



Yoga Scotland

Complaints Policy and Procedure

Policy Statement

Yoga Scotland welcomes feedback from members and students. This allows us to correct any problems with our service and to maintain positive relationships with our members, staff, trainees on courses, teachers attending OGT days and members of the public attending seminars. Feedback enables us to learn how to improve our service quality.

The policy sets out the procedures for dealing with complaints concerning classes, courses, Yoga Scotland events and administration of Yoga Scotland's activities.

Yoga Scotland is committed to a fair and just system for responding to complaints and grievances. This policy ensures complaints are dealt with sensitively, confidentially, effectively and promptly.

In keeping with the principles of Yoga, common sense, courtesy to all involved and a positive approach focused on coaching, counselling and/or retraining must be the main tools used when dealing with complaints.

Definition of Complaint

Yoga Scotland defines a complaint as any expression of dissatisfaction with our service by a member, course participant or other user.

Principles

The following principles underpin this policy:

- That users have the right to know what they can expect from Yoga Scotland's services.

- That Yoga Scotland's complaint-handling processes will be consistent with current complaint-handling standards.
- Where a complaint is made in relation to a matter of equality, the Equality and Diversity Policy will be adhered to.
- Every effort will be made to deal effectively and timeously with complaints, initially at a personal and informal level, involving arbitration between the complainant and the person complained about. If this does not produce a satisfactory outcome for the complainant, there are mechanisms for formal complaint involving the appropriate Yoga Scotland representative and more extensive investigation.

Making a Complaint

Informal Complaint

Members, staff, students and other users of Yoga Scotland are, in the first instance, invited to raise their concern / complaint informally with the individual concerned, or any Yoga Scotland representative.

Yoga Scotland representatives are members of the Trustee Board, non-executive volunteers, employees and course tutors.

Informal complaints may take the form of:

- An expression of dissatisfaction within a broader discussion
- An issue being raised verbally or by email, perhaps without the use of the word 'complaint'

In such circumstances, Yoga Scotland representatives will endeavour to understand the nature of the issue being raised and establish whether or not this can be resolved easily. If the issue cannot easily be resolved by the individual in receipt of the communication, they are encouraged to contact another appropriate Yoga Scotland representative.

If the matter is not satisfactorily resolved, the complainant is invited to make a formal complaint.

Formal Complaint

If the issue has not been resolved satisfactorily through informal channels, the complainant is invited to make a formal complaint in writing, by letter, or by email. Depending on the nature of the complaint, it should be directed to the appropriate recipient via the email addresses on the website:

- The Secretary for a complaint relating to a Yoga Scotland-registered teacher

- The Training Coordinator for a complaint about any of the training course personnel or training standards in general
- The Protection of Vulnerable Groups (PVG) Officer for a complaint relating to the experience of a vulnerable (protected) individual in class
- The Ongoing Training Coordinator for a complaint relating to Ongoing Training
- The Events Coordinator for a complaint relating to a Yoga Scotland event

The recipient of the complaint is responsible for addressing the issues raised in the complaint, including reporting to the Trustee Board that the complaint has been made and coordinating a panel to investigate it.

Response to Formal Complaints

Formal complaints will be acknowledged within seven working days.

Yoga Scotland aims to respond to any complaint within 28 working days, but this will depend on the nature of the investigation required. Should the investigation extend beyond this time period, the complainant will receive written notice of this.

Should the outcome of the investigation and the subsequent response to the complaint not meet the complainant's satisfaction, then the complaint can be escalated to the Chairperson for further investigation and arbitration.

Implementation

This policy will be implemented as per the associated procedures.

Trustee Board members and YS Tutors will be offered training to ensure their understanding of the policy and the appropriate skills needed to resolve complaints.

Monitoring and Review

This policy and its procedures will be reviewed every three years.

Procedure for Handling Complaints

1. Investigation of Complaints

The complaint should initially be investigated by the appropriate Yoga Scotland representative, depending on its nature. This will include a request for information from the person about whom the complaint was made and making a recommendation as to further investigations, depending on the seriousness of the matter. See individual subsections for details.

