

Code of Conduct for Students

Students are expected to maintain a high ethical and academic standard. Students are expected to take time to familiarize themselves with the Student Code and they pledge to uphold the student code of their own volition to the humble best of their ability. Graduates of the school represent the highest standard for Ayurvedic Practitioners. They practice what they preach and embody the ancient principles of Ayurveda. Students are expected to be aware of the school's ethical and academic standards and to adhere to them strictly under all circumstances without complaint or hesitation. Serious student of Ayurveda understand the utility of a strict code of conduct and academia for Ayurvedic Practitioners. They naturally aspire to these ideals in their personal life and happily accept the challenge of maintaining this standard as students. Students who do not appreciate the utility of such a code are encouraged to seek another field of work. Perfection in all these practices is not expected, but sincere effort is demanded. Students who have serious doubts as to their ability to maintain such strict standards are advised to seek counsel from Swamiji gananathamritananda@gmail.com.

Code Violations

The Soma Matha works very hard to ensure the success of all students. The school has a responsibility to provide a safe and supportive atmosphere for learning for all students, based upon mutual respect, support, and spiritual striving. The school has instituted this Student Code for that purpose. Failure to meet any one of the ethical or academic standards of the school may result in disciplinary measures or expulsion from the program and withholding of diploma. Disciplinary measures, suspension, and expulsion are instituted at the sole discretion of the school. Students who repeatedly violate the Student Code without showing signs of remorse or efforts toward improvement shall be expelled. Students who are expelled from the program due to failure to comply with ethical or academic standards will be expelled and from all classes, practicums, and school sponsored events without refund of tuition.

Faculty Standard

Faculty shall be held to the same standard as students concerning the school's ethical code of conduct.

Ethical Conduct

Non-violence

Students are required to observe non-violence in thought, word, and deed in and out of school for the duration of their academic career. Students who fail to meet this standard may be expelled. Students who struggle with anger are offered counseling and recommendations of practices to help adjust during their individual student consultations. Incidents of violence during classes, practicums, or extracurricular activities and particularly physical violence will not be tolerated.

Weapons

Students are absolutely prohibited from bringing weapons of any kind to classes, practicums, and extra-curricular events including but not limited to guns, bombs, knives, swords, mace, or pepper-spray. Students caught in possession of weapons shall be automatically expelled.

Drugs and Intoxicants

Students are required to abstain from illegal drugs and intoxicants and to abstain from abuse of legal intoxicants for the duration of their academic career. It is absolutely prohibited for students to bring illegal drugs or intoxicants to classes, practicums, or extra-curricular activities. Students caught in possession of illegal drugs shall be immediately expelled from the program without exception. Students may be required to submit to drug testing if deemed necessary to enforce this policy.

Illegal Activities

Students are required for the duration of their academic career to abstain from activities considered illegal by the State or Federal government. Students who are arrested and convicted of any serious crime or felony shall be automatically expelled.

Animal Products

Students are required to observe a strict vegetarian diet, avoiding meat, poultry, fish, and eggs for the duration of their studies. Students who are not currently eating a vegetarian diet are advised to make dietary changes gradually before application to this program. Counseling will be provided to interested applicants to assist with this change, and ongoing support for students is available upon request.

Dress code:

Students shall dress modestly in traditional Indian or Western dress. All students shall wear modest, comfortable, clean, neat, and professional clothing at all times while attending classes, practicums, and extra-curricular events. Jeans, Tight “Yoga” outfits, T-shirts, and other clothing with writing are prohibited. Students are required to wear white Sari or Dhoti provided by the school to all Pujas, Yajnas, or other Ceremonies.

Students are encouraged to develop a clean professional appearance to garner respect for themselves and for their profession. Pertaining to dress code violations, students may be given one or more warnings at the discretion of the school. Repeated violations shall result in disciplinary actions.

Women’s Dress:

In keeping with the traditions of Southern India, women shall cover their shoulders, breasts, and legs to the ankles whenever attending school events. Women’s clothing is to be modest even when moving, bending, or practicing yoga asanas. Tight fitting or revealing clothing shall be avoided. Tight or revealing cloths which show the shoulders, cleavage, hips, thighs, or buttocks are strictly prohibited. We recommend Sari, Salwar Kameez or conservative Western formal wear in white or light, uplifting, and dosha-specific colors. For puujaas and other ceremonies, a white Sari provided by the school is mandatory.

