

## FAQs Related to Certification Manual

This document is a collection of various queries raised by different members of associations and RIMYI's responses to those queries. This document is meant to be a common resource pool for all Association representatives and will be updated at regular intervals with newer relevant queries. The queries and respective responses have been grouped together under common headings like mentoring, syllabus, assessors, etc. for ease of reference.

In case you have a query, you are advised to go through this document first to check if RIMYI has already responded to a query like yours.

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## Role of the Association

1. In the case of teachers from other countries that are invited for conventions/studio workshops, is it required that the association of that country also be notified?

**RIMYI Response:** RIMYI's stance is that the Association must be aware when a teacher gives courses, or workshops in a country where they do not regularly teach. This has been introduced as it is important for the Association to be aware of all the activities related to the system occurring in their country through a formal channel of communication. It would be the responsibility of the teacher/center inviting their colleague from another place to inform the Association of the invitation. RIMYI may be notified, only for the cases when the Association deems it necessary.

2. Does the association have any responsibility to supervise these cases?

**RIMYI Response:** No, it is not necessary to supervise these cases. However, some basic principles should be followed when such information is received—for example, ensuring the invited teacher is teaching a group appropriate to their certification level and other guidelines laid down by Gurujī.

3. Does it make a difference if they are offering workshops with recognized Iyengar Yoga Centers or with other entities unrelated to Yoga Iyengar?

**RIMYI Response:** The general answer to this question is no, as it may be possible that teachers teach at entities unrelated to Yoga Iyengar to propagate Gurujī's teachings to a larger audience. However, country context is essential and therefore, the Association is best placed to decide whether it makes a difference.

4. Is this communication also necessary for online courses, where the workshop is organized in one country with an invited teacher from another country?

**RIMYI Response:** Yes, this communication is also necessary for online courses. To reiterate, it is important for the Association to be aware of all the activities, online or offline, related to the system occurring in their country through a formal channel of communication.

## Mentors/Mentoring

1. The requirements to be a mentor are unclear from the table mentioned in the manual. Can you clarify what are the exact requirements for someone to be considered as a mentor?

**RIMYI Response:** For any person to be considered as a mentor, he/she must meet the requirements of point 1 AND point 2. The first requirement is that the person should be teaching regularly and be well versed with the syllabus of that level (this is written as point 1 for each level). The second requirement is that of certification level. Various options are indicated in point 2 to help Associations through the transition period by stating the minimum certification requirement from different levels (old system) and its equivalent in the new system. These choices are indicated by 'OR'. Any person who is under consideration will have to fulfil at least one option from point 2. Mentors for Level 3 have a third requirement of RIMYI visit.

2. Teachers currently conducting general classes as per syllabus of Level 1 for at least 2 years implies to me that all Level 2 teachers must wait until July 1, 2022 to begin mentoring aspiring Level 1 teachers. Is that correct? Further, is it correct that previous Intermediate Junior 1 teachers must wait until July 1, 2023 to begin mentoring aspiring Level 1 teachers?

**RIMYI Response:** Level 2 teachers are a combination of IJ1 and IJ2 teachers. These criteria are for the transition period - for example, if there is IJ2 who wishes to start mentoring immediately, then that teacher must fulfil two conditions to be eligible- that she has been conducting general classes for the past two years (as per the syllabus is indicative as there is some overlap between the previous syllabus and Level 1 syllabus) and the second condition is that she has been certified Int J2 for at least 2 years. In the case of Int J1 teachers who are now recognized as Level 2 and wish to mentor, these must be dealt with on a case-to-case basis. If the mentoring teacher of someone certified at Int J1 is confident and will recommend and oversee the mentoring of their student, it is acceptable. However, it is important to remember that Int J1 with recent certification have relatively less experience and we must emphasize to these teachers that becoming a mentor or an assessor are neither requisites nor milestones to becoming a good teacher.

