

National Association of Schools of Theatre

**DRAFT DOCUMENT**

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REVIEW OF STANDARDS ADDRESSING PURPOSES  
AND OPERATIONS; REVIEW OF STANDARDS  
ADDRESSING THEATRE PROGRAM COMPONENTS;  
REVIEW OF SPECIFIC OPERATIONAL STANDARDS  
FOR FREE-STANDING THEATRE INSTITUTIONS OF  
HIGHER EDUCATION; REVIEW OF SPECIFIC  
OPERATIONAL STANDARDS FOR PROPRIETARY  
INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

For current standards in force, see the *NAST Handbook 2026-27*

**COMMENT PERIOD**

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*Please forward all comments to:*

Jenny Rebecca G. Kuhlmann  
Management Associate for  
Communications and Publications  
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS OF THEATRE  
11250 Roger Bacon Drive, Suite 21  
Reston, Virginia 20190-5248

Email: [jkuhlmann@arts-accredit.org](mailto:jkuhlmann@arts-accredit.org)  
Phone: (703) 437-0700, Extension 112  
Website: <https://nast.arts-accredit.org>

1 **II. PURPOSES AND OPERATIONS**

2 **NOTE:** In addition to the standards in the Standards for Accreditation, Section II., (1) free-  
3 standing theatre institutions of higher education that offer professional education and training in  
4 theatre are reminded that Standards for Accreditation XIX. apply and must be addressed, and (2)  
5 proprietary schools must demonstrate compliance with Standards for Accreditation XX.

6 **A. Purposes of the Institution and Theatre Unit**

7 **1. Standards**

- 8 a. Each institution chooses the specific terminology it uses to state its purposes.  
9 Although terms such as *vision, mission, goals, objectives, and action plans* are  
10 widely used, they and the structures they imply are not required.
- 11 b. There must be one or more statements indicating overall purposes. For  
12 independent theatre institutions, at least one statement must apply to the  
13 institution as a whole. For multi-purpose institutions, at least one statement must  
14 apply to the institution and at least one statement must apply to the theatre unit.
- 15 c. In multipurpose institutions, the overall purposes of the theatre unit must have a  
16 viable relationship to the purposes of the institution as a whole.
- 17 d. Specific degrees or other educational programs in theatre, including research  
18 institutes, performance ensembles, and other specific components shall have  
19 purposes consistent with the purposes of the entire theatre program and of the  
20 institution as a whole. Standards regarding purposes for specific curricular  
21 programs are found in the standards for undergraduate (see Standards for  
22 Accreditation IV.), graduate (see Standards for Accreditation XII.), and non-degree-  
23 granting programs (see Standards for Accreditation XVI.).
- 24 e. Statements regarding overall purposes for theatre and theatre study must:
- 25 (1) Indicate that fundamental purposes are educational.
- 26 (2) Encompass and be appropriate to the level(s) of curricular offerings.
- 27 (3) Reflect and remain consistent with specific institutional and programmatic  
28 responsibilities and aspirations for theatre and theatre study.
- 29 (4) Be compatible with NAST standards.
- 30 (5) Be published and made available in one or more texts appropriate for various  
31 constituencies, including the general public.
- 32 (6) Guide and influence decision making, analysis, and planning, including each of  
33 these as they shape and fulfill relationships among curricular offerings,  
34 operational matters, and resources.
- 35 (7) Be fundamental in determining the extent to which policies, practices,  
36 resources, and curricular and other program components have sufficient  
37 conceptual, structural, and operational synergy to achieve stated expectations  
38 for theatre and theatre study.

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**2. Guidelines, Recommendations, and Comment**

- a. There are numerous specific definitions of common terms, but usually:
  - (1) *Purposes* is a generic term referring to statements that when reviewed together, define the special, perhaps unique, function of an institution or program in the larger context of educational and artistic endeavor.
  - (2) *Vision statements* normally define what an entity aspires to be and often, whom it intends to serve.
  - (3) *Mission statements* articulate broad connections between the institution’s efforts in theatre and the world of art and intellect.
  - (4) *Goals* are broad statements of aim, the specific needs toward which efforts are directed, normally less remote and more definitive than *mission*.
  - (5) *Objectives* are the specific steps for reaching goals, normally measured in time among other indicators.
  - (6) *Action plans* are specific means for achieving objectives, normally measured in dollars among other indicators.
- b. Areas normally addressed in statements of purposes may include, but are not limited to: specific theatre and theatre-related fields; students to be served; learning; teaching; creative work and research; service; performance; and the policies and resources needed for effectiveness in these areas.
- c. To guide and influence the work of a theatre unit, statements of purposes are normally the basis for:
  - (1) Creating a common conceptual framework for all participants.
  - (2) Making educational and artistic decisions.
  - (3) Long-range planning, including the development of new curricula, innovative activities, expansion or reduction of programs or enrollments.
  - (4) Operational decisions, including admission practices, selection of faculty and staff, allocation of resources, evaluation, and administrative policies.
- d. Structural and operational synergy among components may be achieved in part by:
  - (1) Stating specific goals for student learning in terms of artistic and academic achievement at levels of detail appropriate to each statement of purpose.
  - (2) Making student learning in terms of artistic and academic achievement the primary basis for decisions about resource and other operational and evaluative matters.
  - (3) Planning and acting with informed analysis and judgment about the symbiotic relationships among all components of the theatre unit, including the potential impact of specific decisions on specific components and on the achievement of purposes.

- 1 e. When considering purposes, it is useful for most institutions to consider standards  
2 and guidelines on Evaluation, Planning, and Projections (see Standards for  
3 Accreditation II.L.).

4 **B. Size and Scope**

5 **1. Standards**

- 6 a. Institutions shall maintain sufficient enrollment to support the specific programs  
7 offered including:
- 8 (1) An appropriate number of faculty and other resources.
- 9 (2) Sufficient advanced courses in theatre appropriate to major areas of study at  
10 degree or program levels being offered.
- 11 (3) Requisite performance, production, or design experience (a) at an advanced  
12 level and (b) consistent with major areas of study and degree or program  
13 levels.
- 14 b. An institution shall not be considered for accreditation unless there are at least  
15 three full-time equivalent resident faculty.

16 **2. Guidelines**

- 17 a. Institutions are expected to demonstrate a positive relationship among the size and  
18 scope of theatre programs, the goals and objectives of these programs, and the  
19 human, material, and fiscal resources available to support these programs.
- 20 b. The study of theatre performance, production, or design requires opportunities for  
21 daily interaction with other theatre students and professionals. In academic  
22 settings, this interaction is critical not only in performance, production, and design,  
23 but also in the development of all types of theatre knowledge and skills.

24 **C. Finances**

25 **1. Standards**

- 26 a. Financial resources shall be adequate in terms of:
- 27 (1) The purposes of the theatre unit and each of the specific degrees or programs  
28 it offers.
- 29 (2) The size and scope of the theatre unit.
- 30 b. Budget allocations for personnel, space, equipment, and materials must be  
31 appropriate and sufficient to sustain the programs offered by the theatre unit from  
32 year to year.
- 33 c. Evidence must be provided demonstrating that financial support is sufficient to  
34 ensure continued operation of the theatre unit and its programs in accordance with  
35 applicable NAST standards for the projected period of accreditation.
- 36 d. The institution shall publish all regulations and policies concerning tuition, fees, and  
37 other charges, and shall develop a tuition refund policy that is equitable to both the  
38 institution and the student.

- 1 e. The institution shall maintain accurate financial records according to legal and  
2 ethical standards of recognized accounting practice.
- 3 (1) For privately supported institutions this means an annual audit with opinion of  
4 financial statements prepared by an independent certified public accountant.  
5 Such audit is normally completed within 120 days, and must be completed  
6 within 180 days, after the close of each fiscal year.
- 7 (2) For tax-supported institutions, this means a periodic audit with opinion of  
8 financial statements or a review as mandated by the legislative or executive  
9 branch of the government entity supporting the institution.
- 10 f. The audited financial statements of the institution shall reveal sound financial  
11 management in support of the educational program.
- 12 g. Evidence of past and potential financial stability and long-range financial planning  
13 must be demonstrated.

14 **NOTE:** Theatre units blended with other disciplines shall provide information pertaining to  
15 the theatre unit confirming and demonstrating that resources are sufficient to enable the  
16 theatre unit to fulfill its purposes and function.

17 **2. Guideline and Recommendation**

- 18 a. Student learning and health and safety are paramount considerations in  
19 determining and evaluating financial support.
- 20 b. Fiscal and financial planning, especially for the long-term, should be correlated with  
21 current and evolving purposes and content of the theatre unit and its programs.

22 **D. Governance and Administration**

23 **1. Standards**

- 24 a. Governance and administrative structures and activities shall:
- 25 (1) Serve and work to fulfill the purposes of the institution and the theatre unit;
- 26 (2) Assure fundamental educational, artistic, administrative, and financial  
27 continuity and stability, and show evidence of long-range planning.
- 28 (3) Include a board of trustees with legal and financial responsibilities and  
29 adequate public representation.
- 30 (4) Exhibit relationships among trustees, administration, faculty, staff, and  
31 students that demonstrate a primary focus on support of teaching and  
32 learning:
- 33 (a) The trustees are legally constituted to hold the property, assets, and  
34 purposes of the institution in trust with responsibility for sustaining the  
35 institution and exercising ultimate and general control over its affairs.
- 36 (b) The administration is empowered by the trustees to operate the  
37 institution, provide optimum circumstances for faculty and students to  
38 carry out these purposes, and provide effective communications channels  
39 both inside and outside the institution.

- 1 (c) The faculty has a major role in developing the artistic and academic  
2 program and in evaluating and influencing the standards and conditions  
3 that pertain directly to instruction, creative work, and research.
- 4 (d) Student views and judgments are sought in those matters in which  
5 students have a direct and reasonable interest.
- 6 b. The governance and administrative relationships of each organizational component  
7 of the institution, including the process by which they function and interrelate, shall  
8 be stated clearly in written form.
- 9 (1) Administrators, faculty, and staff shall understand their duties and  
10 responsibilities and know the individuals to whom they are responsible.
- 11 (2) The theatre executive's responsibilities shall be clearly delineated and  
12 executive authority shall be commensurate with responsibility.
- 13 (3) The theatre unit shall have reasonable and sufficient autonomy commensurate  
14 with its purposes.
- 15 (4) In multidisciplinary institutions, the theatre unit must have adequate  
16 representation to deliberative bodies whose work has an impact on the  
17 educational and artistic endeavors and results of the theatre unit.
- 18 c. The administration of the theatre unit must provide mechanisms for  
19 communication among all components of the unit.
- 20 d. The institution shall provide the theatre executive and other administrators of  
21 specialized areas sufficient time and staff to execute the required administrative  
22 and/or teaching duties effectively.

## 23 **2. Guideline and Recommendations**

- 24 a. Normally, the theatre executive exercises leadership in program evaluation and  
25 planning, encourages faculty development, and promotes among all faculty and  
26 staff a spirit of responsibility, understanding, and cooperation.
- 27 b. The theatre executive should nurture an environment that contributes to the  
28 theatre unit's pursuit of its artistic, intellectual, and educational purposes.
- 29 c. Written descriptions of governance and administrative relationships should be  
30 publicly available.

## 31 **E. Faculty and Staff**

### 32 **1. Qualifications**

#### 33 **a. Standards**

- 34 (1) The institution shall maintain faculties and staff whose aggregate individual  
35 qualifications enable the theatre unit and the specific educational programs  
36 offered to accomplish their purposes.
- 37 (2) Faculty members (including part-time faculty and graduate teaching assistants,  
38 as applicable) shall be qualified by earned degrees and/or professional  
39 experience and/or demonstrated teaching competence.

- 1 (3) All faculty must be able to guide student learning and to communicate personal  
2 knowledge and experience effectively.
- 3 (4) Faculty members teaching graduate-level courses must represent the  
4 professional standards to which graduate students aspire in specific fields and  
5 specializations.
- 6 (5) It is essential that a significant number of faculty members teaching graduate-  
7 level courses be active in presenting their work to the public and to peers in  
8 their respective theatre specializations.

9 **b. Guidelines, Recommendation, and Comment**

- 10 (1) Standards for Accreditation II.E.1.a. apply to studies, coursework, and  
11 participation in production at the institution or under cooperative  
12 arrangements with another educational or performing institution, or in any  
13 other third-party arrangement.
- 14 (2) Teachers of performance, design/technology, and/or playwriting normally are  
15 or have been deeply and currently involved as a practicing artist in the  
16 particular disciplines or specializations they are teaching.
- 17 (3) NAST recognizes the Master of Fine Arts as the appropriate terminal degree for  
18 performance, design/technology, and playwriting faculty. At the same time, the  
19 Association recognizes that some highly qualified artist-teachers may hold  
20 other academic degrees; others may not hold any academic degrees. In such  
21 cases, the institution should base appointments on experience, training, and  
22 expertise at least equivalent to those required for the master's degree in the  
23 appropriate field.
- 24 (4) Academic degrees are a pertinent indicator of the teacher's qualifications for  
25 instructing in theoretical, historical, and pedagogical subjects. In general, the  
26 Ph.D. and comparable doctorates are the appropriate terminal degrees in these  
27 fields; however, creative work, research, and publication are indicators of a  
28 teacher's qualifications, productivity, professional awareness, and contribution  
29 to various aspects of theatre and theatre-related fields.

30 **2. Number and Distribution**

31 **a. Standards**

- 32 (1) The number and ratio of full- and part-time faculty positions and their  
33 distribution among the specializations must be:
- 34 (a) Sufficient to achieve the theatre unit's purposes.
- 35 (b) Appropriate to the size and scope of the theatre unit's programs.
- 36 (c) Consistent with the nature and requirements of specific programs offered.
- 37 (2) The institution must have clear, published definitions of any faculty  
38 classifications in use (for example, tenured, graduate assistant, full-time, part-  
39 time, adjunct, and visiting).