Men’s Dress:

In keeping with the traditions of Southern India, men shall have their legs covered to the ankles under all circumstances. Clothing should be modest even when moving, bending, or practicing yoga asanas. Tight fitting and revealing clothing should be avoided. We recommend dhoti and angavastram (and optional kurta), kurta and pajama, or conservative Western formal wear in white or light, uplifting, and dosha-specific colors. For puujaas and other ceremonies white dhoti / angavastram provided by the school is mandatory and kurta or shirt is prohibited (unless cold weather makes this impractical) in keeping with the tradition of South Indian Temples. For classes, practicums, and other non-religious events shirt is required.

Relationship’s

Students are absolutely prohibited from entering into a romantic alliances with members of the faculty or clients of the school. The school strongly disapproves of divorce and polygamy (including dating various people simultaneously), and encourages students to aspire strictly to the ideals for healthy romantic relationships as described in the Yamas below. The school does not strictly regulate students’ personal choices pertaining to romantic relationships, so long as these relationships do not interfere with their studies. If there is any notion that a student’s romantic relationship(s) may be interfering with their successful completion of the course, the school may in rare cases exert the right to implement disciplinary measures for their failure to place the importance of their success as students above their desire for relationships.

Associations with Other Spiritual Organizations / Traditions

Under rare circumstances a student’s affiliations with other people or organizations such as Family, Friends, Churches, Temples, Sangas, Support Groups, Teacher’s, Guru’s, Healers or Shamans may be deemed by the school as contrary to that student’s work in the program. This is extremely rare but may happen in particular when these people or organizations become impassioned and speak or act vehemently against Ayurveda and the philosophy of the program, vehemently discourage students from participating, or threaten or assault students or teachers. If such interpersonal connections are deemed by the school to be contrary to a student’s individual progress in the program or potentially dangerous for the students and teachers, the school reserves the right to ask a student to willingly end such associations or to willingly drop out from the program.

Respect

Students are expected to treat all other students, faculty, and clients of the school with compassion and respect.

Harmony

Students are expected to maintain harmony with faculty by complying with instructions explicit or implied promptly and without complaint or hesitation. When conflict arises between students, other work should be put on hold when possible, so that the conflict does not affect the students’ work until conflict resolution may be promptly completed. Conflict and prolonged disharmony between students or faculty shall not be tolerated.

Confidentiality

Students are required to respect the confidentiality of their classmates and clients, and never to divulge or gossip about private or sensitive information about others. A policy of confidentiality encourages trust so that people can open to the process of healing by admitting and working on their faults without fear of judgment or incrimination to others.

Yama and Niyama

Students shall be familiar with the 10 Yamas and 10 Niyamas of Yoga as listed below which are drawn from the Thirumantiram of Sage Thirumular. Yama and Niyama are the basic practices of Yoga without which no success can be sustained through the more advanced practices of Yoga like Asana. Students are expected to evaluate themselves openly and honestly with the assistance of their practicum adviser in relation to the practice of these 10 Yamas and ten Niyamas. They are expected to work sincerely and diligently to improve their practice of each of these ancient disciplines basic to the practice of Yoga. Perfection is not required but diligent effort and sustained improvements are expected according to the individual capacity of each student as assessed by and discussed with the practicum adviser.

10 Yamas (Restraints)

This does not mean the repression of natural urges or mental impressions but the spiritual, detached awareness that allows the consciousness of the soul to transcend the bonds of attachment and to function unhindered by these things.

1 Ahimsaa (non-violence) Not hurting others (or self) through thought, word, or deed. This includes avoiding eating meat, fowl, fish, eggs, gelatin, and other animal products which are produced by killing the animal.

2 Satya (truth) Not lying, betraying promises, concealing information, or misrepresenting oneself or others.

3 Asteya (nonstealing) Not wrongfully claiming or seizing the property of others (this includes cheating for gain of money, property, credit, acknowledgement, reward, praise, or recognition). Non-stealing should be practiced mentally as well by not coveting the property of others.

