

**Scheme for
Voluntary Certification of Yoga Professionals**

The Scheme Launched by Ministry of AYUSH

and

Managed by QCI

INTRODUCTION

1. INTRODUCTION:

- 1.1 The word Yoga is derived from Sanskrit Yuj - which means to unite or integrate'. Yoga is most commonly known to be a Hindu spiritual and ascetic discipline, a part of which, including breath control, simple meditation, and the adoption of specific bodily postures, is widely practiced world over for health and relaxation. The famous Patanjali defined Yoga - "*Yogas Chitta Vritti Nirodhah*", which means "Yoga is the removal of the fluctuations of the mind". *Chitta* is mind, *Vrittis* are thought impulses, *Nirodah* is removal.
- 1.2 There has been no exact date about history of Yoga. The Yoga tradition is much older, there are references in the Mahabharata, and the *Gitā* identifies three kinds of Yoga. It is a way of life which find mentions in the Veda between 3500 to 2500 years. The classical Yoga have been documented in Patanjali's Yoga Sutras outlining the Eightfold Path of Yoga.
- 1.3 The Yoga *Sūtras* codifies the royal or best (raja) Yoga practices, presenting these as an eight-limbed system (*Ashtānga*). The philosophic tradition is related to the *Sankhya* school. The focus is on the mind; the second Sutra defines Yoga – it is the cessation of all mental fluctuations, all wandering thoughts cease and the mind is focused on a single thought. In contrast to the focus on the mind in the Yoga Sutras, later traditions of Yoga such as the Hatha Yoga focus on more complex *Asanas* or body postures.
- 1.4 Nowadays Yoga is being practiced mainly around elevating the life force or 'Kundalini' which is aimed to achieve through a series of physical and mental exercises. At the physical level, the methods comprise various Yoga postures or '*Asanas*' that aim to keep the body healthy. The mental techniques include breathing exercises or '*Pranayama*' and meditation or '*Dhyana*' to discipline the mind.
- 1.5 It has been widely reported that since human are mix of physical, mental and spiritual being, Yoga achieves the following:
- Attainment of perfect equilibrium and harmony
 - Promotes self- healing and freeing mind from negative blocks from the mind and toxins from the body
 - Enhances Personal power and increases self-awareness
 - Helps in attention focus and concentration
 - Reduces stress and tension in the physical body by activating the Parasympathetic nervous system
- 1.6 People across the globe strive to practice Yoga for achieving a better quality of life. They need to be informed of credible and competent personnel for imparting training to them to practice Yoga.

2. THE NEED

- 2.1 The Hon'ble Prime Minister has desired to spread India's traditional knowledge worldwide with credible systems which shall provide India the leadership in assuring quality of Yoga practices across the world.
- 2.2 The Ministry of AYUSH in pursuance of the above and in the wake of declaration of International Day of Yoga recognizes there is a huge demand for Yoga experts at national and international level.

- 2.3 It has been also felt that there a mushrooming of Yoga experts whose credentials are not verifiable and therefore there is an urgent need to introduce a robust system of evaluation and certification of Yoga Professionals based on international best practices to enhance their credibility and for marketing and popularising Yoga globally.
- 2.4 The Ministry of AYUSH identified QCI to develop a Voluntary Scheme for Evaluation and Certification of Yoga Professionals recognising that QCI has expertise in developing such quality frameworks based on international best practices.
- 2.5 The focus of the **Scheme for Voluntary Certification of Yoga Professionals**, as it is being called, is to certify the competence of Yoga Professionals who provide Yoga lessons/classes as Instructors or Teachers or Archaryas or by whatever nomenclature they are called.
- 2.6 After the Launch of the Scheme for Voluntary Certification of Yoga Professional, The Ministry of AYUSH requested QCI to develop a Certification scheme for Yoga School

