

Setting Students Expectations

Clear expectations are one of the foundations of professional yoga teaching — what you offer, how you work, and what students can reasonably expect.

YOGAPROS

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Compliance & Safety



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◆ INTRODUCTION

This template provides a practical starting point for planning, recording, and reviewing your professional practice. Adapt it to suit your role, teaching environment, students, and any relevant legal, safeguarding, or insurance requirements.

◆ WHY EXPECTATIONS MATTER

Clear expectations are a *foundation*.

Clear expectations are one of the foundations of professional yoga teaching. When students understand what you offer, how you work, and what they can reasonably expect, they are more likely to:

- Feel confident and supported.
- Engage positively with your classes.
- Develop trust in your teaching.
- Remain long-term clients.
- Avoid misunderstandings and complaints.

Managing expectations is not about lowering standards. It is about ensuring that students have realistic expectations and that professional boundaries are maintained.

◆ WHEN TO USE THIS CHECKLIST

Refer to this checklist whenever you launch a new class or service, onboard private clients, update your website or marketing materials, or respond to student concerns or complaints. It's also helpful to revisit these guidelines regularly as part of your ongoing professional development to ensure you consistently manage expectations in your yoga teaching practice.

◆ BEFORE A STUDENT BOOKS

Ask *yourself*.

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- ☐ Is my website or booking page clear about the type of yoga I teach?
 - ☐ Have I clearly identified who my classes are suitable for?
 - ☐ Is my level (beginner, mixed ability, advanced) clearly stated?
 - ☐ Have I accurately described what participants can expect?
 - ☐ Have I avoided exaggerated claims or promises?
-

Best Practice

Avoid statements such as:

- ✗ “This class will cure back pain.”
- ✗ “Yoga will eliminate anxiety.”
- ✗ “Guaranteed results.”

Instead use:

- ✓ “Many participants find yoga helpful for improving mobility and supporting wellbeing.”
- ✓ “Individual experiences and outcomes will vary.”

◆ INITIAL COMMUNICATION WITH STUDENTS

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- ☐ Welcome new students professionally.
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- ☐ Explain class expectations.
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- ☐ Provide information about location, timings, equipment, and accessibility.
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- ☐ Explain cancellation and booking policies.
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- ☐ Explain your approach to physical adjustments and consent.
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- ☐ Encourage students to inform you of injuries, medical conditions, or accessibility needs.
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Reflection question: would a new student understand exactly what to expect from your class?

◆ UNDERSTANDING YOUR SCOPE OF PRACTICE

The limits of your *role*.

One of the most important professional responsibilities is recognising the limits of your role.

A Yoga Teacher Can:

- ✓ Teach yoga practices.
- ✓ Offer movement guidance.
- ✓ Provide general wellbeing support through yoga.

- ✓ Adapt classes where appropriate.
- ✓ Encourage students to seek professional advice when needed.

A Yoga Teacher Should Not:

- ✗ Diagnose injuries or illnesses.
- ✗ Prescribe treatment plans.
- ✗ Recommend medication changes.
- ✗ Offer counselling or psychotherapy unless appropriately qualified.
- ✗ Guarantee health outcomes.

◆ PROFESSIONAL RESPONSE EXAMPLE

Instead of:

- ✗ “Yoga will fix that injury.”

Try:

- ✓ “I recommend speaking with a healthcare professional about your condition. We can explore suitable modifications during class.”

◆ SETTING PROFESSIONAL BOUNDARIES**Communication Checklist**

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- ☐ Use professional communication channels.
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- ☐ Establish reasonable response times.
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- ☐ Keep communication relevant to teaching.
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- ☐ Maintain respectful boundaries online and in person.
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- ☐ Keep records of important conversations where appropriate.
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Avoid

- ✗ Becoming available 24/7.
- ✗ Providing ongoing emotional support beyond your role.
- ✗ Engaging in inappropriate personal discussions.
- ✗ Blurring professional and personal relationships.

Remember: being supportive does not mean being constantly available.

◆ **MANAGING EXPECTATIONS AROUND RESULTS**

Students may attend yoga for many different reasons. Common goals include:

- Increased flexibility
- Strength
- Stress management
- Better sleep
- Improved wellbeing

Best Practice

- ✓ Explain that progress varies between individuals.
- ✓ Focus on consistency rather than quick results.
- ✓ Celebrate personal progress.
- ✓ Encourage realistic goals.

Avoid

- ✗ Promising specific outcomes.
- ✗ Suggesting yoga is a substitute for medical treatment.
- ✗ Creating unrealistic expectations through marketing.

◆ **HANDLING STUDENT CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS**

Even with excellent communication, concerns can arise.

Professional Response Checklist

☐

Listen calmly.

☐ Thank the student for raising the issue.

☐ Avoid becoming defensive.

☐ Clarify the concern.

☐ Keep written records where appropriate.

☐ Follow your complaints procedure.

☐ Seek support if necessary.

Reflection question: would you be comfortable if your response were reviewed by a professional body or insurer?

◆ MANAGING EXPECTATIONS IN PRIVATE SESSIONS

One-to-one sessions often require additional clarity.

Before the First Session

☐ Explain what the session will involve.

☐ Clarify fees and cancellation terms.

☐ Discuss goals and limitations.

☐ Explain confidentiality and safeguarding procedures.

☐ Discuss communication between sessions.

Important: private sessions do not create a therapeutic, counselling, or healthcare relationship unless you hold appropriate qualifications.

◆ MANAGING EXPECTATIONS IN ONLINE CLASSES

Students Should Understand

☐ How to access sessions.

☐ Whether sessions are recorded.

☐ Camera expectations.

☐ Technology requirements.

☐ Online conduct expectations.

☐ Communication channels.

Teachers Should Ensure

☐ Digital boundaries are maintained.

☐ Consent is obtained where necessary.

☐ Online safeguarding procedures are followed.

◆ PROFESSIONAL REFLECTION EXERCISE

Consider the following *questions*.

Communication

- Do my students clearly understand what I offer?
- Could any information be misunderstood?

Boundaries

- Am I maintaining appropriate professional boundaries?
- Do I ever feel pressured to take on responsibilities outside my role?

Marketing

- Are my marketing messages realistic and evidence-informed?
- Could any claims create unrealistic expectations?

Professional Practice

- Am I working within my scope of practice?

- Do I know when to refer students to other professionals?

◆ SIGNS YOU ARE MANAGING EXPECTATIONS WELL

- ✓ Students understand your role.
- ✓ Policies are respected.
- ✓ Boundaries feel comfortable and sustainable.
- ✓ Complaints are rare.
- ✓ Communication feels professional and manageable.
- ✓ Students trust your expertise without expecting you to solve every problem.
- ✓ You feel confident saying “that is outside my scope of practice.”

IMPORTANT

This checklist is provided for general awareness, professional orientation, and reference only. It is an example of points you may wish to consider and is not exhaustive, nor is it a substitute for professional legal, tax, insurance, safeguarding, or other advice specific to your individual circumstances.

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*A Learning Hub resource from the Compliance
& Safety team — helping members teach with
confidence.*

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YogaPros Learning Hub — Compliance & Safety

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