conducting general classes.

Assessment body: Respective Associations.

What Level 3 certified teachers can do? Level 3 teachers can conduct general and therapy classes.

Important note:

- Candidates who have been awarded Intermediate Junior 3 certification before July 2020 (or before the new system came into effect) are NOT permitted to conduct therapy classes.
- These candidates are advised to work with a mentor (who conducts therapy classes) for at least two years before conducting independent therapy classes. They need a referral letter from the mentor to Association authorising the candidate to deal with therapeutic cases.

Applying for Level 3 from current certification

Intermediate Junior 1	at least 2 years from July 01, 2020
Intermediate Junior 2	at least 2 years from July 01, 2020

Level 4 Certification

Eligibility Criteria : Level 3 certificate for at least 2 years and conducting general classes.

Assessment body: Given that there will be no pool of assessors for Level 4, RIMYI will conduct all assessments for Level 4 certification until further notice.

What Level 4 certified teachers can do? Level 4 teachers can conduct general and therapy classes.

Applying for Level 4 from current certification

Intermediate Junior 3	at least 2 years from July 01, 2020
Intermediate Senior 1	at least 1 year from July 01, 2020
Intermediate Senior 2	at least 1 year from July 01, 2020
Intermediate Senior 3	Candidate's discretion

Level 5 Certification

Important note:

- The decision to apply for Level 5 has been left entirely up to the candidates. They may apply as and when they feel ready.

Eligibility Criteria : Level 4 certificate.

Assessment body: RIMYI.

What Level 5 certified teachers can do? Level 5 teachers can conduct general and therapy classes.

Section B
Becoming a Teacher

1. **You are a student of Iyengar Yoga and want to apply for Level 1 assessment:**

   Contact the Iyengar Yoga Association in your country to seek a teacher who can guide you in the art of teaching. If there are no Iyengar Yoga Associations in your country of residence, write to RIMYI.

2. **You are a certified teacher in Iyengar Yoga and you want to apply for the next level:**

   Contact the Iyengar Yoga Association in your country to seek a teacher who can guide you in the art of teaching. If there are no Iyengar Yoga Associations in your country of residence, write to RIMYI.

Guidelines to Help Iyengar Yoga Associations Decide who Can Train/Mentor Whom

Trainers/Mentors for Level 1

1. Teachers currently conducting general classes as per syllabus of Level 1 for at least 2 years

   AND

2. Teachers certified at minimum Level 2 for at least 3 years (new system)

   OR

   Teachers certified at minimum Intermediate Junior 2 for at least 2 years (old system).

Trainers/Mentors for Level 2

1. Teachers currently conducting general classes as per syllabus of Level 2

   AND

2. Teachers certified at minimum Level 3 for at least 3 years. (new system)

   OR

   Teachers certified at minimum Intermediate Junior 3 for at least 5 years and currently training students for Intermediate Junior 1 (old system)

   OR

   Teachers certified at Intermediate Senior 1 or Intermediate Senior 2 or Intermediate Senior 3 (old system).

Trainers/Mentors for Level 3

1. Teachers currently conducting general classes as per syllabus of Level 3

   AND

2. Teachers certified at minimum Level 4 for at least 3 years (new system)

   OR

   Teachers certified at Advanced Junior 1, Advanced Junior 2, Advanced Junior 3, Advanced Senior 1 or Advanced Senior 2

   AND

3. Should have visited RIMYI at least 3 times.

Trainers/Mentors Mentors for Level 4

Contact RIMYI.

- **Important note –** All certified teachers, who have rich experience in teaching but have not pursued further certification levels, and were granted special permission either by Guruji, RIMYI or their Associations, may continue to do so. Associations may consider similar requests on a case to case basis. RIMYI reserves the right to grant exceptions to the rules. Associations and RIMYI will inform each other about such requests to maintain a common list of trainers/mentors.

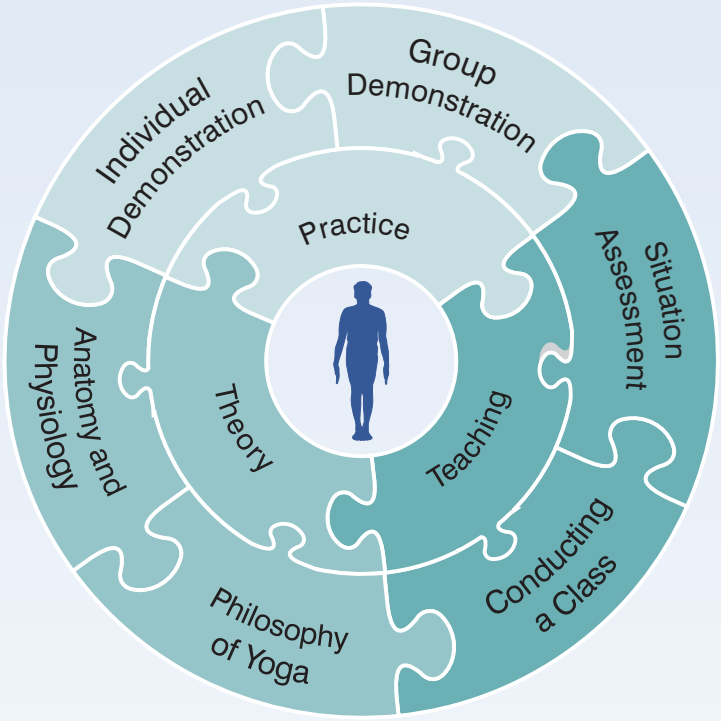
Section C
Criteria for Assessors

It should be noted that those who are allowed to mentor a certain level, are allowed to assess that level, after undergoing training set forth by the Association. Associations may introduce changes to their Assessors training system, based on their country context and the changes in the assessment process as outlined in this manual.

All aspiring assessors should note that it is neither mandatory nor advisable to view assessor training as a mode of advancement in our school. All aspirants should be fully versed and comfortable at their respective certification level before considering taking up the huge responsibility of assessor training.

Section D
Assessment Process

Candidates will be assessed on three criteria: **theory, practice and teaching.**



Components of assessment

A) Initial requirements

It is the trainer's/mentor's responsibility to evaluate if the candidate's pranayama practice is at par with the expectations of the corresponding level. The trainer/mentor should also see the candidate teach pranayama sessions on more than just a few occasions to decide if he or she is ready for the corresponding level of certification.

For any assessment, mentor should send a confidential letter to the Assessment committee with the following information:

- Name of candidate
- Duration the candidate has studied with me (mentor)
- Duration the candidate has assisted me (mentor)
- Opinion about candidate's skill set
- Other specific remarks

B) Written assessment - Theory

- All written assessments for all levels will be take-home assessments henceforth.

C) Assessment-in-person – practice and teaching

- Duration - 2-3 days
- Number of assessors - 3
- Moderator - If required (to be decided by Association)

General Guidelines for Assessors

A) Rapport building

- Communication is the key to being a part of our community.
- Right kind of disposition by the assessors should build up a certain level of comfort in the candidate.

B) Scoring

- Assessors should take an all-round view of the candidate.
- Assessors should always keep in mind that the candidate may not be able to perform at their usual level due to anxiety, stiffness, injury or any other reason.
- A margin of consideration should be given to teachers above 60 owing to the circumstance of their age.
- The candidate's understanding of the asanas, rather than physical perfection should be discerned for the purposes of assessment.
- It is not mandatory for the candidate to accomplish all the asanas called out in the Conducted performance.

C) Note taking

- Assessors should not take notes or mark scoresheets when a candidate is presenting or teaching.
- Assessors should use the time in between the candidates or allocate time to write their notes and mark scoresheets after the candidate's performance.

Assessors are at discretion to discontinue a candidate's assessment at the time points indicated if they agree that the candidate is not following the Iyengar method.

Assessment

Level 1 — Day 1

The Assessors and Candidates Practice Together — 60 mins.

Assessors are expected to think judiciously with discretion to arrive upon the theme.

This is an informal session where the assessor observes the candidates and the candidates can ask doubts, questions related to the practice sessions to the assessors.

Break — ~60 mins.

Candidates should fill in a feedback form. (See Appendix A.1)

Assessors should read candidates' feedback forms.

Inversions Practice — 15-30 mins.

- Since it is a practice session, each candidate can design his/her own sequence.
- Preparatory asanas can be added.
- Variations can be included.
- Those who should not be doing inversions should practice a course suitable for their situation.
- Menstruating women can demonstrate inversions on Day 2 if possible, or show videos of her inversions practice.

Interaction Time — 60 mins.

The assessors converse with the candidates, based on the group practice and the feedback forms submitted.

Guiding principles for initial impression of the candidate

- Are the basics of Iyengar Yoga clear to the candidate?
- Does practice enthuse the candidate?
- Is he/she participating?
- Is he/she involved?
- Does the candidate show potential for becoming an instructor?

Lunch & Rapport Building — 90 mins.

- Communication is the key to being a part of our community.
- Right kind of disposition by the assessors should build up a certain level of comfort in the candidate.

Free Time — 120 mins.

■ Demonstration — 45 mins.

Candidates demonstrate their practice through a conducted performance.

A) Conducted Performance — 45 mins.

Suggested features for conducted performance

- An assessor calls out the asanas indicating the pose, change of side.
- Include as many asanas as possible from the list.
- No inversions as separate time is allocated for those.
- No timer to be used.

Guiding principles

- Are the basics of Iyengar Yoga clear to the candidate?
- Is the presentation expressive and inspiring?
- Do you think the candidate is ready?

Assessors and candidates should note

- It is not mandatory to accomplish all the asanas called out in the Conducted performance.
- The candidate has to show an alternative that he/she will do if unable to perform a certain posture or take props wherever needed. For e.g. A person may be in Ardha Sirsasana while the rest of them will go to Sirsasana.
- The candidate should be able to express physically and/or verbally how he/she will go in the direction of Sirsasana when asked. For e.g. taking bricks for dorsal, with help of a helper to lift shoulders etc.

Day 2

■ Teaching Presentation — 35-45 mins. Per Candidate

• Candidate teaches a volunteer general batch (if available and preferably)

Assessors provide:	Candidate:
3 asanas per candidate (excluding inversions)	Teaches a class which is woven around the 3 given asanas, in any order, at any point in time.
A context: e.g. "It is summer"; "It is an evening class"; "It is one of the earlier classes the candidates are attending i.e. students aren't acquainted with many of the asanas"; "It is the end of the course i.e. students know all the asanas in the syllabus".	Decides timing of each pose.
Situation via mock student (to present a particular situation like back pain, dizziness, discomfort in a particular part etc.).	Can repeat any posture.
	Should include Sirsasana and Sarvangasana. Their variations can be added.

The assessor is expected to observe THREE MAIN ASPECTS of the candidate's teaching:

1. Demonstration of asanas to guide students.
2. Explanations while teaching.
3. How the candidate corrects and helps students during the class.

Guiding principles

- Is the candidate using body language to communicate in a way the student understands?
- Is the candidate observing the student?
- Is the candidate using eye contact?
- Is the candidate's approach inspiring the student to get involved with the subject?
- Is candidate engaging the student throughout?
- Is the candidate's thought process clear enough?
- Is the candidate using demonstration as an effective tool in teaching?
- Do you think the candidate is ready?

