



Fundamentals & Innovation Policy

Table of Contents

I. PURPOSE	2
II. DEFINITIONS:	2
III. FUNDAMENTAL ELEMENTS OF ANUSARA YOGA	2
IV. GUIDELINES FOR INNOVATION OF THE ANUSARA METHOD	4
V. APPENDICES	6
APPENDIX A – HEART THEME	6
APPENDIX B - Examples of Innovation	6
VI. FAQ	6
Is teaching with music permitted?	6
Can Anusara teacher’s teach flow or describe their classes as a “flow” class?	7
Can I do Yin Yoga in an Anusara yoga class?	7
Can Anusara members teach other styles of yoga?	7

I. PURPOSE

The *Fundamentals & Innovation Policy* was created to:

1. Ensure the consistency of the Anusara® method from country to country and teacher to teacher
2. Create an opportunity for the Anusara method to evolve by providing Anusara teachers with guidelines within which they can incorporate new innovative material and ideas into their teaching of the Anusara method

Moreover, this policy is intended to support and guide Anusara yoga teachers as they innovate within the Anusara method. The policy provides guidelines intended to assist Anusara yoga teachers to clearly define and develop class, workshop and training curricula that:

- Align with the Anusara method and support its three main pillars of Attitude, Alignment and Action,
- Can be called Anusara yoga and
- Can be offered to students for Anusara teacher training credit (workshops and trainings)

II. DEFINITIONS:

Anusara yoga (basic definition):

A method of Hatha yoga that combines the practices of yoga postures (*asanas*), Universal Principles of Alignment, and non-dual Tantric Philosophy, and is taught by a licensed Anusara yoga teacher.

Anusara yoga teacher:

A licensed teaching member of the Anusara School of Hatha Yoga, who is actively licensed to teach the Anusara yoga method (i.e.: Anusara Elements, Inspired, Certified & ECAT).

III. FUNDAMENTAL ELEMENTS OF ANUSARA YOGA

The Fundamental Elements of Anusara Yoga are the essential building blocks of an Anusara yoga class, workshop or training. They support and highlight the three distinguishing aspects of Anusara yoga: Non-Dual Tantric Philosophy, Universal Principles of Alignment™ and Community. These fundamental elements are also included in the class plan, in all instances where a class, workshop or training is identified as *Anusara yoga*, or is offered in exchange of Anusara elective 300-hour teacher training credit.

The Fundamental Elements of Anusara yoga that are to be included in any course that is taught representing the Anusara method must include ALL the following:

1. Centering and Intention Setting
 - a. Anusara classes start with a clear spiritual intention and centering.
2. A Heart Theme expressed from the perspective of Non-Dual Tantric philosophy (see Appendix A)
3. Universal Principles of Alignment (UPA)
 - a. Class teachings should center around a single UPA or its actions (or two UPAs if teaching in a balanced theme approach).
 - b. The systematic application of all 5 UPAs should be present in at least two (2) poses when asana is being taught.
4. Teach to what is seen or observed in the class
 - a. Anusara teachers walk around the class, observing and assisting students according to what is seen in the class.
 - b. Performing the asanas with the class should be minimized.
5. Anusara Verbiage
 - a. Anusara has many language tools to make teaching more powerful, direct and effective. These include: using plain language, explicit instructions, linking, directionality, active/passive commands.
 - b. In Anusara yoga the use of indirect cues is minimized. This is not to be confused with *passive language* which is one of the Anusara language tools. (See *Section 14* of the Anusara Teacher Training Manual).
 - c. Anusara teachers link actions to the breath.
6. Sequencing
 - a. The basic principles of sequencing are respected: Including moving from centering, warming up to meditation/savasana and a final blessing. As well as progressing from simple, less strenuous poses to more complex and challenging poses.
 - b. The climax of the class is composed of the poses that require the most strength, stamina and flexibility (which may or may not include an apex pose)
 - c. Although teachers are required to know the poses in the Anusara syllabi, they are free to practice Hatha yoga posture and preparatory postures outside of these lists.

IV. GUIDELINES FOR INNOVATION OF THE ANUSARA METHOD

Innovation is the integration of new ideas that expand, refine, and compliment the Anusara yoga method. New innovative ideas may be presented in an Anusara class or training, as a way for teachers to:

- A. Explore ideas from other systems, methods, philosophies, and sciences that align with the Anusara method
- B. Integrate new research into their teachings to refine the Anusara method.
- C. Express their unique passions and professional interests as yoga teachers

(See Appendix B for examples of innovation)

General Guidelines:

1. The Fundamental Elements of the Anusara method must be included in all innovative Anusara yoga classes, workshops and trainings.
2. The Anusara School of Hatha Yoga's policies for Code of Conduct, Intellectual Property, Trademark Usage & Guidelines, and Ethical Guidelines must be respected at all times. ([See all policies here](#))
3. Teachers must respect their scope of practice and only present ideas and subjects for which they have received adequate and complete training to teach.
4. Anusara teachers working towards Certification must practice teaching Classical Anusara yoga classes, as outlined in the Universal Class Assessment Form.

