

Addendum to the NAST *Handbook 2024-25*

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS OF THEATRE

March 2025

As noted below, the NAST Commission on Accreditation and membership approved these revisions during votes that took place during the NAST Annual Meeting in March 2025.

Rules of Practice and Procedure, Part II

— Action by the NAST Commission on Accreditation —

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Rules of Practice and Procedure, Part II

Article IV., Commission Policies

Section 3. Policy Concerning Commission Action and Timelines

A. Action

Amend Article IV., Section 3.A. as follows:

- A. Action.** After the second consecutive request from the Commission for information sufficient to enable an accreditation decision, should an application of a member institution fail to indicate compliance with a specific standard, the Commission shall adopt one of the following motions upon third consideration of the application:
1. To require a response from the institution for the next Commission meeting demonstrating compliance with any standard cited;
 2. To require a response from the institution for the next Commission meeting showing why the institution:
 - a. should not be placed on probation, or
 - b. should not have its membership revoked.
 3. To place the institution on probation; or
 4. To revoke membership.

NOTE: An institution placed on probation is reminded of the timelines pertaining to this sanction (see Bylaws, Article I., Section 3.C.) and to its responsibility to disclose the sanction to current and prospective students (see Rules of Practice and Procedure, Part II, Article XI., Section 2.B.).

NOTE: In extreme cases, the Commission ~~will~~ **may** take immediate action to sever an institution's relationship with NAST by revoking accreditation when it has been determined that such an action is warranted (see Rules of Practice and Procedure, Part II, Article IV., Section 5.B.2.b.).

Rules of Practice and Procedure, Part II

Article IV., Commission Policies

Section 5. Commission Procedures in Extreme Matters of Institutional Ethics and Integrity

Amend Article IV., Section 5. as follows:

Section 5. Commission Procedures in Extreme Matters of Institutional Ethics and Integrity

A. When the Commission has cause to believe that an institution’s non-compliance with NAST consensus-based standards and/or Code of Ethics threatens its fundamental viability or integrity because:

1. The fundamental purposes of the institution or theatre unit cannot be fulfilled; or
2. There are serious conditions that cause major adverse effects on the overall financial viability or operational integrity of the institution or theatre unit; or
3. The program or programs, or courses or study, offered in the academic catalog of the institution cannot be delivered; or
4. The institution or theatre unit is deliberately misrepresenting itself or its program(s) to students and the public in categories of published information required by NAST standards.

The Commission may request the institution to provide written information documenting the relationship between conditions at the institution and/or the theatre unit and compliance with applicable NAST standards.

B. If information is not forthcoming within the time stipulated, or the Commission finds that, with respect to the institution or the theatre unit, institutional viability has been lost, is in jeopardy, or that institutional integrity has been seriously undermined, the Commission will:

1. With regard to an institution that is an applicant, but not yet a member, cease the application process.
2. With regard to a member institution,
 - a. Issue an order requesting that the institution show cause why its Membership status should not be revoked, and providing an appropriate timeline for reply and suggested corrective actions; or
 - b. In extreme cases, immediately sever the relationship between the institution and NAST by revoking accreditation.

The institution may appeal the decision of the Commission in accordance with the NAST appeals procedure.

NOTE: ~~NAST may limit the adverse or other action to a particular program(s) offered by the institution or to a particular additional location(s) of an institution, without necessarily taking action against the entire institution and all of its programs, provided the noncompliance is limited to a particular program or location. Under such conditions, NAST may maintain the institution’s accreditation until the institution has had reasonable time to complete the activities in its teach-out plan or to fulfill the obligations of any teach-out agreement to assist students in transferring or completing their programs.~~

**Rules of Practice and Procedure, Part II
Article V., Substantive Change
Section 1. Procedure**

Amend Article V., Section 1. as follows:

~~**NOTE:** NAST may limit the adverse or other action to a particular program(s) offered by the institution or to a particular additional location(s) of an institution, without necessarily taking action against the entire institution and all of its programs, provided the noncompliance is limited to a particular program or location.~~

Section 1. Procedure. Institutions are required to gain prior approval of substantive change occurring between regular accreditation visits. Substantive changes occurring during accreditation review periods are reported and considered as part of the Self-Study, on-site visit, and Commission review. The Association also offers the opportunity for member institutions to receive an optional consultative review of proposed substantive changes by the Commission on Accreditation prior to submission of an official request for substantive change. Procedures and submission requirements for substantive change may be obtained from the National Office.