The assessor will score candidates on each of the three above said aspects, using the entire sequence as a benchmark, rather than individual asanas.

A sample scoring sheet for the teaching presentation can be found in the appendix. (See Appendix A.4)

Day 2 should also be used for any retakes, at the discretion of the assessors or upon a specific request by the candidate.

Level 2 Day 1

The Assessors and Candidates Practice Together — 60 mins.

Assessors arrive upon the theme with their own discretion.

This is an INFORMAL session where the assessor observes the candidates and the candidates can ask doubts, questions related to the practice session to the assessors.

Break — ~60 mins.

Candidates should fill in a feedback form. (See Appendix A.1)

Assessors should read candidates' feedback forms.

Inversions Practice — 15-30 mins.

- Since it is a practice session, candidates can design their own sequence.
- Preparatory asanas can be added.
- Variations can be included.
- Those who should not be doing inversions should practice a course suitable for their situation.
- Menstruating women can demonstrate inversions on Day 2 if possible, or show videos of her inversions practice.

Interaction Time — 60 mins.

The assessors converse with the candidates, based on the group practice and the feedback forms submitted.

Guiding principles for initial impression of the candidate

- Are the basics of Iyengar Yoga clear to the candidate?
- Does practice enthuse the candidate?
- Is he/she participating?
- Is he/she involved?
- Does the candidate show potential for becoming an instructor?

Lunch and Rapport Building — ~90 mins.

- Communication is the key to being a part of our community.
- Right kind of disposition by the assessors should build up a certain level of comfort in the candidate.

Free Time — 120 mins.

■ Demonstration — 180 mins.

Candidates demonstrate their practice through a conducted performance and individual presentation.

A) Conducted Performance — 45 mins.

Suggested features for conducted performance

- An assessor calls out the asanas indicating the pose, change of side.
- Include as many asanas as possible from the list.
- No inversions as separate time is allocated for these.
- No timer to be used.

Guiding principles

- Are the basics of Iyengar Yoga clear to the candidate?
- Is the presentation expressive and inspiring?
- Do you think the candidate is ready?

B) Individual Presentation — 10 mins. per candidate

Suggested features for conducted performance

- Includes performance of asanas/pranayama and explanation.
- Candidates can decide the subject matter, number of asanas/pranayama, the timing and sequence.

Guiding principles

- Are the basics of Iyengar yoga clear to the candidate?
- Is he/she thoughtful?
- Is the presentation expressive and inspiring?
- Do you think the candidate is ready?

A sample scoring sheet for the Individual Presentation can be found in the appendix. (See Appendix A.2)

Assessors and candidates should note

- It is not mandatory to accomplish all the asanas called out in the Conducted performance.
- The candidate has to show an alternative that he/she will do if unable to perform a certain posture or take props wherever needed. For e.g. A person may stand in Ardha Padmasana while the rest of them will go to Ardha Baddha Padmottanasana.
- The candidate should be able to express physically and/or verbally how he/she will go in the direction of Ardha Baddha Padmottanasana when asked. For e.g. going to the wall, using the support to bend half way forward.

Day 2

Assessors Class — 60 mins.

- Assessor demonstrates the fabric of sensitivity in Iyengar Yoga.
- At least 10 poses are to be woven in.

Teaching Presentation — 35-45 mins. Per Candidate

Assessors provide:	Candidate:
3 asanas per candidate (excluding inversions)	Teaches a class which is woven around the 3 given asanas, in any order, at any point in time.
A context: e.g. "It is summer"; "It is an evening class"; "It is one of the earlier classes the candidates are attending i.e. students aren't acquainted with many of the asanas"; "It is the end of the course i.e. students know all the asanas in the syllabus".	Decides timing of each pose.
	Can repeat any posture.
	Should include Sirsasana and Sarvangasana. Their variations can be added.

The assessor is expected to observe THREE MAIN ASPECTS of the candidate's teaching:

1. Demonstration of asanas to guide students.
2. Explanations while teaching.
3. How the candidate corrects and helps students during the class.

Guiding principles

- Is the candidate using body language to communicate in a way students understand?
- Is the candidate observing the student?
- Is the candidate using eye contact?
- Is the candidate's approach inspiring the student to get involved with the subject?
- Is candidate engaging the student throughout?
- Is the candidate's thought process clear enough?
- Is the candidate using demonstration as an effective tool in teaching?
- Is the candidate able to move from activity component to **sensitivity component?**
- Do you think the candidate is ready?

A sample scoring sheet for the Teaching Presentation can be found in the appendix. (See Appendix A.4)

Day 2 should also be used for any retakes, at the discretion of the assessors or upon a specific request by the candidate.

Level 3 Day 1

The Assessors and Candidates Practice Together — 60 mins.

Assessors arrive upon the theme with their own discretion.

This is an INFORMAL session where the assessor observes the candidates and the candidates can ask doubts, questions related to the practice session to the assessors.

Break — ~60 mins.

Candidates should fill in a feedback form. (See Appendix A.1)

Assessors should read candidates' feedback forms.

Candidates are given time to blind pick two situations.

They will be expected to present their logic regarding this during the situation presentation on Day 2.

Inversions Practice — 15-30 mins.

- Since it is a practice session, candidates can design their own sequence.
- Preparatory asanas can be added.
- Variations can be included.
- Those who should not be doing inversions should practice a course suitable for their situation.
- Menstruating women can demonstrate inversions on Day 2 if possible, or show videos of her inversions practice.

Interaction Time — 60 mins.

The assessors converse with the candidates, based on the group practice and the feedback forms submitted.

Guiding principles for initial impression of the candidate

- Are the basics of Iyengar Yoga clear to the candidate?
- Does practice enthuse the candidate?
- Is he/she participating?
- Is he/she involved?
- Does the candidate show potential for becoming an instructor?

Lunch and Rapport Building — ~90 mins.

- Communication is the key to being a part of our community.
- Right kind of disposition by the assessors should build up a certain level of comfort in the candidate.

Free Time — 120 mins.

■ Demonstration — 180 mins.

Candidates demonstrate their practice through a conducted performance and individual presentation.

A) Conducted Performance — 45 mins.

Suggested features for conducted performance

- An assessor calls out the asanas indicating the pose, change of side.
- Include as many asanas as possible from the list.
- No inversions as separate time is allocated for these.
- No timer to be used.

Guiding principles

- Are the basics of Iyengar Yoga clear to the candidate?
- Is the presentation expressive and inspiring?
- Do you think the candidate is ready?

B) Individual Presentation — 10 mins. per candidate

Suggested features for conducted performance

- Includes performance of asanas/pranayama and explanation
- Candidates can decide the subject matter, number of asanas/pranayama, the timing and sequence.

Guiding principles

- Are the basics of Iyengar yoga clear to the candidate?
- Is he/she thoughtful?
- Is the presentation expressive and inspiring?
- Do you think the candidate is ready?

A sample scoring sheet for the Individual Presentation can be found in the appendix. (See Appendix A.2)

Assessors and candidates should note

- It is not mandatory to accomplish all the asanas called out in the Conducted performance.
- The candidate has to show an alternative that he/she will do if unable to perform a certain posture or take props wherever needed. For e.g. For dropping back to Urdhva Dhanurasana from standing position, a person may drop the hands on the wall, instead of going on the floor.
- The candidate should be able to express physically and/or verbally how he/she will go in the direction of standing drop-back when asked. For e.g. going to the wall.

Day 2

Assessor's Class — 60 mins.

- Assessor demonstrates the fabric of perceptivity in Iyengar Yoga.
- At least 5 poses are to be woven in.

Teaching Presentation — 35-45 mins. Per Candidate

Assessors provide:	Candidate:
3 asanas per candidate (excluding inversions)	Teaches a class which is woven around the 3 given asanas, in any order, at any point in time.
A context: e.g. "It is summer"; "It is an evening class"; "It is one of the earlier classes the candidates are attending i.e. students aren't acquainted with many of the asanas"; "It is the end of the course i.e. students know all the asanas in the syllabus".	Decides timing of each pose.
	Can repeat any posture.
	Should include Sirsasana and Sarvangasana. Their variations can be added.

The assessor is expected to observe THREE MAIN ASPECTS of the candidate's teaching:

1. Demonstration of asanas to guide students.
2. Explanations while teaching.
3. How the candidate corrects and helps students during the class.

Guiding principles

- Is the candidate using body language to communicate in a way students understand?
- Is the candidate observing the student?
- Is the candidate using eye contact?
- Is the candidate's approach inspiring the student to get involved with the subject?
- Is candidate engaging the student throughout?
- Is the candidate's thought process clear enough?
- Is the candidate using demonstration as an effective tool in teaching?
- Is the candidate able to move from activity component to **sensitivity component** and from sensitivity component to **perceptivity component?**
- Do you think the candidate is ready?

A sample scoring sheet for the Teaching Presentation can be found in the appendix.
(See Appendix A.4)

Day 3

■ Situation Presentation

30 mins. Per Candidate

- This section assesses the candidate's ability to address ailments e.g. PCOD, Menorrhagia, Migraine, Meniscus tear etc.
- Two situations chosen by the candidate on Day 1 are to be presented here.
- The candidate should make the mock patient do the required asanas.
- While doing so, he/she should explain the logic behind it.

Important Note: This is a presentation of the situation. Considering the time constraint, candidate shouldn't explain the posture to the mock patient.

Guiding principles

- Is the candidate's overall application of knowledge for helping satisfactory?
- Is the candidate being logical? Assessors can ask pertinent questions regarding this.
- Is the candidate aware of safety while helping?
- Is the candidate's technical skills adequate?
- Is the candidate ready?

A sample scoring sheet for the Situation Presentation can be found in the appendix. (See Appendix A.5)

Day 3 should also be used for any retakes, at the discretion of the assessors or upon a specific request by the candidate.

Scoring

The candidates' inversions and conducted performance are not assessed with the aim of scoring but for the assessors to decide whether the candidate has a satisfactory practice and understanding of Iyengar Yoga.

If the assessors feel that the candidate does not follow the system or similar exceptional circumstances, they may discontinue the assessment for the candidate. This is referred to as the red flag in the manual.

Candidates must have a passing score on each individual component of assessment in order to pass the assessment. The scoring for all individual components of assessment at all levels is on a scale of 4:

1- Poor

2- Fair

3- Good

4- Excellent

Do not use decimal scoring to indicate the candidate's general tendency towards a scoring category. The scores for each individual component from all three assessors should be averaged independently.

If a candidate's average score lies between 4-8 on an individual component, then the candidate fails and may reappear for assessment.

If a candidate's average score lies between 9-11 on an individual component, the candidate can retake for that component at the end of the assessment.

If a candidate's average score is 12 and above on an individual component, the candidate has successfully passed the individual component.