1 (3) An institution shall distinguish in its printed literature between regular  
2 continuing and short-term or guest faculty.

3 **3. Appointment, Evaluation, and Advancement**

4 **a. Standards**

5 (1) The institution and theatre unit must have procedures for appointing,  
6 evaluating, and advancing theatre faculty that promote objectivity and that  
7 ensure appropriate connections between personnel decisions and purposes,  
8 especially as aspirations and purposes concern teaching, creative work,  
9 performance, research, scholarship, and service.

10 (2) The institution must have procedures for the regular evaluation of all faculty.

11 (3) Creative activity must be regarded as being equivalent to scholarly efforts and  
12 publication when the institution has goals and objectives for the preparation of  
13 theatre professionals in practice-oriented specializations.

14 **b. Guidelines and Recommendations**

15 (1) Effective and fair evaluation of faculty is based on clear and accurate  
16 statements regarding responsibilities and expectations made at the time of  
17 employment and thereafter.

18 (2) Normally, the particular arrangement of elements and perspectives used to  
19 determine the quality of faculty work are considered and articulated as clearly  
20 as possible for each faculty and staff member, especially at the time of  
21 appointment.

22 (3) Normally, theatre faculty holding appropriate credentials and having full-time  
23 appointments are entitled to full faculty status and given treatment  
24 comparable to that for faculty members in other disciplines on a given campus  
25 with regard to appointment, tenure, increases in salary, and advancements to  
26 higher academic rank.

27 (4) Creative activity should be accepted as a criterion for appointment and  
28 advancement in all institutions.

29 **4. Loads**

30 **a. Standards**

31 (1) Faculty loads shall be such that faculty members are able to carry out their  
32 responsibilities effectively.

33 (2) Faculty members, according to their title and job description, shall have  
34 adequate time to provide effective instruction, advise and evaluate students,  
35 continue professional growth, and participate in production and service  
36 activities.

1           **b. Guidelines, Recommendations, and Comment**

- 2           (1) Institutions use a variety of methods for calculating teaching loads. The choice  
3           of method is the prerogative of the institution. When determining loads, it is  
4           recommended that institutions consider the means (such as on ground, hybrid,  
5           fully online) by which educational programs are delivered.
- 6           (2) Policies concerning loads should be clearly developed and published with  
7           regard to the variety of educational, artistic, and administrative duties  
8           undertaken by theatre faculty, and any conversions between clock hours and  
9           credit hours.
- 10          (3) Classroom instruction in lecture/seminar format is commonly weighted with  
11          studio teaching on a 1:2 ratio, that is, 3 hours of classroom instruction is  
12          equated with 6 hours of studio instruction.
- 13          (4) Theatre faculty teaching only classroom/seminar courses should have their  
14          load determined in the same way as faculty in other departments of the  
15          institution.
- 16          (5) All faculty should have sufficient time for artistic, scholarly, and professional  
17          activity in order to maintain excellence and growth in their respective areas of  
18          expertise.
- 19          (6) Normally, the teaching loads of those having administrative, consultative,  
20          and/or production duties are appropriately reduced.

21          **5. Student/Faculty Ratio**

- 22          **a. Standard.** The student/faculty ratio must be consistent with the size, scope, goals,  
23          and specific purposes and requirements of the theatre programs offered.

24          **6. Class Size**

25          **a. Standards**

- 26          (1) Class size shall be appropriate to the format and subject matter of each class,  
27          with regard to such considerations as:
- 28                  (a) Materials and equipment requirements.
- 29                  (b) Safety.
- 30                  (c) The balance between student and faculty time necessary to accomplish the  
31                  goals and objectives of the class.
- 32          (2) When individual faculty attention to individual student work is required during  
33          class, class size shall be such that students can receive regular critiques of  
34          meaningful duration during the regular class period.

35          **b. Guidelines**

- 36          (1) Classes in creative work generally should not exceed 16 students. In some  
37          cases, safety considerations and specialized equipment limitations will require  
38          class limits of fewer than 16.

1 (2) Effective instruction can be achieved in lecture classes with larger enrollments  
2 than are acceptable in studio courses; however, sound educational practice  
3 indicates that such large classes should be supported by small discussion or  
4 tutoring sessions.

5 **7. Graduate Teaching Assistants**

6 a. **Standard.** The theatre unit must carefully select, train, supervise, and evaluate  
7 graduate teaching assistants whenever they are employed.

8 b. **Recommendation.** Mentoring programs for graduate teaching assistants are  
9 encouraged.

10 **8. Faculty Development**

11 a. **Standard.** Institutions and theatre units must encourage continuing professional  
12 development, even if funding is limited.

13 b. **Recommendation and Comment**

14 (1) Sabbatical or other professional leaves; participation in activities that foster  
15 exchanges of ideas; cooperative activities and research, scholarship, and course  
16 preparation support are encouraged and should be provided for theatre faculty  
17 consistent with support provided to comparable units in the institution.

18 (2) Whatever the institution's faculty development policies and mechanisms, the  
19 primary initiative for professional growth rests with each faculty member.

20 **9. Support Staff**

21 a. **Standard.** Support staff shall be provided commensurate with the theatre unit's  
22 purposes, size, and scope, and its degrees and programs.

23 b. **Guideline.** Normally, these positions are administered by the theatre unit.

24 **F. Facilities, Equipment, Technology, Health, and Safety**

25 **1. Standards**

26 a. Facilities, equipment, and technology must be adequate to support faculty needs,  
27 all curricular offerings, and all students enrolled in them, and be appropriately  
28 specialized for advanced work.

29 b. Space, equipment, and technology allotted to any theatre unit function must be  
30 adequate for the effective conduct of that function.

31 c. The number of rehearsal, performance, and classroom spaces and the amount and  
32 availability of equipment must be adequate to serve the scope of the program and  
33 the number of students enrolled.

34 d. Budget provisions shall be made for adequate maintenance of the physical plant  
35 and equipment.

36 e. Theatre units with goals and objectives in areas that require constant updating of  
37 equipment must demonstrate their capacity to remain technologically current.

1 f. Students enrolled in theatre unit programs and faculty and staff with employment  
2 status in the theatre unit must be provided basic information about the  
3 maintenance of health and safety within the contexts of studio practice, theatrical  
4 shop and lab experiences, pre-production elements and processes, rehearsal, and  
5 performance.

6 For theatre majors and theatre faculty and staff, general topics include, but are not  
7 limited to, basic information regarding health and safety issues, hazards, and  
8 procedures associated with making, producing, and presenting theatre. They also  
9 include instruction on the use, proper handling, and operation of potentially  
10 dangerous materials, chemicals, equipment, and technology as applicable to  
11 specific program offerings or experiences. Beyond the provision of basic general  
12 information, and the identification of available resources, decisions regarding topic  
13 areas and breadth and depth are made by the institution, and normally are  
14 correlated with the nature, content, and requirements of specific areas of  
15 specialization or specific courses of study.

16 For non-majors enrolled in courses offered by the theatre unit, topics chosen are  
17 directly related to health and safety issues associated with their specific area of  
18 study or activity in theatre.

19 Theatre program policies, protocols, and operations must reflect attention to  
20 maintenance of health and injury prevention and to the relationships among: the  
21 health and safety of theatre artists, designers, and technicians; safe practices as  
22 they pertain to scenes requiring movement, fight choreography, intimacy, and the  
23 like; suitable choices of equipment and technology for various specific purposes;  
24 appropriate and safe operation of equipment and technology; and other conditions  
25 associated with health and safety in studio, shop, lab, rehearsal, and performance  
26 facilities.

27 Specific methods of providing information and addressing injury prevention,  
28 technology, and facilities are the prerogative and responsibility of the institution.

29 **NOTE:** Health and safety depend in large part on the personal decisions of informed  
30 individuals. Institutions have health and safety responsibilities, but fulfillment of  
31 these responsibilities cannot and will not ensure any specific individual's health and  
32 safety. Too many factors beyond any institution's control are involved. Individuals  
33 have a critically important role and each is personally responsible for avoiding risk  
34 and preventing injuries to themselves before, during, and after study or  
35 employment at any institution. The NAST standards in this section and applicable  
36 guidelines below, and institutional actions taken under their influence or  
37 independently do not relieve the individual from personal responsibility for  
38 appropriate, prudent, and safe behavior or action, nor do they shift such  
39 responsibility and liability for the consequences of inappropriate, imprudent,  
40 and/or unsafe behavior or action in any instance or over time to any institution, or  
41 to NAST.

42 g. Ventilation and safety treatments appropriate to theatre facilities shall be provided.

43 h. All instructional and production preparation facilities shall be accessible, safe, and  
44 secure, and shall meet the standards of local fire and health codes.

45 i. The institution shall have a plan by which it addresses health and safety issues on a  
46 continuing basis.

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**2. Guideline and Recommendations**

- a. Facilities for the instructional, production, and administrative aspects of the program should be sufficiently localized to function cohesively and effectively.
- b. Provision should also be made for students to have access to adequate studio facilities in other than scheduled class times.
- c. A well-equipped theatre with suitable acoustics should be available when needed for theatre production and for use as a class laboratory.
- d. Adequate, safe, secure, and well-equipped space should be provided for costume and scene construction, maintenance, and storage.
- e. Adequate, safe, and secure storage space should be provided for instructional equipment.
- f. Appropriate and secure dressing and shower facilities should be provided for students and faculty.
- g. Adequate office space for faculty and staff should be provided in close proximity to the instructional facilities.
- h. There should be appropriate space and equipment for the administrative functions of the program.
- i. Equipment should be provided in the following areas appropriate to the research, teaching, and artistic needs of the program:
  - (1) Lighting.
  - (2) Materials and equipment for the teaching of lighting, scenery, and costumes.
  - (3) Video and film.
  - (4) Sound systems (recording and playback equipment) in production areas.
  - (5) Computers.
- j. All facilities and equipment should produce an environment conducive to learning and be sufficient to enable faculty and students to focus on academic and artistic endeavors.
- k. Each theatre unit should maintain a plan for the regular upkeep of its facilities and upkeep and replacement of equipment. The plan should be developed consistent with goals and objectives, the size and scope of the theatre unit, and prospective changes.
- l. Normally, institutions or theatre programs (1) have policies and protocols that maintain strict distinctions between the provision of general health information for theatre artists, designers, and technicians in the theatre program, and the specific diagnosis and treatment of individuals by licensed medical professionals; and (2) identify for the benefit of students and other personnel as appropriate or as requested, resources that will enable them to make contact with such professionals for specific treatment or other medical care.

- 1 m. Normally, institutions and theatre programs develop their specific methods for  
2 addressing the maintenance of health and safety in consultation with qualified  
3 professionals, for example, licensed medical personnel and/or authoritative sources  
4 providing information to students and faculty regarding the maintenance of  
5 professional health and wellness, and the prevention of injuries.

6 **G. Library and Learning Resources**

7 **NOTE:** Standards for Accreditation II.G.1.–7. apply to degree-granting institutions. Standards  
8 for Accreditation II.G.8. applies only to non-degree-granting institutions.

9 **1. Overall Requirements**

10 **a. Standards**

- 11 (1) The theatre unit shall have library, learning, and information resources  
12 necessary to fulfill its purposes and appropriate for the size and scope of its  
13 operations.
- 14 (2) The institution shall place importance on the development and maintenance of  
15 library, learning, and information resources to support its curricula in theatre.
- 16 (3) The institution shall have policies concerned with, but not limited to, the  
17 following aspects of library operation:
- 18 (a) Governance and administration.
- 19 (b) Collections and their development.
- 20 (c) Personnel services.
- 21 (d) Access, facilities, and finances.

22 **b. Guidelines**

- 23 (1) The theatre collection should be considered an integral part of the theatre  
24 program of the institution.
- 25 (2) The policies referred to in Standards for Accreditation II.G.1.a.(3) should  
26 support both the number and scope of curricular objectives and should be  
27 developed in a manner that demonstrates coordination between the library  
28 staff and the theatre faculty.

29 **2. Governance and Administration**

- 30 **a. Standard.** The functional position of the theatre collection within the total library  
31 structure shall be clearly identified, and the responsibilities and authority of the  
32 individual in charge of this collection shall be defined.
- 33 **b. Recommendation.** There should be a close administrative relationship among all  
34 libraries within the institution so that theatre students and faculty may make the  
35 best use of library resources.

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**3. Collections**

**a. Standards**

- (1) The institution must maintain library holdings and/or electronic access to holdings in theatre of sufficient size and scope to complement the nature and levels of the total instructional program in theatre, to provide incentive for individual learning, and to support research appropriate for its faculty.
- (2) There shall be evidence that a systematic acquisitions, preservation, and replacement program compatible with appropriate needs has been planned, and that some form of faculty consultation and review is a continuing aspect of this program.
- (3) Materials in all formats required for the study of theatre, including, but not limited to, books, play scripts, periodicals, microforms, audio and video recordings, film and images, and electronic access to other databases, shall be the basis of the acquisitions, preservation, and replacement program.

**b. Recommendation and Comment**

- (1) Whenever possible, cooperative arrangements should be established with information sources outside the institution to augment holdings for student and faculty use.
- (2) The books, play scripts, films and images, and audio and video recordings held by the libraries of municipalities, radio stations, historical societies, and other schools, and access to various electronic databases, can often provide a breadth of coverage far beyond that of the institution.

**4. Personnel**

- a. Standard.** The library shall be staffed by qualified personnel sufficient to meet the various needs of the theatre unit.
- b. Recommendation.** Institutions are encouraged to engage specialized personnel whenever feasible to organize and maintain the theatre holdings.

