

Answers to frequently asked questions:

What are the credentials of the course?

The course is run under the auspices of the British Wheel of Yoga which is the largest and most progressive yoga organization in the UK. If you are unfamiliar with the Wheel then check out their website to be found at <http://www.bwy.org.uk> and you will see that the Wheel is an extremely well established organization which exists both at a national and regional level.

What are the course requirements?

Ideally students will have completed a foundation course, although because these are often hard to find it is possible to begin the course having attended yoga classes on a regular basis for more than two years. It is important to note that student yoga teachers will not be expected to have experienced all the different elements of yoga, as classes often do not incorporate much pranayama, use of bandhas, meditation, philosophy etc. This is because there is plenty of opportunity to practice these techniques and learn about the theory behind them during the course. Nor is it necessary that student teachers can perform every asana we shall encounter in the course as whilst we will be developing our own practice of asana the focus is primarily upon being able to teach to asana to others; indeed students with particular physical challenges are often naturally able to be more empathetic to their students!

What kind of yoga is being taught?

This diploma course teaches us to be able to effectively teach mixed ability adult classes, and as certainly every individual has unique abilities and levels of experience then to some degree all classes are mixed ability. We will learn how to modify, offer alternatives, variations and developments for all of the practices we can teach meaning our teaching is always inclusive and everyone is working to the correct intensity. In essence hopefully our students will never be doing too much or too little and will always be progressing! We will also learn how to teach many different aspects of yoga, some of which are not included in all classes and traditions of yoga, to include asana, basic breathing techniques, pranayama, relaxation and meditation, plus how to incorporate our teaching of theory and philosophy within our classes in a gentle and relevant way. This means that we can apply these principles to any style of yoga whether we have a background in Sivananda yoga, Ashtanga yoga or so forth. I personally have a background in the Sivananda, Iyengar and Desikachar schools of yoga and found that the British Wheel of Yoga was an excellent choice because there is complete freedom in what we can teach and we can be as creative as we wish whilst being rooted in a solid foundation of knowledge and practice.

How is this course assessed?

There are several written assignments and mini-teaching practices to be formally assessed during each part of the course. In addition in part two and part three of the diploma there will be one recorded teaching practice where you will teach a

90 minute class to a real life yoga group. This can be a borrowed class, your own class or one that has been specially set up for the occasion.

When will I be able to teach my classes?

The new diploma has been designed so that the most important professional skills for teaching are introduced within part one of the course. We also begin to practice teaching almost from the beginning of the course so that your skills can be refined and confidence can be built. This means that whilst we will always be developing our knowledge and skills, once you feel ready and the tutor agrees, you can establish your own classes within part one of the course.

Do I have to establish my own yoga class before the end of the course?

No, it is not absolutely necessary to have established your own yoga class by the end of the course, although if it is possible it is a very good idea because you will have lots of support and you will be able to implement everything that you learn. You will however be expected to have taught at least 30 hours of classes over the duration of the course which can be done in several different ways, both informally and formally, so please do not worry now!

Where is the course being held?

The course venue is Willaston Memorial Hall in the village of Willaston near Chester. It is a good-sized hall which has excellent facilities and has been very well cared for. The location is semi-rural, with the hall being next to the village green but it is extremely close to the M56, M53 and A55 meaning it has good accessibility. If you wish to check out the location the full address is Willaston Memorial Hall, The Green, Hadlow Road, Willaston, Neston, CH64 2UG. I will give more details with a map when sending the invitation for induction days.

What is the tutor's background?

Yoga : My passion for yoga began as a teenager when I became fascinated by yoga philosophy, and this has continued to this day. In my 20's I studied with the Sivananda, Desikachar and Iyengar yoga traditions, going on to become a yoga teacher with the British Wheel of Yoga at age 30. Having been encouraged to become a British Wheel of Yoga Tutor I have enjoyed running BWY Yoga Teacher Training Diplomas for more than 14 years. I have also taught many times at the BWY Teachers Training Week, which has always been a pleasure.

More recently I was commissioned to write a series of yoga courses to be run throughout China as the government sponsored form of yoga. It was felt that most yoga currently available in China was too forceful and created too many injuries so it was a great honour to introduce yoga highlighting working with individual capacities and intelligent progression, rooting the practices in accessible yogic philosophy. To this end yoga foundation, yoga teacher training and yoga therapy courses have been written; and having spent far too long at the computer the exciting news is that these courses began to be taught in China starting in August 2011.

Ayurveda: I am a fully qualified and insured Ayurvedic Consultant, initially training with the American Institute of Vedic Studies under the tutorage of Dr David Frawley (Vaidya Vama Deva), and then with the European Institute of Vedic Studies under the tutorage of Vaidya Atreya Smith and Alex Duncan. I have also completed a Clinical Internship with Dr Alaknanda Rao (B.A.M.S) and Dr Deepa Kshire (B.A.M.S) at the Panini Clinic, Pune, India, and have since taken various short courses with several Ayurvedic Doctors in the U.K.

Mindfulness Training: Over the last few years I have been working more intensively with mindfulness practices, especially practicing and teaching meditations focusing upon our emotional self. Several years ago I also completed my training as a Mindfulness Teacher with Bangor University. These are excellent techniques which can be very transformative and certainly make the ordinary extra-ordinary!

Healing: I have been working with energy medicine in various forms for many years, in particular focusing upon developing my receptivity skills.

Feedback from previous students

In my new website you will find there is some feedback from former diploma students as well as some pieces of advice they wanted to pass on to those who followed them. I shall add to these as more feedback and advice is sent to me – meanwhile I hope you find them useful!

My website is: <http://www.yoga-ayurveda.co.uk>