2. Formal Complaints against Yoga Scotland-Registered Teachers

The Secretary will:

1. Contact the teacher concerned to ask for a short report on the matter.
2. Convene a meeting comprising a minimum of three members of the Trustee Board to investigate the complaint in whatever way they consider appropriate, including interviewing the complainant, and decide on the action to be taken. Action to be taken may include asking an independent, senior Yoga Scotland teacher with experience of assessment to observe the teacher in a class situation.
3. A report with recommendations will be made to the Trustee Board.
4. In the case of a complaint being upheld by the Trustee Board, the teacher concerned will be notified by the Secretary. Advice will be provided, leading to agreement on the nature of the improvements to be made and how these are to be demonstrated.
5. If this strategy fails to produce the desired change/improvement, the Secretary will recommend, after consulting the Trustee Board, that the teacher be mandated to undertake further relevant training (OGT or other).
6. A review will determine whether the issues identified have been resolved.
7. Should this work not lead to a satisfactory outcome, the Secretary will propose to the Trustee Board that the teacher be removed from the YS register.
8. Whatever the final outcome, the Secretary will write to the complainant with a copy to the teacher involved, explaining what action has been taken.
9. Full written records will be kept of the entire procedure.

Appeals

Teachers have the right to appeal a decision to remove them from the register. Such an appeal should be made within 14 days of the decision, before they are removed from the register.

The appeal procedure is as follows:

1. An appeal forum will be constituted comprising the YS Chairperson, Secretary, another member of the Trustee Board not previously involved in the case and a lay member who may be an experienced yoga practitioner but not a teacher or a member of Yoga Scotland.
2. The Teacher will be invited to meet the forum. They may invite a witness to attend.
3. The Chairperson will describe the case being made in the presence of the teacher in question and their representative if any. Any documentation or witness representations supporting Yoga Scotland's case will be presented at the meeting.
4. The member or their representative may then put their case to the appeal forum.
5. The evidence presented will be discussed by the forum and the Teacher.
6. The Chairperson will summarise the discussion.
7. The appeal forum will consider the discussion in private.

8. The decision of the appeal forum will be made as soon as possible and the decision confirmed in writing immediately thereafter.
9. The decision of the Appeal Committee shall be final.

3. Complaints against Yoga Scotland Course Tutors

1. The Training Coordinator will contact:
 - a. the Yoga Scotland tutor/s concerned to ask for a short report
 - b. a minimum of three members of the Trustee Board who will discuss the complaint and decide on the action to be taken.
2. Depending on the nature of the complaint, the Training Coordinator may decide to send a questionnaire to the other participants on the relevant Yoga Scotland Teacher Training Course, and/or to ask an independent senior Yoga Scotland teacher to observe the tutor in a teaching situation.
3. The issues will be summarised in a report to the Trustee Board.
4. If a complaint is upheld:
 - The first option will be counselling, by providing a mentor who may suggest further professional development. If the outcome of this strategy is satisfactory, no further action will be necessary.
 - If this strategy fails to produce the desired change/improvement, the Yoga Scotland Training Coordinator may recommend, after consulting the Trustee Board and Training Subcommittee, that the contract with the tutor be terminated.
5. Whatever the final outcome, the Training Coordinator will write to the complainant with a copy to the tutor involved, explaining what action has been taken.
6. Depending on the outcome of the investigation and the nature of the complaint, the Training Coordinator may send the complainant/s, on behalf of Yoga Scotland, a written apology.
7. Should the complainant/s decide, or be forced to leave the course, if the complaint is upheld in whole or in part, Yoga Scotland will review whether or not to reimburse all or a suitable part of the course fees.
8. In the case of the tutor stepping down, a replacement tutor will be provided as soon as possible.

4. All other complaints

Complaints concerning any other aspect of Yoga Scotland business (e.g. seminars, administration) will be investigated in a way that is proportionate to their nature.

The appropriate Yoga Scotland representative will investigate the complaint, and consult the Trustee Board in the process. If the complaint is directed at a

member of the Trustee Board, the Secretary and/or Chair will investigate and make any recommendations, and as with the other types of complaints, these may include mandated training or mentoring.

Where the outcome of any complaint requires a change in policy or procedure, this recommendation will be made to the Trustee Board for agreement. Depending on the nature of any such change, this may be proposed at the next Annual General Meeting.

5. Record-Keeping

A report must be kept on file for the record of all complaints, bearing in mind responsibilities under the Data Protection Act.