**5. Services**

**a. Standards**

- (1) The institution shall maintain appropriate hours of operation for the library.
- (2) There must be convenient access to the library holdings in theatre through complete and effective catalogs, indexes, and other appropriate bibliographical tools.
- (3) There must be access to the holdings of other institutions through union catalogs, cooperative network facilities, photoduplication, and interlibrary loan.
- (4) Instruction in the use of the theatre collection shall be provided.

- b. Guideline.** Institutions should assist students to develop functional capabilities with regard to library resources including, but not limited to, the use of current tools and techniques necessary to support research and promote inquiry.

- 1       **6. Facilities**
- 2       **a. Standards**
- 3           (1) The institution shall provide an environment conducive to study.
- 4           (2) The institution shall provide and maintain equipment that allows access to the
- 5                 resources of the library including, but not limited to, audio and video
- 6                 equipment, microfilm units, and computer terminals.
- 7       **b. Guideline.** Normally, facilities are as centralized as possible to provide access to all
- 8           library holdings devoted to the study of theatre. For example, play scripts,
- 9           recordings, and listening equipment are located in close proximity for effective use
- 10          in conjunction with one another.
- 11       **7. Finance**
- 12       **a. Standard.** Budgetary support shall be adequate to provide appropriate services,
- 13           carry out necessary operations, and satisfy stated requirements of the programs
- 14           offered.
- 15       **b. Recommendations**
- 16           (1) Although fiscal policies may vary among institutions, it is desirable that the
- 17                 allocation for the theatre collection be an explicit element in the institution’s
- 18                 library budget. The management of this allocation should be the responsibility
- 19                 of a designated staff person.
- 20           (2) An organized system of involvement by theatre faculty and students should
- 21                 exist to advise the librarian in planning short- and long-range fiscal needs most
- 22                 effectively.
- 23       **8. Non-Degree-Granting Institutions**
- 24       **a. Standards**
- 25           (1) Adequate library, learning, and information resources must be readily available
- 26                 to support both the theatre programs offered and the needs of faculty and
- 27                 enrolled students.
- 28           (2) Library materials must be current and relevant to the programs offered.
- 29           (3) Institutions providing access to library facilities in the immediate area must
- 30                 demonstrate that the library used has a collection adequate to support the
- 31                 program, and that policies and procedures for access are appropriate to the
- 32                 needs of the students and faculty.
- 33       **b. Guideline.** Postsecondary non-degree-granting institutions are expected to have
- 34           library resources and access commensurate with program levels and content.
- 35       **H. Recruitment, Admission, Retention, Record Keeping, and Advisement**
- 36       **1. Standards**
- 37           a. Communications with prospective students and parents/guardians must be
- 38                 accurate and presented with integrity.

- 1           b. As a matter of sound educational practice, institutions recruit and admit students  
2           only to programs or curricula for which they show aptitudes and prospects for  
3           success.
- 4           c. Recruitment goals, policies, and procedures shall be ethical, controlled by the  
5           institution, compatible with the goals and objectives of the theatre unit, and free of  
6           practices that compensate recruiters directly on an individual or aggregate  
7           per-student-yield basis or otherwise create conflicts of interest for recruitment  
8           personnel or the institution.
- 9           d. Admissions evaluation procedures and advising services must be clearly related to  
10          the goals and objectives of the institution’s theatre programs.
- 11          e. Admission to particular programs of theatre study must be correlated to the  
12          institution’s ability to provide the requisite coursework and experiences at the  
13          appropriate level for all students enrolled.
- 14          f. Student retention policies and procedures must be:
- 15             (1) Appropriate to the purposes of the institution’s curricular programs.
- 16             (2) Clearly defined.
- 17             (3) Published for students and faculty.
- 18             (4) Applied with rigor and fairness.
- 19          g. The institution shall inform a student promptly if it is determined that the student is  
20          not acceptable as a candidate for a degree, certificate, or diploma.
- 21          h. The institution shall maintain accurate, up-to-date records of each student’s  
22          educational progress, including courses taken, production participation, grades,  
23          and/or credits earned, and the results of other appropriate evaluations.
- 24          i. Institutional members shall maintain documents pertinent to the awarding of  
25          graduate degrees, including theses, scripts, dissertations, and portfolios.
- 26          j. Advising must address program content, program completion requirements,  
27          potential careers or future studies, and theatre-specific student services consistent  
28          with the natures and purposes of theatre degrees and programs being offered.  
29          Institutions must provide students with written documents and advising that  
30          describe all requirements and the purposes of their programs.

31          **2. Recommendations**

- 32          a. Students with specific career goals should have opportunities to participate in an  
33          advisement program related to their area of specialization.
- 34          b. Advisement should reflect concern for the goals of each student and should provide  
35          assistance with the selection of courses that serve as appropriate preparation for  
36          advanced study.
- 37          c. Students should have access to information concerning specialization at the  
38          graduate level and available career options in theatre.

1 **I. Published Materials and Websites**

2 **1. Standards**

3 a. Published materials concerning the institution and the theatre unit shall be clear,  
4 accurate, and readily available.

5 b. A catalog or similar document(s) shall be published at least biennially and shall  
6 cover:

7 (1) Purposes;

8 (2) Size and scope;

9 (3) Curricula;

10 (4) Faculty;

11 (5) Administrators and trustees;

12 (6) Locale;

13 (7) Facilities;

14 (8) Costs and refund policies;

15 (9) Rules and regulations for conduct;

16 (10) All quantitative, qualitative, and time requirements for admission, retention,  
17 and completion of programs and degrees and other credentials;

18 (11) Descriptions for each course offered;

19 (12) Academic calendar;

20 (13) Grievance and appeals procedures; and

21 (14) Accreditation status with NAST and other appropriate accrediting agencies.

22 c. Basic institutional policies for defining a credit hour must be published and readily  
23 available.

24 d. The institution shall have transfer of credit policies that (1) are publicly disclosed,  
25 and (2) include a statement of the criteria established by the institution regarding  
26 the transfer of credit earned at another institution of higher education (see  
27 Standards for Accreditation III.A.4.).

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

32 e. Members of the Association having degree programs in K–12 theatre education  
33 and/or drama therapy shall state in their catalogs the registration, certification,  
34 and/or licensure to which their curricula will lead.

- 1 f. Qualitative, quantitative and time requirements; costs; and academic calendars  
2 shall have an appropriate relationship to purposes, curriculum, and subject matters  
3 taught.
- 4 g. Program and degree titles shall be consistent with content (see also Standards for  
5 Accreditation II.I.2.c.).
- 6 h. When an institution or program offers work that is given academic credit by  
7 another institution, the source of the credit and any credential to which it leads  
8 must be clearly described.
- 9 i. Through means consistent with its mission, goals, objectives, and resources, (1) the  
10 institution, or (2) the theatre program, either separately or in conjunction with the  
11 institution, shall routinely provide reliable data and information to the public  
12 concerning the achievement of its purposes.
- 13 j. The institution and the theatre unit shall have readily available valid documentation  
14 for any statements and/or promises regarding such matters as program excellence,  
15 educational results, success in placement, and achievements of graduates or  
16 faculty.
- 17 k. Any statement connecting any specific degree or program offering with career  
18 preparation, career entry, or preparation for advanced study must be consistent  
19 with what the degree or program specifically prepares graduates to be able to do  
20 immediately upon completion, and therefore with all of the following elements or  
21 characteristics for that specific program:
- 22 (1) Published purposes and requirements.
- 23 (2) Degree or program level and type.
- 24 (3) Subject matter content, range, and depth.
- 25 (4) Distributions of curricular and other graduation requirements.
- 26 (5) Scope and levels of observable competency development in graduating  
27 students.

28 **NOTE:** Publication of information indicated in Standards for Accreditation  
29 II.I.1.k.(1)–(4) is encompassed in requirements for all institutions and programs  
30 outlined in Standards for Accreditation II.I.1.b.(1), (3), and (10).

- 31 l. Published materials must clearly distinguish those programs, courses, services, and  
32 personnel available every academic year from those available on a less frequent  
33 basis.
- 34 m. Publications shall not list as current any courses not taught for two consecutive  
35 years that will not be taught during the third consecutive year.

36 **2. Guidelines**

- 37 a. Published materials include websites and any other forms of information  
38 distribution.

- 1           b. In addition to a standard catalog, theatre units normally maintain published  
2 documents of sufficient clarity and detail to facilitate understanding about all  
3 aspects of their work among administrators, faculty, students, parents/guardians,  
4 and other constituencies.
- 5           c. The practices of member institutions support the system of academic currency that  
6 allows degrees to be broadly understood and widely accepted. Member institutions  
7 serve students, higher education, and the public by ensuring that degree and  
8 program titles are consistent with content. Standard academic degree rubrics and  
9 titles of degrees and emphases should be used unless the degree or program has a  
10 significant emphasis on unique content. Enrollment levels, public relations, and  
11 resource availability are important elements in determining an institution's  
12 program offerings, but they are not appropriate criteria for assigning degree titles.

### 13 **J. Community Involvement**

- 14           **1. Standard.** Institutions must publish any formal relationships and policies concerning  
15 community involvement that are connected to curricular offerings.
- 16           **2. Comment.** Institutions vary in the intensity of their community involvement according  
17 to their various objectives and types of program offerings. Normally, all theatre units  
18 enjoy reciprocal benefits from cooperating with local schools, performing groups, and  
19 arts organizations (see Appendix II.A., Section 4.D.).

### 20 **K. Articulation with Other Institutions**

- 21           **1. Standard.** Institutions must publish any articulation agreements with other schools.
- 22           **2. Guideline.** Baccalaureate degree-granting theatre units are expected to assume joint  
23 responsibility for working cooperatively to facilitate the articulation between  
24 community and two-year college and four-year college programs: for example, the  
25 development of clear and functional understandings and agreements (see Standards for  
26 Accreditation II.I.1.b.(10)), validation examinations, state and/or regional articulation  
27 committees, and procedures for maintaining current information regarding credit and  
28 admission policies (see Standards for Accreditation III.A.3. for standards regarding  
29 transfer of credit).

### 30 **L. Evaluation, Planning, and Projections**

#### 31 **1. Standards**

- 32           a. The theatre unit shall evaluate, plan, and make projections consistent with and  
33 supportive of its purposes and its size and scope.
- 34               (1) Techniques, procedures, time requirements, resources, and specific  
35 methodologies used for evaluation, planning, and projections shall be  
36 developed by the theatre unit appropriate to the natures of the theatre  
37 disciplines offered at the institution and with a logical and functioning  
38 relationship to overall financial conditions impacting the institution.
- 39               (2) The theatre unit shall ensure that appropriate individuals are involved and  
40 appropriate information is available to accomplish the goals and scope of each  
41 evaluation, planning, and projections project.

- 1 (3) Each theatre unit must determine the scope, breadth, and degree of formal  
2 systematic attention to the connected activities of evaluation, planning, and  
3 projection as it makes decisions pertaining to:
  - 4 (a) Purposes;
  - 5 (b) Present and future operational conditions;
  - 6 (c) Resource allocation and development; and
  - 7 (d) Specific programs and services.
- 8 (4) Reviews and evaluations must demonstrate consideration of the functions of  
9 study at all levels (graduate, undergraduate, and certificate/diploma program)  
10 and the purposes, structure, content, and results of each specific program of  
11 study.
- 12 (5) Evaluation, projection, and planning associated with adding, altering, or  
13 deleting curricula must address multiple, long-term programmatic and resource  
14 issues.
- 15 (6) Evaluation, planning, and projection must be pursued with sufficient  
16 intellectual rigor and resource allocations to accomplish established purposes.
- 17 b. The theatre unit shall demonstrate that the educational and artistic development of  
18 students is first among all evaluative considerations.
  - 19 (1) Regular, systematic attention shall be given to evaluating the learning  
20 achievements of individual students.
  - 21 (2) Individual evaluations shall be analyzed and organized to produce an overall  
22 picture of the extent to which the educational and artistic purposes of the  
23 theatre unit are being attained.
  - 24 (3) When various levels of programs are offered in the same field of study,  
25 differences in expectations about achievement must be specified.
  - 26 (4) The theatre unit shall be able to demonstrate that students completing  
27 programs have achieved the artistic and educational levels and competencies  
28 outlined in applicable NAST standards.

## 29 **2. Guidelines, Recommendations, and Comment**

- 30 a. Evaluation, planning, and making projections are a set of connected activities that  
31 relate to all aspects of a theatre unit's work. They include, but go well beyond:  
32 numbers of students, personnel, or programs; lists of resource needs; or  
33 declarations of aspiration. They address strategies and contextual issues consistent  
34 with the purposes, size and scope, program offerings, and responsibilities of the  
35 theatre unit.
- 36 b. Evaluations provide analyses of current effectiveness; planning provides systematic  
37 approaches to the future; and projections create understanding of potential  
38 contexts and conditions.
- 39 c. Internal evaluation and reporting of evaluation of student achievement normally  
40 differentiates among (1) levels of quality, and (2) attainments.