4 Brahmacharya (Divine Conduct) Controlling the tendency to act out of passions and overcoming instinctive reactions to events, thoughts, and feelings. Traditional interpretation of Brahmacharya has been limited to "celibacy." From the meaning of the root words brahma meaning "God" and charya meaning "action or conduct," it is clear that the concept of brahmacharya goes far beyond restraining the sexual urges. More or less it is the practice of conducting oneself as the Lord does by always considering and acting for the good of all others.

Celibacy is the ideal practice for the unwed to help avoid needless and draining psychic connection which could diminish the depth of one's spiritual practice and diminish the intimacy between a husband and wife once married. Dating and (sleeping with) partners before marriage is discouraged. Certain mature souls (who represent a rare few within society), with the blessing of a Guru, may take lifetime or temporary vows of celibacy and dedicate their lives to Divine service. Married people are encouraged to practice brahmacharya by remaining monogamous in marriage and confining their sexual attention to their partner alone. Divorce is prohibited. The wise spiritual seeker realizes that all problems come from within, though they may be mirrored by the partner. They realize that leaving their marriage is really running away from their own inner work, which will cause the same problems to arise in all other relationships after. In the case of serious abuse, neglect, adultery, separation may be tolerated. Only in the case of physical abuse, for the protection of one partner or the children, is divorce regrettably permitted.

5 kshamaa (Patience) This means overcoming the irritability and intolerance that causes impatience with people and situations.

6 Dhriti (Steadiness) Overcoming changeability, and lack of dedication and constancy. It is important to face fears and overcome indecisiveness, hesitation, and avoidance. It is also important to honor all commitments by doing what one says they will and to be careful to commit only to obligations which can be realistically fulfilled.

7 Daya (Compassion) Conquering insensitivity and all violent or neglectful patterns that follow. Compassion arises naturally toward all things (even our enemies) when the seeker learns to truly love oneself.

8 Arjava (Honesty, Straightforwardness) Representing oneself and all situations openly and honestly by avoiding deception in all forms. To practice straightforwardness, a person must learn first to know himself and then to love and respect himself enough to present his actions, feelings, thoughts, and personality to all without fear of judgment or criticism. It is a necessary part of the practice of arjava to avoid entering into any debt which cannot be quickly repaid. This is done by paying all fees and dues (like taxes) honestly and promptly to the best of one's financial capacity.

9 Mitaahaara (Moderate Appetite) Not eating too much or too little. Avoiding overeating and excessive fasting or dieting. This practice includes avoiding unwholesome foods in general and those which aggravate a person's Ayurvedic vikriti (constitutional imbalances).

10 Shauca (Purity) Avoiding impurity in body, mind, and speech. The body should be kept clean by regular bath, and the mind similarly purified with mantra and spiritual practice. The mind and speech should be kept on spiritual and uplifting thoughts. It can be helpful to avoid asangha (bad associations), violent and explicit TV, movies, music, books, and other entertainment.

10 Niyama (observances)

1 HrI (Remorse) This means being modest, grateful, and to show remorse for wrong doing. People must be humble to admit their faults and courageous to apologize and make amends whenever possible.

2 SantoSha (Contentment) This is the practice of maintaining an attitude of satisfaction. It is the maintenance of inner joy, serenity, and emotional steadiness throughout the painful and pleasurable experiences that life may offer.

3 Daana (Giving) Giving generously wherever there is need without any thought of reward or acknowledgement. This could be giving of one's money or resources or giving time to volunteer at the Temple or the homeless shelter, feeding animals, or picking up trash. Karma yoga is especially useful here as it more intimately connects a person to the act of giving to serve than to simply give away material things.

4 Astikya (Faith) Strong, unwavering belief in God, the Shastras (scriptures), the Guru, and the path to liberation. This practice involves maintaining faith in difficult situations even when it is difficult, unpopular, or when it does not make sense.

5 Ishvarapuujana (Worship of God) The regular practice of Puja (Worship of one's chosen form of God) and dhyana (meditation on God) to develop bhakti (devotion), shraddha (faith) and Jnaana (Direct perception of God).