Incorporating Innovative Ideas:

5. Bring in ideas that empower, enhance, or speak to the Fundamental Elements of Anusara
6. Reference or credit any outside sources you are using
7. Explicitly relate innovative teachings back to the UPAs, answering the question: "Which of the UPAs does this idea or teaching provide more insight into?"
8. Explicitly relate innovative teachings back to non-dual Tantric philosophy, answering the question: "How does this subject relate to non-dual tantric philosophy?" Or, "Which non-dual Tantric teaching does this idea demonstrate?"

Mixing styles:

9. Terms that are proprietary to another's brand or trademark should be identified as such and must not be identified or introduced as part of the Anusara method.

10. It is possible to integrate aspects of other styles (e.g. Iyengar's use of language) and still teach Anusara provided the teachings, terms or concepts are related back to teachings from the Anusara method and its fundamental elements.
11. Students should leave the class better able to answer the question "What is Anusara yoga?" without explaining a completely different method of yoga.

Innovative Curriculum Development & Trainings:

As a teacher-led school, we rely on each other's creativity, passion, and unique skill set to ensure the Anusara method continues to evolve.

12. *Innovative Trainings* are specialized elective trainings (pre/postnatal yoga, yoga for seniors, chair yoga, etc.) that include the Fundamental Elements of Anusara in the presentation of the course curriculum and class plans and compliments our School's current curricula.
13. Innovative Trainings supplement but do not replace our currently approved 200- and 300-hour Anusara Teacher Training curricula.
14. Innovative Training course titles, descriptions, trademark usage must make it clear that the training does not lead to a license to teach Anusara yoga.
15. Innovative Trainings must be titled or described as "aligned" or "based" in Anusara yoga.
16. Only Certified teacher trainers or ECATs can teach/co-teach Innovative Trainings that offer 300-hour elective credit hours. (This is consistent with existing policies.)
17. Any approved Anusara elective curriculum may be used as the basis for an Innovative Training curriculum. Eg: 36 hour Bridge program, Yoga for Women, Yoga for Seniors.
18. Teachers must use the accompanying "Procedures" document to determine when the existing 2.5% Teacher Training registration fee applies to an Innovative Training.
19. Students who participate in Innovative Training can receive Elective credit hours towards their 300-hour Anusara Teacher Training.
20. In keeping with existing policy, Anusara-Inspired yoga teachers are not eligible to offer teacher trainings that represent Anusara yoga but may practice innovation in their classes and workshops, in accordance with this policy. (Applicable to all Anusara teacher trainings).

Note: The School's Operations Team will be responsible for implementation of this policy. To this effect, the Operations Team will develop related processes and procedures, including the approval process.

V. APPENDIXES

This section contains supplemental information to provide further detail to the policies in the above sections.

APPENDIX A – HEART THEME

1. Anusara classes have a single Heart Theme that is expressed from the perspective of non-dual Tantric philosophy and woven throughout the class.
2. “Heart Theme” is a term used to define the Anusara method of theming a class. Heart Themes are class themes that invoke *Bhavana*—creative contemplation of the higher purpose for practicing yoga through the Six (6) Divine Aspects of the One, notably: Cit, Ananda, Svatantra, Shri, Purnatva, and Spanda. (*Sat* is implied in each of the six aspects.)
3. There are different ways to develop and express a Heart Theme including:
 - a. Heart quality (“classic” way to theme)
 - b. Imagery
 - c. Story telling
 - d. A mini Dharma talk (sprinkle the theme throughout the class)
4. If teacher decides to build their Heart Theme around a Heart quality, they must stick to one or two central attitudinal Heart qualities throughout the class (Two if teaching a balanced theme approach with two UPAs in pulsation with one another)

APPENDIX B - Examples of Innovation

Here are some examples of ways that Anusara yoga teachers are innovating Anusara yoga:

- Incorporating principles of functional movement to support the UPA’s,
- Using poetry to build and/or illustrate a class theme,
- Developing a prenatal teacher training that integrates the Fundamental Elements of the Anusara method and supports Anusara yoga teachers expand their Anusara yoga offering.
- Etc...

VI. FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions)

Is teaching with music permitted?

Teaching without music is preferred in the Anusara yoga class as it allows students to focus inward and on the instructions being given. Ultimately, it helps students step more fully into the flow of Grace.

However, music can add value to a class when it is used with clear intention, resonates well with the students and is aligned with your class theme.

In other cases, ambient music might be necessary, especially if you are teaching a beginner's class at a gym or in another public space where there may be outside distractions that easily draw student's attention away from their practice.

Can Anusara teacher's teach *flow* or describe their classes as a "flow" class?

Yes, provided that the Fundamental Elements of Anusara yoga are present and that most poses are held long enough to teach the alignment actions.

Can I do *Yin Yoga* in an Anusara yoga class?

No, *Yin Yoga* methodology does not include the Fundamental Elements of Anusara yoga. An Anusara teacher may however include restorative yoga postures, where the body is supported with props or more gentle postures where the alignment principles and balanced action can be maintained.

Can Anusara members teach other styles of yoga?

Yes. However, those should not be titled or described as Anusara yoga unless they fall within this policy's guidelines. Many members of our community are trained in multiple styles of yoga and offer yoga classes in other styles such as Iyengar Yoga, Yin Yoga, Forest Yoga, etc.... This policy only concerns classes that are marketed as "Anusara yoga" or eligible for Anusara yoga elective credit.