Growth experienced by an institution sufficient to result in the requirement of a special review is defined in the agency's Substantive Change policy as being "significant" (see *NAST Handbook*, Rules of Practice and Procedure, Part II, Article V.). When considering the impact growth may have on an institution, many individual factors must be considered, including the availability of resources to support the growth, as well as related factors such as the size and scope of the theatre unit, relationships and balances that must be maintained between size and scope (see *NAST Handbook*, Standards for Accreditation II.B.), and the effect growth will have on the institution's ability to continue to meet applicable standards as they pertain to operations and curricular programs. For this reason, NAST considers each instance of growth, including, but not limited to, rapid enrollment growth, in light of the impact such growth has on these factors singly and in combination. In the aggregate, conditions and requirements associated with assessing the impact of growth for the purposes described throughout NAST documents constitute NAST's operating definition and means for determining the significance of growth in specific instances.

The nature and scope of the substantive change or the extent to which the institution demonstrates its ability to meet all applicable standards may necessitate an on-site visit or a comprehensive review either as required by *NAST Handbook* provisions or at the discretion of the Commission.

**Rules of Practice and Procedure, Part II
Article V., Substantive Change
Section 2. Definition**

Amend Article V., Section 2. as follows:

Section 2. Definition. *Substantive change* includes, but is not limited to:

- A. Any fundamental change in the established mission, goals, or objectives of the institution or theatre unit.
- B. Any change in the legal status, form of control, or ownership of the institution.
- C. The acquisition of any other institution or any program or location of another institution.
- D. The addition of or change to curricular programs that represent a significant departure from the existing offerings or educational programs or method of delivery, from those that were offered when NAST most recently evaluated the institution. As examples, this provision includes (1) significant changes made in conjunction with a change from quarter to semester hours or vice versa, and (2) a change that would result in the institution (a) offering 50 percent of a program through distance learning means, (b) enrolling at least 50

percent of its students in programs offered through distance learning means, or (c) offering at least 50 percent of its courses through distance learning means.

- E. The addition of curricular programs at a degree or credential level other than the curricular level(s) included in the institution's current accreditation (e.g., the offer of a graduate degree in theatre by an institution that previously offered only undergraduate degrees in theatre).
- F. A change in the measurement of credit or time requirements (i.e., from quarter hours to semester hours or vice versa, from clock hours to credit hours or vice versa, etc.).

EXPLANATORY NOTE: Clock-hour systems measure course length in terms of the total number of hours devoted to face-to-face instruction. Credit-hour systems, on the other hand, assign numerical credit to courses based both on the number of instructional hours per week over a standard academic term (semester or quarter) and the amount of preparatory time per week that students must spend outside the classroom. For the NAST standards on computing credit hours, see Standards for Accreditation III.A.

- G. A substantial increase or decrease in:
 - 1. The number of clock or credit hours awarded for successful completion of a program; or
 - 2. The length of a program.
- H. Adding a branch campus or other entity (such as an additional location, extension program, other external program) at which the institution offers at least fifty percent of any educational program in theatre, regardless of how many such campuses or other entities have been approved previously by NAST.

NOTE: The agency's review will include an assessment of the institution's fiscal and administrative capability to operate the location or branch campus, the regular evaluations of locations, and verification that (1) academic control is clearly identified by the institution; (2) the institution has adequate faculty, facilities, resources, and academic and student support systems in place; (3) the institution is financially stable; and (4) the institution has engaged in long-range planning for the expansion.

