

Draft I: Proposed Revisions to the *Handbook 2022-23*

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS OF THEATRE

January 4, 2023

OFFICIAL NOTICE. This constitutes the official notice of proposed revisions to the *Handbook* forwarded in advance as required by the NAST Bylaws.

Note: All proposed revisions are indicated in red.

Following the current comment period, a second proposal of these amendments will be presented to the NAST membership in February for further review and comment.

VOTE SCHEDULED. A final text of these proposed revisions will be presented to the membership for a vote in March.

Rationales for these changes are provided at the end of the document on page 7.

COMMENT PERIOD I

January 4 – February 3, 2023

Jenny Rebecca G. Kuhlmann
Management Associate for Communications and Publications

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS OF THEATRE

11250 Roger Bacon Drive, Suite 21

Reston, Virginia 20190

Email: jkuhlmann@arts-accredit.org

Phone: (703) 437-0700, Extension 112

Facsimile: (703) 437-6312

Website: <https://nast.arts-accredit.org/>

Standards for Accreditation

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Standards for Accreditation

II. Purposes and Operations

E. Faculty and Staff

4. Loads

b. Guidelines, Recommendations, and Comment

Amend II.E.4.b.(1) as follows:

- (1) Institutions use a variety of methods for calculating teaching loads. The choice of method is the prerogative of the institution. **When determining loads, it is recommended that institutions consider the means (such as on ground, hybrid, fully online) by which educational programs are delivered.**

Standards for Accreditation

III. Theatre Program Components

H. Distance Learning

Amend III.H. as follows:

H. Distance Learning *(applicable to programs that are partially or entirely delivered by distance learning)*

1. ~~Definitions. Distance learning involves programs of study delivered entirely or partially away from regular face-to-face interactions between teachers and students in studios, classrooms, tutorials, laboratories, and rehearsals associated with coursework, degrees, and programs on the campus. Normally, distance learning uses technologies to deliver instruction and support systems, and enables substantive interaction between instructor and student. Technologies include, but are not limited to:~~

a. ~~Distance Learning. Involves programs of study delivered entirely or partially away from regular face-to-face interactions between teachers and students in studios, classrooms, tutorials, and laboratories associated with coursework, degrees, and programs on the campus. Normally, distance learning uses technologies to deliver instruction and support systems, and enable substantive interaction between instructor and student either synchronously or asynchronously. Technologies include, but are not limited to:~~

- ~~(1) a. The Internet;~~
- ~~(2) b. One- and/or two-way transmission through open broadcast, closed circuit, cable, microwave, broadband lines, fiber optics, and wireless communication devices;~~
- ~~(3) c. Audio and/or video conferencing; or~~
- ~~(4) d. Other media Video cassettes, DVDs, and CD-ROMs, if the cassettes, DVDs, or CD-ROMs are used in a course in conjunction with any of the technologies listed in (1)–(3) a–c. above.~~

b. ~~Substantive Interaction. Involves engaging students in teaching, learning, evaluation, and assessment as related to the course of study in which the student is enrolled. It also includes, but is not limited to, at least two of the following:~~

- ~~(1) Providing direct instruction;~~
- ~~(2) Assessing and/or providing feedback to students regarding their course of study;~~
- ~~(3) Providing information and/or responding to questions regarding the content of a course and/or required competencies;~~
- ~~(4) Facilitating group discussion regarding the content of a course and/or required competencies; and~~
- ~~(5) Other instructional opportunities and/or initiatives deemed appropriate by the institution intended to support and advance a student’s course of study.~~

2. ~~Means. The distance aspect of these programs may be delivered through a variety of means, including teaching and learning through electronic systems. Regardless of the means employed, an institution shall ensure that regular interaction between a student and an instructor(s), prior to the student’s completion of course of study, takes place through:~~

a. ~~The provision of opportunities for substantive interactions with the student on a predictable and regular basis commensurate with the length of time and the breadth of the student’s course of study;~~

and

- b. Monitoring the student's academic engagement and success, and ensuring that instructors are responsible for promptly and proactively engaging in substantive interaction with a student as needed as indicated by such monitoring, or upon request by the student.

3. Standards Applications

- a. Distance learning programs must meet all NAST operational and curricular standards for programs of their type and content. This means that the functions and competencies required by applicable standards are met even when distance learning mechanisms predominate in the total delivery system.
- b. Programs in which more than 40% of their requirements are fulfilled through distance learning will be designated as distance learning programs in NAST publications.