3. In X country, we have a group of Level 2s and Level 3s but only one person at level 4. So just one person to mentor all the level 2s and no-one for Level 3. How can our Level 2s progress?
4. My reading of the document leads me to believe level 2s can be mentored/trained by level 3s, but my Association reads it as saying I need to be trained and signed off for assessment by a teacher currently at level 4. There are no such qualified teachers in the country in which I live. What can I do?
5. In Y country, for those wishing to train for Level 3 the way I read the new guidelines is that there is only one teacher qualified to mentor at L3 level and also the only teacher qualified to assess at this level. This seems to me to be less than ideal, especially in the world we currently live in. We are now even more reliant on seniors from other countries than we were before and as trainees we have no choice as to who we train with in my country. Am I correct in the way I read and understand this?"

**RIMYI Response:** To specific concerns on few or no teachers at Level 3/4 for mentoring and assessment, Guruji's guidance on this matter is mentioned on the note on Page 10 "All certified teachers, who have rich experience in teaching but have not pursued further certification levels, and were granted special permission either by Guruji, RIMYI or their Associations, may continue to do so. Associations may consider similar requests on a case-to-case basis".

During this transition, the role of seniors (irrespective of their previous certification levels) with their rich experience, maturity and wisdom will be crucial as they teach, impart experience and knowledge to youngsters in the systems. Even though the specifics may change based on country context, Associations may follow this principle laid down by Guruji. This will help to smoothen the transition. In the same spirit, RIMYI may grant exceptions based on this principle, keeping the respective country's Association informed.

6. I am a certified Iyengar yoga teacher (junior intermediate 3-old system, Level 3- new system) from X country. My country does not have an association. Since 2008 until 2018 my teacher was from Y country. I was certified for the Junior intermediate 3 in 2018. I read that I can be a mentor for Level 1. Did I read correctly? And if yes, are there any further specifications? Do I need, for example, permission from my mentor or from the Institute or from the Association of my teacher's country?

**RIMYI Response:** If there is no country association, then the aspiring student should first approach his/her teacher to seek their feedback. After receiving the teacher's feedback, the aspiring student should then write to RIMYI—at the moment, RIMYI is dealing with all such individual cases in countries with no associations.

7. Assuming that candidates that are being prepared by the same mentor may have started their preparation at different times and follow different paces until they are ready to take the assessment, and that not all of them necessarily have to take the assessment at the same sitting, has, however, a maximum number of candidates per mentor been fixed? If so, and taking into account that there may be more than one mentor in the same center, is this maximum number of candidates applicable per mentor or per center?

**RIMYI Response:** The maximum number of candidates that can be mentored by a teacher is best decided by the individual. Someone, with experience, may be able to mentor 3 or 4 candidates whereas someone with relatively less experience may be able to mentor 1 candidate at most. Guruji said that the duty of a teacher is to guide, build up students towards the exploration of yoga, which should be used as a guiding principle when preparing candidates.

Additionally, please look at the note on TTCs and mentoring—it is important for all

concerned to understand that mentoring is quite different from a training program and requires the mentor to be fully committed to the candidate's growth and vice versa. As we enter this transition phase, we must take care that no one confuses mentorship as simply a name change for TTC—they are two distinctly different matters. We are in the process of preparing a note on Guruji's thoughts on mentoring which will be added to the FAQs document so that this becomes clearer.

8. May/should a mentor charge for his/her mentoring process
  - a. When doing mentoring for his/her own students?
  - b. When a mentor accepts in his/her mentoring process students from other teachers who are not certified at a level allowing them to act as mentors?

**RIMYI Response:** The matter of charging for the mentoring is an individual matter and as such, should be decided between the mentor and the candidate. We understand that cultural contexts about payment for mentorship may be different.

## Assessors

1. There is mention on page 55 that assessors of a certain level have to had been to RIMYI, but I don't see that in the qualifications for assessors page. Can you clarify the visits to RIMYI requirements for assessors?

**RIMYI Response:** The criteria are mentioned on page 10 (i.e., trainers/mentors for Level 3). It holds for assessors as well.

2. In the guidelines, you are saying that assessors-to-be require only 2 or 3 years of experience - I do not understand; how is such a short time enough?

**RIMYI Response:** It is important to understand that the focus should be on the quality of the assessment and assessor, rather than the number. The process of an assessor-in-training becoming an assessor is largely dependent on the country context as well as the total number of assessments carried out in that country in a year. For example, some associations may hold up to 4 assessments in a year and therefore, the assessors-in-training are exposed to multiple assessments in a short period of time. There may be some associations that hold only one assessment a year and therefore, the assessors-in-training will take a longer time to gain the relevant exposure and experience. The focus, at any given time, should not be on the numbers but on the quality and sensitivity of the process.