SCORESHEETS

LEVEL 1

INVERSIONS' PRACTICE

Red flag: Discontinue assessment | Satisfactory: Continue assessment

CONDUCTED PERFORMANCE

Red flag: Discontinue assessment | Satisfactory: Continue assessment

TEACHING

Thought process

1 | 2 | 3 | 4

Demonstration

1 | 2 | 3 | 4

Instructions

1 | 2 | 3 | 4

Helping method

1 | 2 | 3 | 4

4-8: Fail
9-11: Retake (with an aim to arrive at a decisive result)
12-16: Pass

LEVEL 2

INVERSIONS' PRACTICE

Red flag: Discontinue assessment

CONDUCTED PERFORMANCE

Red flag: Discontinue assessment

INDIVIDUAL PRESENTATION

a. Verbal component

Thought process

1 | 2 | 3 | 4

Articulation

1 | 2 | 3 | 4

b. Demonstration

Action

1 | 2 | 3 | 4

Congruence with verbal presentation

1 | 2 | 3 | 4

4-8: Fail
9-11: Retake (with an aim to arrive at a decisive result)
12-16: Pass

TEACHING

Thought process

1 | 2 | 3 | 4

Demonstration

1 | 2 | 3 | 4

Instructions

1 | 2 | 3 | 4

Helping method

1 | 2 | 3 | 4

4-8: Fail
9-11: Retake (with an aim to arrive at a decisive result)
12-16: Pass

LEVEL 3

INVERSIONS' PRACTICE

Red flag: Discontinue assessment

CONDUCTED PERFORMANCE

Red flag: Discontinue assessment

INDIVIDUAL PRESENTATION

a. Verbal component

Thought process

1 | 2 | 3 | 4

Articulation

1 | 2 | 3 | 4

b. Demonstration

Action

1 | 2 | 3 | 4

Congruence with verbal presentation

1 | 2 | 3 | 4

4-8: Fail
9-11: Retake (with an aim to arrive at a decisive result)
12-16: Pass

TEACHING

Thought process

1 | 2 | 3 | 4

Demonstration

1 | 2 | 3 | 4

Instructions

1 | 2 | 3 | 4

Helping method

1 | 2 | 3 | 4

4-8: Fail
9-11: Retake (with an aim to arrive at a decisive result)
12-16: Pass

SITUATION PRESENTATION

Situation Awareness and Thought process

1 | 2 | 3 | 4

Communication skill

1 | 2 | 3 | 4

Technical skill

1 | 2 | 3 | 4

Safety

1 | 2 | 3 | 4

4-8: Fail
9-11: Retake (with an aim to arrive at a decisive result)
12-16: Pass

Section E
Feedback

The assessors should give the candidate feedback at the end of assessment. The exact nature and timing of the feedback should be decided by the respective associations and try to utilise existing feedback systems insofar as possible.

It is helpful to think of Guruji's advice when giving feedback. Guruji always said that your (the assessor's) opinion and feedback for the candidate should not be swayed by your (the assessor's) impression of the candidate's recommending teacher.

Keeping this in mind, any feedback to the candidate or the candidate's recommending teacher should be humane. It should be framed such that the assessor's observations about the candidate, the candidate's potential and any other information will help the candidate and the candidate's teacher to work forward positively.

The Association can revoke the privileges of a recommending teacher with due notice, in case of a recurring record of unsuccessful candidates.

The Association will maintain the track history of recommending teachers in the form of reports, prepared by the assessors of each assessment and may use this information to inform change in policy.

Section F
Skeleton of Certification Syllabus

Level 1

- Individual asana
- Introduction to family of asanas
- Linear sequencing
- Mental contribution

Level 2

(of asanas new in this syllabus)

- Individual asana
- Family of asanas
- Linear sequencing
- Mental contribution

(of asanas from Level 1 + Level 2)

- Understanding deeper threads of family of asanas
- Perceiving somatic sensation
- Observing connections of different body parts (adjacent)
- Breath observation
- Introduction to inter-family of asanas

Level 3

(of asanas from Level 1 + Level 2 + Level 3)

- Individual asana
- Family of asanas
- Linear sequencing
- Perceiving somatic sensation
- Observing connections of different body parts and organs (adjacent and distant)
- Understanding deeper threads of inter-family of asanas
- Maintaining the asana
- Breath observation
- Breath awareness

Level 4

- Asana and Pranayama

Level 5

- Ashtanga yoga of Patanjali as taught by B.K.S. Iyengar

Lesson Plan

Yoga teaching has four main components.

- Instructions regarding correct action – individual asana – **physical posture**.
- Instructions initiating enthusiastic involvement from the student – mental contribution – **sensitivity.**
- Adumbration by the teacher making student aware of himself/herself and to perceive subtle phenomenon in his/her own body – **perceptivity.**
- Burning zeal and ardent desire to reflect upon the information received and converting it to knowledge and wisdom - **reflectivity.**

■ Level 1

A) Individual asana

- At this level, correct and precise action is the aim.
- Though sequencing is an integral aspect of our school of yoga, to teach beginners (i.e. Level 1), the focus should be on understanding individual asanas with specific reference to the external configuration.
- The position and gross alignment of body parts are to be taught.

  e.g. in Utthita Hasta Padasana,

  - **Expected instruction -** Arms should be straight and in line with the shoulders.
  - **Not expected -** Extension or stretch of outer arms originating from the shoulder blades.

B) Family of asanas (Refer to Appendix A.6)

C) Linear sequencing

- The asanas are woven in an order whereby one develops the mobility and freedom in the entire body or certain parts of the body. This involves three processes. One, doing an asana, two, understanding an asana and lastly addressing stiffness.
- The order of the asanas within the family of asanas proceeds from the simplest to more complicated (with reference to performance).

  e.g. Uthita Trikonasana
  Uthita Parshvakonasana
  Parivritta Trikonasana
  Parivritta Parshvakonasana

- In a Level 1 class, one often starts with standing poses as most body parts are more accessible in this family as compared to others. (In exceptions, one may have better access in supine or prone positions as opposed to standing).
- Thereafter one may decide to move on to any family of asanas preceded or succeeded by inversions.
- It is only in a class that is meant for one who is sensitive, that one goes into the depth of this. Hence, a Level 2 class may start with any family of asanas based on the body part or asana he or she wishes to touch upon.

  e.g. To make student aware of pelvic opening in standing poses, one may begin with Supta Baddhakonasana or Supta padangushthasana 2

To convey fabric of alertness in standing poses, one may begin with Full arm balance, Rope 1, Urdhva Mukha Svanasana, Purvottanasana.

To convey leg sensitivity in standing poses, one may start with leg work in inversions

D) Mental contribution

- An asana is in reality more a mental endeavor than a mere physical posture. It requires definitive mental contributions. In an Iyengar yoga class, a student learns the asana in a manner whereby he/she starts confronting, objectifying and reading his/her own mind.
- In a Level 1 class, it will suffice to just make the student aware of this.

  e.g. In Ardha Chandrasana and Virabhadrasana III, make student aware that the mental involvement needed is stronger than other standing asanas.

■ Level 2

- When a student reaches this level, it is expected that he is ready to graduate from the plane of physicality to the plane of sensitivity.
- At this level, along with correct instructions for an action, the instructor should guide the student to be aware of subjective feeling surfacing during action.
- In Iyengar yoga, attention is paid not just to attaining an asana, but to maintaining it too.
- Breath should be introduced as a tool to focus the mind.

A) Understanding deeper threads in a family of Asanas

- When one moves from the plane of physicality to sensitivity, one moves from configuration of asana to constitution of asana.
- With the help of a teacher one begins to appreciate the intrinsic characteristic features within a family of asanas.
  - Perceiving somatic sensation.
    - Sensation is impression of the senses.
    - Somatic sensation - Sensations arising from
      - the skin, such as touch, pressure, cold, warmth, and pain and
      - the muscles, tendons, and joints, such as the spatial orientation i.e position of the limbs and pain.

    The ability to feel the body in an asana has to be cultivated.

    Instruction difference between Level 1 and Level 2 teacher

    A level 1 teacher necessarily conveys objective instruction whereby the student performs postures or actions.

    A level 2 teacher needs to inculcate the ability to feel in the student.

    e.g. Level 1: Lift both the arms equally up.

    Level 2: Compare the right and left arm. Feel which arm is longer and which is shorter and lift the shorter arm higher up.

    Level 1: Lift chest up.

    Level 2: Feel the lift of the chest as you inhale.

- Observing connections between adjacent parts of the body.

  The first step for union (yoga) is connection. As one learns asanas and pranayama, one learns to recognise and appreciate the connections between body parts which go unnoticed.

e.g. Opening the chest needs contribution from different parts:

- Rolling the shoulders back.
- Widening the clavicles.
- Tucking the shoulder-blades in.

When candidate becomes aware of these connections, it is easy to prime the mind towards the philosophy of yoga.

B) Breath observation

- This is a process of closely observing the breath cycle which includes inhalation, exhalation along with voluntary or involuntary retention.
- To understand the nuances of asana or pranayama, the act of observing the breath contributes a great deal.

e.g. In any supine pose, the different arm positions lead to different pathways of the breath:

- Arms horizontally across.
- Arms downwards
- Arms overhead.

In Trikonasana, if the bottom side of the trunk is shortened, breath doesn't touch that side.

C) Introduction to inter-family of asanas

- The deeper threads of family of asanas are dealt with in Level 2. As one's sensitivity is refined, the connections between seemingly distinct families of asanas appear on the horizon.

e.g. Parivritta Parshvakonasana and Ardha Matsyendrasana 1 with the paradigm of rotation of muscles of the back.

Janu Sirsasana and Supta Baddha Konasana with the paradigm of length of anterior trunk.

■ Level 3

This is the level of perceptivity along with action and sensation refinement.

A) Inter-connection of distant body parts, organs

- The skill of observation of connections between adjacent body parts was introduced in Level 2. At this level of heightened sensitivity and perceptivity, one starts unveiling connections between distant body parts and organs easily. Understanding of this network can be incorporated in the practice.

e.g. Yoga Dandasana is not just hip work to place the leg, but involves mobility in the shoulder-blade to move the trunk forward so that the leg can be fixed.

Dropped arches adversely affect the spine.

Relaxation of legs as a means to quieten the mind in Savasana.

B) Deeper threads of inter-family of asanas

- The concept of inter-family of asanas was introduced in Level 2. As one's sensitivity is refined, the connections between seemingly distinct families of asanas are perceived by the student.
- Similarities and hence contributions are perceived with refined sensitivities.
- As one becomes sensitive he/she begins to observe the behaviour of a certain body part in an asana. Augmenting this sensitivity, he/she is guided to see a similar behavioural pattern of the same body part in an asana from another family.

  e.g. Supta Padangushtasana II, Utthita Hasta Padangushtasana II and Ardha Chandrasana

  Though these appear to be different postures, they happen to be very similar postures just arranged differently with reference to the axis of the spine. A sensitive understanding of one asana in this set will contribute greatly to the performance and understanding of the other asanas in this set.
- Once this relationship is understood, one's concept of sequencing is naturally opened out and one can traverse through different families of asanas based on the aim.

C) Maintaining the asana

- This was introduced in Level 2. As one explores this, he or she draws attention to one of the foundational pillars of our system along with precision and sequencing, that is timing.

  This is vital for:

  - achieving the benefits of the asanas.
  - developing sensitivity for involvement of mind/intelligence.

  It is to be noted that:

  - For enhancing the timing in an asana, one cannot solely depend open will and physical power.
  - For breath awareness to fade in, efforts have to fade out.

