

YOGA 'Regulation' - What you need to know!

Governing Body Status, REPs & Who's Who in the regulation game:

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and there is no statutory legislation governing the teaching of Yoga
in the UK other than common law.**

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There is much confusion in the British Yoga world about regulation and the certificates required for working teachers.

Following is a 'who's who' on the current key organisations involved and a brief explanation outlining the facts.

WHO'S WHO

Skillsactive – A government authorised 'Sector Skills Council' set up to ensure the Sport, Fitness and Leisure Industries have professionally trained and qualified staff based on industry requirements and standards. Both Skillsactive and REPs were set up primarily to benefit the 'Instructors' Employers' rather than the employee or the general public.

REPs – The Register for Exercise Professionals originally set up by SkillsActive. This is precisely what its name implies: a voluntary register of exercise professionals that employers and the public can refer to. For most exercise disciplines, there are criteria of training and competence for registration that the register requires of an exercise professional.

The Independent Yoga Network – an organisation of independent Yoga teacher trainers, teachers and practitioners set up in 2004 to counter the inappropriate attempt to regulate and control Yoga in the UK by the fitness industry in conjunction with a large, but single Yoga organisation. The IYN operates a registration scheme for teacher training schools and individual teachers. Its registration criteria are based on Yoga rather than education, therapy or fitness. This registration has no legal force in the UK and the IYN does not aspire to make it so. The IYN's central commitment is to the freedom of Yoga.

Yoga Alliance - A US-based organisation offering registration of Teacher Training Programmes and Teachers. It offers its registration internationally but does not actively support members outside of the US. This registration has no legal force in the UK.

Yoga Alliance UK - A UK based organisation offering registration of Teacher Training Programmes and using a registration schema similar to that used by Yoga Alliance. This registration has no legal force in the UK and Yoga Alliance UK has no aspirations to make it so.

The Awarding Organisations – Currently, BWYQ, CYQ and ITEC.

CYQ and ITEC train teachers or ‘accredit’ third party teacher trainers within the National Qualifications Framework, (though there is no National Occupational Standard or NVQ for Yoga Teachers or yoga). BWYQ (a branch of BWY) has its own course. The awarding bodies are ‘authorised’ by SkillsActive and Ofqual.

The Fitness Industry Association – The employers’ association for the fitness industry, closely related to SkillsActive, having joint membership.

Ofqual - The Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation. Ofqual is the government body that regulates qualifications, examinations and assessments in England and vocational qualifications in Northern Ireland.

THE FACTS

There are no legal requirements for Yoga teachers and there is no statutory legislation governing the teaching of Yoga in the UK other than common law.

Governing Body Status – A title ‘awarded’ to a Yoga Teacher training school /organisation by the then Sports Council in 1995. This recognition was carried over to Sport England when the Sports Council was dissolved as a part of devolution. (This status is currently under review by Sport England.) There is no consensus amongst the general Yoga community of England that this title is meaningful. Clearly, it can only rationally hold meaning to those who consider Yoga to be a sport. The term ‘Governing Body’ is a non-protected one and as such carries no legal authority whatsoever. Yoga Scotland has subsequently been recognised by SportScotland as ‘the Governing Body in Scotland.’

REPs and Skillsactive admit they have no expertise in Yoga. None of the NOS (new National Occupational Standards) or NVQ (National Vocational Qualifications) associated with the fitness industry makes any reference to Yoga or Yoga Teachers and is not likely to in the foreseeable future. The ‘standards’ used by the Awarding Organisations are currently under review.

Teachers do NOT require a REPs certificate in order to teach in public places such as gyms, schools or fitness centres or to hire rooms for their own self-organised classes or to teach in a self-employed capacity. An employer may request that you hold a REPs certificate or any other qualification or registration it sees fit, and may refuse to employ you if you do not have what they require.

The insistence on REPS is most likely if the employer is a member of the Fitness Industry Association.

There are two certain ways currently to get REPs registration should you feel you really need it as follows:

As a trained teacher you can register with The Independent Yoga Network which is recognised by REPs and SkillsActive as an authority on Yoga and the members of which are guaranteed REPs registration;

You have training ratified by one of the Awarding Organisations or BWY. This will also be recognised by REPS.

This situation is currently under review and it is highly likely that in the near future any Yoga Teacher, irrespective of affiliation, will be able to apply directly to REPS.

Insurance – Contrary to a common rumour, liability insurance is easily available from a number of providers. You don’t have to be associated with BWY or REP’s to get insurance.