- I. Participation in an agreement to teach-out students from an institution or program that is closing. (Institutions to which Standards for Accreditation XIX. pertains must review and demonstrate compliance with Standards for Accreditation XIX., Section 1.K.)-
- J. The addition of a permanent location at a site at which the institution is conducting a teach-out for students of another institution that has ceased operating before all of the students have completed their programs of study.
- K. If NAST accreditation enables the institution to seek eligibility to participate in Title IV Higher Education Act (HEA) programs, the entering into written arrangement under 34 CFR 668.13 under which an institution or organization not approved to participate in Title IV Higher Education Act (HEA) programs offers more than twenty-five percent but less than fifty percent of one or more of the NAST accredited institution's educational programs.

NOTE: With regard to Section 2.K. above, upon receipt of a materially complete request, the Commission on Accreditation will review the institution's application for Substantive Change and make a final decision within 90 days unless there are significant circumstances related to the Substantive Change that require a review by the Commission to occur ~~provide the outcome of its review to the institution~~ within 180 days.

- L. An institution's designation of NAST as its gatekeeper for the purpose of eligibility for participation in federal Title IV programs, irrespective of whether:
 - 1. The institution is accredited as a single-purpose institution by NAST and does not currently participate in Title IV programs, but plans to apply for participation in federal Title IV; or

2. The institution is accredited as a single-purpose institution by NAST and another Secretary-recognized institutional accrediting agency, has designated the other institutional accrediting agency as its gatekeeper for the purpose of eligibility for federal Title IV participation, and plans to relinquish such other institutional accreditation entirely; or
 3. The institution is accredited as a single-purpose institution by NAST and another Secretary-recognized institutional accrediting agency, has designated the other institutional accrediting agency as its gatekeeper for the purpose of eligibility for federal Title IV participation, and plans to retain the other institutional accreditation and relinquish the connection between that accreditation and Title IV participation.
- M. With regard to an institution that has designated NAST as its gatekeeper for the purpose of eligibility for participation in federal Title IV programs that has been placed on probation or an equivalent status, has been subject to negative action by NAST over ~~the prior a period of~~ three academic years, or is under provisional certification, as provided in 34 CFR 668.13:
1. An aggregate change of twenty-five percent or more of the clock hours, credit hours, or content of a program since the agency's most recent accreditation review.
 2. The development of customized pathways as defined in 34 CFR 602.22(b)(3)(i)–(ii).
 3. Entering into a written arrangement under **34 CFR 668.13 under** which an institution or organization not certified to participate in the Title IV, HEA programs offers up to twenty-five percent of one or more of the **accredited institution's educational** programs.
- N. The addition of a direct assessment program.
- O. Other major changes that would impact continuing compliance with NAST standards applicable to degrees and programs being offered.

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Rules of Practice and Procedure, Part II

Article VIII., Procedures for Reviewing Complaints Directed Against Member Institutions of the National Association of Schools of Theatre

Section 2. Eligibility

Amend Article VIII., Section 2.B. as follows:

B. A complaint may be eligible for review if it:

1. Is presented in writing.

NOTE: Should a disability exist making it difficult to submit a complaint in writing, the complainant may contact the staff in the National Office to seek an appropriate accommodation.

2. Is forwarded to the NAST National Office by U.S. Mail, courier service, or through the NAST email address dedicated to receive formal complaints. **Facsimile and verbal transmissions are not acceptable.**
3. Is signed by the complainant.

NOTE: NAST will not confirm receipt of or respond to complaints that do not meet the requirements outlined in the Rules of Practice and Procedure, Part II, Article VIII., Section 2.B.1.–3.

4. Includes a signed copy of the NAST Official Complaint Form.

5. Presents itemized issues or concerns directly related to specific NAST standards, rules, or the Code of Ethics as published in the NAST *Handbook* and any addenda to the *Handbook* current at the time of the complaint, and includes specific, factual documentation corroborating each concern raised.
6. Presents evidence that the institutional review or grievance procedures available and applicable to the complaint and complainant have been completed or exhausted.
7. Is not subject to the criteria set forth in the Rules of Practice and Procedure, Part II, Article VIII., Section 2.C.