D) Breath awareness

- The concept of Breath observation was dealt with in Level 2.
- **Observation of the breath is looking at it from distance as an external object whereas awareness of breath is looking at it without the distance, from within.**
- When mind- the chitta, is free from the frenzy of external world and is focused inwards, it is able to witness. When asanas are done with breath awareness mind calms down naturally.

Theory Syllabus

Level	Mandatory	Recommended	
LEVEL 1	Tree of yoga	Light on Life	It is recommended that any student reads any or all books of the 3 Iyengars at any stage of learning or any level of certification
	Art of Yoga	Yogashastra Level 1,2,3	
	Yoga in Action: Preliminary Course		
	Yoga in Action: Intermediate Course		
	Light on Yoga: Part 1: Introduction Part 2: Yogasanas (Relevant Asanas) Part 3: Pranayama (Relevant Pranayamas)		
	Light on Pranayama: Section 1 Section 2: Chapter 10 (Relevant Pranayamas)		
	Basic Guidelines for Teachers of Yoga		
LEVEL 2	Aarogya yoga	Light on Yoga	
	Yogic Manas	Light on Pranayama	
	Yoga Sutra Parichaya	Yogashastra Level 4,5	
	Gem for women		
	Tuesdays with Prashant		
	Light on Yoga: Part 1: Introduction Part 2: Yogasanas (Relevant Asanas) Part 3: Pranayama (Relevant Pranayamas)		
	Light on Pranayama: Section 1 Section 2: Chapter 10 (Relevant Pranayamas)		
	Basic Guidelines for Teachers of Yoga		
LEVEL 3	Light on Yoga	Astadala Yogamala series	
	Light on Pranayama: Section 1 Section 2: Chapter 10 (Relevant Pranayamas)	Hatha Yoga Pradipika	
	Light on yoga sutras of Patanjali: Chapter 1, 2	Bhagavad Gita Chapter I,VI	
	Light on Life		
	Alpha and Omega of Trikonasana		
	Mobility and Stability		
	Basic Guidelines for Teachers of Yoga		
LEVEL 4	Light on yoga sutras of Patanjali	Astadala Yogamala series	
	Basic Guidelines for Teachers of Yoga	Bhagavad Gita Chapter I to VI	
LEVEL 5	Core of yoga sutras of Patanjali	Various texts on yoga	

* Students can refer to any introductory textbook available in their respective countries and languages for these subjects.

Asana and Pranayama Syllabus

■ Syllabus Level 1

Asanas	Plate No.	Source
Utthishtha Sthiti — Standing Asanas		
Tadasana	1	Light on Yoga
Vrksasana	2	
Utthita Trikonasana	4, 5	
Parivrtta Trikonasana	6, 7	
Utthita Parsvakonasana	8, 9	
Parivrtta Parsvakonasana	10, 11	
Virabhadrasana I	14	
Virabhadrasana II	15	
Virabhadrasana III	17	
Ardha Chandrasana	19	
Utthita Hasta Padangusthasana I with support	120, 121	Yoga: A Gem for Women
Utthita Hasta Padangusthasana II with support	122, 123	
Parsvottanasana	26	Light on Yoga
Prasarita Padottanasana I	33, 34	
Utkatasana	42	
Padangusthasana	44	
Padahastasana	46	
Uttanasana	48	
Garudasana	56	

Upavistha Sthiti — Sitting Asanas		
Dandasana	77	Light on Yoga
Swastikasana	5	Light on Pranayama
Parvatasana in Swastikasana		Preliminary Course book
Gomukhasana	80	Light on Yoga
Siddhasana	84	
Virasana	89	
Parvatasana in Virasana	91	
Baddha Konasana	102	
Upavistha Konasana	151	

Asanas	Plate No.	Source
Paschima Pratana Sthiti — Forward Extension Asanas		
Adho Mukha Virasana	92	Light on Yoga
Janu Sirsasana	127	
Trianga Mukhaikapada Paschimottanasana	139	
Marichyasana I	144	
Parsva Upavistha Konasana	152	
Paschimottanasana (Ugrasana/Brahmacharyasana)	161	
Malasana II	322	
Parivrtta Sthiti — Lateral Extension Asanas		
Parighasana	39	Light on Yoga
Bharadvajasana I	297, 298	
Bharadvajasana II	299, 300	
Marichyasana III	303, 304	
Ardha Matsyendrasana I	311, 312	
Viparita Sthiti — Inversions		
Salamba Sirsasana I (using the wall; know how to teach with ropes, when available)	184, 185, 190	Light on Yoga
Salamba Sarvangasana I	223, 224	
Halasana	244	
Parsva Halasana	249	
Karnapidasana	246	
Parsva Karnapidasana	Similar to Parsva Halasana but legs are in Karnapidasana	
Supta Konasana	247	Light on Yoga
Eka Pada Sarvangasana	250	
Parsvaika Pada Sarvangasana	251	
Chatushpadasana	102	Yoga: A Gem for Women
Setubandha Sarvangasana (with support)	98, 99	Yoga: A Gem for Women
		Preliminary Course book
Setubandha Sarvangasana (from Sarvangasana, with bent knees, feet dropping to wall or chair)		

Asanas	Plate No.	Source
Udara Akunchana Sthiti — Asanas for Abdominal Contraction		
Paripurna Navasana	78	Light on Yoga
Ardha Navasana	79	
Urdhva Prasarita Padasana (90°)	279	
Supta Padangusthasana I	284	
Supta Padangusthasana II	287	
Purva Pratana Sthiti — Backward Extension Asanas		
Salabhasana	60	Light on Yoga
Makarasana	62	
Dhanurasana	63	
Bhujangasana I	73	
Urdhva Mukha Svanasana	74	
Ustrasana	41	
Urdhva Dhanurasana I	482	
Dwi Pada Viparita Dandasana (chair)		Intermediate Course book
Visranta Karaka Sthiti — Restorative Asanas		
Supta Swastikasana		Intermediate Course book
Supta Virasana (supported and not supported)	96	Light on Yoga
Supta Baddha Konasana	38, 39	Yoga: A Gem for Women
Savasana	592	Light on Yoga
Savasana (on the bolster with eyes covered, observing the normal in breath and out breath)		
Savasana (with eye band, normal in breath and deep out breath)		
Hasta Tolana Sthiti — Arm Balancing Asanas		
Note: It is good to be equipped with this entire section in case you are teaching youngsters. The asanas marked with an asterisk are not mandatory.		
Chaturanga Dandasana	67	Light on Yoga
Adho Mukha Svanasana	75	
Pincha Mayurasana *	357	
Adho Mukha Vrksasana *	359	
Tittibhasana (from Uttanasana) *	395	
Pranayamas		
Ujjayi, Viloma Pranayama in supine position		

Syllabus Level 2

All asanas and pranayama from Level 1 syllabus are a part of Level 2 syllabus.

Asanas	Plate No.	Source
Parivritta Ardha Chandrasana	13	Art of Yoga
		Intermediate Course book
Utthita Hasta Padangusthasana I without support	23	Light on Yoga
Utthita Hasta Padangusthasana II without support		
Utthita Hasta Padangusthasana III	124	Yoga: A Gem for Women
Prasarita Padottanasana II	35, 36	Light on Yoga
Urdhva Prasarita Ekapadasana	49	
Ardha Baddha Padmottanasana	52	
Parsva Dhanurasana	64, 65	
Lolasana	83	
Paryankasana	97	
Bhekasana	100	
Padmasana	104	
Parvatasana	107	
Tolasana	108	
Matsyasana	113	
Maha Mudra	125	
Parivrtta Janu Sirsasana	132	
Parivrtta Upavista Konasana	Similar to Parivrtta Janu Sirsasana but legs in Upavista Konasana position	
Ardha Baddha Padma Paschimottanasana	135	Light on Yoga
Parivrtta Paschimottanasana	165	
Ubhaya Padangusthasana	167	
Purvottanasana	171	
Akarna Dhanurasana	173, 175	
Salamba Sirsasana I (in the middle of the room or according to the students' needs)	184, 185, 190	
Parsva Sirsasana	202, 203	
Parivrttaikapada Sirsasana	206, 207	
Eka Pada Sirsasana	208, 209	
Parsvaika Pada Sirsasana	210	
Urdhva Padmasana in Sirsasana	211	

Asanas	Plate No.	Source
Pindasana in Sirsasana	218	Light on Yoga
Salamba Sarvangasana II	235	
Setubandha Sarvangasana	259	
Urdhva Padmasana in Sarvangasana	261	
Pindasana in Sarvangasana	269	
Jathara Parivartanasana	274, 275	
Urdhva Prasarita Padasana (all plates)	276-279	
Chakrasana	280-283	
Supta Padangusthasana I	285, 286	
Supta Padangusthasana III	Legs similar to Utthita Hasta Padangusthasana III but body is in a supine position	
Eka Hasta Bhujasana	344	Light on Yoga
Dwi Hasta Bhujasana	345	
Bhujapidasana	348	
Pincha Mayurasana (against the wall, with palms facing downward, palms facing each other and palms facing upward)	357	
Adho Mukha Vrksasana (against the wall, fingers pointing towards the wall and also palms turned outward)	359	
Kurmasana	363, 364	
Eka Pada Sirsasana	371	
Tittibhasana (from Uttanasana)	395	
Urdhva Dhanurasana	479 - 482	
Dwi Pada Viparita Dandasana	516	

Pranayamas
Note: The use of a wall for support is acceptable.
Ujjayi, Viloma pranayama in sitting position
Ujjayi with a short spell of Kumbhaka
Anuloma pranayama without retention of breath
Pratiloma pranayama without retention of breath
Bhramari
Sitali
Sitkari

■ Syllabus Level 3

All asanas and pranayama from Level 1 and Level 2 are a part of Level 3 syllabus.

Asanas	Plate No.	Source
Vatayanasana	58	Light on Yoga
Nakrasana	68 - 71	
Sanmukhi Mudra	105, 106	Light on Pranayama
Simhasana I	109	Light on Yoga
Simhasana II	110	
Kukkutasana	115	
Garbha Pindasana	116	
Baddha Padmasana	118	
Yoga Mudrasana	120	
Krounchasana	141, 142	
Marichyasana II	146	
Urdhva Mukha Paschimottanasana I	168	
Urdhva Mukha Paschimottanasana II	170	
Urdhva Dandasana	188	
Salamba Sirsasana II	192	
Salamba Sirsasana III	194, 195	
Parshva Urdhva Padmasana in Sirsasana	213 - 216	
Niralamba Sarvangasana I	236	
Niralamba Sarvangasana II	237	
Eka Pada Setu Bandha Sarvangasana	260	
Parshva Pindasana in Sarvangasana	270, 271	
Anantasana	290	
Uttana Padasana	292	
Marichyasana IV	305	
Malasana I	321	
Pasasana	328, 329	
Ardha Matsyendrasana II	330, 331	
Ardha Matsyendrasana III	332, 333	
Astavakrasana	342, 343	
Mayurasana	354	
Adho Mukha Vrksasana (with palms back, as in Mayurasana, but apart and at a distance of one and a half feet from the wall)	359	
Supta Kurmasana	368	

Asanas	Plate No.	Source
Bhairavasana	375	Light on Yoga
Yoganidrasana	391	
Vasistasana	398	
Bakasana	410	
Parsva Bakasana	412	
Dwi Pada Koundinyasana	438	
Eka Pada Koundinyasana I	441	
Eka Pada Bakasana I	446, 447	
Eka Pada Bakasana II	451, 452	
Yogadandasana	456	
Mulabandhasana	462, 463	
Vamadevasana II	466	
Urdhva Dhanurasana I (from Tadasana)	483-486	
Urdhva Dhanurasana II	483 - 487	
Eka Pada Urdhva Dhanurasana	501, 502	
Kapotasana	507, 512	
Laghu Vajrasana	513	
Dwi Pada Viparita Dandasana (from Sirsasana)	516, 517 - 520	
Eka Pada Viparita Dandasana I	521	
Eka Pada Rajakapotasana I	542	
Note: Classically, as shown in LOY, some arm balancing asanas have to be attempted from Sirsasana. However, they can also be attempted from Tadasana/Uttanasana.		