4. Standards

a. Purposes and Resources

- (1) Purposes shall be clear. The institution must demonstrate that such purposes can be delivered through current or proposed systems of distance learning.
- (2) Expectations with regard to competency development and the acquisition of knowledge and skills shall be consistent among curricular programs whether offered through on ground, hybrid, or distance learning means. This applies to both lecture and studio coursework.
- (3) ~~(2)~~ The institution must provide financial and technical support commensurate with the purpose, size, scope, and content of its distance learning programs.
- (4) ~~(3)~~ Any sustained enrollment growth must be accompanied in a timely manner by a corresponding growth in resources and support systems.

b. Delivery Systems, Verification, and Evaluation

- (1) Delivery systems must be logically matched to the purposes of each program. Delivery systems are defined as the operational interrelationships of such elements as program or course content, interactive technologies, teaching techniques, schedules, patterns of interaction between teacher and student, and evaluation expectations and mechanisms.
- (2) The institution must have processes that establish that the student who registers in a distance education course or program is the same student who participates in and completes the program and receives academic credit. Verification methods are determined by the institution and may include, but are not limited to, secure login and password protocols, proctored examinations, and new or other technologies and practices.
- (3) Institutions must use processes that protect student privacy and notify students of any projected or additional student charges associated with verification of student identity at the time of registration or enrollment in distance education programs.
- (4) Specific opportunities for student evaluations shall be established throughout the time period of each course or program.

c. Technical Prerequisites

- (1) The institution must determine and publish for each distance learning program or course (a) requirements for technical competence, and (b) any technical equipment requirements. The

institution must have means for assessing the extent to which prospective students meet these requirements before they are accepted or enrolled.

- (2) The institution shall publish information regarding the availability of academic and technical support services.

d. Program Consistency and Equivalency

- (1) The institution shall have mechanisms for assuring consistency in the application of policies, procedures, and standards for entering, continuing, and completing the course or program.
- (2) When an identical program, or a program with an identical title, is offered through distance learning as well as on campus, the institution must be able to demonstrate functional equivalency in all aspects of each program. Mechanisms must be established to assure equal quality among delivery systems.

- e. Communication with Students.** Instructions to students, expectations for achievement, and evaluation criteria must be clearly stated and readily available to all involved in a particular distance learning program. Students must be fully informed of means for asking questions and otherwise communicating with instructors and students as required.

5. **Notification Rule.** A special notification rule applies to institutions that participate in federal Title IV programs and to which Standards for Accreditation XIX., Section 2.D. applies.

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Standards for Accreditation

VII. The Liberal Arts Degree with a Major in Theatre

E. Liberal Arts Programs with Studies in Musical Theatre

Amend VII.E. follows:

~~E.—Liberal Arts Programs with Studies in Musical Theatre. Standards and Guidelines for all such programs are found in Appendix I.B., Section 3.~~

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Standards for Accreditation

VII. The Liberal Arts Degree with a Major in Theatre

F. Liberal Arts Programs Combining Studies in Theatre, Business, and Arts Administration

Amend VII.F. as follows:

E. ~~F~~ Liberal Arts Programs Combining Studies in Theatre, Business, Arts Administration. Standards and Guidelines for all such programs are found in Appendix I.C., Section 2.

Standards for Accreditation

IX. Specific Professional Baccalaureate Degrees in Theatre

D. Bachelor of Fine Arts in Musical Theatre

Amend IX.D. as follows:

D. Bachelor of Fine Arts in Musical Theatre with a Theatre Emphasis

NOTE: The text below regarding the Bachelor of Fine Arts in Musical Theatre with a Theatre Emphasis is reiterated in Appendix I.B., Standards and Guidelines for Opera and Musical Theatre Programs, Section 5.B. Appendix I.B. also includes standards and guidelines for Bachelor of Fine Arts degrees in Musical Theatre with a Music Emphasis (Appendix I.B., Section 5.A.) and Bachelor of Fine Arts degrees with an Interdisciplinary Emphasis (Appendix I.B., Section 5.C.).

The standards statements below refer to professional baccalaureate programs in musical theatre where theatre is the emphasis of the curriculum. The title normally applied to this program is the Bachelor of Fine Arts in Musical Theatre. These programs are reviewed for accreditation by NAST. *For standards for the professional baccalaureate degree in musical theatre where music is the emphasis, see Appendix I.B.*

1. Curricular Structure

- a. Standard.** Curricular structure, content, and time requirements shall enable students to develop the range of knowledge, skills, and competencies expected of those holding a professional baccalaureate degree in musical theatre with an emphasis in theatre as indicated below and in Standards for Accreditation VIII.
- b. Guidelines.** Curricula to accomplish this purpose normally adhere to the following guidelines: studies in the major theatre area and supportive courses in theatre and dance shall total at least 50% of the curriculum; studies in music, 20–25%; general studies, 20–25%; electives, approximately 5% (see Standards for Accreditation III.C.).

2. Specific Guidelines for General Studies. Studies in the career-related business aspects of musical theatre are strongly recommended.