- 1 d. Normally, students have regular opportunities to evaluate formally the curricular  
2 experiences in which they participate. This is an example of the function indicated  
3 in Standards for Accreditation II.L.1.a.(2).
- 4 e. Theatre units have available a broad range of evaluation techniques such as juries,  
5 critiques, course-specific and comprehensive examinations, institutional reviews,  
6 peer reviews, and the performance of graduates in various settings. Information  
7 gained is used as an integral part of planning and projection efforts. However, the  
8 institution and the theatre unit should ensure and make clear that evaluation,  
9 planning, and projection exist to serve the theatre unit's programs, rather than the  
10 reverse. Periodic cost/benefit analyses, in terms of improvements to student  
11 learning in theatre, are strongly encouraged for all theatre units and externally  
12 imposed evaluation systems.
- 13 f. Evaluation, planning, and projection should contribute to a general understanding  
14 about the relationships of parts to wholes, both for the theatre unit and its  
15 component programs. They should result in successful management of  
16 contingencies, opportunities, and constraints. They should produce realistic  
17 short- and long-term decisions. They should ensure a productive relationship  
18 between priorities and resource allocations.
- 19 g. Over reliance on quantitative measures is inconsistent with the pursuit of quality in  
20 the arts. The higher the level of achievement, the more strongly this pertains.
- 21 **M. Operational Standards for Free-Standing Theatre Institutions.** Additional operational  
22 standards that apply to free-standing theatre institutions may be found in Standards for  
23 Accreditation XIX. All institutions to which these standards apply must demonstrate  
24 compliance with all applicable standards in Standards for Accreditation XIX.
- 25 **N. Operational Standards and Procedures for Proprietary Institutions.** Additional operational  
26 standards that apply to all proprietary institutions may be found in Standards for  
27 Accreditation XX. All institutions to which these standards apply must demonstrate  
28 compliance with all applicable standards in Standards for Accreditation XX.
- 29 **O. Operational Standards for Branch Campuses and Other Entities.** Additional operational  
30 standards that apply to branch campuses, additional locations, extension programs, and  
31 other external programs may be found in Appendix I.A. All institutions to which these  
32 standards apply must demonstrate compliance with all applicable standards in Appendix I.A.

1 **III. THEATRE PROGRAM COMPONENTS**

2 **NOTE:** This section contains general statements regarding theatre programs that are classified in  
3 five ways: (1) standards applicable in all or most institutions; (2) standards applicable if specific  
4 types of programs are offered; (3) policies regarding the application of standards or  
5 recommendations for development of the field through curricular efforts; (4) policies that  
6 provide frameworks for the application of curricular standards; and (5) policies recommending  
7 actions for development of the field. The classification of each standards component is indicated  
8 in italics. Standards for Accreditation IV.–XV. provide further and more specific standards for  
9 degree granting programs. Standards for Accreditation XVI.–XVIII. provide further and more  
10 specific standards for non-degree-granting programs.

11 **A. Credit and Time Requirements** (*always applicable in postsecondary institutions*)

12 **1. Program Length**

- 13 a. Associate degrees require a minimum of 60 semester or 90 quarter credit hours and  
14 the equivalent of two academic years.
- 15 b. Baccalaureate degrees require a minimum of 120 semester or 180 quarter hours  
16 and the equivalent of four academic years.
- 17 c. Post-baccalaureate degrees require a minimum of 30 semester or 45 quarter hours  
18 and the equivalent of one academic year and must meet additional credit and time  
19 requirements according to degree level and title.
- 20 d. Postsecondary professionally-oriented non-degree-granting programs in  
21 degree-granting institutions have semester, quarter, clock hour, and/or other time  
22 requirements commensurate with the subject matter and purposes of specific  
23 programs.
- 24 e. The total time requirement for any postsecondary program must be commensurate  
25 with the number of credit or clock hours required to complete the program.  
26 Reasonable total time requirements must be formulated and published.
- 27 f. Community or pre-collegiate programs have time requirements commensurate with  
28 the subject matter and purposes of specific programs. Standards for Accreditation  
29 III.A., excluding Standards for Accreditation III.A.1.f., do not apply to these  
30 programs.

31 **2. Awarding Credit**

- 32 a. Credit shall be awarded consistently according to the published credit policies of  
33 the institution and in compliance with NAST standards. Institutional policies shall  
34 establish the credit hour in terms of time and achievement required. The minimum  
35 time requirement shall be consistent with or reasonably approximate the following:  
36 (1) a semester hour of credit represents at least 3 hours of work each week, on  
37 average, for a period of fifteen to sixteen weeks, (2) a quarter hour of credit  
38 represents at least 3 hours of work each week for a period of ten or eleven weeks.  
39 Credit for other kinds of academic requirements or offerings that are in different  
40 formats, use different modes of delivery, or that are structured to take a different  
41 amount of time is computed on the same basis in terms of representing at least the  
42 equivalent amount of work. Policies concerning achievement shall be consistent

1 with the principle that credit is earned only when curricular, competency, and all  
2 other requirements are met and the final examination or equivalent is satisfactorily  
3 passed.

4 **NOTE:** The above standard does not (i) require that a credit hour definition at any  
5 institution for any course or purpose duplicate exactly the definition provided in  
6 Standards for Accreditation III.A.2.a.(1) and (2), or that all programs or courses  
7 within a single institution follow the same credit hour policies; (ii) restrict an  
8 institution from requiring more student work per credit hour than indicated in  
9 Standards for Accreditation III.A.2.a.(1) and (2); (iii) dictate the ratio of in-class  
10 versus out-of-class work; or (iv) prevent an institution from establishing means and  
11 methods for equating the direct assessment of student learning to the awarding of  
12 1 or more credit hours.

13 b. In lecture-discussion courses, normally 1 hour of credit is given for one period of  
14 recitation (50 minutes) plus 2 hours of preparation each week of the term. In  
15 laboratory or ensemble courses, normally 1 hour of credit is given for two or three  
16 50-minute recitation periods per week.

17 c. When institutions offer programs and courses for abbreviated time periods, or in  
18 independent study, they must ensure that students completing such programs or  
19 courses acquire levels of knowledge, competence, and understanding comparable  
20 to that expected of students completing work in the standard time period. For  
21 example, in order to earn 1 hour of credit during a summer session, students must  
22 attend approximately the same number of class hours and make the same amount  
23 of preparation as they would in attending a 1-hour-per-week course for one term  
24 during the regular academic year.

25 d. Institutions or curricular programs using a clock-hour system must ensure that their  
26 system for dealing with matters such as clock hour assignments or requirements  
27 and the relationship of clock hours to program completion is consistent with and  
28 equivalent, but not necessarily identical, to credit and time requirements as stated  
29 in Standards for Accreditation III.A. (see also Note, Standards for Accreditation  
30 III.A.2.a.). Meeting this standard does not require the conversion of clock hour-  
31 based programs to credit hour-based programs. Normally, institutions participating  
32 in federal Title IV programs also follow federal regulations regarding clock hour  
33 definitions, calculation, equivalencies, and policies.

34 e. Any credit awarded for short-term workshops should be computed on the same  
35 basis as other coursework during the academic year. Institutional members of NAST  
36 should not award credit for short-term workshops or attendance at meetings  
37 sponsored by themselves, other institutions, or organizations unless such credit is  
38 acceptable toward specific undergraduate, graduate, or non-degree-granting  
39 professional programs at their own institutions.

40 **3. Transfer of Credit**

41 a. Presentation of a satisfactory transcript from a collegiate institution accredited by  
42 an agency or association recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education is one  
43 criterion for transferring credit.

- 1           b. In granting course credit to transfer students, the receiving institution shall  
2           maintain policies to assure that the overall educational experience of the  
3           transferring student is at least equal in quality to that of the student taking all of the  
4           student’s work at the member school.
- 5           c. Transfer credit should be granted for courses taken at another institution only when  
6           the coursework involved and the level of the transfer applicant’s achievement in it  
7           permit the student to complete the remaining coursework successfully.
- 8           d. Accreditation by the Association carries with it no obligation to accept, without  
9           examination, theatre credits from other member schools.

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

13       The institution shall have transfer of credit policies that (a) are publicly disclosed, and  
14       (b) include a statement of the criteria established by the institution regarding the  
15       transfer of credit earned at another institution of higher education (see Standards for  
16       Accreditation II.I.1.d.).

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

21       **5. Transcript Evidence.** Transcripts of graduates must be consistent with the curricular and  
22       other requirements stated in the institution’s publications applicable to the degree  
23       being awarded. Applicability is defined by the published policies of the institution.

24       **6. Institutional Procedures.** The institution must have procedures to make credit hour  
25       assignments for courses, programs, and other requirements consistent with its credit  
26       hour policies applicable to those offerings, and the means to ensure accurate and  
27       reliable application of its credit hour policies and procedures. Consistent with the Note  
28       in Standards for Accreditation III.A.2.a., it is recognized that institutions may have  
29       different policies or procedures for different types of programs or delivery systems.

30       **7. Notification Rule.** As a USDE-recognized accrediting agency, NAST is required to file a  
31       specific report to the U.S. Secretary of Education when an institution is found in  
32       systemic noncompliance with the NAST standards and policies regarding credit hours  
33       either within a specific program of study or unit or, if applicable, within an institution as  
34       a whole. In this instance, systemic refers to organization- or unit-wide policies,  
35       procedures, or practices, including but not limited to, continuous noncompliance.  
36       Normally, specific instances or lapses promptly clarified or remediated are not  
37       considered systemic. Opportunities for the institution to remediate problems and  
38       document compliance with NAST standards and policies normally precede such  
39       notification to the Secretary. The Rules of Practice and Procedure, Part II, Article IV.,  
40       Section 4. and federal regulations as amended from time to time provide one protocol  
41       framework for communication and notification between NAST and the Secretary.

- 1 **B. Time on Task, Curricular Proportions, and Competencies** (*always applicable in*  
2 *postsecondary institutions*)
- 3 1. Curricular structures and requirements must provide sufficient time on task to produce  
4 the competencies required and expected.
- 5 2. Curricular proportions indicated as benchmarks in the standards below represent the  
6 amounts of time normally needed to reach the levels of achievement expected for  
7 graduation.
- 8 3. In calculating curricular structures, the Association uses a four-year degree program of  
9 120 semester hours, or 180 quarter hours, as the basis for determining percentages of  
10 various components. For institutions with program requirements beyond 120 semester  
11 hours or 180 quarter hours, the combined percentage of the components will exceed  
12 100%. For associate degrees, the basis is 60 semester hours or 90 quarter hours. For  
13 initial master's degrees, the basis is 30 semester hours or 45 quarter hours.
- 14 4. Professional undergraduate and graduate programs in theatre are shaped by the  
15 realities and expectations in the field to seek the development of competencies at the  
16 highest possible levels. At these levels, competencies are far beyond minimum learning  
17 expectations and are usually not amenable to evaluation in purely mathematical terms.  
18 The higher the level of achievement, the more each work is judged by experts on the  
19 terms and expectations it sets for itself.

20 **C. Principles, Standards, and Expectations for Student Achievement** (*always applicable*)

- 21 1. The NAST *Handbook* provides clear profession-developed standards for theatre  
22 programs at specific levels and in specific specializations in terms of what students and  
23 graduates are expected to know and be able to do. These standards follow below in  
24 clearly titled sections by degree or program content and by degree or program level.  
25 Consistent with national practice, these program specific standards provide a  
26 framework of threshold requirements within which institutions make specific detailed  
27 decisions about content, operations, and assessments associated with specific  
28 programs. Threshold indicates essential, not minimal.
- 29 2. NAST accreditation review procedures specify that institutions must document how  
30 they assist students to gain NAST specified competencies applicable to their  
31 specialization, and how the institution tests, evaluates, and/or assesses achievement  
32 levels for a variety of individual and institutional purposes during their programs and  
33 prior to their approval for graduation.
- 34 3. NAST on-site review procedures specify that visitors centered in the theatre profession  
35 review and report on the quality and level of student work in various settings, including,  
36 but not limited to, for example, individual and ensemble performances, juries, critiques,  
37 course-specific and comprehensive evaluations, institutional reviews, peer reviews,  
38 theses and dissertations, lessons and classroom observations, student teaching where  
39 applicable, and student meetings.
- 40 4. In demonstrating and documenting student achievement consistent with program  
41 purposes, institutions use and mix a variety of methods, including, but not limited to,  
42 tests, evaluations, assessments, performance jury results, grades, critiques, transcripts,  
43 summative or final projects such as performances, dissertations, competition  
44 placements, prizes or awards, fellowships, admission to higher level study, employment,  
45 recording, publication, and professional acceptance within specializations and the field.

1 **NOTE:** Institutions may wish to choose from among a variety of methods available to  
2 serve as indicators of success with regard to student achievement (see C.4. above), as  
3 no single indicator addresses all of the component aspects of student achievement.

- 4 5. As a part of every NAST accreditation review, each institution must demonstrate how  
5 each curricular program specifies content expectations consistent with NAST standards  
6 and must test, evaluate, and/or otherwise assess for individual achievement in terms of  
7 these expectations. As a matter of principle, and consistent with artistic practice and the  
8 principle of frameworks, NAST encourages institutional creativity in program and  
9 assessment development and operation.

10 **D. Forms of Instruction, Requirements, and Electives** (*always applicable*)

- 11 1. Forms of instruction chosen for any specific curricular program must have a logical and  
12 functioning relationship to the purposes of that program and to expectations for  
13 learning and achievement specified by NAST standards and by the institution. Forms of  
14 instruction include, but are not limited to: lecture courses; productions; labs; private,  
15 independent, or small group study; internships; and so forth.
- 16 2. It is the prerogative of the institution to establish course requirements and the extent to  
17 which a particular curriculum will contain any opportunities for free electives or  
18 electives chosen from a specified set of courses or experiences. For each curriculum, this  
19 determination must have a logical and functioning relationship to purposes and  
20 expectations for learning and achievement specified by NAST standards and by the  
21 institution.

22 **E. Individual Program Continuity** (*always applicable*). Institutions shall not impose new or  
23 revised degree requirements on continuing students. Enrolled students shall have the  
24 opportunity to complete the degree requirements in effect at the time of their admission  
25 into a degree program.

26 **F. Residence** (*always applicable*). No degree or other credential shall be granted by a member  
27 school of NAST unless the student has fulfilled any established residence policy of the  
28 institution applicable to that program.