Pranayamas
Ujjayi with Antara Kumbhaka (according to each one's individual capacity)
Bhastrika, Kapalbhati
Anuloma pranayama with retention of breath
Pratiloma pranayama with retention of breath

Syllabus Level 4

All asanas and pranayama from Level 1, Level 2 and Level 3 are a part of Level 4 syllabus.

Asanas	Plate No.	Source
Goraksasana	117	Light on Yoga
Supta Vajrasana	124	
Baddha Hasta Sirsana	198	
Mukta Hasta Sirsasana	200, 201	
Parsva Sarvangasana	254, 255	
Parsva Urdhva Padmasana in Sarvangasana	262 - 265	
Uttana Padma Mayurasana	267	
Setu Bandhasana	296	
Paripurna Matsyendrasana	336, 339	
Padma Mayurasana	355	
Hamsasana	356	
Sayanasana	358	
Skandasana	372	
Buddhasana	373	
Kapilasana	374	
Kala Bhairavasana	378	
Chakorasana	379, 380	
Durvasasana	383	
Ruchikasana	384, 385	
Viranchyasana I	386, 387	
Viranchyasana II	388	
Dwi Pada Sirsasana	393, 394	
Tittibhasana (From Dwi Pada Sirsasana)	395	
Kasyapasana	399, 400	
Visvamitrasana	403	
Urdhva Kukkutasana	417 - 419	
Parsva Kukkutasana	424, 425	
Galavasana	427, 428	
Eka Pada Galavasana	431, 433	
Eka Pada Koundinyasana II	442, 443	
Supta Bhekasana	458	
Vamadevasana I	465	
Kandasana	470, 471	

Asanas	Plate No.	Source
Hanumanasana	475, 476	Light on Yoga
Samakonasana	477	
Supta Trivikramasana	478	
Viparita Chakrasana in Urdhva Dhanurasana	488 - 499	
Eka Pada Viparita Dandasana II	523	
Chakra Bandhasana	524	
Mandalasana	525 - 535	
Vrschikasana I	536, 537	
Vrschikasana II	538	
Valakhilyasana	544	
Eka Pada Rajapkapotasana II, III, IV	545, 546, 547	
Bhujangasana II	550	
Rajakapotasana	551	
Padangustha Dhanurasana	555	
Gherandasana I	561 - 563	
Gherandasana II	564 - 566	
Kapinjalasana	567	
Sirsa Padasana	570	
Ganda Bherundasana	580, 581	
Viparita Salabhasana	584	
Tiriang Mukhottanasana	586	
Natarajasana	590, 591	

Pranayamas
Surya Bhedana
Chandra Bhedana
Nadi Sodhana

Notes

Note 1

Complicated and difficult asanas

"Self-exploration group of asanas"

We are aware that Light on Yoga is a comprehensive and complete book on Yoga. Though it has everything a student needs, most of the time our focus is on the instructions about the asanas only. If one makes a serious effort to study those initial chapters, it is certain that the treasure of Ashtanga Yoga will be unveiled.

The only hitch in this study tour is that those gems are hidden. They are not evident.

They cannot be formally taught or instructed with a linear academic plan.

They are to be learnt.

We always categorise asanas in our minds based on our ability to attain them. So, some asanas become simple and some become difficult. We postpone the difficult asanas for later and hence call them "advanced asanas".

For e.g:

Sayanasana

Sirsa Padasana

Ganda Bherundasana

Viparita Shalabhasana

Valakhilyasana

Paripurna Matsyendrasana

Kandasana

Durvasasana

The statement made earlier, on the gems of Ashtanga yoga - "They are to be learnt" enlightens us about this group of asanas.

These asanas are to be learnt; they cannot be taught.

Light on Yoga undoubtedly provides detailed instructions regarding them. But we should accept that it is difficult for any teacher to teach them. The reasons behind this difficulty are discussed below.

- To teach this group of asanas, the teacher needs to be proficient in performing and demonstrating them.
- He or she should be well conversant with the intricacies and should be able to articulate these intricacies.
- He or she should be capable of dealing with any complications that may arise.

Does that mean that these asanas are "out of syllabus"? Are they henceforth omitted from Iyengar Yoga?

No! Absolutely not.

They are a part of the Iyengar Yoga curriculum. But, it is expected that the students take a greater responsibility.

This group of asanas have hence been labelled as "Self-exploration group of asanas."

If we consider their positional status, they are included in the later level of the new syllabus and not before that. This is done simply to ensure that a teacher who has completed his/her journey till this level will have the maturity and understanding of all aspects of Iyengar Yoga.

He or she is expected to have the realisation that the instructions provided in Light on Yoga are really the beacon; one needs to take their help and move forward on his/her own. Simply following the instructions without any contemplation is not going to contribute much.

Self-exploration and self-study along with relentless practice are the keys to these physically demanding intricate poses.

One who is comfortable with these poses can help others only after their consent and a detailed assessment of their physical abilities. No teacher is entitled to stretch a student's physical limits with force.

Please keep in mind that tenderness with gentle persuasion is pivotal in learning these poses.

■ Note 2

Teachers, Mentors and TTCs

There is a deep-rooted myth that, "A teacher is made."

Extrapolation of this, states, "Any student can be trained to become a teacher."

Is it true?

Response to this question can be diverse, ranging from definitely yes to probably to maybe not.

There is no correct answer as the contextual details vary from place to place.

Instead of getting entangled in the cobweb of answers, let us focus on the core thought and paraphrase the question, "Is the desire to teach somebody a voluntary wish?"

The prima facie answer appears to be straight and simple - "Yes, it is a voluntary wish." But when delved deeper, other subtle facets of this query are apparent and the initial response sounds naïve.

On a metaphorical level, as a seed sprouts and a bud blooms, a student ripens and feels the necessity from within to share knowledge. Neither anybody commands/instructs to do so nor is it a conscious decision, it is just a natural progression.

This 'urge to share' is the first lamp-post on the journey to become a teacher.

The process of learning transforms a student into a teacher. It is a gentle and gradual internal evolution. No single moment in this voyage can be pinpointed as, "the moment of transformation".

Maharshi Patanjali's words, "*jatyantara parinama*"- process of evolution from one species to another, clearly defines this transformation.

Needless to say, teaching can never be a profession that one can be trained in or a skill-set that one can acquire. Neither is teaching an obligation.

Guruji said, "*Teaching is commitment, it is a responsibility, a process of paying forwards with gratitude, the information, knowledge and wisdom you have gained from your guru and the subject of Yoga."*

In this light, let us look at history of teachers in Iyengar Yoga.

Guruji, in 1960s, observed 'the urge to share knowledge' in some of his students. He asked them to take the subject to their countries. They were the 'first batch of Iyengar Yoga teachers'.

Later on, some students, sought permission to teach. Guruji granted it as they were directly trained under him for many years. He was confident of their abilities to spread the message of yoga in its purest form.

As time travelled, interest in Yoga grew by leaps and bounds. Students from all corners of the world started coming in. Need for properly trained teachers was on a steep rise.

Considering the time and communication constraints, Guruji advised his senior students and the then teachers to assess who has the ability and desire to teach.

The assessment process came in to existence at that time. To help the assessors, Guruji designed and documented a formal framework. Over a period of time, as and when needed, Guruji mended this framework and over time, formulated a detailed 'teachers training and assessment process.' This was a part of the 'Pune Constitution'.

Our new assessment process has its roots in that document.

Nowadays interest in 'becoming a Yoga teacher' seems to be in vogue. Institute is flooded with such queries. The following questions arise:

Why are so many people interested in teaching Yoga rather than studying the subject?

Why are they in such a hurry to establish themselves as a "Yoga Teachers"?

Are they interested mainly in the phenomenal benefits of Yoga, like good health, decent living, respect in the society, opportunities to travel around the globe?

Or, is there is an ardent zeal to go on the path of self-realisation which is the ultimate goal of Yoga?

As expected, answers are not simple.

When we dig deeper, ethico-moral confusions start surfacing. To clear them up, we need to examine the basic premise.

What is the intent, context and focus behind this wish to become a Yoga teacher?

Maharshi Patanjali in the fourth chapter of Yoga Sutra mentions -

"*hetu, phala, aashraya* and *aalambana*" – intention, fruit of action, context and foundation stones. He instructs us to examine these hidden aspects of any action.

In this light, if we examine the wish to become a Yoga teacher, the first and foremost genuine query is, how can a person, prior to learning the subject, know beforehand, that he or she wants to teach it.

Is it not necessary to check whether he or she is even interested in it, leave alone being equipped to do so? Or do the material benefits adulterate the intention?

Guruji stated categorically, *"One who has not learnt the subject thoroughly cannot teach. If one attempts to do so, he or she is going to harm; harm the society, the subject and oneself".*

His words guide us like a lighthouse.

The only debatable point in Guruji's above said statement is, how to quantify the word 'thoroughly'?

Guruji's advice is that 6 years is a fair time in which one can learn the skills to become a teacher in Yoga and this has stood the test of time.

Let us know his thoughts on this process of becoming a teacher and see how he did it.

Guruji learnt under his guru for 2 years and was sent to Pune to teach. When he started teaching, he had twofold responsibilities, firstly a practitioner and secondly 'a forced teacher.'

He did justice to both of them. In retrospect, it seems to be a blessing in disguise!

Based on his own practice, Guruji could define and design various levels, configure different syllabi according to the need on this journey and the necessity to pen down meticulous instructions. All these things are reflected in his first masterpiece - "Light on Yoga."

Now the times have changed and so have the communication modalities. Along with this, we have Guruji's work as a reference point.

In the new system, neither do we intend to suggest any change in the internal process of learning, nor do we hint that sincere, ardent practice with burning zeal is not necessary. We do not deviate from any of Guruji's teachings. We are just trying to ease the system by taking advantage of what we have.

Be assured, proposal for new assessment system is to make the learning and teaching of Yoga contemporary, more objective and simpler; but it has its roots in Guruji's teachings and Pune Constitution.
In Iyengar Yoga, the phrase "TTC- Teachers Training Course" has widespread popularity. Not that everybody likes or adores it, but that the concept is popular is a reality.

Let us concentrate on the present picture of TTC.

Refinement in skillset to equip the 'would be teacher' is the 'stated' purpose of TTC.