The eligibility criteria in the guidelines are written keeping a 'minimum' number in mind, however it should be well understood that it is quite likely that when you start implementing these guidelines, we will realize that it needs a lot more time.

3. During the discussions at Anusasanam in December 2019, the question was raised of whether a mentor could be an assessor for their own candidate. We have not seen this in writing and would just like to confirm that this is acceptable.

**RIMYI Response:** Yes, it is acceptable that a mentor could be an assessor for their own candidate.

## Teachers and Teaching

1. What Levels can teach pregnant women?

**RIMYI Response:** Guruji has said in a letter to all teachers in 2010 that all certified teachers may teach their students who become pregnant and have normal pregnancies. However, if there are complications, then teachers must refer the student to a senior teacher or in the absence of a senior teacher in the region, the teacher can teach the pregnant student under the supervision of and in consultation with a senior teacher. This applies to the new system as well. Complicated pregnancies must be referred to teachers at Level 3 and above (i.e., the same level as when therapy yoga begins) but all teachers may teach their students who become pregnant and have normal pregnancies.

2. In the first part it says to be granted Level 1 one should have the old Introductory Certificate, specifically Introductory I or Introductory II. In 2014 Guruji disallowed teaching with an Introductory I Certificate. Since then, we have refused to allow anyone to teach without an Introductory II Certificate. Is this a change of policy by RIMYI or a misunderstanding? We would suggest amending Table 1. to avoid the interpretation that those who achieved Introductory I but chose not to continue with Introductory II can now be granted Level 1.

**RIMYI Response:** Thank you for pointing out the misprint—we will make the changes in the guidelines. There is no change in policy—having an Introductory I/II certificate is still a pre-requisite for teaching.

3. Can we put an age limit to qualify for Level 1 certification?

**RIMYI Response:** No. Guruji made yoga accessible to all people of all age groups and races. It would be wrong to put an age limit. There is enough flexibility in the certification and assessment level for all groups.

## Teacher Training Courses (TTCs)

1. In December of 2019, it seemed that TTCs were to be allowed under the following conditions: 3 years long, 25 people or less, only one TTC to be carried out at a time. Is this still true? Or are there to be no TTCs at all?

**RIMYI Response:** What was mentioned in December on TTCs still holds. The Association must be informed of any new TTCs and it is in turn, the Association's responsibility to inform RIMYI.

2. Prior to December 2019, many teachers would offer 2–5-day events that were billed as teacher training. These weekends would be a combination of asana and pranayama classes, Q&A sessions, practice teaching, learning how to correct and adjust, etc. Are these allowed?

**RIMYI Response:** Specifically, on the type of events mentioned—these are at the discretion of the students and the teachers who offer these courses. The broader philosophy on mentoring and TTCs is covered in the note on page 45. RIMYI's stance is that it is the responsibility of the teachers who offer these courses to reflect on the note and then decide what is the best way to serve students. We fully recognize that there may be merit in courses like those that you mention but we urge caution and reflection both on the part of teachers and students before taking up any of these offerings.

3. What is the minimum certification required to be able to give a TTC? Are there any other requirements, in addition to the certification level, that must be fulfilled before being able to give a TTC?

**RIMYI Response:** The same criteria mentioned in the guidelines for a teacher to be eligible to train/mentor. There are no other requirements.

4. Has a minimum period of time been established between the end of a TTC and the beginning of a new one given by the same teacher trainer? If so, how long this period should be?

**RIMYI Response:** At the moment, no such period of time has been established. However, it appears that practical/logistical issues will differ country to country and RIMYI will deal with these as such.

## Level 4 Assessments

1. With respect to Level 4 assessments being conducted at RIMYI: Will candidates need to present in-person; or will there be some type of online option; or will this involve sending a photo/video portfolio? If we are required to present in-person, will there be a

specified time that the assessments take place, or will we be able to present at any time through the year (once the Institute reopens)?

**RIMYI Response:** All queries related to Level 4 assessments are being dealt on a case-to-case basis. At the moment, RIMYI is not insisting on a fixed pattern for this assessment due to the current uncertainty for everyone. Any arrangement (online or offline) will be decided after discussion with the candidate and/or respective association.