3. Essential Competencies, Experiences, and Opportunities (*in addition to those stated for all professional theatre degree programs*)

- a. Achievement of the highest possible level of performance as an actor-singer. Studies in acting shall continue throughout the entire degree program.
- b. Thorough development of skills in acting and skills in dance as appropriate to musical theatre.
- c. Thorough development in basic musical skills including voice performance, musicianship, and music theory. Studies in voice should continue throughout the degree program.
- d. Opportunities to develop a high level of skill in sight-singing.
- e. Performance experience in workshops and full productions of musical theatre in a variety of formal and informal settings shall be provided throughout the degree program. Students must participate in at least one fully produced major musical production during their course of study. In addition, performance of a significant role in at least one musical production during advanced study and prior to graduation is required. This performance need not be fully produced and may be in a medium other than live musical performance.
- f. Opportunities for developing repertory and techniques for auditions.

Appendix I.B.

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Appendix I.B., Standards and Guidelines for Opera and Musical Theatre Programs

Section 3. General Guidelines: Undergraduate Academic Programs

A. Degree Types

Amend Section 3.A. as follows:

A. Degree Types

1. **Liberal Arts Degrees.** Usually titled Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Science, degrees meeting the standards for a *liberal arts* emphasis normally contain 30–45% content in the major. The primary curricular objective of this program is general studies in the liberal arts. Within the 30–45% of the degree devoted to the major, the objectives of the program will dictate the degree of emphasis that can be placed upon opera or musical theatre training (*standards and guidelines pertaining to a liberal arts degree with a major in Theatre may be found in Standards for Accreditation IV.C. and VII.*).
2. **Professional Degrees.** Usually titled Bachelor of Music or Bachelor of Fine Arts, the *professional* degree normally requires at least 65% content in the major area. The primary curricular objective of the program is basic professional studies in the discipline. Within the 65% or more of the degree devoted to the major, the objectives of the program will dictate the degree of emphasis that can be placed upon opera or musical theatre training (*standards and guidelines pertaining to a professional degree with a major in Musical Theatre may be found in Standards for Accreditation IV.C., VIII., and IX.D. and Appendix I.B., Section 5.A.–C.*).

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Appendix I.B., Standards and Guidelines for Opera and Musical Theatre Programs

Section 5. Standards for the Professional Baccalaureate Degree in Musical Theatre

A. Musical Theatre Degrees with a Music Emphasis

Amend Section 5.A. as follows:

A. Musical Theatre Degrees with a Music Emphasis

NOTE: The text below is duplicated in its entirety in the *NASM Handbook, Standards for Accreditation IX.J.*

The standards statements below refer to professional baccalaureate programs in musical theatre where music is the emphasis of the curriculum. Some of the titles applied to these programs are: Bachelor of Music in Musical Theatre; Bachelor of Fine Arts in Musical Theatre. These programs are reviewed for accreditation by NASM.

1. Curricular Structure

- a. **Standard.** Curricular structure, content, and time requirements shall enable students to develop the range of knowledge, skills, and competencies expected of those holding a professional baccalaureate degree in musical theatre with an emphasis in music, as indicated below and in the *NASM Handbook, Standards for Accreditation VIII.*

- b. **Guidelines.** Curricula to accomplish this purpose normally adhere to the following guidelines: studies in the major music area and supportive courses in music shall total at least 50% of the curriculum; studies in theatre and dance, 20–25%; general studies, 20–25%; electives, approximately 5% (see *NASM Handbook*, Standards for Accreditation III.C.).
2. **Specific Guideline for General Studies.** Studies in the career-related business aspects of musical theatre are strongly recommended.
 3. **Essential Competencies, Experiences, and Opportunities** (*in addition to those stated for all professional music degree programs*):
 - a. Achievement of the highest possible level of performance as a singer-actor. Studies in voice shall continue throughout the entire degree program.
 - b. Achievement of a high level of skill in sight-singing.
 - c. Thorough development of skills in acting.
 - d. Basic development of dance and movement skills appropriate to musical theatre.
 - e. Performance experience in workshops and full productions of musical theatre in a variety of formal and informal settings shall be provided throughout the degree program. Students must participate in at least one fully produced major musical production during their course of study. In addition, performance of a significant role in at least one musical production during advanced study and prior to graduation is required. This performance need not be fully produced and may be in a medium other than live musical performance.
 - f. Opportunities for developing repertory and techniques for auditions.

NOTE: Rationale for Changes

The rationale for the changes proposed above are as follows:

1. *Standards for Accreditation, II.E.4.b.(1)*: To recommend the inclusion of consideration of the means of delivery when determining teaching loads.
2. *Standards for Accreditation, III.H.*: To align with federal regulation and guidelines.
3. *Standards for Accreditation, VII.E.*: To remove the unnecessary citation.
4. *Standards for Accreditation, VII.F.*: To re-letter a section.
5. *Standards for Accreditation, IX.D.*: To clarify that the standards pertain to the Bachelor of Fine Arts in Musical Theatre with a Theatre Emphasis.
6. *Appendix I.B., Section 3.A.*: To provide citations to applicable standards as they pertain to liberal arts and professional undergraduate standards.
7. *Appendix I.B., Section 5.A.*: To remove the incorrect citation.