With this background:

- Each teacher trainer has to pose this **moral** question - Is the purpose fulfilled?

- Each teacher trainee has to pose this **logical** question - Is the purpose fulfilled?

Are the sensitivities and intricacies in Guruji's teachings shared and handed over to the new generation of teachers? Or, has TTC become a set model, where there is a collection of people who are handed over a manual on what instructions to give for each asana so that they may clear the assessment? Has it become an event which generates immense stress? Is it the pivotal thing which can make or break somebody's career as an Iyengar Yoga teacher?

The first response of denial would be in the lines of - "The picture is unrealistic; over inflated and biased."

Everybody, when asked personally, will come up with a "correct" answer.

"Others may be doing it but not me", is the feedback we received time and again. Unfortunately, whispers speak a different language.

Are we shunning reality?

We all need to undergo scrutiny of our own conscience and honestly address these concerns

We know 'would be teachers' are a 'handle with care' entity. Once upon a time we all were in those shoes.

Budding teachers are eager and anxious, enthusiastic and in awe, sharp and tentative, simultaneously. It is a teacher's or a mentor's responsibility to generate a cosy and caring atmosphere wherein the newcomers can bloom and feel at home.

TTC has to be a gentle, cordial and confidence building exercise which infuses 'would be teachers' with love and joy for our system.

Precision, timing and sequencing are not only the pillars for asanas, they are catalysts for refinement in the process of understanding Yoga.

It may seem to be a laborious task for somebody, for others, it may just be a fine tuning in thought.

Naturally, a predefined structural framework for TTC is not an appropriate concept.

To escalate TTC from a mere 'instruction and symposium of addition of points', the trainer has to graduate to a level of mentor.

Who is a mentor?

Oxford dictionary states, "mentor is an experienced person in an organisation or institution who trains and advises new employees or students."

The word is coined after Mentor, adviser of Telemachus in Odyssey.

In yogic context, we can attribute greater meaning to it.

The one who teaches is a teacher, one who guides is a mentor and the one who takes to the destination is a Guru.

For a Yoga sadhaka, mentor is a senior adviser who has walked the path, who knows the nuances and intricacies of the journey, who will make the sadhaka aware of them and will help one to negotiate with them.

If one happens to get trapped and slips from sadhana path, mentor will be there for rescue and support.

Metaphorically, Guru shows the light, mentor navigates, teacher trains and student (sadhaka) undertakes the journey.

Mentor is a bridge between the Guru and a teacher. But it is not a hierarchical rung. It is not a linear process where one first becomes a teacher, then a mentor and finally a guru. Mentorship has a specific responsibility. Responsibility of extending a helping hand, accompanying sadhaka on the path of sadhana and seeing him/her reach the destination. Mentor is a senior colleague, advisor and a friend par excellence at the same time.

The role of a teacher, mentor and guru may overlap or may remain distinct as per the need of the situation. If a sadhaka is fortunate, he/she may confront a person who is embodiment of all three and who has discrimination (viveka) to adopt a role according to the need.

Mentor never discourages anybody. Teacher, in view of improvement, may be harsh and strict regarding the instructions delivered. He/she may admonish somebody to get best out of him/her. Mentor does not. He/she has to have the grasp of reality which is far bigger than the manifested moment. He/she understands and comprehends the reality-picture to its minutest detail, but he/she cannot demoralise or discourage anybody. Mentor has to be prepared with the solution. At times, Guru may not be available, accessible for him/her or the problem may be mundane; in such a situation mentor is the real confident and alliance of sadhaka in the path of sadhana.

Mentor contributes to the value system of sadhaka and helps him/her, become a good human being.

Maharshi Patanjali, while stating the fruits of yoga-sadhana or *yoganganushthana*, categorically states the concepts of *ashudhhikshaya* (elimination of impurities) and *vivekakhyati* (dawn of discrimination). These are essential to reach that pinnacle of being a mentor. Mentor is a friend, philosopher and guide for a yoga-sadhaka.

Note 3

Statement by RIMYI in November, 2019

At RIMYI, the practice of yoga is available to everyone, free of judgement or prejudice, so we want to assure everyone that we do not discriminate against homosexuals. We consider it our spiritual duty to unequivocally welcome and accept each and every person in pursuit of spiritual development and well-being.

We certainly do not, in any way consider homosexuality as wrong, unnatural or un-yogic.

RIMYI considers sexual orientation to be a deeply personal, natural form of universal diversity and not a disease or illness requiring a cure. Therefore, we would never prescribe any practice of asanas to 'cure' homosexuality.

FAQs

The first draft of this manual was presented to a group of representatives from all Iyengar Associations for their feedback in December 2019 in Pune. After incorporating salient points and addressing concerns raised in the December meeting, RIMYI posted a second draft online for all members of the Iyengar community to read and send feedback. More than five hundred members; some students, some teachers-in-training, some teachers, some officeholders, responded with great enthusiasm.

The reader will find for his/her reference the most commonly asked questions about the changes outlined in this manual.

1. **Why does there have to be an overhaul of the system that has been functioning so well?**

   To understand why to overhaul the system, we need to have a look at why the system came into existence. For that let us start from the beginning.

   The story of Iyengar Yoga began when a young boy named Sundararaja was sent to Pune by his guru Sri T. Krishnamacharya. At that time, yoga was confined to the sections of hermits and sages. The one with an ardent desire to learn the subject was expected to go through rigorous scrutiny and only thereafter was initiation to yoga permissible. Naturally there were very few who could make it to their destination. Guruji abolished these biased filters and opened the doors of yoga to common man.

   For this, a structural framework was necessary, and it evolved over a period of time.

   We have to keep in mind the global context of yoga in that age.

   The Western world faintly knew it is an Indian philosophical system, but also thought of it as a mystical subject.

   Yoga was a sacred subject, and hence there were no resources available. From those meagre resources, Guruji formulated a well defined system which could produce predictable results.

   A subjective and philosophical subject, with Guruji's efforts, slowly and steadily started entering the arena of science.

   As his students grew and they started teaching yoga, he brought forth a well conceived syllabus for learning this subject. This has made it possible for people across the globe to access his teachings in his absentia. Thus the teachings of Guruji could be carried out precisely and this way he paid forward the grace of his guru.

   As Iyengar yoga started becoming popular, more and more people wanted to learn it. By giving certificates, B.K.S Iyengar took responsibility for his student's knowledge. His framework of syllabus and method of teaching was so clear that his teachings could go to people in his absentia via his students. This was also the reason why he did not issue certificates for his students in Pune, because he was present.

   Gradually B.K.S Iyengar gave authority to his senior students in the West to decide who is qualified to promote the art, science and philosophy of Yoga according to his teachings and philosophy.

   The first certificates were given in 1968. He set up a system in the late 1970s and in 1980s, he established the current assessment system.

   B.K.S Iyengar started teaching at a time when the only mode of learning was when the guru and shishya met face to face.

   Some of his students communicated with him through letters and at that time, letters from Europe to India took 21 days to reach.

When that improved, there was still no internet, no Youtube videos, no recordings of classes, no Light on Yoga and no regular workshops, no intensives on yoga.

So detailed precise instructions, at times in immaculate detail was the necessity of the age. Addressal to every minute detail was of immense value as Guruji was not available directly!

The last decade of the 20th century and the 21st century has seen a revolution. Communication between the two ends of the world are at the hit of a button.

Teachers and students can communicate via various platforms. Answers to questions are a few seconds or a few clicks away. Information is rampant. Recordings are innumerable.

"In the 50s and 60s, I worked hard to popularise yoga; now I must work to correct the distortions that have appeared since that popularisation. On television and especially in physical fitness classes, yoga is being presented, not in its true form, but in a Westernised version that is more like any other form of physical exercise."
- B.K.S Iyengar, 1977 Yoga Journal

If we struggle to hold on to the past, they will end up becoming mere rituals and anything done ritualistically without a subjective involvement will lead to stagnation.

"Stagnation is death."
-B.K.S Iyengar

"This generation of students is very lucky because you have with you, my 80 years of wisdom"
-B.K.S Iyengar, 2014

So, a strictly defined rigid system was a "MUST" at that time, but making the system more "user-friendly" is the need of the present era.

Now that yoga is hugely popular, the responsibilities are different.

Even though we are at an advantage because information and knowledge are available, we may falter if we stop at the objective elements.

Objective components + Subjective components = Complete experience.

2. In this day and age, are teachers redundant?

Though information (whether in books or internet) is a huge advantage in learning, asana and pranayama are best learnt under the watchful eye of a teacher because of the direct contact that is established between the teacher and student. The art of adjustment is inevitable in learning any art form involving the body. Therefore, there is no substitute for a good teacher whatsoever.

3. Is RIMYI trying to "force" changes?

No. Based on the ideas and teachings of Guruji, RIMYI is outlaying a system that is contemporary and simpler.

4. What is the core of the new system?

The core of the new system remains the same. It is about understanding Yoga through Guruji's teachings. Simplicity is the only added feature.

5. Is RIMYI taking away the autonomy of Associations?

No.

6. How do you envision this transition to take place?

Basically this transition must not be perceived as a calamity. It is an attempt to rejuvenate Iyengar Yoga by making it simpler and user-friendly.

We will need a soft approach for this transition. Each Association is requested to adopt a mechanism that they deem fit to enable this transition in their region. Be assured that the transition will not be a hasty process.

7. What will be the role of our senior teachers in this transition?

Senior teachers are "SENIORS" in our system. Their practice, maturity and wisdom is and will never be questioned. Their role will remain the same - to teach, to impart experience and knowledge. Now they have an added responsibility to ease this process of transition.

8. The world recognises Iyengar Yoga for its high standards. How will this change affect the existing standards?

High standards are achieved only with appropriate changes and adjustments introduced whenever necessary.

Be assured, this change will add to the standards of Iyengar Yoga in this day and age.

The assessors will continue to maintain a vigilant approach that will keep in mind the safety of the student community. The only change is it will happen in a simpler way.

9. Forcing so many asanas within a level goes against the safety that our system stood for. Do we no longer value safety in our method?

Anything done with force is non-sustainable. None of Guruji's teachings have ever endorsed use of force. His instructions guide us with such meticulous details that make the use of force alien. Force implies doing something against somebody's desire. Do we ever do that?

The teacher and the mentor or the recommending teacher has to decide who can do what and how. This demands discrimination. The reduction in number of certification levels is merely to make the system simpler and create more freedom in learning.

10. This new system takes away from the goals and structure that we are used to. Having different levels meant we could strive to attain that level. What are we to do now?

Motivation comes from within. By taking down the number of levels, if you are feeling demotivated, you have to question yourself - "Why am I doing this?"

If it is only an external impetus that makes us do things, how long is it going to last? We can never be certain of the things around us. The world around us is ever-changing.

11. To me it is unclear whether teachers, who are currently certified will automatically obtain the corresponding level certification according to the new levels or need to go through an assessment anew?

No certified Iyengar Yoga teacher in good standing needs to undergo any assessment to obtain the equivalent level of certification. The table mentioning the comparison is only for reference for:

- upgradation in future
- knowing what syllabus you are expected to be well versed with according to the new system.
- mentoring and assessing in the future.

It does not in any sense refute or discard the previous system or the teachers certified in it. NO WAY!