## Syllabus

1. Some poses have been moved “up” a level. For example, Parivrtta Ardha Chandrasana was an Intro II pose. Now it is a Level 2 pose. Can a Level 1 teacher previously certified at the Intro II level continue to teach Parivrtta Ardha Chandrasana?

**RIMYI Response:** This is at the discretion of the certified teacher. If the teacher has been previously teaching Parivrtta Ardha Chandrasana (and was allowed to do so) and is confident, then he/she should continue to do so. However, if the teacher is under confident, it is safer and in the interest of the student for the teacher to not teach the pose.

2. Page 34 of the RIMYI Guidelines lacks *Yoga: A Gem for Women* as a required text. Page 35 clearly implies that it is required at Level 1.

**RIMYI Response:** *Yoga: A Gem for Women* is required theory text for Level 2 which is not connected to the asana syllabus mentioned. It is used as a reference point for some asanas in Level 1—but there is no contradiction there.

## New Assessment System

1. Please confirm that only one recommendation is needed to apply for assessment.

**RIMYI Response:** Only one recommendation is needed.

2. In December and the earlier drafts, you had mentioned that candidates are to send a feedback form to RIMYI after the class conducted by the assessor(s). The form is still there in the Appendix but there is no mention in the guidelines. Do you still plan to collect the feedback?

**RIMYI Response:** Yes. There has been a printing error, but feedback forms are still expected to be collected at the end of the Assessor’s class for Level 2 and Level 3

assessments using the feedback form provided in the appendix. There is no such class for Level 1 assessment.

3. On page 56 of Certification and Assessment Guidelines (July 2020), we would like to clarify the position of the recommending teacher. We have understood, particularly with regard to Level 1 assessment, that the options for presenting a student for assessment would now be the mentor or the teacher trainer. We had understood until now the recommending teacher as an alternative to undergoing the teacher training process. We understand your comments about the difference between a recommending teacher and mentor, and we therefore wish to clarify if we are obliged to accept a candidate for assessment with the signature of a recommending teacher as an alternative to the mentor. We understand this would mean the candidate had not gone through a mentorship or teacher training process.

**RIMYI Response:** The recommending teacher should know the candidate well enough to be able to talk about their impression of the candidate—the components of this confidential letter to the Assessment Committee should reflect this. The recommendation should include the following information: Name of candidate, duration the candidate has studied with me (mentor), duration the candidate has assisted me (mentor), opinion about candidate’s skill set, and other specific remarks.

It may be possible in a few cases that the candidate’s mentor and trainer are different people.

4. In page 16 of the RIMYI Guidelines, there is a table detailing all the things that must be evaluated by assessors during a Level 1 assessment. This table includes: “Situation via mock student (to present a particular situation like back pain, dizziness, discomfort in a particular part, etc.)”. However, in the corresponding table for the assessment for obtaining Level 2 (page 19), no reference to "situation via mock student" is included. With all due respect, we think the order of these tables has been inverted, and that the table on page 19 should appear on page 16, and vice versa. We do not understand why notions of therapy would be required for Level 1 assessment, but not required for Level 2 assessment. Could you please provide further clarification on this issue?

**RIMYI Response:** Guruji had said that introductory teachers should be capable of addressing minor ailments like back pain, dizziness, discomfort in a particular part, etc.—hence this has been included for Level 1. This is not included for Level 2 assessment as the candidates have already been tested for it (during Level 1) and are most likely practicing this in their classes.

5. In reading the new Guidelines from RIMYI, it is stated that between 4 to 8 is not a passing score in the new system for an individual component. For example, if there are three assessors and they each grade a candidate 3—Good on an individual component, that candidate will fail the assessment because they failed an individual component?

**RIMYI Response:** If we look at Level 1 teaching component, there are a total of four criteria (Thought Process, Demonstration, Instructions, and Helping Method)—each of which has to be scored between 1–4. Now if the assessor grades the candidate ‘3’ on all these four criteria, in which case the final score for this component for the candidate will be  $3+3+3+3=12$ . Let us assume the remaining assessors also give the candidate the same grade. When you calculate the final score for the candidate for this teaching component, you will average the scores given by each assessor i.e.,  $12+12+12/3= 12$ . It is for this score ‘12’ that you then apply the criteria of:

4–8: Fail

9–11: Retake (with an aim to arrive at a decisive result)

12–16: Pass

In this particular example, the candidate will receive a pass grade for this component.

