

## NAST Competencies Summary

### Degree: BFA in Theatre Education, *a professional undergraduate degree*

**Essential Note:** Items below are excerpts from the *NAST Handbook*. Items 1 through 5 indicate the content and natures of the competencies expected of those graduating with the above degree. Items 6 and 7 indicate desirable personal qualities and recommendations for competency development.

**Only the *Handbook* in its entirety contains all standards and guidelines applicable to and used by all phases of NAST membership reviews.** In the text below “H.” indicates the location of the excerpted text in the Handbook; the term “(All)” indicates standards applicable to all professional undergraduate theatre degrees including theatre education; “(Theatre Education)” indicates specific standards for that major.

#### Item 1. (All)

#### **Common Body of Knowledge and Skills (H.VIII.B.)**

1. **Production.** Students must acquire:
  - a. Technical skills requisite for artistic self-expression in at least one major area of production (for example, acting, design/technology, playwriting, directing) and those skills must be progressively developed to the highest level appropriate to the particular area of concentration. Technical proficiency standards should be established for each level of study. The achievement of a specified level of proficiency in technique should be required for retention at each level and must be required for graduation.
  - b. An overview understanding of the major aspects, techniques, and directions in the area of concentration.
  - c. Fundamental, comprehensive understanding of the various elements and basic interrelated processes of creation, interpretation, performance, and production.
  - d. Fundamental, conceptual understanding of the expressive possibilities of theatre.
  - e. Knowledge and skills sufficient to work in both collaborative and individual roles in matters of theatre interpretation.
  - f. Growth in artistry, technical skills, collaborative competence, and knowledge of repertory through regular performance and production experiences. Students must have such experiences throughout the degree program.
2. **Repertory.** Students must acquire:
  - a. Familiarity with theatre literature of various historical periods, cultural sources, and modes of presentation.
  - b. Experience with specific repertories and comparative standards of production quality through performance, academic study, and attendance at productions.
3. **Theoretical and Historical Studies**
  - a. Students must acquire:
    - (1) The ability to analyze plays perceptively and to evaluate them critically.
    - (2) An understanding of the common elements and vocabulary of theatre and of the interaction of these elements, and be able to employ this knowledge in analysis, including analyses of their productions.
    - (3) The ability to place works of theatre in historical and stylistic contexts and have some understanding of the cultural milieu in which they were created.
    - (4) The ability to develop and defend informed judgments about theatre.

- b. The competencies listed in Standards for Accreditation VIII.B.3.a. are achieved by coursework and studies in such fields as repertory, playwriting, theatre history, theatre criticism, philosophy of theatre, dramaturgy, performance studies, movement, anatomy and kinesiology, and production design.
  - c. In certain areas of specialization such as costume and scenic design, it is advisable to require that students study the historical development of works within the specialization.
4. **Technology.** Students must acquire a working knowledge of technologies and equipment applicable to their area(s) of specialization.
  5. **Synthesis.** While synthesis is a lifetime process, by the end of undergraduate studies students should be able to work independently on a variety of professional problems by combining, as appropriate to the issue, their capabilities in performance, repertory, theory, history, and technology, as well as other fields they have studied.

## Item 2. (All)

### Results (H.VIII.C.)

Upon completion of any specific professional undergraduate degree program:

1. Students must demonstrate achievement of professional, entry-level competence in the area of specialization including significant technical mastery, the capability to produce work and solve professional problems independently, and a coherent set of artistic/intellectual goals that are evident in their work.
2. Students must demonstrate their competence by developing a body of work for evaluation in the major area of study. A senior project or presentation in the major area is required in many concentrations, and strongly recommended for all others.
3. Students must have the ability to communicate ideas, concepts, and requirements to theatre professionals and laypersons related to the practice of the major field. Such communication may involve oral, written, visual, and musical media.

## Item 3. (Theatre Education)

### Theatre Competencies (H.X.C.2.)

*(in addition to those stated for all degree programs in VIII.B. and C.):*

The following basic competencies are essential to all prospective theatre teachers:

#### a. The Production Foundation

- (1) The prospective theatre teacher must be familiar with the basic expressive, technical, procedural, and organizational skills, and conceptual insights essential for theatrical performance. Instruction should include traditional processes as well as new developments.
- (2) Prospective theatre teachers should have the understanding to make pupils emphatically aware of the all-important process of artistic creation from conceptualized image to finished work.
- (3) The prospective theatre teacher must be a competent director, able to create expressive performances with various types of groups and in general classroom situations. Laboratory experiences to give the prospective teacher opportunities to apply rehearsal techniques and procedures are essential.