Yoga is not like any gadget wherein when a new version is introduced, the earlier one becomes obsolete.

Yoga is the process of upgrading yourself.

12. Is my certificate going to be replaced?

No. Your current certificate remains valid.

13. How will you ensure that one is well-versed in the syllabus that he is not assessed for?

It is not feasible and not fair to undergo a separate assessment process for existing certified teachers. Each Association can outline if they want to set up a standard way for the teachers to be well-versed with the new syllabus. RIMYI recommends contacting your senior teachers/trainers/mentors and tapping on available resources by B.K.S Iyengar, Geeta Iyengar and Prashant Iyengar as options.

14. How will this change affect our students?

The students will only benefit from this change as their horizons will be opened out.

15. Guruji said do not teach what you cannot practice. Now it appears that one can teach even if one cannot do a certain pose. How can you bring such a radical change?

In this question, we feel sorry to say that the essence of Guruji's statement is being ignored.

Practice or knowledge of asanas has three components:

- Thorough understanding
- Translation of that understanding into actions in the asanas
- Accurate demonstration.

Guruji was adept at all three.

We should strive for at least 2 of these 3 qualities to be a teacher.

For e.g. an 80 year old senior teacher in our system will not be able to do Paschimottanasana as per Light on Yoga or as he did in his youth.

However would it be right to say this person hence should not teach at all?

Second consideration is about ethicality. In teaching yoga, one is answerable to oneself. Consider a teacher who has never accomplished Adho Mukha Vrkshasana. He will simply not have the raw material to teach it. He has to ask the question to himself and seek an honest answer.

However, if the teacher knows Adho Mukha Vrkshasana (knows by experience) and there are youngsters in a class, the teacher now has the freedom to separate these youngsters in the same class and make them do Adho Mukha Vrkshasana.

Rather than quoting Guruji verbatim, we should make an attempt to decipher the philosophy in his words.

16. Is it not a bad idea to discard the steps that Guruji gave in learning as asana?

According to the old system, there would be a few countries where there is no one qualified to teach Urdhva Dhanurasana classically. While any asana taught in a wrong manner is harmful, not being able to teach Urdhva Danurasana at all, deprives an entire community from being introduced to that asana. Here the question of individual ethicality comes in. Should I teach or should I not?

We are all aware of the fact that, to learn any asana safely, resources are available. (Still, a teacher is the best option).

We should see what B.K.S Iyengar, Geeta Iyengar and Prashant Iyengar have said about them.

17. Why have you changed the pranayama syllabus? How can I approach this with my mentor?

The pranayama syllabus has also been changed with the same intent - to make things simpler.

The responsibility is on the teacher/trainer/mentor to guide the student in the art of learning pranayama using the book Light on pranayama as a base.

18. Why is there little focus on pranayama?

"Asana is a perceptual subject. Pranayama is a conceptual subject."
-B.K.S Iyengar

The learnings in Pranayama have not been lessened. All the types of Pranayama that B.K.S Iyengar has taught is a part of our syllabus. However assessment of Pranayama is not possible.

Pranayama is a sadhana of and for sensitivity. The routine proverb, "'You can lead a horse to water but you can't make him drink" holds true with Pranayama.

It is the teacher/trainer/mentor's responsibility to ensure that the student is well versed with the Pranayama syllabus of his/her level.

19. The syllabus feels like you want to encourage only young, fit people to become teachers. Is that the case?

No.

The pursuit of asanas has different flavours in different phases of life. A youngster likes to be challenged and hence the physically demanding poses appeal to him. Later on, the interest moves from the physical plane to the plane of sensation and perception. A teacher should be equipped with the knowledge to teach one and all - young, old, stiff, flexible.

20. Why can't we have a standalone therapeutics programme that is open for all CIYTs?

B.K.S Iyengar applied his knowledge of asanas and pranayama to help people with ailments. The starting point for therapeutic application of asanas and pranayama is understanding the asanas and pranayama.If one learns the basics of asana and pranayama, its application can be taught.

21. Can you please offer a short clarification of the key words under eligibility section - zeal and ardent?

These two words, zeal and ardent, have interesting origins.

Zeal, initially was related to “jealousy” and ardent has its root in arduous, which in turn is from the word “orthos”-straight, upright.

Arduous got its metaphorical connection, difficult and laborious, later.

So how do jealousy, difficult and laborious contribute to a subject like yoga?

Jealousy, in modern era, considered “not so correct” has a unique quality.

It ignites the fire, to be better than... within. This makes one work hard and incessantly.

Considering this context, jealousy is related to burning desire within to be better.

In yogic sadhana comparison has to be with oneself. Am I better than yesterday? Is my sadhana getting texturally rich every day?

If these things are observed meticulously, distraction from the path of sadhana is unlikely.

- Ardent, as stated above, has three connections.
- Straight - without distraction,
- Upright - observing yamas and niyamas in Ashtanga yoga,
- Difficult, laborious - these narrate the yogic sadhana in nutshell.

So, ‘ardent’ in yogic perspective can be defined as a difficult and laborious sadhana done while observing yamas and niyamas with complete concentration and focus on the goal to be achieved.

When we add zeal to this definition, it brings in the mental facet of sadhana, which is, observation with incessant assessment of the self.

In this way, zeal and ardent are two important pillars of yogic sadhana. One states the mental facet while the other denotes the physical element.

22. Why is visit to RIMYI mandatory? It is impossible to leave my kids and work for a month.

Considering family issues, work and financial constraints, visit to RIMYI is no longer mandatory. Since the certificates will be issued by RIMYI, this condition will remain for mentors and assessors for certain levels.

Regarding the financial constraints to visit RIMYI, you can to write to your Association. The Association and RIMYI can discuss if this can be eased in any way.

23. Visit to RIMYI must be made mandatory for all levels of certification. Why don’t you add this clause for Level 1 also?

While RIMYI welcomes with open arms whoever wishes to visit and learn at the mother institute, it acknowledges that some people will be unable to undertake a visit to RIMYI because of various constraints. We do not want to deprive such people the chance to proceed in the path of certification.

On mentoring

24. It is not easy or financially viable to find a mentor living in rural areas or small countries. Who can mentor me in such situations?

This is a valid concern. In such situations, please write to your Iyengar Yoga Association. They will guide you in this matter. If there is no Iyengar Yoga Association in your country, write directly to RIMYI.

25. Are mentors and recommending teachers one and the same?

Not necessary, but can be. Mentor is a close associate in your path to yoga. He/she knows you, your situation, history, strengths, weaknesses, fears and delights. When he/she sends you to an assessment, he/she knows what he/she is putting you through. It is beneficial to have a mentor.

Compared to this, a recommending teacher has limited association with the student. He/she gauges you on the basis of the interactions happened. He/she may not be aware of you as a person, as a yoga sadhaka.

A recommending teacher does not translate into a mentor, unless he commits himself to the task of mentorship.

26. What should I, as a student expect from my mentor and vice versa?

Mentor is your close confidante on the yogic path.

"Maitri karuna mudita upeksanam sukha duhkha punya apunya visayanam bhavanatah cittaprasadanam" - Through cultivation of friendliness, compassion, joy and indifference to pleasure and pain, virtue and vice respectively, the consciousness becomes favourably disposed, serene and benevolent. ~ Light on Yoga Sutras of Patanjali I.33

Mentor has concern, compassion, joy and involvement in your evolution.

If you are under the care of a mentor, you can be rest assured that the mentor has walked the path and is going to walk the path with you.

What a mentor should expect from a student, this question like this will not arise in the mind of the mentor. Don't worry.

27. How is the new system not a deviation from the old system? Are we casting off B.K.S Iyengar's contributions?

Can we? The new system is simpler in the context of present generation.

You and posterity will always have access to the old syllabus.

This is like refuting the contribution of one's father in his or her existence.

Old system is not trashed. No way! You can and should refer to it.

28. The sequential method of introducing asanas is lost. Why does the syllabus not refer to different methods of approaching an asana, the use of props?

Let us consider an example. When a daughter enters into a relationship, is the daughter lost? No! She has adopted a new role. She has transformed from one phase to another.

The sequential method is available in the old syllabus and the teachers should refer to it.

Props remain an integral part of our school. However, many Iyengar Yoga teachers do not have the luxury of being equipped with props. Some teachers teach outdoors, where even a wall is not available. Therefore props cannot be made a mandatory tool.

As a teacher, it is your foremost responsibility to give what you have received. Therefore the different methods of approaching an asana must be taught by the teacher.

29. I have been cast away in a box with the juniors. I am devastated. How can you undermine all my time, efforts and money to reach where I am today like this?

Are juniors so scary? Different categorisation does not have the intent to demean anybody.

Please be assured that THIS IS NOT A DEMOTION IN ANY SENSE WHATSOEVER.

This new system is outlined for assessments that will happen hereafter. Each certified teacher will continue his/her functionalities and responsibilities as he/she did until this change was made. All your existing certificates are valid for as long as you are alive. Nobody can take away your knowledge, maturity and goodwill that you have earned and they are bound to radiate now and in the future.

On assessments

30. As an assessor, I don't know how I can practice or establish a rapport with a candidate that I am assessing. Isn't there a conflict there?

Assessment is a process of welcoming. Assessee has shown interest by appearing for the assessment. It is the duty of the assessor to greet the student, make him/her feel comfortable and then gently check his/her preparations. In a subject like yoga, assessment can never be 100% objective. It necessarily involves emotions. In India, one who shares food, sorrows and joy is considered a family member.

In this context, assessor is the elderly person in our family who has seen life. When he/she extends their good wishes, how is the newcomer (assessee) going to feel? Assessor has the capacity to interact, practice and assess simultaneously. If you think deeper, interaction and practice are an integral part of assessment.

If the result doesn't suit the candidate, and you have built a rapport with the candidate, the candidate is not going to be demoralised. He will instead be inspired to do better.

31. As an assessor I don't know how I would practice with the candidates. The mental processes of assessing and practicing are, in my experience, very different. How will this work?

Yoga is unification, not segregation. A performer is a silent observer. While Guruji was demonstrating in a class, he was doing and at the same time teaching, observing and assessing his students.

Practising together is a means to unravel together some concepts of asanas. It can be a good mode of knowledge as there are different minds working together.

Self-practice is another type of practice where one can be completely inward, oblivious to the world outside.

As an assessor, your maturity by now should be of a level where this role can be easily played.

32. There is a 60 minute practice, then a long interaction. What happened to *abhyasa* and *vairagya*?

It is a misconstrued notion that *abhyasa*, practice and doing the asanas all correspond to the same thing.

Patanjali mentions *abhyasa* as an effort to restrain the fluctuations of consciousness. The attributes of *abhyasa* are:

- Long duration
- Uninterruptedly
- With reverence.

With the right understanding of yoga, practice of asanas can be *abhyasa* and *vairagya*, independently and simultaneously too.

33. Shouldn't the candidate already know about the 'fabric of Iyengar yoga'. As an assessor what should I talk about it?

Because you have been on the path for a longer duration of time, you have your pearls of wisdom to share. Your sensitive practice not only contributes to better insights in a posture, they also add to the value of understanding that can throw light on hidden gems.

You are going to teach a class, where the fabric would be seamlessly demonstrated.