3. METHODOLOGY ADOPTED

- 3.1. QCI has designed the **Scheme for Voluntary Certification of Yoga Professionals** by adopting the principles and requirements laid down in the international standard, **ISO/IEC 17024:2012 (E) General Requirements for Bodies Operating Certification of Persons** especially clause 8 that describes the elements of the scheme.
- 3.2. QCI aims to certify Yoga Professionals using the principles of third party assessment through the following process:
- a. Defining the competence requirements in terms of knowledge and skills to be complied with by the Yoga Professionals in the form of **Competence Standard**
 - b. Defining the process of evaluation and certification in the form of the **Certification Process**
 - c. Laying down requirements for competence and operation of assessment bodies through **Accreditation**
- 3.3. The draft Competence Standard was prepared by engaging group of experts having knowledge on different schools of Yoga. This included School of *Ashtang* Yoga, *Shivananda* School of Yoga with *Ashatang* Yoga and *Vedanta* Philosophy, *Ashtang* Yoga of Patanjali Yoga Sutra.
- 3.4. The draft was presented to a Steering Committee constituted for the purpose of multi-stake holder consultation, **chaired by Sri Sri Ravi Shankar Ji** having members from the Government, Yoga Institutions, Universities, Industry Bodies, related Organizations, and individual experts for discussion and seeking concurrence from experts representing various Schools of Yoga.
- 3.5. Sri Sri Ravi Shankar Ji appreciated the completeness of the documents and requested for internalizing some points that came up during the discussion.
- 3.6. An **Expert Group under the Chairmanship of Dr. H. R. Nagendra, Chancellor, S-VYASA Yoga University** was constituted to modify the Scheme based on directions of the Steering Committee.

- 3.7. It was agreed in the meeting that this Scheme for Yoga Professionals will evaluate four levels of competence, namely, Yoga Instructor, Yoga Teacher, Yoga Master and Yoga Acharya (being the advanced level). It was also agreed in the meeting that the highest competence level would be termed as *Acharya*.
- 3.8. A pilot evaluation was undertaken to validate the draft scheme and 19 candidates were subjected to evaluation as per the updated Competence Criteria (Standard) at the Morarji Desai National Institute of Yoga. The candidates had varied backgrounds coming from academic and training institutions and they were subjected to the process of evaluation that comprised of theory and practical carrying equal weightage.
- 3.9. A set of 3 evaluators from academic, non-formal and practicing institutions, were the examiners. Each set of examiners evaluated a group of 10 applicants and reported their findings. The learning of the 19 pilots has been incorporated in the Scheme being submitted.
- 3.10. By using the same methodology QCI developed the following documents for Certification of Yoga Schools
- a. Defining the certification criteria to be complied with by the Yoga Schools
 - b. Defining the process of evaluation and certification in the form of the Certification Process
 - c. Laying down requirements for competence and operation of assessment bodies through Accreditation

4 OUTCOME:

4.1 The Scheme has the following sections

1. Introduction
2. Governing Structure – the structure, components, roles and responsibilities of participating organizations and committees, if any
3. Competence Standard – the standard for certification, which has been arrived at after deliberations among experts
4. Certification Process – application process, initial evaluation, frequency of surveillance etc.
5. Requirements for Personnel Certification Bodies including requirements for evaluators and additional requirements to ISO 17024

4.2 More sections/documents would be added as the Scheme is operationalized.

4.3 As decided by the Ministry of AYUSH, Quality Council of India shall be the Scheme Owner, with the Ministry of AYUSH, being an important stakeholder and permanent member.

4.4 The Scheme has been Launched on 22nd June 2015 at the International Day of Yoga by the honourable The Scheme was presented to the Ministry of AYUSH and was launched on 22 June 2015 in the valedictory function of the International Day of Yoga celebration by the Hon'ble Home Minister, Shri Rajnath Singh with distribution of certificates to candidates who qualified in the pilot evaluation.

4.5 The Scheme for certification of Yoga professionals has been launched on 1 April 2016