Let us take a look at the same example, modified slightly, to give you an idea of the fail grade. If the assessor gives the following grades on the four criteria:

Thought Process - 1

Demonstration -1

Instructions - 1

Helping method - 1

Then the candidate’s score will be  $1+1+1+1=4$ . If the remaining assessors also give the candidate the same grade, then the candidate’s final score will be  $4+4+4/3=4$ ; in which case, the candidate fails.

6. What should be the basis of giving someone a score of 2 (Fair) or 3 (Good) in the new system? Can you talk a bit more about the four qualitative values: Excellent, Good, Fair, Poor so we can better understand the thinking behind the model?

**RIMYI Response:** The major shift in grading is that the candidate is now assessed on the basis of the entire session of the assessed component as opposed to being graded on individual poses. The tenets of Alignment, Extension, Directionality, Steadiness and Stability, and Precision are essential objective features of our school. On these, the assessor has to base his subjective reading. These criteria have not been mentioned explicitly because they are expected to be present implicitly in the decision-making process. Taking the teaching component as an example, an assessor would look at the four criteria that contribute to a candidate becoming a good teacher in our system i.e., Thought Process, Demonstration, Instructions, Helping Method. The tenets of Alignment, Extension, Directionality, Steadiness and Stability, and Precision are all applicable under each of these criteria but should be considered on the whole. An assessor has to make a subjective call, keeping these tenets in mind, how a candidate fares on the teaching component. A ‘good’ candidate fares well on all four criteria i.e., Thought Process, Demonstration, Instructions, Helping Method with a few specific areas for improvement—this is where the assessor’s feedback and their interaction with the candidate is essential. A ‘fair’ candidate has the making of becoming ‘good’ but needs to

put in a lot more work to improve his/her understanding of the four criteria. Similarly, criteria have been defined for the individual presentation (which is a reflection of the candidate's self-practice) and for the situation presentation (which involves minor or major therapy issues).

7. What exactly does it mean that "no timer to be used" in the conducted performance?

**RIMYI Response:** The provision for 'no timer' has been introduced to make assessments more accessible. Previously, candidates would be required to hold a pose for a certain time (ranging from 30 seconds to a minute) before moving on to the next called pose with the emphasis mostly on the physical aspect of the pose. With the 'no timer to be used' provision, it is hoped that assessors will look at the candidate's overall understanding and approach to asanas (not just a specific pose), beyond just the physical appearance. For example, a senior candidate may not be able to hold a balancing pose like *Titibhasana* but the candidate's understanding and approach will be reflected in how they attain the pose, irrespective of the duration for which they stay in the pose.

8. What would an appropriate theme for the Level 1 informal practice look like?
  - a. The actions of the feet, or the symmetry of the trunk, or the proper actions in the legs?
  - b. Focus on standing poses, or forward bending, or more back bending?

Are there any guiding principles to choose a theme from the above two?

**RIMYI Response:** Since this is for Level 1 and they are mostly beginners, theme B will be more appropriate. The Lesson Plan provided in the guidelines may also be used as a reference point while planning for the practice sessions in the future.

9. We are not sure we all share the same understanding of what is meant by "group practice". We are clear that it is informal, and candidates can ask questions. But we are unsure if the intention is that after the starting point is given each person then follows/develops their own practice from that, or is it intended to be a led practice where everyone works on similar asanas at the same time?

**RIMYI Response:** The starting point is the theme. It is expected that the person follows their own practice. It is not intended to be a led practice.

10. Conducted Performance—we would appreciate some guidance on what is meant by "include as many asanas as possible from the list." Some of us take that to mean literally as many as possible (which could be the majority of the whole syllabus at a brisk pace). Some take it to mean choose a few from each section maybe even as few as 15 in total as there is a concern for example that if there was an older or slower person in the group that the conducted performance should go at their speed. I am inclined to read it

as the former (literally as many as possible), and I think if we had a particular needs group of candidates, an older batch or a batch with lots of injuries that it could be taken a little more slowly, but I wouldn't want to impose that on all, including young, fit ones, so I wondered therefore if there was a batch of say older candidates, or other particular needs, that they could have a separate assessment rather than making every assessment work at the level of the weakest person.