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Rules of Practice and Procedure, Part II

Article X., Appeals of Adverse Decisions Concerning Accredited Institutional Membership

Section 10. Decision on an Appeal

Amend Article X., Section 10. as follows:

Section 10. Decision on an Appeal. After following requisite procedures, considering the appeal and responding to it only in terms of one or both of the grounds for appeal in the Rules of Practice and Procedure, Part II, Article X., Section 5., and making judgments based solely on NAST published standards and procedures and the documentation provided, the appeals committee’s final decision shall be either to (a) deny the appeal and sustain the decision of the Commission, or (b) sustain the appeal and remand the decision to the Commission for reconsideration explaining ~~in writing~~ the basis for the decision to remand, including, but not limited to, any amendments to the original decision proposed by the appeals committee. In making its final decision, ~~which will be provided in written form~~, the Commission must act in a manner consistent with published NAST standards and procedures, and with due consideration of all written findings and recommendations of the appeals committee accompanying its decision to remand.

The final decision of the appeals committee ~~will shall~~ be distributed in written form to the theatre executive and the chief executive officer of the institution and to the Chair of the Commission whose decision is being appealed.

An institution’s continuing disagreement with a final decision of the appeals committee to deny the appeal shall be settled by arbitration in accordance with the Rules of the American Arbitration Association. Arbitration considers only items (a) and (b) of the Grounds for Appeal outlined in the Rules of Practice and Procedure, Part II, Article X., Section 5.

Standards for Accreditation

— Action by the NAST Membership —

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Standards for Accreditation

II. Purposes and Operations

I. Published Materials and Websites

1. Standards

Amend II.I.1.d. as follows:

- d. The institution shall have transfer of credit policies that (1) are publicly disclosed, and (2) include a statement of the criteria established by the institution regarding the transfer of credit earned at another institution of higher education, ~~and include any types of institutions or sources from which the institution will not accept credit~~ (see Standards for Accreditation III.A.4.).

NOTE: With regard to a free-standing institution that has designated NAST as its gatekeeper for the purpose of eligibility for participation in federal Title IV programs, written criteria used to evaluate and award credit for prior learning experience shall be provided as described in 34 CFR 668.43(a)(11)(~~h~~).

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Standards for Accreditation

III. Theatre Program Components

A. Credit and Time Requirements

4. Published Policies

Amend III.A.4. as follows:

- 4. Published Policies.** The institution must publish clear policies concerning program length and credit-granting policies, including indications of courses that carry or do not carry credit in specific circumstances (see Standards for Accreditation II.I.1.c.).

The institution shall have transfer of credit policies that (a) are publicly disclosed, and (b) include a statement of the criteria established by the institution regarding the transfer of credit earned at another institution of higher education, ~~and include any types of institutions or sources from which the institution will not accept credit~~ (see Standards for Accreditation II.I.1.d.).

NOTE: With regard to a free-standing institution that has designated NAST as its gatekeeper for the purpose of eligibility for participation in federal Title IV programs, written criteria used to evaluate and award credit for prior learning experience shall be provided as described in 34 CFR 668.43(a)(11)(~~h~~).

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Standards for Accreditation

III. Theatre Program Components

H. Distance Learning

4. Standards

Amend III.H.4.b. as follows:

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.~~

(3) (4) Specific opportunities for student evaluations shall be established throughout the time period of each course or program.

Standards for Accreditation

XIX. Specific Operational Standards for Free-Standing Theatre Institutions of Higher Education

Section 1. Standards for Accreditation

H. Student Services

Amend XIX., Section 1.H. as follows:

