

How to be an Official Institutional Representative to NAST

Congratulations! Your institution is an accredited institutional member of NAST and you have been appointed its official representative to the Association. This document provides a brief overview of your fundamental responsibilities, with appropriate links to other information found on the NAST website.

SIX BASICS

1. Accredited Membership in NAST is held by the institution, and thus only the institution has a vote in official membership actions. Each member institution selects one official representative through a procedure or protocol determined by the institution. It is common practice for the executive leader of the theatre unit to be the official representative to NAST; however, some institutions choose another administrator or a member of the faculty with knowledge of education and training in theatre.
2. Individuals serve as official representatives on behalf of the institution, its theatre program, and its faculty, administrators, students, and other associated constituencies. Although individual official representatives exercise judgment and carry out most of the volunteer work of the Association, they are delegates to, not members of, NAST.
3. The official representative is an emissary representing both NAST to his or her institution, and the institution to NAST. Both roles are necessary if either is to function effectively.
4. Effective communication within the institution by the official representative is essential.
5. Procedures or protocols regarding the distribution of official communications about specific NAST matters are determined at each member institution. These procedures and protocols should describe the levels and types of information various offices or groups want and need to know, and when and by whom they are to be informed. NAST provides [Internal Communications worksheets](#) to assist in this regard. NAST does provide copies of accrediting Commission actions to the chief executive officer of the institution.
6. NAST exists to provide assistance and appropriate support. It seeks a positive, productive relationship with its member institutions and representatives.

MAJOR RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Communicate

As the official institutional representative, you should communicate effectively, promptly, and judiciously, balancing information-sharing with respect for others' interests and time. Consistent with item 5 in the "Six Basics" listed above, the official institutional representative is expected to foster policies, protocols, and common understanding about regular communications flow regarding various NAST matters within the theatre unit, and beyond if the institution is multipurpose. All items below are central to or matters for communication.

2. Become Familiar with NAST

Know how NAST is structured, its basic philosophical principles, and how it works. Resources to support this objective may be found under [Institutional Representatives](#) and [Resources for Current Members](#).

3. Represent Accurately

Represent NAST policies, procedures, and standards accurately. Current versions are found in the latest NAST [Handbook](#), including any current addenda, and in the NAST [Procedures for Institutions](#). Be sure that all involved parties at your institution are using current information. Make clear distinctions between what is under discussion or review at NAST and NAST's current policies and standards.

4. Be Informed

Make it your business to know what NAST is doing and share the information with others. View periodically the [Current Notices](#) and NAST [Proposed Handbook Revisions](#) sections of the website. Attend NAST [Annual Meetings](#). Provide regular information on important points, issues, or discussions to faculty and other administrators as predetermined by your communications plan or as appropriate to the nature of the topic.

5. Be Proactive

Respond in a timely manner on behalf of the institution to requests for comment on drafts, suggestions, and information. Local consultative review and response to standards drafts are especially important.

6. Attend the NAST Annual Meeting

The NAST [Annual Meeting](#) provides the most concentrated exchange of information among institutions and between institutions and the Association. Institutions are welcome to send as many additional representatives as they wish, or a substitute for the designated official representative. Report ideas from the Annual Meeting to interested parties on your campus consistent with item 4 above.

7. Vote at the Annual Meeting

Votes are taken at the national level. These include actions on the NAST standards and elections of officers. An institution may change its official representative temporarily for purposes of voting at an Annual Meeting.

8. Volunteer

Volunteer as opportunities arise and, if nominated, agree to stand for elected office. Only the official representative is eligible for most offices in NAST.

9. Provide Leadership in Matters of Accreditation

- a. Provide leadership or management for NAST reviews for renewal of Membership. This means applying knowledge of the standards and procedures of the Association, understanding the options for [Self-Study process and format](#), developing an [internal institutional communication plan](#) that addresses various steps in the review, and ensuring that the overall process is oriented and structured to serve current and future needs of the theatre school or department. NAST provides [Annual Meeting](#) sessions and web information to assist with these responsibilities.
- b. Provide leadership or management for NAST [reviews of new curricula](#) being developed at the institution between regular reviews for renewal of Membership. Each new curriculum must receive Plan Approval from the Commission before students are enrolled.

10. Submit HEADS and Other Required Annual Reports

Assure that the NAST Annual Report, also referred to as the [HEADS Data Survey](#), is submitted online by the deadline. The same is true for the [Accreditation Audit](#), [Affirmation Statement](#), and [Supplemental Annual Report](#) (required only by free-standing institutions to meet federal mandates). Official representatives receive notice and a password each year when the HEADS project is open for data entry.

11. Use HEADS Data

Be knowledgeable about the ways HEADS data, compiled from institutional HEADS Data Surveys, can be used beneficially in decision making at the institution and in the theatre school or department. Understand the possibilities inherent in special statistical reports customized for the institution.

12. Use and Share Access to HEADS Online System and NAST Website

Use, share, and otherwise work with passwords you are given to the HEADS Data System and to the entire NAST website according to policies and protocols developed in the communication plan created within the institution. For security reasons, these two passwords are provided only to the official institutional representative. NAST has no interest in who else has the passwords as long as the decision regarding distribution is made within, and access controlled by, the institution.

13. Ensure Accuracy in NAST's Published and Internal Records of Your Institution

Assure that the annual [NAST Accreditation Audit](#) is carefully reviewed and returned to NAST by the deadline. This audit is informational, not financial. The request is sent from NAST to the official representative.

14. Contact NAST

If a problem, concern, or question arises that remains after consulting published material, contact the [NAST National Office staff](#) immediately to seek resolution, and if necessary, counsel others to do the same.