6 Siddhaanta shravaNa (Hearing the Scriptures) Listening with open heart to the teachings of the scriptures and the teachings of the Guru. If one truly hears the teachings of the Guru, they will also recall and practice these in their day to day life. This could also include chanting or listening to the sacred hymns of the Scriptures while seeking to open to the inner meaning and the shakti (energy) they bestow.

7 Mati (Cognition, Mindfulness) Developing spiritual will and awareness by seeking the grace of the Guru's guidance and through self-examination.

8 Vrata (Vows) Taking and fulfilling religious vows and observances. This could include: daily meditation, japa, or puja, visiting the Temple or Guru at least once a week, performing pilgrimage to a Holy site at least once a year, and observing the sacred festival days, or stopping bad habits. Making and keeping vows is a good way to develop will power and to redirect the instinctive impulses and awareness inward from its normal state of externalization.

9 Japa (Recitation) Practicing mantras and chanting sacred hymns from the Vedas or Shastras (scriptures and spiritual teachings) daily. This practice restructures the mind and consciousness by bathing awareness in the shakti (energy) of the mantra.

10 Tapas (Spiritual Austerities) Performing saadhana (spiritual practice), sacrifice, and penance. For healthy people, the practice of prostrating 108 times before the deity in a Temple is a safe and effective austerity, as is a temporary vow of silence. Other self-imposed austerities could include fasting once a month on Pradosham day, or a temporary vow of silence. Intense austerities like prolonged fasting, walking on burning coals, sleeping on a bed of nails, mortification, keeping one hand raised for extended periods of time, or special practices like the pancha agni sadhana may be useful with the Guru's express guidance and blessing. It is not wise for a person to practice intense austerities without the guidance of a qualified Guru, because the risk of overdoing a practice or doing the wrong type of practice and causing imbalance are great.

Academic Policies

Attendance Policy

Students shall attend classes punctually and regularly. Unexcused tardiness shall be counted as absences. Unexcused early departure shall likewise be counted as absences. Students are requested to arrive at all school functions a minimum of 5 minutes prior to the scheduled time of commencement, and to remain until dismissed. At the scheduled class time students are expected to sit silently with attention on the teacher. The same rules which apply to the start and end time for school events shall apply to breaks throughout the day. Three unexcused absences may be considered cause for expulsion. Absences, excused or unexcused, shall be limited to 5 for the course. Excused absences shall be granted for occasional uncontrollable accidents, the student's hospitalization (or a doctor's order), death in the family, or death of a close friend. Students are expected to show proof of excusable circumstances (like a mechanic's bill or a

Doctor's note) and notify their teacher ahead of time whenever possible. Students are expected to make up class time for excused and unexcused absences by listening to a recording of the lecture or borrowing notes. Any work missed due to absence must be made up within two week of the original due date.

Snow days

Snow days and other cancelations of class will be announced as soon as possible and students informed by way of phone call, text message, or email as they prefer.

Assignments

Assignments shall be completed and turned in a timely manner. Late assignments shall not be accepted, except in the case of excused absence. Students are responsible for the completion of examinations. Examinations which are missed due to excused absence shall be rescheduled at the teacher's convenience and completed in a timely manner, no later than 2 weeks after the original exam date. All assignments missed due to unexcused absences shall be counted as incomplete and result in no credit.

Practicums

Practicums adhere to the same general attendance policy as classes. Students are required to participate openly and honestly in their personal evaluations. They are expected to whole-heartedly seek the guidance of their practicum counselor, to humbly admit their weaknesses, and to strive diligently and sincerely to conquer these inner obstacles. Perfection is not expected, but honesty, improvement, and consistent effort is required.

Extra-curricular Events

Extra-curricular events adhere to the same general attendance policy as classes. Students are expected to behave in a mature way while attending extra-curricular events, remembering always that they are representatives of the school. They should remain mindful that their presence in public will reflect upon their own level of maturity and spiritual awareness, upon their school, and the profession of Ayurveda. Students are requested to be aware of the traditions of the Temples and other places they visit as a part of the curriculum and to honor those traditions with grace and respect.

Grading

Grading is based upon 4 factors: 1) class participation, homework and other assignments, 2) examinations 2) practicum participation, 3) and final examination. Each of these four factors will create 25% of the final grade.