29 **G. New Programs** (*always applicable*)

- 30 1. Institutions planning to (a) offer new programs or (b) offer a program for the first time,  
31 must receive Plan Approval from the Commission on Accreditation as applicable, before  
32 the matriculation of students (see Rules of Practice and Procedure, Part II, Article I.,  
33 Section 3.; and Rules of Practice and Procedure, Part II, Article VI.).
- 34 2. Institutions planning to offer a master's or doctoral degree for the first time should  
35 inquire of the National Office for appropriate additional procedures.

36 **H. Independent Study** (*applicable to programs that contain or are based on independent study*)

- 37 1. **Definition.** Each offering institution must publish information that includes its  
38 definitions of independent study and its policies for the conduct of independent study  
39 on campus or through distance learning.

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**2. Policies and Resources**

- a. Institutions offering degrees extensively based on independent study must provide the instruction, tutorials, critiques, evaluations, and resources essential to degree programs of that type, and to each specific degree being offered.
- b. At the doctoral level, institutions may not wish to specify course or credit requirements, other than the satisfactory completion of certain examinations, project reviews, or a dissertation.

**3. Student Requirements**

- a. The content and expectations for each independent study course or program or degree must be clearly stated to the student in writing before each independent study begins.
- b. When independent study is used to substitute for a required course, the institution must ensure that the content, scope, depth, and learning expectations of the required course are fulfilled by the independent study.

**4. Degree Requirements.** Each institution determines the extent to which independent study is to be a means for meeting the requirements for each degree that it offers. However, if a degree is based primarily on course requirements that are to be taken in formal classes, normally independent study is not substituted for more than 20% of such required courses.

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

**1. Definitions**

**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 regular and substantive interaction between instructor and student either synchronously or asynchronously. Technologies include, but are not limited to:

- (1) The Internet;
- (2) One- and/or two-way transmission through open broadcast, closed circuit, cable, microwave, broadband lines, fiber optics, satellite, and wireless communication devices;
- (3) Audio and/or video conferencing; or
- (4) Other media used in a course in conjunction with any of the technologies listed in (1)–(3) 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;

- 1 (2) Assessing and/or providing feedback to students regarding their course of  
2 study;
- 3 (3) Providing information and/or responding to questions regarding the content of  
4 a course and/or required competencies;
- 5 (4) Facilitating group discussion regarding the content of a course and/or required  
6 competencies; and
- 7 (5) Other instructional opportunities and/or initiatives deemed appropriate by the  
8 institution and in compliance with applicable NAST operational and curricular  
9 standards intended to support and advance a student's course of study.
- 10 **2. Means.** The distance aspect of these programs may be delivered through a variety of  
11 means, including teaching and learning through electronic systems. Regardless of the  
12 means employed, an institution shall ensure that regular interaction between a student  
13 and an instructor(s), prior to the student's completion of a course of study, takes place  
14 through:
- 15 a. The provision of opportunities for substantive interactions with the student on a  
16 predictable and regular basis commensurate with the length of time and the  
17 breadth of the student's course of study; and
- 18 b. Monitoring the student's academic engagement and success, and ensuring that  
19 instructors are responsible for promptly and proactively engaging in substantive  
20 interaction with a student as needed as indicated by such monitoring, or upon  
21 request by the student.
- 22 **3. Standards Applications**
- 23 a. Distance learning programs must meet all NAST operational and curricular  
24 standards for programs of their type and content. This means that the functions  
25 and competencies required by applicable standards are met even when distance  
26 learning mechanisms predominate in the total delivery system.
- 27 b. Institutions approved by NAST to offer theatre programs delivered either entirely or  
28 partially through distance learning means will be designated as such in NAST  
29 publications.
- 30 c. Institutions approved by NAST to offer distance learning programs shall provide, in  
31 institutional publications as appropriate, a listing, or designation, or indication of all  
32 theatre programs offered either entirely or partially through distance learning  
33 means. Institutions shall designate in publications whether required courses are  
34 offered through distance learning (i.e., online, hybrid) and/or on ground in-person  
35 means.
- 36 **4. Standards**
- 37 **a. Purposes and Resources**
- 38 (1) Purposes shall be clear. The institution must demonstrate that such purposes  
39 can be delivered through current or proposed systems of distance learning.

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

9 **b. Delivery Systems, Verification, and Evaluation**

- 10 (1) Delivery systems must be logically matched to the purposes of each program.  
11 Delivery systems are defined as the operational interrelationships of such  
12 elements as program or course content, interactive technologies, teaching  
13 techniques, schedules, patterns of interaction between teacher and student,  
14 and evaluation expectations and mechanisms.
- 15 (2) The institution must have processes that establish that the student who  
16 registers in a distance education course or program is the same student who  
17 participates in and completes the program and receives academic credit.  
18 Verification methods are determined by the institution and may include, but  
19 are not limited to, secure login and password protocols, proctored  
20 examinations, and new or other technologies and practices.
- 21 (3) Specific opportunities for student evaluations shall be established throughout  
22 the time period of each course or program.

23 **c. Technical Prerequisites**

- 24 (1) The institution must determine and publish for each distance learning program  
25 or course (a) requirements for technical competence, and (b) any technical  
26 equipment requirements. The institution must have means for assessing the  
27 extent to which prospective students meet these requirements before they are  
28 accepted or enrolled.
- 29 (2) The institution shall publish information regarding the availability of academic  
30 and technical support services.

31 **d. Program Consistency and Equivalency**

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

- 1           **e. Communication with Students.** Instructions to students, expectations for  
2           achievement, and evaluation criteria must be clearly stated and readily available to  
3           all involved in a particular distance learning program. Students must be fully  
4           informed of means for asking questions and otherwise communicating with  
5           instructors and students as required.
- 6           **5. Notification Rule.** A special notification rule applies to institutions that participate in  
7           federal Title IV programs and to which Standards for Accreditation XIX., Section 2.D.  
8           applies.
- 9           **J. Disciplines in Combination (Inter-, Multi-, Co-Disciplinary Programs, etc.)** (*applicable when*  
10           *an institution offers inter-, multi-, co-disciplinary programs, etc.*)
- 11           **1. Standards Applicability.** To some extent, every curriculum represents a combination of  
12           modes of thought and inquiry, and thus, some combination of disciplinary perspectives.  
13           However, when an institution decides to offer any study program or degree which is  
14           explicitly designated as a multi- or interdisciplinary combination and in which theatre is  
15           either the primary or home discipline or constitutes over 25% of the total program  
16           content, the following standards apply in addition to those applicable to all other  
17           theatre programs.
- 18           **2. Standards**
- 19           a. A specific coherent set of purposes shall be developed and published that include,  
20           but are not limited to:
- 21                   (1) Title or basic identification of the primary focus of the program in terms of  
22                   fields of study or areas of inquiry, or both.
- 23                   (2) Specific content, techniques, and perspectives used to pursue the primary  
24                   focus, including aspirations and expectations regarding:
- 25                           (a) Breadth and depth.
- 26                           (b) Specific intellectual, disciplinary, or artistic engagement.
- 27                           (c) Juxtaposing, combining, applying, integrating, or synthesizing the  
28                           disciplines involved.
- 29           b. Operations shall reveal coherent achievement of goals and objectives.
- 30           c. Terminology shall reflect accurately the type(s) of disciplinary combinations  
31           represented or used.
- 32           d. Program titles shall be consistent with their curricular content. Published materials  
33           shall be clear about the status of any curricular program with respect to  
34           constituting a major, a minor, or field for independent study, etc.
- 35           e. Applicable prerequisites for courses or curricula shall be clearly stated, especially  
36           with regard to levels of competence in specific disciplines that are to be combined.
- 37           f. There must be clear descriptions of what students are expected to know and be  
38           able to do upon completion, consistent with Standards for Accreditation III.J.2.a.
- 39           g. Guidance, advising, and mentoring shall be adequate to support the achievement of  
40           purposes.

- 1 h. Evaluation mechanisms shall be consistent with the goals defined for specific  
2 courses, projects, programs, or curricula, and to the collaborative approach(es)  
3 involved.
- 4 **3. Theatre Content.** Programs expressing objectives in specific theatre content are  
5 reviewed in terms of that content and the level and type of achievement expected.
- 6 **K. Majors in or Based on Electronic Media** (*applicable when programs are focused on content*  
7 *addressed in Standards for Accreditation III.K.2.a. and b.*)
- 8 **1. Standards Applicability**
- 9 a. In reviewing majors in or based on electronic media and technology, the  
10 Commission will consider the extent to which electronic technology is used in the  
11 context of programs in the standard theatre disciplines discussed elsewhere in the  
12 *Handbook*. Given the extent to which electronic media and technology are the focus  
13 of such programs, the standards in this section may apply along with the standards  
14 for the home field.
- 15 b. Programs centered on new approaches and combinations will be reviewed by the  
16 standards in this section and, as applicable, by those that address distance learning  
17 and disciplines in combination.
- 18 **2. Purposes, Options, and Characteristics.** Computers and associated electronic media  
19 have expanded possibilities for the education of theatre professionals and other artists.  
20 Institutions have a large number of options for establishing goals for curricula and  
21 coursework. Choices include, but are not limited to, the following categories:
- 22 a. **Discipline(s).** Programs may concentrate in, represent combinations of, or integrate  
23 studies in such areas as the standard theatre disciplines, computer science,  
24 engineering, design, digital media, animation, film/video, languages, the psychology  
25 of perception, and many others. Within theatre, new technologies may develop  
26 additional fields.
- 27 Programs may seek to use electronic media and technology as a tool to do work in a  
28 pre-existing field. Programs may also combine fields in various ways to develop new  
29 sets of knowledge and skills for various applications. Institutions may also seek to  
30 create new fields, or to address emerging niches in particular job markets.
- 31 b. **Technology.** Content goals range from how a technology works, to how to work it,  
32 to how to work with it, to how to do work with it, to how to understand it, to how  
33 to integrate it. Programs may concentrate on one or more technologies. Technology  
34 goals may also include how to build technologies, how technologies evolve, or the  
35 impacts of technology.
- 36 c. **Problem Solving.** Each program represents a particular set of approaches and  
37 expectations for identifying and solving problems. The level, nature, and complexity  
38 of the problems to be solved delineate the program's character and the projected  
39 accomplishments of its graduates.

- 1           **d. Delivery System.** A wide variety of practices work as long as within each program or  
2 curriculum delivery systems are consistent with the specific achievements  
3 necessary to the success of that program. In addition to traditional formats,  
4 team-based teaching, learning, projects, and evaluations are common in electronic  
5 media programs.
- 6           **e. Specialization.** The range here includes programs that provide a broad foundation  
7 as the basis for future specializations to programs that are specifically focused on a  
8 particular field or subparts thereof. Connections and specializations involving  
9 theatre, various design fields, photography, animation, digital media, film/video,  
10 Web/Internet applications, movement and dance, music, computer science,  
11 multimedia, and pedagogies at various levels are among the most usual areas of  
12 focus.
- 13           **f. Education in Theatre.** Each program makes a choice regarding the extent to which  
14 it addresses foundation principles and techniques in and of themselves or in some  
15 combination with a more specialized purpose.
- 16           **g. General Liberal Education.** A determination is made regarding the extent to which  
17 elements or composite expectations for education in the humanities, sciences,  
18 social sciences, and other arts are included in the program.

19           **3. Standards**

- 20           a. A specific coherent set of purposes shall be developed and published that include,  
21 but are not limited to:
- 22               (1) Titles or basic identification of subject matter, techniques, technologies,  
23 disciplines, or issues to be addressed.
- 24               (2) Specific content, methods, and perspectives used to consider subject matter,  
25 techniques, technologies, disciplines, or issues to be addressed, including  
26 expectations regarding:
- 27                   (a) Specific artistic, intellectual, or disciplinary engagement.
- 28                   (b) Breadth and depth in disciplinary components.
- 29                   (c) The development of problem setting and solving capabilities.
- 30           b. Curriculum and other program requirements shall be consistent with goals and  
31 objectives.
- 32           c. Program titles shall be consistent with their curriculum content.
- 33           d. Applicable prerequisites for courses or curricula shall be clearly stated, especially  
34 with regard to levels of competence in specific disciplines or technologies central to  
35 the artistic or educational purposes and content of the program. The institution  
36 must have means for assessing the extent to which prospective students meet  
37 these requirements before they are accepted or enrolled.
- 38           e. The institution must determine and publish any technical equipment requirements  
39 for each program or course. The institution must have means for assessing the  
40 extent to which prospective students meet these requirements before they are  
41 accepted or enrolled.

- 1 f. There must be clear descriptions of what students are expected to know and be  
2 able to do upon completion, and effective mechanisms for assessing student  
3 competencies against these expectations. Normally, expectations and  
4 competencies can be related to all or several of the seven purposes areas outlined  
5 in Standards for Accreditation III.K.2.a.–g. The level of the competency expected  
6 shall be consistent with the level of the degree or program offered.

7 **L. Non-Degree-Granting Programs for the Community** (*applicable according to provisions of*  
8 *Standards for Accreditation III.L.1.*)

- 9 **1. Standards Applicability.** Many postsecondary theatre units offering liberal arts or  
10 professional degrees or programs also offer non-degree-granting programs of study for  
11 children, youth, and adults in their communities. These range from private lessons with  
12 collegiate instructors to large, institutionalized programs with specialized professional  
13 faculty and administration. *Community theatre school, preparatory program, laboratory*  
14 *school, and community division* are among the many titles used to designate such  
15 programs when they have a specific published identity.

16 When a postsecondary institution offers non-degree-granting theatre programs that (a)  
17 serve individuals in their communities in a pre-professional or avocational context; (b)  
18 have a specific published identity; (c) have at least one specifically designated  
19 administrator; and (d) operate on an academic year or year-round basis, the part of the  
20 theatre unit or other entity so designated and the programs it offers must meet the  
21 following standards in order to protect the institution's name and its accreditation  
22 status as a theatre unit.