34. Why can't I take notes during assessment?

For candidates who exude confidence, this doesn't matter. For the others, it can be an intimidating experience. The candidate's major focus may get shifted to what is being written in the notes, rather than being involved with what he is doing.

For the benefit of the larger audience, we feel the assessors will be able to conduct an assessment successfully without notes. Still, if you feel the need, you can make notes after the candidate's presentation is over.

35. Why are the 'objective' methods of scoring each pose being replaced with this 'subjective' approach of scoring as a whole?

As Guruji stated, yoga is not only a subjective, but emotional too. Objective assessment tends to neglect this aspect. Here we have to understand we are not discarding objective framework. The dryness and aridity in an assessment will definitely be replaced by tender subjective participation.

36. Existing criteria for assessment are Alignment, Extension, Directionality, Steadiness and Stability, and Precision. These criteria have not been mentioned in the proposal. Are they no longer to be assessed?

These are essential objective features of our school. On these, the assessor has to base his subjective reading. These criteria have not been mentioned explicitly because they are expected to be present implicitly in the decision making process.

37. What if I forget the feedback I wanted to give the candidate?

No problem. If you feel you may forget, you can make notes in between sessions or before the next candidate walks in.

38. What is the purpose/goal of the Individual Presentations? Will the other candidates be in the room? How much should the candidate speak?

Individual presentation is a "publicly private time" for the assessee. The skillsets and nuances he or she wants to present gets space. He or she can display his or her strengths. Whether the other candidates should be in the room can be decided based on the comfort level of each candidate.

39. Why is there so much focus on 'communication'?

The prefix "com" denotes coming together, joining etc; as in communion, commemorate. Yoga also has the same root - "yuj" - to join, to yoke, to unite. Our assessment should be a process of congregation and not separation. The only way to achieve this is "communication". We need to and have to focus on "excellent and proper communication".

40. In the introduction: I don't understand why teacher training becoming a business is necessarily a bad thing. I feel as though there is something more to this that needs to be explained. I run a yoga studio. It is a business. There's no inherent problem with

that. I run the business ethically. It's how teaching of yoga is done in Australia.

The goal of any business is profit and the aim of a yoga teacher is giving benefit to society. There is a difference in priority settings between benefit and profit.

When profit is the primary focus, exploitation, not opulently, but subtly is the hidden method. This should not be the case. Intention of teaching yoga and benefitting the society should never be adulterated. We acknowledge the financial component in teaching yoga. That expenditures have to be met is a reality. But, not at the cost of substituting 'yoga' with 'business yoga'.

On Associations

41. In the manual, you mention "RIMYI reserves the right to grant exceptions to the rules." Does this mean that any teacher can ask RIMYI directly without notifying his/her Association?

Communication is vital. Any Association and RIMYI will keep each other informed about any such requests.

Appendix

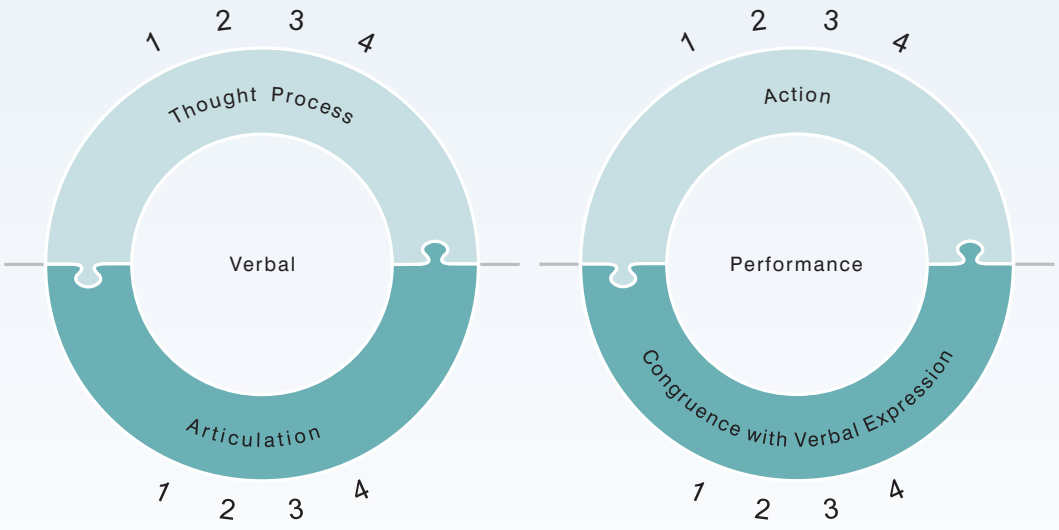
A.1

Questions for feedback form (Group Practice)

- Has motive been attained?
- What would you do better in this?
- What feedback would you give yourself?
- Was it a fulfilling practice?
- What are the physical observations you made about yourself?
- What were the mental observations you made about yourself?
- Any impressions you want to keep with you?

A.2

Individual Presentation Scoresheet



1: Poor | 2: Fair | 3: Good | 4: Excellent

A.3

Questions for feedback form (to be returned to RIMYI)

- Was it a positive learning experience?
- Where would you have taken a different route in the class and why?
- What did not occur to you at all from what the teacher said?
- What do you read about yourself in this class?
- Other thoughts/comments.

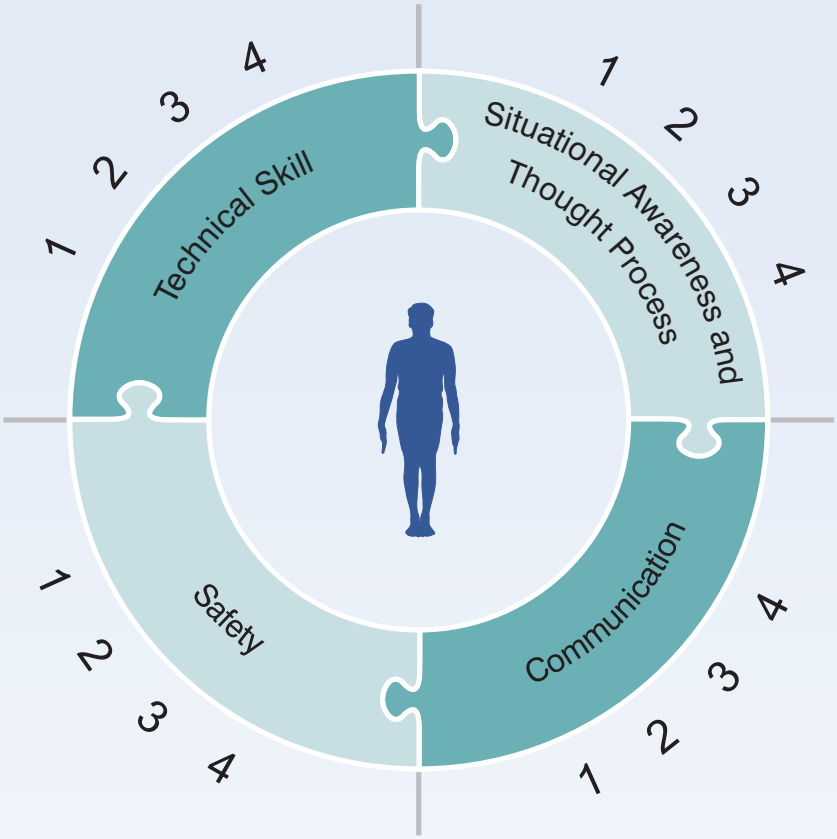
A.4

Teaching Scoresheet

1: Poor | 2: Fair | 3: Good | 4: Excellent

A.5

Situation Presentation Scoresheet



1: Poor | 2: Fair | 3: Good | 4: Excellent

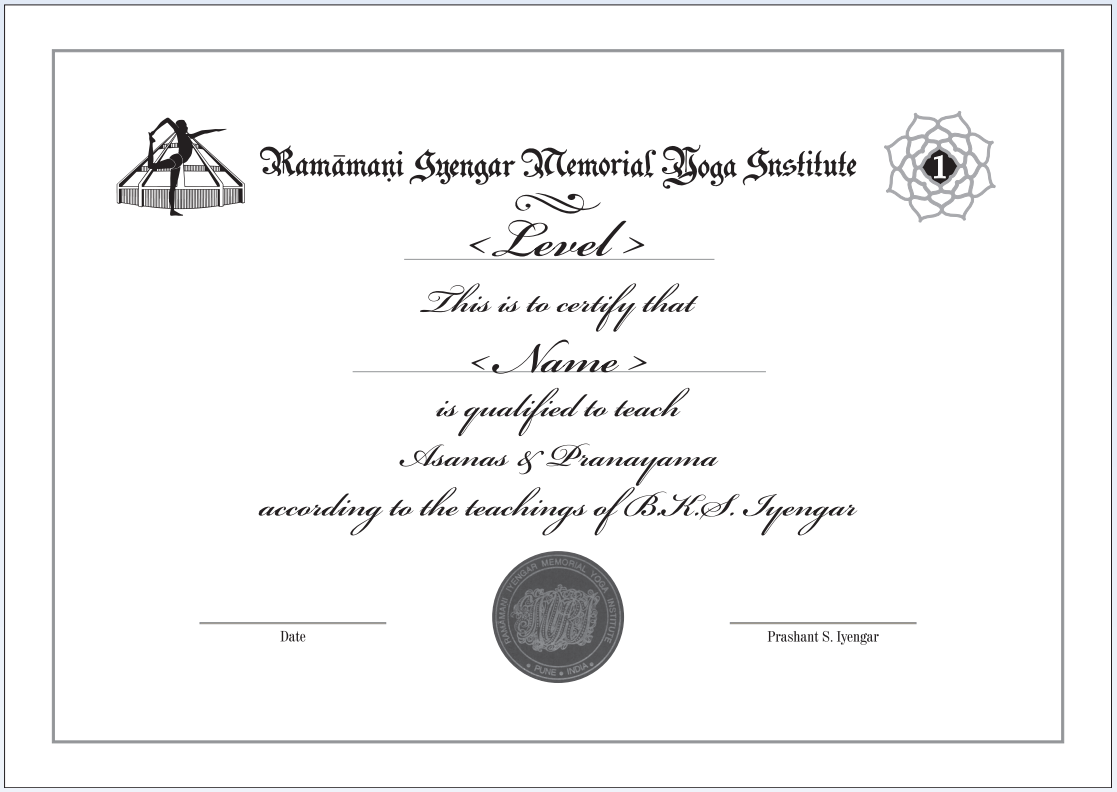
A.6 Family of asanas

Asanas which have broadly similar properties arising from their similarities in posture.

The broad family names are

Utthishtha Sthiti	Standing Asanas
Upavistha Sthiti	Sitting Asanas
Paschima Pratana Sthiti	Forward Extension Asanas
Parivrtta Sthiti	Lateral Extension Asanas
Viparita Sthiti	Inversions
Udara Akunchana Sthiti	Asanas for Abdominal Contraction
Grathana Sthiti	Body Knotting Asanas
Hasta Tolana Sthiti	Arm Balancing Asanas
Purva Pratana Sthiti	Backward Extension Asanas
Visranta Karaka Sthiti	Restorative Asanas

Sample Certificate



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