**RIMYI Response:** The idea to include as many *asanas* as possible so that the candidate can demonstrate familiarity with the entire syllabus. The note about not accomplishing all asanas and being able to demonstrate alternatives has been included to address the concerns you raise about candidates with special needs or older candidates. The assessor has the discretion to set the pace and may decide based on the group of candidates—for example if it is a group of young candidates, a brisk pace will work but a slower pace may be required for a group of older candidates. Irrespective of the pace, the focus should be on whether the candidate understands the form of the pose—to quote the example from the guidelines, the candidate should be able to express physically and/or verbally how he/she will go in the direction of Sirsasana when asked. For e.g., taking bricks for dorsal, with help of a helper to lift shoulders etc.

11. For the Level 3 Conducted Performance we are thinking it will be difficult to include as many asanas as possible from the syllabus (and possibly Level 2 also) in 45 minutes. With this in mind, can we make that session longer, or do you have some other guidance?

**RIMYI Response:** Yes, you may modify—however, it is better to decide this based on looking at the composition of the candidate cohort—if it is a younger group, it might be good to do as many asanas as possible. If the candidate cohort is older, then the number of asanas may be reduced. It is more important that candidates have an opportunity to show their understanding of the concepts, not just the physical attainment of a pose.

12. Assessor's Class (Level 2+): We understand that this is fundamentally about demonstrating fabric of sensitivity at level 2 and fabric of perceptivity at level 3, we take that to be modelling to the candidates how that might be done. But there was some doubt about the number of poses indicated:
  - Level 2. Some interpreted those minimum 10 poses to be woven in could be any poses; some interpreted it as those minimum 10 poses must be from the level 2 syllabus.
  - Similarly at level 3, some interpreted it as those minimum 5 poses to be woven in could be any poses; some interpreted it as those minimum 5 poses must be from the level 3 syllabus.

Please could you clarify? We feel there are various ways an assessor could choose to approach this assessor's class, e.g., using it as an opportunity to demonstrate how to progressively work towards more challenging asanas, or to show that the challenging asanas can help facilitate experience of sensitivity and perceptivity in simpler asanas.

Also, that the class could be built around very few asanas or quite a few. Please could you clarify that the full range of interpretations would be all right and it would be up to the assessor constructing the class to make their own judgement call?

**RIMYI Response:** You can include poses from Level 1 as well. There is no compulsion for the poses to be from that level's syllabus only. In fact, the way the syllabus is structured is that all levels build from Level 1 onwards so as to demonstrate and build up a candidate's sensitivity and perceptivity—it would be good for the candidate to see how poses from Level 1 build up to poses in Level 2 and so on. Your interpretations that the assessor's class is an opportunity to demonstrate how to progressively work towards more challenging asanas, or to show that the challenging asanas can help facilitate experience of sensitivity and perceptivity in simpler asanas and that the class could be built around very few asanas or quite a few are all spot on. It would be up to the assessor constructing the class to make their own judgement call based on the candidate cohort they are assessing.

13. Level 1, day 1 - Is it possible to modify the timetable? morning: 60 min practice, + 30 min inverted, + 45 min demonstration, and then they fill up the form, and we talk during and after lunch time? Having 2 hours gap between lunch and demonstration appears like we are "wasting" some time.
14. Page 14 of the Guidelines it says that it requires 90 minutes for lunch and rapport building followed by 120 minutes free time. We feel it is too long since we culturally have a light lunch, and it makes the day a long day to keep the focus. For interaction time and report building we don't think we need 270 minutes (4,5 hours). The question is, are we allowed as association to bring it down with one hour?
15. Could we increase the timing for individual presentation for Level 2 and 3 to 20 min per candidate (as it will only be possible to have a maximum of 6 candidates).

**RIMYI Response:** These are broad times that have been included keeping in mind a cohort of about eight to ten candidates per assessment. It is more important that the order mentioned in the format is followed. We suggest you go through a couple of rounds before any decision on modifying the time is taken.