23 **2. Standards**

- 24 a. Specific purposes correlated with those of the postsecondary theatre unit and the  
25 institution as a whole must be developed and published.
- 26 b. Statements of purpose must clarify priorities among theatre and other important  
27 goals.
- 28 c. Functional principles in the NAST standards for purposes and operations (see  
29 Standards for Accreditation II.) shall be visible in the organizational and  
30 management relationship between the postsecondary and non-degree-granting  
31 community-oriented elements of the total theatre effort, and shall support the  
32 achievement of educational results as specified by programmatic purposes.
- 33 d. Titles of programs and terminology must be consistent with content and  
34 programmatic focus. For example, use of the term *community* implies open  
35 opportunity for all; the term *laboratory*, units or programs involving the majority of  
36 intern teachers from pedagogy programs.
- 37 e. A review of each instructional program demonstrates that students are:
- 38 (1) Achieving a measurable degree of technical mastery in at least one of the  
39 traditional or innovative techniques appropriate to their area of study.
- 40 (2) Developing an effective work process and a coherent set of ideas and goals  
41 appropriate to their level of study.
- 42 (3) Developing a significant body of skills sufficient to produce work consistent  
43 with the goals of their programs.

- 1 f. The offering of non-degree-granting credentials such as certificates and diplomas  
2 shall be consistent with NAST standards for such programs.
- 3 **3. Opportunities.** Community education programs are encouraged to provide cultural  
4 opportunities to the communities they serve. When planning programs of study and  
5 community activities, consideration should be given to, and informed by, the heritage(s)  
6 of the community in which the institution operates.
- 7 **M. Content, Repertories, and Methods** (*policies that establish a conceptual framework or*  
8 *guidelines for the application of curricular standards*)
- 9 1. NAST standards address bodies of knowledge, skills, and professional capacities. At  
10 times, the standards require breadth, at other times, depth or specialization. However,  
11 the standards do not mandate specific choices of content, repertory, or methods.
- 12 2. With regard to specifics, theatre has a long history, many repertories, multiple  
13 connections with cultures, and numerous successful methodologies. Content in and  
14 study of these areas is vast and growing. Each theatre unit is responsible for choosing  
15 among these materials and approaches when establishing basic requirements consistent  
16 with NAST standards and the expectations of the institution.
- 17 3. In making the choices outlined in Standards for Accreditation III.M.2., the institution is  
18 responsible for decisions regarding breadth and depth and for setting proportions  
19 among them.
- 20 4. Choices and emphases, as well as means for developing competencies, reflect  
21 institutional and program purposes and specific areas of specialization. The result is  
22 differences among programs regarding attention given to specific content, repertories,  
23 and methods and to various perspectives through which theatre may be studied.
- 24 **N. Flexibility and Innovation** (*policies that establish a conceptual framework or guidelines for*  
25 *the application of curricular standards*)
- 26 1. NAST standards constitute a framework of basic commonalities that provides wide  
27 latitude for the creativity of faculty, students, and institutions.
- 28 2. There are many ways to achieve excellence. Innovative and carefully planned  
29 experimentation is encouraged. Experimentation might lead to programs of study not  
30 specifically indicated in Standards for Accreditation IV.–XV.
- 31 3. The failure to meet the specifics of each standard will not necessarily preclude  
32 accreditation; however, if deviations exist, the institution must provide an acceptable  
33 rationale documenting how functions required by the standard are being fulfilled, or  
34 how required competencies are being developed.
- 35 **O. Quality Policies** (*policies that establish a conceptual framework or guidelines for the*  
36 *application of curricular standards*)
- 37 1. Quality is developed and enabled by combinations of competence, capacity, aspiration,  
38 and dedication supported by essential resources. Artistic and academic quality is  
39 created primarily through the work of individuals and groups of faculty and students.

- 1           2. With regard to quality:
- 2           a. NAST standards set thresholds that establish basic but demanding requirements for
- 3           studies in theatre.
- 4           b. NAST reviews of institutions and programs analyze, recognize, and promote artistic,
- 5           intellectual, and programmatic quality and their relationships through and beyond
- 6           the standards of the Association.
- 7           c. In addition to the requirements set by the NAST standards, the faculty and
- 8           administration of individual schools define and implement specific expectations for
- 9           levels of quality to be reached by graduating students.
- 10          d. NAST standards and reviews, and sets of institutional expectations primarily
- 11          delineate characteristics, indicators, and conditions of quality. Ultimately, quality
- 12          itself is manifested in the work that students and graduates are able to produce.
- 13          3. After fundamental competencies have been achieved, judgments about quality are best
- 14          made by professionals who are able to determine high levels of artistic and intellectual
- 15          quality.

16 **P. Theatre in General Education** (*policy recommending actions for development of the field*  
17 *through curricular and other efforts*). The Association encourages member institutions, as  
18 appropriate to their objectives and situation, to offer programs for non-majors toward the  
19 development of the future public for theatre. Opportunities should be afforded non-major  
20 students through courses in performance, design/production, history and criticism, and  
21 theatre appreciation.

22 Non-major students should be encouraged to develop an appreciation and knowledge of  
23 theatre by direct participation in classes and production activities. The objectives of course  
24 offerings in theatre appreciation should be to expose students to a broad range of styles and  
25 to develop critical skills that enable the individual to be knowledgeable and discriminating.  
26 Institutions are encouraged to experiment with various types of course offerings, and to be  
27 innovative in designing them, in order to meet the interests and needs of non-major  
28 students.

1 **XIX. SPECIFIC OPERATIONAL STANDARDS FOR FREE-STANDING THEATRE INSTITUTIONS**  
2 **OF HIGHER EDUCATION**

3 **NOTE:** The following standards apply to free-standing theatre institutions of higher education  
4 that offer professional education and training in theatre. They may be degree- and/or non-  
5 degree-granting; they may be not-for-profit or proprietary. These standards are in addition to  
6 Standards for Accreditation I.–XVIII. Additional standards apply to proprietary schools (see  
7 Standards for Accreditation XX.). Free-standing theatre institutions to which Standards for  
8 Accreditation XIX. apply must demonstrate compliance with all applicable standards below.

9 **Section 1. Standards for Accreditation**

10 In addition to meeting all operational and curricular standards of the Association appropriate to  
11 the scope of programs offered, as noted in Standards for Accreditation I.–XVIII., institutions of  
12 higher education to which Standards for Accreditation XIX. apply shall meet the following  
13 standards:

14 **A. Title.** The descriptive title of the institution shall be appropriate to its purpose, size, and  
15 complexity.

16 **B. Operating Authority.** The institution must have specific official documentation confirming  
17 that the institution has a charter and/or formal authority of incorporation and state  
18 recognition and/or licensure.

19 **C. Finances**

20 **1. Operation**

21 a. The institution must demonstrate that tuition and other fees are reasonable and  
22 appropriate in relation to subject matters taught; to goals, objectives, and time  
23 requirements of the degrees, credentials, or programs offered; and to any other  
24 relevant variables.

25 b. The institution must conduct an annual financial review resulting in an annual audit  
26 with opinion prepared by an independent certified public accountant. The annual  
27 audit must be completed within 180 days after the close of each fiscal year.

28 c. If the institution supplements tuition revenue with contributions private or public  
29 or earnings from endowment, evidence must be provided that there are  
30 appropriate policies, plans, procedures, and volunteer and/or professional  
31 resources to generate sustainable non-tuition revenue sufficient for the needs of  
32 the school.

33 **2. Review Protocol**

34 For the purpose of evaluating the financial stability and business policies of the  
35 institution, at least one member will be added to each NAST visiting team. This member  
36 shall have expertise and experience in the management, operation, and assessment of  
37 financial practices, and in cooperation with other members of the team, be responsible  
38 for reviewing the practices and sufficiency of financial resources of the institution.

1 **D. Governance and Administration**

2 **NOTE:** Standards for Accreditation XIX., Section 1.D.1.a.(1)–(4) and D.3.(a)–(d) apply to not-  
3 for-profit institutions only. The remaining provisions of Section 1.D. apply to both not-for-  
4 profit and proprietary institutions.

5 **1. Governing Board**

6 **a. Structure**

- 7 (1) A not-for-profit institution must have a governing board consisting of at least  
8 five members with the duty and authority to ensure that the overall mission of  
9 the institution is carried out.
- 10 (2) The governing board must be the legal body responsible for the institution it  
11 holds in trust.
- 12 (3) The presiding officer of the board, along with a majority of other voting  
13 members, must have no contractual, employment, or personal or familial  
14 financial interest in the institution.
- 15 (4) The board must have adequate representation of the public interest  
16 recognizing that institutions serve a public purpose when they provide  
17 educational services and opportunities. Public representatives receive no  
18 financial benefit from the operation of the institution.

19 **b. Financial Responsibilities.** For all institutions, the duties of the board include  
20 securing financial resources to support the achievement of institutional mission,  
21 goals, and objectives. The board is responsible for approving the annual budget,  
22 reviewing periodic fiscal audits, participating in and overseeing any non-tuition  
23 revenue gathering and management, and approving the long-range financial plan.

24 **c. Conflict of Interest.** In all institutions, the board shall maintain policies concerning  
25 conflict of interest, both with respect to its own actions and to actions of  
26 administration, faculty, and staff.

27 **d. Duties.** All institutions must have an official document that defines board duties,  
28 responsibilities, and operations, including the number of members, length of  
29 service, rotation policies, organization and committee structure for overseeing  
30 areas such as finance, properties, and programs, and frequency of regular meetings.  
31 Board policies shall clearly state that no member or committee acts in place of the  
32 board, except by formal delegation of authority by majority vote of the board of  
33 directors.

34 **2. Governance Scope.** If the institution is involved with multi-campus, off-campus,  
35 continuing education, evening and weekend programs, etc., governance and  
36 administrative procedures must be clearly defined and appropriately integrated and  
37 incorporated into the total governance and administration system.

38 **3. Chief Executive Officer**

39 **a.** In all not-for-profit institutions, the institution must have a chief executive officer  
40 whose primary responsibility is to the institution and who is an employee of the  
41 institution.

- 1           b. The Board selects and regularly evaluates the institution’s chief executive officer  
2           using consultative mechanisms described in the official document outlining duties  
3           of the board.
- 4           c. The chief executive officer must not be the presiding officer of the board, but may  
5           be an *ex officio* member of the board.
- 6           d. The board must delegate to the chief executive officer and, as appropriate, to other  
7           officers whose primary responsibilities are to the institution, the requisite authority  
8           and autonomy to manage the institution effectively and formulate and implement  
9           policies compatible with the overall structures and intents established by the board.

10       **4. Administration and Record Keeping**

- 11           a. The administrative structure of the institution must be sufficient in size and  
12           competence to cover business, registrar, maintenance, security, safety, and student  
13           services functions.
- 14           b. The institution shall have appropriate administrative and physical capabilities to  
15           protect the permanent records of students and any other permanent records as  
16           board policies and applicable laws and regulations may dictate.

17       **E. Administrative and Staff Appointments.** In addition to consideration of the provisions of the  
18       Code of Ethics regarding faculty, when recruiting key administrators and staff, independent  
19       institutions are encouraged to consider contractual or other arrangements that candidates  
20       may have with their current employers that promote desired continuity so as to avoid  
21       disruptions that could significantly impact an institution’s ability to fulfill its artistic and  
22       academic obligations to its students.

23       **F. General Studies in Undergraduate Programs**

- 24           **1. Content.** Institutions granting associate degrees (with the exception of two-year  
25           vocational programs, which should follow standards in Standards for Accreditation VI.C.)  
26           or baccalaureate degrees must develop and operate or otherwise provide for general  
27           studies programs addressing the content listed in Standards for Accreditation VII.D. for  
28           liberal arts programs, or Standards for Accreditation VIII.A.6. and applicable portions of  
29           Standards for Accreditation IX. for professional programs.
- 30           **2. Evaluation.** Institutions shall have means for evaluating student achievement in general  
31           studies against general curricular and specific subject matter goals.
- 32           **3. Resources and Program Components.** Institutions providing general studies programs  
33           must document the presence and application of adequate resources and program  
34           components to support the content of each course or type of study offered. These  
35           resources include, but are not limited to, qualified faculty, facilities and equipment,  
36           library and information resources, and distance learning if applicable. Program  
37           components include, but are not limited to, credit and time requirements, program  
38           continuity, and forms of instruction. Resources and program components for general  
39           education must be in compliance with applicable standards outlined in Standards for  
40           Accreditation II. and III.

- 1       **4. General Studies Offered by Other Institutions.** If any or all of the general studies  
2 requirements for degrees offered by the institution are offered through another  
3 institution, the second institution shall be accredited by the appropriate nationally  
4 recognized regional or national accrediting agency.
- 5       **5. Review Protocol.** If an institution administers its own general studies program, at least  
6 one member will be added to each NAST visiting team unless the team is empaneled for  
7 a specific purpose that does not include general education. This member(s) shall have  
8 expertise and experience in the operation and assessment of undergraduate general  
9 studies programs, and in cooperation with other members of the team, be responsible  
10 for reviewing the general studies program at the institution.

#### 11 **G. Facilities and Equipment**

- 12       1. If the institution depends on facilities, equipment, or resources outside of its direct  
13 control (for example, studio and performance facilities, library resources), there must be  
14 a written, clear, fixed understanding with those controlling the outside resources that  
15 ensures the reasonable continued availability of those resources during the  
16 accreditation period.
- 17       2. The institution must provide clear guidelines and procedures for its constituents' use of  
18 such resources and must ensure that such descriptions are readily available to students  
19 whose programs of study require use of these resources.