- b. **Aesthetics, Theatre History, Literature, Theory, and Criticism.** The prospective theatre teacher should have an understanding of contending philosophies of theatre, the development of past and contemporary theatre forms, major styles and periods of theatre history and dramatic literature,

theories of criticism, and an understanding of the fundamental and integral relationships of all these to the theatre performance.

- c. **Advanced Work.** It is expected that a student in a B.F.A. program will have an area or areas of emphasis in performance. The student in a B.A. program should have an opportunity for advanced work in at least one production area. These studies should build upon the competencies outlined in Standards for Accreditation X.C.1. and 2., and should require no less than 6 semester hours.

#### Item 4. (Theatre Education)

##### **Teaching Competencies (H.X.C.3.)**

*(in addition to those stated for all degree programs in VIII.B. and C.):*

The theatre teacher is expected to understand the total contemporary educational program—including relationships among the arts—in order to apply theatre competencies in teaching situations and to integrate theatre instruction into the total process of education. Essential competencies are:

- a. An understanding of child development and the identification and understanding of psychological principles of learning as these relate to theatre education.
- b. An understanding of the philosophical and social foundation underlying theatre in education and the ability to express a rationale for personal attitudes and beliefs.
- c. An ability to assess aptitudes, experiential backgrounds, skills, and interests of individuals and groups of pupils, to devise learning experiences to meet assessed needs, and to manage classrooms and rehearsals effectively.
- d. A knowledge of current methods and materials available in all fields and levels of theatre education.
- e. An understanding of the principles and methods of developing curricula and the short- and long-term units that comprise them.
- f. An understanding of evaluative techniques and the ability to apply them in assessing both the progress of students and in the objectives and procedures of the curriculum.
- g. An awareness of the need for continuing study, self-evaluation, and professional growth.

#### Item 5. (All)

##### **General Studies Competencies (H.VIII.A.6.)**

- a. **Competencies.** Specific competency expectations are defined by the institution. Normally, students holding a professional undergraduate degree in theatre are expected to have:
  - (1) The ability to think, speak, and write clearly and effectively.
  - (2) An informed acquaintance with fields of study beyond theatre such as those in the arts and humanities, the natural and physical sciences, and the social sciences.
  - (3) A functional awareness of the differences and commonalities regarding work in artistic, scientific, and humanistic domains.
  - (4) Awareness that multiple disciplinary perspectives and techniques are available to consider all issues and responsibilities including, but not limited to, history, culture, moral and ethical issues, and decision-making.
  - (5) The ability to identify possibilities and locate information in other fields that have bearing on theatre questions and endeavors.
- b. **Operational Guidelines**
  - (1) Some theatre courses, if conceived and taught in relation to other realms of human experience, may be appropriately included in the category of general studies. Some theatre history, literature, theoretical or cultural studies may meet this criterion.

- (2) Many areas of inquiry from general education are directly supportive of various specializations in theatre.

#### Item 6. (Theatre Education)

##### **Desirable Personal Qualities (H.X.C.1.)**

*(in addition to those stated for all degree programs in VIII.B. and C.):*

Desirable characteristics of the prospective theatre teacher are:

- a. The potential to inspire others and to excite the imagination of pupils, engendering a respect and desire for theatre and theatre experiences.
- b. The ability and desire to seek out, evaluate, and apply new ideas and developments in both theatre and education.
- c. The ability to maintain positive relationships with individuals and various social and ethnic groups, and empathize with pupils and colleagues of differing backgrounds.
- d. The ability to articulate and communicate the goals of a theatre program to pupils, colleagues, administrators, and parents in an effective and professionally responsible manner.

#### Item 7. (All)

##### **Recommendations for Professional Studies (H.VIII.D.)**

Students engaged in professional undergraduate degrees in theatre should have opportunities to:

1. Gain a basic understanding of the nature of professional work in their major field. Examples are: organizational structures and working patterns; artistic, intellectual, economic, technological, and political contexts; and developmental potential.
2. Acquire the skills necessary to assist in the development and advancement of their careers, normally including the development of competencies in communication, presentation, business, and leadership skills necessary to engage in professional practice in the major field.
3. Explore areas of individual interest related to theatre in general or to the major. Examples are: bibliography, aesthetics, theory, production practices, specialized topics in theatre history, analysis, technology, and pedagogy.
4. Practice synthesis of a broad range of theatre knowledge and skills, particularly through learning activities, such as independent study, that involve a minimum of faculty guidance, where the emphasis is on evaluation at completion (see Section III.G.).

#### Please Note:

For specific information regarding curricular structure, see H.X.A.1. Normally, approximately 50% of a 120 semester hour program is in theatre studies, and 15-20% in professional education, to ensure that time is available to develop the requisite competencies.

For a table of contents for all standards, see [NAST Handbook](#).