H. Student Services

- 1. General.** Consistent with its mission, goals, and objectives, the institution shall provide a physical, philosophical, and human environment that fosters the artistic, intellectual, and personal development of students. The institution’s program of student services is derived from the relationship between specific goals for student development and the purposes of the institution.
- 2. Personnel.** Student services shall be organized and managed by individuals with appropriate training, experience, and abilities.
- 3. Access**
 - a. All types of services shall be available to all students.
 - b. Institutions must provide an effective orientation program that acquaints new and transfer students with all aspects of the institution related to their course of study and their personal well-being.
 - c. The institution shall provide and/or facilitate access to education, counseling, and professional care associated with the maintenance of physical and mental health.
 - d. The institution shall provide and/or facilitate access to counseling covering personal, social, vocational, and financial issues.
- 4. Financial Transactions.** Students and the institution shall confirm in writing their mutual agreement regarding any financial requirements and conditions associated with enrollment, tuition, or scholarship awards.
- 5. Financial Aid and Student Loans**
 - a. Financial Aid**
 - (1) If the institution administers a program of financial aid, such aid shall be provided and administered in an organized and accessible manner.
 - (2) Awards are based on the equitable application of clear and published eligibility criteria.
 - (3) The financial aid program must be audited at least once a year.
 - (4) Records for financial aid shall be accurate and clearly documented.
 - b. Student Loans**
 - (1) If the institution participates in student loan programs, such programs shall be provided and administered in an organized and accessible manner.
 - (2) Awards are based on the equitable application of clear and published eligibility criteria.
 - (3) Students must be made aware of the exact conditions under which loans are made.

- (4) The student loan program must be audited by an independent auditing firm at least once a year.
- (5) Records for student loans shall be accurate and clearly documented.

6. Housing and Food Service

- a. If provided, housing must be conducive to individual well-being and personal development. Housing controlled by or affiliated with the institution must meet recognized standards of health, safety, and security, and be appropriately staffed.
- b. If provided, food service must meet recognized standards of nutrition, sanitation, and safety. Food services must be professionally administered and operated.

7. Student Records. The institution must have policies regarding the kinds of information that will be included in the permanent record of students. It shall also have policies regarding the retention, safety and security, and disposal of records. Information-release policies shall respect the rights of individual privacy, the confidentiality of records, and the best interests of students and the institution.

8. Verification of Student Identity. The institution 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.

9. ~~8~~ Complaints. The institution must maintain policies concerning student responsibilities and rights, including complaint procedures. Policies must be clearly stated, well publicized and readily available, and administered fairly and consistently.

10. ~~9~~ Opportunities. The institution should provide opportunities for student leadership consistent with its mission, goals, objectives, and policies. Students should be encouraged to develop their abilities to work with people in as many settings and contexts as feasible. Opportunities to be involved in appropriate institutional decision-making processes are highly desirable.

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Standards for Accreditation

XIX. Specific Operational Standards for Free-Standing Theatre Institutions of Higher Education

Section 2. Procedural Requirements

E. Starting a Branch Campus or Similar Entity

Amend XIX., Section 2.E. as follows:

E. Starting a Branch Campus or Similar Entity

1. If an accredited institution plans to establish a new branch campus, or similar entity that functions in the same manner, in the United States or elsewhere, that offers postsecondary and/or professional-level degrees or non-degree-granting programs in theatre, the following materials must be submitted at least six months prior to the opening of the branch/similar entity:
 - a. A business plan. At minimum, the business plan must contain a complete description of:
 - (1) The educational program to be offered at the branch campus/similar entity.
 - (2) The projected revenues and expenditures and cash flow at the branch campus/similar entity.
 - (3) The operation, management, and physical resources at the branch campus/similar entity.

At the same time, the institution must provide:

- (4) Information showing the financial relationship of the branch/similar entity to the main campus.

- (5) The most recent audited financial statement of the institution.
- b. Information in the standard NAST format which demonstrates compliance with all applicable standards including but not limited to: operational standards, applicable curricular standards, Standards for Free-Standing Theatre Institutions of Higher Education, and Specific Operational Standards for Proprietary Institutions of Higher Education.
2. Within six months of the opening of a branch campus or similar entity, **NAST will schedule an on-site review**, the branch/similar entity **will ~~must schedule a site visit and~~** host **~~an a team of~~** NAST visiting evaluator(s), and the **evaluator(s) will ~~team must~~** conduct and complete the visit.
3. Approval of the branch campus or similar entity and its operations will depend upon the institution's demonstration that it meets requisite NAST standards applicable to the programs it offers and the operations that support those programs.