Grading shall be performed based upon effort and achievement. Students will not be compared to or graded against their peers. Instead, each student shall be graded individually based upon their own efforts and abilities. Intelligence which may lead to academic success is not viewed as a worthy quality in comparison to striving and personal betterment. The Ayurveda practitioner who has enacted the most change in his or her own life will be most competent to assist others in achieving change in their lives. The student who has an ounce of experience of the practice of Ayurveda will have much more to offer the world as a practitioner and teacher than the student who has perfectly memorized the texts, but lacks experiential understanding of their contents. Improvement and sustained effort are therefore viewed as the highest standard for achievement and grading shall be conducted accordingly.

Grade Points

The school grades upon a scale of 0-100 points with 100 considered complete and 0 considered incomplete. 25 points will be awarded automatically for appropriate effort in any assignment. A grade of 100% is considered perfect. A grade of 93% to 99% is considered excellent. A grade of 86% to 92% is considered good. A grade of 79% to 85% is considered average. A grade of 73% to 78% is considered bellow average. A grade lower than 73% for the program shall result in disqualification from certification. Students who earn a grade higher than 79% for the program shall receive certification. Students who earn a grade of higher than 93% graduate with honor, "cum laude," and are thusly distinguished from other graduates.

Class participation, and assignments

Class participation will be graded based upon attendance and efforts. Students who attend classes but do not assert themselves whole-heartedly shall have this reflected in their grades. Reading assignments shall be completed before class and this will be tested by random tests on the reading material. Other assignments may be assigned at times. All assignments shall be completed by their assigned due date. Assignments shall not be accepted late except in the case of excused absence. Class participation and assignments shall constitute 25% of the final grade. Examinations are graded separately.

Practicum Participation and Evaluation

Practicums will be graded based upon participation, achievement, and personal growth, humbleness to admit shortcomings, and effort to overcome such shortcomings. Practicums will be graded upon completion of the course

according to the criteria listed above. If students are concerned about how their practicum evaluation will go, they may request to talk to their teacher about this according to his ability at any point throughout the course. The practicum grade will constitute 25% of the final grade.

Examinations

Random tests will be conducted unannounced at the beginning of class to ensure that students are retaining information covered in class and that they are doing reading assignments. These examinations shall constitute 25% of the final grade.

Final Examination

Final examination will be given at the end of the course and will cover all the material studied in the program. The Final Examination grade constitutes 25% of the final grade.

Extra Credit

Students who are concerned about their grades may request additional assignments for extra credit. Extra credit assignments will grant a specific number of points added to the final grade and vary according to assignment. Students are allowed as many opportunities for extra credit assignments as they desire, but extra credit shall add no more than 15 points to the final grade.

Application

Applications may be made for the current year's program up until about 2 weeks before the program begins. There is a \$50 fee for processing. After the application is received, students will be required to attend at least one interview. Other regulations pertaining to application are written at the bottom of the application itself.

Tuition

Tuition for the course is \$1,500 for each of sixteen 375-hour terms. Students are strongly encouraged if at all possible to pay the full tuition before the commencement of classes. Students are required to pay the tuition in full or their first payment as agreed before classes commence. If a student pays the full tuition for the term at least 1 week before the commencement of the term, he or she shall receive a 5% discount (and pay \$1,425). If the class is canceled by the school due to not enough students enrolling, a full refund of tuition will be issued. Students who can prove that they cannot afford to pay the tuition in full before the commencement of classes, but that they can afford to pay in installments, may be approved for a payment plan. In this case, students are required to sign a legally binding contract agreeing to pay all of their payments, regardless of whether they finish the term. The school depends on the tuition of students to afford to offer the course, and therefore requires students to pay for the course in full even if they decide to drop out from their studies. If a student does not stay current with their payments, this may be grounds for disciplinary measures.

Work Study

There are a few work/study opportunities for students in need offered each term. For students who excel in the application process, but who have trouble to afford tuition, work study opportunities may be awarded based upon need and qualification. The work study program offers students a discounted tuition in turn for working for the school doing various tasks which may include (but are not limited to) computer work, website maintenance, reception, plant care, research, typing, proof reading, and cleaning. Students interested in the work study program are encouraged to contact Swamiji to express interest and to learn more gananathamritananda@gmail.com