#### 20 **H. Student Services**

- 21       **1. General.** Consistent with its mission, goals, and objectives, the institution shall provide a  
22 physical, philosophical, and human environment that fosters the artistic, intellectual,  
23 and personal development of students. The institution's program of student services is  
24 derived from the relationship between specific goals for student development and the  
25 purposes of the institution.
- 26       **2. Personnel.** Student services shall be organized and managed by individuals with  
27 appropriate training, experience, and abilities.
- 28       **3. Access**
- 29       a. All types of services shall be available to all students.
- 30       b. Institutions must provide an effective orientation program that acquaints new and  
31 transfer students with all aspects of the institution related to their course of study  
32 and their personal well-being.
- 33       c. The institution shall provide and/or facilitate access to education, counseling, and  
34 professional care associated with the maintenance of physical and mental health.
- 35       d. The institution shall provide and/or facilitate access to counseling covering  
36 personal, social, vocational, and financial issues.
- 37       **4. Financial Transactions.** Students and the institution shall confirm in writing their mutual  
38 agreement regarding any financial requirements and conditions associated with  
39 enrollment, tuition, or scholarship awards.

- 1           **5. Financial Aid and Student Loans**
- 2           **a. Financial Aid**
- 3           (1) If the institution administers a program of financial aid, such aid shall be  
4           provided and administered in an organized and accessible manner.
- 5           (2) Awards are based on the equitable application of clear and published eligibility  
6           criteria.
- 7           (3) The financial aid program must be audited at least once a year.
- 8           (4) Records for financial aid shall be accurate and clearly documented.
- 9           **b. Student Loans**
- 10          (1) If the institution participates in student loan programs, such programs shall be  
11          provided and administered in an organized and accessible manner.
- 12          (2) Awards are based on the equitable application of clear and published eligibility  
13          criteria.
- 14          (3) Students must be made aware of the exact conditions under which loans are  
15          made.
- 16          (4) The student loan program must be audited by an independent auditing firm at  
17          least once a year.
- 18          (5) Records for student loans shall be accurate and clearly documented.
- 19          **6. Housing and Food Service**
- 20          a. If provided, housing must be conducive to individual well-being and personal  
21          development. Housing controlled by or affiliated with the institution must meet  
22          recognized standards of health, safety, and security, and be appropriately staffed.
- 23          b. If provided, food service must meet recognized standards of nutrition, sanitation,  
24          and safety. Food services must be professionally administered and operated.
- 25          **7. Student Records.** The institution must have policies regarding the kinds of information  
26          that will be included in the permanent record of students. It shall also have policies  
27          regarding the retention, safety and security, and disposal of records. Information-  
28          release policies shall respect the rights of individual privacy, the confidentiality of  
29          records, and the best interests of students and the institution.
- 30          **8. Verification of Student Identity.** The institution must use processes that protect student  
31          privacy and notify students of any projected or additional student charges associated  
32          with verification of student identity at the time of registration or enrollment.
- 33          **9. Complaints.** The institution must maintain policies concerning student responsibilities  
34          and rights, including complaint procedures. Policies must be clearly stated, well  
35          publicized and readily available, and administered fairly and consistently.

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

6       **I. Publication of Articulation Agreements**

7       In addition to the requirements of Standards for Accreditation III.A.4., the institution must  
8       make readily available to enrolled and prospective students a list of any institutions with  
9       which the institution has established an articulation agreement.

10      **J. Occupations of Graduates**

11      If NAST accreditation enables the institution’s participation in federal student loan and grant  
12      programs, and if the institution participates in such programs or plans to participate in the  
13      next academic year, the institution must have systems for:

- 14      1. Requesting and compiling occupation information from graduates, particularly the most  
15      recent graduates.
- 16      2. Considering the compiled information in efforts to improve.

17      For purposes of this standard, *occupation* refers to employment or further study.

18      **K. Teach-Out Plans and Agreements**

19      **1. Definitions**

- 20      a. *Teach-out* means a process during which a program, institution, or institutional  
21      location that provides 100 percent of at least one program engages in an orderly  
22      closure or when, following the closure of an institution or campus, another  
23      institution provides an opportunity for the students of the closed school to  
24      complete their program, regardless of their academic progress at the time of  
25      closure.
- 26      b. *Teach-out plan* means a written plan developed by an institution that provides for  
27      the equitable treatment of students if an institution, or an institutional location that  
28      provides 100 percent of at least one program, ceases to operate or plans to cease  
29      operations before all enrolled students have completed their program of study.
- 30      c. *Teach-out agreement* means a written agreement between institutions that  
31      provides for the equitable treatment of students and a reasonable opportunity for  
32      students to complete their program of study if an institution, or an institutional  
33      location that provides 100 percent of at least one program offered, ceases to  
34      operate or plans to cease operations before all enrolled students have completed  
35      their program of study.

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**2. Conditions of Applicability**

- a. NAST requires an accredited institution to which Standards for Accreditation XIX. apply to submit a teach-out plan requesting Commission review and action upon the occurrence of any of the following events:
    - 1. The U.S. Secretary of Education notifies NAST:
      - i. of a determination by the institution’s independent auditor expressing doubt about the institution’s ability to operate as a going concern or indicating an adverse opinion or a finding of material weakness related to financial stability;
      - ii. that the institution is participating in Title IV, HEA programs under a provisional program participation agreement and the Secretary has required a teach-out plan as a condition of participation.
    - 2. NAST acts to place the institution on probation or an equivalent status.
  - b. NAST requires an accredited institution to which Standards for Accreditation XIX. apply to submit a teach-out plan and, if practicable, teach-out agreements requesting Commission review and action upon the occurrence of any of the following events:
    - 1. The U.S. Secretary of Education notifies NAST that:
      - i. it has placed the institution on the reimbursement payment method under 34 CFR 668.162(c) or the heightened cash monitoring payment method requiring the Secretary’s review of the institution’s supporting documentation under 34 CFR 668.162(d)(2);
      - ii. the Secretary has initiated an emergency action against an institution, in accordance with section 487(c)(1)(G) of the Higher Education Act (HEA), or an action to limit, suspend, or terminate an institution participating in any Title IV, Higher Education Act (HEA) program, in accordance with section 487(c)(1)(F) of the Higher Education Act (HEA).
    - 2. NAST acts to withdraw, suspend, revoke, or terminate the accreditation of the institution.
- NOTE:** 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.
- 3. The institution notifies NAST that it intends to cease operations entirely or close a location that provides one hundred percent of at least one program, including if the location is being moved and is considered by the Secretary to be a closed school.
  - 4. A state licensing or authorizing agency notifies NAST that an institution’s license or legal authorization to provide an educational program has been or will be revoked.

- 1                   5. The institution stops offering an educational program before all students  
2                   enrolled in that program complete the program or transfer to another  
3                   program.

4                   **3. NAST Actions**

5                   If one or more conditions stipulated in Standards for Accreditation XIX., Section  
6                   1.K.2.a.1.–2. or K.2.b.1.–5. occurs:

- 7                   a. NAST will evaluate the teach-out plan to ensure it includes a list of currently  
8                   enrolled students, academic programs offered by the institution, and the names of  
9                   other institutions that offer similar programs and that could potentially enter into a  
10                  teach-out agreement with the institution.
- 11                  b. If NAST approves a teach-out plan that includes a program or an institution that is  
12                  accredited by another recognized accrediting agency, NAST will notify that  
13                  accrediting agency of its approval.
- 14                  c. NAST may require an institution it accredits to enter into a teach-out agreement as  
15                  part of its teach-out plan.
- 16                  d. NAST will require a closing institution to include the following information in its  
17                  teach-out agreement:
- 18                      1. A complete list of students currently enrolled in each program at the institution  
19                      and the program requirements each student has completed.
- 20                      2. A plan to provide all potentially eligible students with information about how  
21                      to obtain a closed school's discharge and, if applicable, information on state  
22                      refund policies.
- 23                      3. A records retention plan to be provided to all enrolled students that delineates  
24                      the final disposition of teach-out records (i.e., student transcripts, billing,  
25                      financial aid records).
- 26                      4. Information on the number and types of credits the teach-out institution is  
27                      willing to accept prior to the student's enrollment.
- 28                      5. A clear statement to students of the tuition and fees of the educational  
29                      program and the number of and types of credits that will be accepted by the  
30                      teach-out institution.
- 31                  e. NAST will require an institution it accredits that enters into a teach-out agreement,  
32                  either on its own or at the request of NAST, with another institution to submit that  
33                  teach-out agreement to NAST for review (see Rules of Practice and Procedure, Part  
34                  II, Article V.). NAST will review and take positive action on the teach-out agreement  
35                  only if the agreement meets the requirements of 34 CFR 600.2 and 602.24; is  
36                  consistent with all applicable NAST standards, the NAST Code of Ethics, and the  
37                  NAST Rules of Practice and Procedure; applicable federal and state regulations; and  
38                  provides for the equitable treatment of students being served.

1       **4. Review Criteria**

2       The institution responsible for teaching-out students must:

- 3       a. have the necessary experience, resources, and support services to provide an  
4       educational program that is of acceptable quality and reasonably similar in content,  
5       delivery modality, and scheduling to that provided by the institution that is ceasing  
6       operations either entirely or at one of the locations; however, while an option via  
7       an alternate method of delivery may be made available to students, such an option  
8       is not sufficient unless an option via the same method of delivery as the original  
9       educational program is also provided;
- 10       b. have the capacity to carry out its mission and meet all obligations to existing  
11       students;
- 12       c. demonstrate that it:
  - 13       i. can provide students access to the program and services without requiring  
14       them to move, or travel for substantial distances or durations; and
  - 15       ii. will provide students with information about additional charges, if any; and
- 16       d. provide to NAST copies of all notifications from the institution related to the  
17       institution’s closure or teach-out options to ensure the information accurately  
18       represents all conditions and requirements including those pertaining to the ability  
19       of students to transfer credits.

20       **NOTE:** Irrespective of any teach-out plan or signed teach-out agreement, an institution  
21       may not serve as a teach-out institution if the institution is (1) subject to XIX., Section  
22       1.K.2.a.1.–2.; or (2) under investigation, subject to an action, or being prosecuted for an  
23       issue related to academic quality, misrepresentation, fraud, or other severe matters by  
24       a law enforcement agency.

25       **Section 2. Procedural Requirements**

26       In addition to meeting all procedural requirements of the Association appropriate to the scope of  
27       programs offered, free-standing theatre institutions of higher education to which Standards for  
28       Accreditation XIX. apply shall be subject to the following procedures:

- 29       **A. Supplemental Annual Report.** In addition to the annual HEADS Data Survey, Accreditation  
30       Audit, and Affirmation Statement (see Rules of Practice and Procedure, Part II, Article III.,  
31       Section 1.), the institution must file a Supplemental Annual Report at a time and in a format  
32       stipulated by the Association, which contains the following information:
  - 33       1. Written confirmation of the institution’s institutional accreditor.
  - 34       2. Current tuition and fee schedules.
  - 35       3. A complete summary of the institution’s involvement with federal and state student  
36       loan and grant programs, with breakdowns for each loan and grant program, and the  
37       percentage of general expenditures derived from Pell Grant funds. If the institution does  
38       not participate in these programs, it must so certify in writing as part of the  
39       Supplemental Annual Report.

- 1 4. The percentage of the institution's tuition income, and the percentage of its total  
2 income, derived from:
- 3 a. Federal loans and grants to students, with breakdowns by category of loan and  
4 grant.
- 5 b. State loans and grants to students, with breakdowns by category of loan and grant.
- 6 5. The annual audited financial statement of the institution with auditor's opinion.
- 7 6. Notice of any actions pending to review the institution by:
- 8 a. A state-wide authority that monitors operations of educational institutions.
- 9 b. Another institutional or specialized accreditor.
- 10 c. Federal or state student grants and loan authorities.
- 11 7. For the current and the previous academic year, the total enrollment of the institution  
12 and of any distance education programs it offers.
- 13 8. The status of any applications for accreditation or reaccreditation to other accrediting  
14 bodies.
- 15 9. If the institution participates in federal student loan and grant programs or plans to  
16 participate in the next academic year, summary information regarding the occupational  
17 record of the graduates of the previous year.

18 For purposes of this standard, *occupation* refers to employment or further study.

19 **B. New Curricula and Substantive Change.** If an accredited institution plans to add a new  
20 curricular program, or make a substantive change to current curricular programs or  
21 operations, in the United States or elsewhere, it must file applications for Plan Approval or  
22 Substantive Change as applicable following the timelines and procedures established and  
23 published by the Association (see Rules of Practice and Procedure, Part II, Articles V. and VI.,  
24 in addition to procedural requirements regarding changes in this section of Standards for  
25 Accreditation XIX.).

26 **C. Change in Ownership and/or Major Change in Control**

- 27 **1. NAST Policy.** Accreditation is not automatically transferable when there is a change in  
28 ownership and/or major change in control.
- 29 **2. Definition.** Change in ownership and/or major change in control includes, but is not  
30 limited to:
- 31 a. The sale of the institution or the majority of its assets.
- 32 b. The transfer of the liabilities of an institution to its parent corporation.
- 33 c. The merger of two or more institutions.
- 34 d. The division of one or more institution(s) into two or more institutions.
- 35 e. The transfer of the controlling interest of stock in the institution or its parent  
36 corporation.