NOTE: The provisions in XIX., Section 2.E. above apply to additional locations or similar entities as well. Definitions of branch campuses or similar entities and additional locations or similar entities may be found in Appendix I.A., Section 2.

Appendix III.F.

— Action by the NAST Membership —

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Appendix III.F., Policies Concerning Regard for Decisions of States and Other Accrediting Organizations in the NAST Accreditation Process

Amend as follows:

Section 1. Institutions Offering Theatre Curricular Programs Only

- A. NAST accredits only those free-standing postsecondary institutions offering degree- or non-degree-granting curricular programs in theatre that are legally authorized under applicable state law to provide a program of education beyond the secondary level.
- B. NAST does not grant or renew the accreditation of a free-standing postsecondary institution if the agency knows, or has reasonable cause to know, that the institution is the subject of:
 1. A pending or final action brought by a state agency to suspend, revoke, withdraw, or terminate the institution's legal authority to provide postsecondary education in the state;
 2. A decision by a recognized agency to deny accreditation or preaccreditation;
 3. A pending or final action by a recognized institutional accrediting agency to suspend, revoke, withdraw, or terminate the institution's accreditation or preaccreditation; or
 4. Probation or an equivalent status imposed by a recognized agency.
- C. If the Commission grants accreditation to a free-standing postsecondary institution notwithstanding the actions described in Section 1.B., NAST provides the U.S. Secretary of Education, not later than thirty days after the date of Commission action, a thorough **and reasonable** explanation, consistent with its accreditation standards, why the previous action by a recognized institutional accrediting agency or the state does not preclude a grant of accreditation status.

- D. NAST will promptly review its accreditation of a free-standing postsecondary institution to determine if it should also take adverse action against the institution if:
 - 1. A recognized institutional accrediting agency takes an adverse action ~~with respect to a dually accredited institution.~~
 - 2. A recognized programmatic accrediting agency takes an adverse action, for reasons associated with the overall institution rather than the specific program or against a program offered by an institution.
- E. NAST will promptly review its accreditation of a free-standing postsecondary institution to determine if it should place the institution on probation or show cause if:
 - 1. A recognized institutional accrediting agency places the institution on public probationary or an equivalent status.
 - 2. A recognized programmatic agency places the program on public probation or an equivalent status.

Section 2. Multipurpose Institutions Offering Theatre Curricular Programs

- A. NAST will not grant or renew the accreditation status of a multipurpose institution offering one or more theatre curricular programs if the agency knows, or has reasonable cause to know, that the institution is the subject of:
 - 1. A pending or final action brought by a state agency to suspend, revoke, withdraw, or terminate the institution's legal authority to provide postsecondary education in the state;
 - 2. A decision by a recognized agency to deny accreditation or preaccreditation;
 - 3. A pending or final action by a recognized institutional accrediting agency to suspend, revoke, withdraw, or terminate the institution's accreditation or preaccreditation; or
 - 4. Probation or an equivalent status imposed by a recognized agency.
- B. If the Commission grants accreditation to a multipurpose institution offering one or more theatre curricular programs notwithstanding the actions described in Section 2.A., NAST provides the U.S. Secretary of Education, not later than thirty days after the date of Commission action, a thorough **and reasonable** explanation, consistent with its accreditation standards, why the previous action by a recognized institutional accrediting agency or the state does not preclude a grant of accreditation status.
- C. NAST will promptly review its accreditation of a multipurpose institution offering one or more theatre curricular programs to determine if it should also take action against the program if a recognized institutional accrediting agency:
 - 1. Takes an adverse action with respect to the institution offering the program, or
 - 2. Places the institution on public probationary status **or an equivalent status.**

Section 3. Upon request, NAST shares with other appropriate recognized accrediting agencies and state agencies information about the accreditation status of institutions or programs and any adverse actions it has taken against an accredited institution or program.