



50 years of
Yoga
Scotland

Yoga Scotland Charter

How do key yogic values translate into the day-to-day running of Yoga Scotland?

Yoga Scotland try to embed key yogic values into the working of the organisation. We are keen for them to inform all our policies and decisions, but realise that it can sometimes be difficult to grasp how this aspiration actually translates into practice, and avoid it simply remaining theoretical.

This year is our 50th birthday and we are relaunching this Charter to celebrate this anniversary and as a reminder of our values. The creation of the Charter was by Karen Nimmo around 2016, when the Trustees (formerly Executive Committee (with input from the Advisory Board) put together these examples of ways in which our work can be guided and helped by the ethical framework of the yamas and niyamas and other key yogic concepts.

When in doubt about how best to proceed or the direction to take, we hope that these examples will help to keep us focused and clear in our intentions. These values link to and underpin our central aims of **community, service, quality and legacy.**

Viveka / discernment

We seek to bring discernment to all our reflections/decisions. We think carefully about the developments and collaborations we suggest for the organisation and endeavour to be as sure as we can be that they are in our interests and in line with our ethical focus.

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02

Raga and dvesa / attachment and aversion

We seek to draw on our discernment to know when to go further and when to draw back. (e.g. is it time to push forward with changes or time to let things settle?) We aim to be aware of tendencies to become attached to desired outcomes or avoid difficult tasks.

03

Karma / selfless service

The Trustees give their time and skills for free and it is important to acknowledge and be grateful for this. The organisation would not continue to exist without their commitment. Equally, many other people contribute time and expertise that enables the organisation to run smoothly (Teacher Recognition Scheme, Protection of Vulnerable Groups) and this too must be recognised and valued. At the same time, we know that the organisation needs paid workers and their rights and roles must also be respected as they are not working for free and should not be expected to (cf asteya).

04

Ahimsa / non-harming

Decisions and actions are informed by the need for kindness, compassion and respect. This must be balanced with satya (e.g. giving negative feedback in a diplomatic way) and asteya (e.g. being compassionate when reimbursements/transfers are requested but respecting the need for rules and for courses not to lose money) No-one should ever feel harassed or bullied.

05

Satya / truth

We endeavour to give honest feedback to everyone (but cf ahimsa): students, tutors and trustees. If the work of a tutor, paid worker or committee member for any reason falls below the appropriate standard, satya requires that an honest exchange regarding this (and any consequences) take place. If a complaint should be made about a YS teacher, we accept that it should not be ignored or minimised, but acknowledged and dealt with honestly and appropriately. We communicate openly, honestly and transparently with members, so they feel that they know what is happening and why and have their say in the running of the organisation (newsletters, magazine, website and social media). We are honest about our own limitations and seek advice from others with appropriate expertise when needed.

06

Asteya / non-stealing

We aim to ensure that paid staff are paid fairly and as well as YS can afford. We remain aware that volunteers give their time for free and it must not be squandered or taken for granted (e.g. making meetings as efficient as possible). Goodwill is an important and valuable asset to be nurtured and respected. We are careful with money paid to us by members and students and ensure it is spent wisely.

07

Brahmacarya / moderation in sensual enjoyment

We remain vigilant to the possibility for abuse of power in teacher/student relationships. In a broader sense, we remain vigilant to the tendency to seek ever more stimulating experiences of all kinds (e.g. bigger, better events, better-known tutors) and endeavour to keep a balance (cf aparigraha, santosha) Sexual harassment is never acceptable and anyone guilty of it cannot work with or for YS. We condemn incidents of sexual abuse within the yoga community and show compassion for the victims.

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Aparigraha / non-grasping

We are a not-for-profit organisation and aim to set course prices and seminar fees at a rate which enables us to cover our costs. We seek to have a small reserve as a 'safety net' but put most of our profits back into the organisation (e.g. by offering student bursaries). We encourage invited and course tutors to request fees and claim expenses in line with this value. We encourage all members of YS to let go of the past and open themselves up to the possibility of change. We aim not to hold on to past hurts and grievances.

09

Saucha / purity

We are careful that our words and actions reflect well on the organisation and the values it wishes to promote. e.g. organisational literature (flyers etc), our website or when a teacher represents the organisation in another forum. We accept and respect the differences of other organisations and do not seek to place ourselves above them.

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Santosha / contentment

We aim to develop and improve the organisation, but keep in mind that we very often just have to be happy with the way things are at the moment. We work with circumstances and with other organisations, not striving to impose our viewpoint.

11

Tapas / discipline

We seek the appropriate level of effort: working hard in the cause of Yoga, but avoiding taking on too much and becoming overwhelmed (cf santosha). We also pay careful attention to individuals who may be at risk of finding themselves overburdened and do our best to provide them with support.

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Svadyaha / self-study

We have in place forms of evaluation which enable us to obtain feedback about specific aspects of the organisation (courses, events, OGT) and its general running. This is vital if YS is to continue to improve and evolve. The magazine and newsletters regularly encourage members to be in touch with suggestions, questions and criticisms. Tutors carry out peer reviews of their teaching. We have in place appropriate complaints procedures

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Iswarapranidhana/acceptance of our limits

We recognise that we are not in control of everything. The yoga world is constantly changing, as is Yoga Scotland's place in it, and we have to accept that evolution is inevitable. e.g. rethinking events if our offer no longer seems to appeal, reviewing courses regularly.