- 1 f. Change in over seventy-five percent of board membership during a ninety-day  
2 period.
- 3 g. The complete replacement of one set of board members of the accredited  
4 institution by another within a six-month period.
- 5 h. Change in status as a for-profit, non-profit, or public institution.
- 6 **3. Institutional Responsibility.** All such changes must be reported at least five days in  
7 advance to NAST, or if the possibility of such changes is not known in advance, they  
8 must be reported immediately after the change. Failure to provide required advance  
9 notice may result in automatic suspension (see Bylaws, Article I., Section 3.D.) and will  
10 result in automatic review (see Standards for Accreditation XIX., Section 2.F.1.b.).  
11 Institutions with change in ownership and/or major change in control will be subject to  
12 special NAST procedures, described herein and in separate documents.
- 13 **4. NAST Review.** Continuation of accreditation will depend upon the institution's  
14 demonstration that it continues to meet requisite NAST standards for all programs  
15 offered.
- 16 a. This review will be conducted in accordance with standard evaluation and  
17 operational procedures or with appropriate monitoring when an institution is being  
18 closed.
- 19 b. A review for change in ownership and/or major change in control will include a visit  
20 to the institution by NAST evaluators to determine the extent to which a change in  
21 ownership and/or major change in control has affected conditions for maintenance  
22 of accreditation. A report of the visit will be submitted to the Commission for  
23 review and action concerning continuation of accreditation status. Preparation for  
24 the visit, the visit, Commission review, and Commission action shall follow regular  
25 NAST procedures. Such a visit will be scheduled, conducted, and completed by  
26 NAST within six months of a change in ownership and/or major change in control.  
27 The institution will assume the responsibility for fees and expenses associated with  
28 this visit.
- 29 **5. Substantive Change.** A change in ownership and/or major change in control is  
30 considered a substantive change; therefore, an application for substantive change is  
31 required (see Rules of Practice and Procedure, Part II, Article V.).
- 32 **6. Requirements for Change in Ownership and/or Major Change in Control.** Accreditation  
33 is not automatically transferrable with a change in ownership and/or major change in  
34 control. Therefore, to maintain eligibility for accreditation, the following information in  
35 the form of a substantive change application must be prepared, fully documented, and  
36 submitted to NAST within two weeks after the change in ownership and/or major  
37 change in control of an NAST accredited institution:
- 38 a. Exact date of change in ownership and/or major change in control.
- 39 b. Curriculum vita of new owner (or new management).
- 40 c. A true and complete signed and dated copy of the Sale or Transfer Agreement.
- 41 d. An audit with opinion of financial statements prepared by an independent certified  
42 public accountant for the two most recently completed fiscal years prior to the  
43 change in ownership for both the existing and new owners.

- 1 e. Current theatre program enrollments, by curricular program.
- 2 f. A notarized statement by the buyer and seller or other transferring parties assuring
- 3 NAST and any interested parties such as students, financial institutions, state and
- 4 government agencies, etc., that appropriate provisions have been made for all
- 5 tuition refunds now due or which may become due for all students to whom the
- 6 institution has an obligation.
- 7 g. Signed and dated documentation that the institution holds and will maintain its
- 8 state license or approval.
- 9 h. Any substantial changes realized or planned (see Rules of Practice and Procedure,
- 10 Part II, Article V.).

11 **D. Notification Rule.** As a USDE-recognized accrediting agency, NAST is required to report to  
12 the U.S. Secretary of Education enrollment information under the following circumstances if  
13 the institution offers distance education: an increase in headcount enrollment for the  
14 institution of fifty percent or more within the HEADS Data Survey, compiled by NAST. If the  
15 fifty percent threshold is reached or exceeded, this fact is provided to the Secretary within  
16 thirty days of the close of the HEADS project each year. The institution will also be notified at  
17 the same time NAST notifies the Secretary, except in cases where provisions of “Policies and  
18 Rules Concerning USDE Title IV” are applicable (see Rules of Practice and Procedure, Part II,  
19 Article IV., Section 4.).

20 **E. Starting a Branch Campus or Similar Entity**

- 21 1. If an accredited institution plans to establish a new branch campus, or similar entity that
- 22 functions in the same manner, in the United States or elsewhere, that offers
- 23 postsecondary and/or professional-level degrees or non-degree-granting programs in
- 24 theatre, the following materials must be submitted at least six months prior to the
- 25 opening of the branch/similar entity:
  - 26 a. A business plan. At minimum, the business plan must contain a complete
  - 27 description of:
    - 28 (1) The educational program to be offered at the branch campus/similar entity.
    - 29 (2) The projected revenues and expenditures and cash flow at the branch
    - 30 campus/similar entity.
    - 31 (3) The operation, management, and physical resources at the branch
    - 32 campus/similar entity.
  - 33 At the same time, the institution must provide:
    - 34 (4) Information showing the financial relationship of the branch/similar entity to
    - 35 the main campus.
    - 36 (5) The most recent audited financial statement of the institution.
  - 37 b. Information in the standard NAST format which demonstrates compliance with all
  - 38 applicable standards including but not limited to: operational standards, applicable
  - 39 curricular standards, Standards for Free-Standing Theatre Institutions of Higher
  - 40 Education, and Specific Operational Standards for Proprietary Institutions of Higher
  - 41 Education.

- 1           2. Within six months of the opening of a branch campus or similar entity, NAST will  
2           schedule an on-site review, the branch/similar entity will host an NAST visiting  
3           evaluator(s), and the evaluator(s) will conduct and complete the visit.
- 4           3. Approval of the branch campus or similar entity and its operations will depend upon the  
5           institution’s demonstration that it meets requisite NAST standards applicable to the  
6           programs it offers and the operations that support those programs.

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

10       **F. Automatic Actions**

- 11           **1. Automatic Review.** The following circumstances will cause an automatic review of the  
12           institution’s accreditation status:
- 13           a. Declaration or evidence of financial exigency.
- 14           b. Change in ownership and/or major change in control, provided NAST is given at  
15           least five days’ advance notice in writing of the date of the change. This includes but  
16           is not limited to:
- 17                   (1) The sale of the institution or the majority of its assets.
- 18                   (2) The transfer of the liabilities of an institution to its parent corporation.
- 19                   (3) The merger of two or more institutions.
- 20                   (4) The division of one or more institution(s) into two or more institutions.
- 21                   (5) The transfer of the controlling interest of stock in the institution to its parent  
22                   corporation.
- 23                   (6) Change in over seventy-five percent of board membership during a ninety-day  
24                   period.
- 25                   (7) The complete replacement of one set of board members of the accredited  
26                   institution by another within a six-month period.
- 27                   (8) Change in status as a for-profit, non-profit, or public institution.
- 28                   However, the five-day advance notice rule does not apply in cases where transfer of  
29                   ownership occurs by right of survivorship upon the death of an owner, or similar  
30                   circumstances. In these cases, NAST must be notified within five days of the  
31                   occurrence.
- 32           c. Any transfer of assets or liabilities between the institution and any parent  
33           corporation that would substantially alter the ability of the institution to remain  
34           current regarding compliance with NAST standards.
- 35           d. Notice to establish a branch campus or similar entity that would offer degrees and  
36           programs eligible for review by NAST, or notice of intent to significantly expand  
37           affiliative uses of the institution’s name.

- 1 e. Notice of intention to designate NAST as the institution’s gatekeeper for the  
2 purpose of eligibility and participation in federal Title IV programs.
  - 3 f. State or federal action that results in the removal of the institution’s eligibility to  
4 participate in state or federal student loan and grant programs.
  - 5 g. Failure to gain accreditation or candidacy status upon application to another  
6 nationally recognized institutional accrediting agency, or loss of accreditation or  
7 candidacy status held with such agency.
- 8 **2. Automatic Suspension of Accreditation Status.** Automatic suspension of accreditation  
9 status will occur under the circumstances articulated in the Bylaws, Article I., Section  
10 3.D.

### 11 **Section 3. Policies and Protocols for Institutions Participating in Federal Student Loan Programs**

12 **A. Context of Accreditation Reviews.** In compliance with Public Law 102-325, the Higher  
13 Education Amendments of 1992, the NAST accrediting Commission must take into account  
14 the following information as it considers the accreditation or reaccreditation of any  
15 institution that participates in federal student loan programs and for which NAST is the  
16 institutional accrediting agency:

- 17 1. Default rates in student loan programs under Title IV of the Higher Education Act (HEA)  
18 of 1965 as periodically amended, based on the most recent data provided to the  
19 institution and/or to the accrediting body by the U.S. Secretary of Education.
- 20 2. Records of any student complaints received by NAST that are eligible for review  
21 according to provisions of the NAST Complaint Procedure.
- 22 3. Evidence concerning compliance with program responsibilities under Title IV of the  
23 Higher Education Act (HEA) of 1965 as periodically amended, based on the most recent  
24 data provided to the institution and/or to the accrediting body by the U.S. Secretary of  
25 Education, including any results of financial or compliance audits, program reviews, and  
26 such other information as the U.S. Secretary of Education may provide to NAST.

27 **B. Arbitration Rule.** The institution shall provide in writing its agreement to abide by the initial  
28 arbitration rule in Section 496 of Public Law 102-325:

29 “The [U.S.] Secretary [of Education] may not recognize the accreditation of any institution of  
30 higher education unless that institution of higher education agrees to submit any dispute  
31 involving the final denial, withdrawal, revocation, or termination of accreditation to initial  
32 arbitration prior to any other legal action.”

### 33 **C. Change in Ownership and/or Major Change in Control**

- 34 1. **NAST Review.** Continuation of accreditation will depend upon the institution’s  
35 demonstration that it continues to meet requisite NAST standards for all programs  
36 offered.
  - 37 a. This review will be conducted in accordance with standard evaluation and  
38 operational procedures or with appropriate monitoring when an institution is being  
39 closed.

1           b. A review for change in ownership and/or major change in control will include a visit  
2           to the institution by NAST evaluators to determine the extent to which a change in  
3           ownership and/or major change in control has affected conditions for maintenance  
4           of accreditation. A report of the visit will be submitted to the Commission for  
5           review and action concerning continuation of accreditation status. Preparation for  
6           the visit, the visit, Commission review, and Commission action shall follow regular  
7           NAST procedures. Such a visit will be scheduled, conducted, and completed by  
8           NAST within six months of a change in ownership and/or major change in control.  
9           The institution will assume the responsibility for fees and expenses associated with  
10          this visit.

11           **NOTE:** Standards for Accreditation XIX., Section 2.C. apply to not-for-profit institutions and  
12           proprietary institutions unless noted otherwise. Standards for Accreditation XX. apply to  
13           proprietary institutions only. See also: Automatic Suspension (Bylaws, Article I., Section 3.D.)  
14           and Automatic Review (Standards for Accreditation XIX., Section 2.F.1.b.).

15           **NOTE:** Institutions anticipating changes in ownership may wish to review 34 CFR 600.20, in  
16           particular the requirement to provide 90-day advance notice to the Secretary and to  
17           enrolled and prospective students.

19          **D. Third-Party Comment Rule.** See Rules of Practice and Procedure, Part II, Article IV., Section  
20          1.

21          **E. Rules Concerning Notification of Action by the NAST Commission on Accreditation.**  
22          Notifications concerning actions by the NAST Commission on Accreditation are published  
23          consistent with the provisions of the Rules of Practice and Procedure, Part II, Article XI.,  
24          Section 2.

1 **XX. SPECIFIC OPERATIONAL STANDARDS FOR PROPRIETARY INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER**  
2 **EDUCATION**

3 Proprietary institutions shall not differ significantly in their educational operations from those of  
4 public or non-profit institutions.

5 **Section 1. Standards for Accreditation**

6 The institution must meet all operational standards of the Association and other standards and  
7 requirements appropriate to the scope of programs offered. In addition, proprietary institutions  
8 shall present or demonstrate the following:

- 9 A. The operation of the institution under the guidance of a specific institutional Board of  
10 Directors, at least one-third of whom have no ownership interest in the institution, and at  
11 least two-thirds of whom have no kinship with the principal owners. The membership of the  
12 Board shall reflect the public interest. This is to assure that the governing body includes  
13 individuals who do not represent per se the interests of the administration, faculty, or  
14 students, or of the proprietors; and that such representation is not merely a token  
15 representation but has an effective, although not necessarily a majority, vote in the affairs of  
16 the governing body.
- 17 B. The complete structure of the financial organization of the institution, including an annual  
18 financial audit with opinion prepared by a certified public accountant independent of  
19 ownership or governance relationships with the institution, and such balance sheets,  
20 operating statements, budgets, salary determinations, etc., that will produce a complete  
21 fiscal picture of the institution and any parent corporation (see also Standards for  
22 Accreditation II.C. and, if applicable, Standards for Accreditation XIX., Section 1.C.).
- 23 C. An established record of fiscal allocation and management demonstrating that the  
24 fundamental purpose is educational excellence, and evidence that such policies will be  
25 continued. The distribution of gross income in support of educational purposes and goals is  
26 especially significant in this regard (see also Standards for Accreditation II.C. and, if  
27 applicable, Standards for Accreditation XIX., Section 1.C.).
- 28 D. The existence of clearly defined roles based upon individual qualifications for the owner(s),  
29 manager(s), administrative personnel, and faculty (see also Standards for Accreditation II.D.  
30 and, if applicable, Standards for Accreditation XIX., Section 1.D.).

31 **Section 2. Requirements for Change in Ownership and/or Major Change in Control**

32 **NOTE:** For requirements for change in ownership and/or major change in control, see Standards  
33 for Accreditation XIX., Section 2.C.6.

34 **Section 3. Policies and Protocols for Proprietary Institutions of Higher Education**

35 **Arbitration Rule.** The institution shall provide in writing its agreement to abide by the initial  
36 arbitration rule in 20 USC § 1099b(e):

37 “The [U.S.] Secretary [of Education] may not recognize the accreditation of any institution of  
38 higher education unless that institution of higher education agrees to submit any dispute  
39 involving the final denial, withdrawal, revocation, or termination of accreditation to initial  
40 arbitration prior to any other legal action.”