

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS OF MUSIC

Procedures for Institutions

**Membership Procedures
September 2008 Edition**

**Applicable for Visits:
2008-2009 through 2015-2016**

National Office

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In addition to the *NASM Procedures for Institutions* (this document), the following are necessary to apply for accredited institutional Membership: (1) *NASM Procedures for the Self-Study Document – Format A, or Format B, or Format C*; (2) *Instructions for Preparing Curricular Tables in the NASM Format*; and (3) the latest edition of the *NASM Handbook* and any current addenda. These texts are available on the NASM Web site.

Information contained herein concerning programs, procedures, requirements, standards, and fees is subject to change without notice by the appropriate body of NASM.

Permission is hereby granted to copy this document for use in the accreditation process.

NASM Procedures for Institutions

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Procedures for Institutions

I. INTRODUCTION

A. NASM Membership and Accreditation

NASM institutional Membership in any category is obtained and continued through reviews consistent with the principles and protocols of peer-review accreditation. Institutional Membership signifies accreditation.

B. Accreditation Purposes

The first purpose of the accreditation process is to provide a mechanism that assists institutions and programs to analyze their operations, work, and aspirations. The results encourage artistic and educational improvements. The review is placed in the context of nationally-developed Standards and facilitated by using consistent procedures that ensure fairness and objectivity. NASM's focus is service rather than control.

Since each institution is unique, the accreditation process balances two concerns: (1) an institution's ability to fulfill NASM Standards for programs offered; and (2) evaluation of institutional achievements based on the purposes and aspirations determined by specific institutions and for specific curricula.

C. Self-Study Purposes

Self-study is the core of the accreditation review. Users of this text should devote considerable thought to specific purposes for their self-study process beyond the preparation of a document for NASM. Whatever the purposes, the focus should be on self-evaluation rather than reporting. The self-study process and the written document can have a profound impact on cohesion of purpose, common understanding of challenges and opportunities, strategic thinking, and operational planning. The specific emphases, however, are developed by each institution.

D. Procedural Flexibility

Users of the *Procedures for Institutions* and *Procedures for the Self-Study Document* are encouraged to take full advantage of the flexibilities offered by NASM to design an accreditation review that meets their specific needs. NASM works with institutions to bring high levels of intellectual energy and artistic purpose to the accreditation process. The accreditation process is a means for working productively to build and strengthen relationships among music, education, and professional preparation. The process should not be considered an end in itself.

E. Questions

As faculty and administrators develop their accreditation agenda and schedule, questions may arise. If answers do not seem evident in these texts or on the Association's Web site, please contact the NASM National Office. The staff looks forward to working with you.

F. Web Site

NASM maintains a comprehensive Web site at <http://nasm.arts-accredit.org>. This Web site will be an important resource throughout the accreditation process and beyond. NASM [contact information](#) and a [staff directory](#) can be found within the NASM Web site.

II. PREPARATIONS FOR APPLICATION

A. NASM Documents

All forms and materials should be obtained from the NASM Web site. See the main heading “Membership Procedures” and, beneath that, “Accredited Institutional Membership” to “Official NASM Standards and Procedures for New and Renewal Applications,” or follow this link:

<http://nasm.arts-accredit.org/index.jsp?page=Official+NASM+Procedures>

The NASM *Handbook* and all current addenda, the NASM accreditation materials, and other resources provided by the Association contain complete information about NASM and the accreditation process and should be studied carefully before application is made, then referenced regularly during the application process.

B. NASM *Handbook* Content

1. The *Handbook* contains the legal organizational documents of the Association, including the Constitution, Bylaws, Code of Ethics, and Rules of Practice and Procedure. Of particular interest to institutions applying for Membership are the sections of the Bylaws describing the categories of Membership, the dues and fee structure, the organization and function of the Commissions, and the portions of the Rules of Practice and Procedure concerning evaluation.
2. The Standards for institutional Membership, and thus, for accreditation, also are found in the *Handbook*. These include Basic Criteria for Membership, Purposes and Operations, Music Program Components, and Standards and Guidelines for specific curricular programs.

C. Individual Membership

This step is optional. During preparation for application for Membership, the music executive is encouraged to become an individual member of NASM in order to remain current with the work of the Association.

The individual member is provided full access to the Association’s Web site, receives all applicable electronic notifications, and may attend NASM meetings as a non-voting member. Individual members are listed in the NASM *Directory*, a mailing list source for the music profession.

D. Definition of Membership and Membership Categories

1. Institutional Membership in any category signifies accreditation. Institutions eligible to apply for Membership include colleges, universities, and independent schools of music. The Standards and Guidelines for Institutional Membership are published in the NASM *Handbook* and any current addenda.
2. Associate Membership may be granted to baccalaureate and/or graduate degree-granting institutions, community/junior colleges, and non-degree-granting institutions applying for the first time that meet all curricular Standards and a substantial portion of all other Standards of the Association, and show promise of being able to meet completely the Association’s Standards applicable to music curricula offered by the institution. Accreditation with Associate Membership is valid for up to five years. At the end of this period, such institutions will be required to satisfy all criteria for Membership in the Association.

3. Membership is granted to baccalaureate and graduate degree-granting institutions, community/junior colleges, and non-degree-granting institutions meeting all Standards of the Association. Institutions approved for Membership are granted five-year periods of accreditation. At the end of five years, the institution is expected to apply for renewal of Membership.
4. Institutions approved for renewal of Membership are normally granted ten-year periods of accreditation.

E. Consultative Visits

During preparation of a first-time application, an institution may wish to have a consultative visit by an NASM-trained consultant who is not a member of the NASM staff.

1. The consultative visit is not a prerequisite for NASM Membership or renewal of Membership. An institution may apply for Membership and have as its first visit an official NASM evaluation. Hosting a consultant does not guarantee accreditation.
2. With regard to the application process, the two purposes of a consultative visit are to (a) provide an objective analysis of an institution's program, and (b) make recommendations based on NASM Standards and Guidelines.
3. When acting as a consultant, the individual may not act as an NASM evaluator. The recommendations of consultants are, therefore, purely advisory in nature. Official action concerning Membership is taken only after the appropriate NASM Commission receives and acts upon a complete, documented application, including the report of official NASM evaluators. It is NASM policy that an individual who serves as consultant to an institution will not later be invited as an official evaluator in connection with a subsequent application for Membership or renewal of Membership.
4. Consultants are hired by, and work for, institutions. NASM merely assists institutions in securing consultative advice.
5. For further information regarding [consultative visits](#), please visit the Web site or contact the NASM National Office staff.

F. Staff Consultation

1. The NASM National Office staff is available by phone at (703) 437-0700 on weekdays from 9:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. Eastern time. The staff consults regularly at the request of music units engaged in the accreditation process.
2. There is no charge for staff consultation. However, travel-related expenses of staff associated with development and operation of joint visits, concurrent visits, custom Self-Studies, or similar services must be reimbursed by the institution.
3. The NASM Web site contains a [Staff Directory](#) indicating appropriate staff contacts for various accreditation functions. Use of this list will facilitate responses to your inquiries.

G. Facsimile and E-Mail

1. The NASM facsimile number (703-437-6312) is provided to facilitate communication about the accreditation process. E-mail addresses for staff members may be found on the NASM [Web site](#) and in the NASM *Directory*.

2. NASM does not conduct official accreditation correspondence through e-mail or by facsimile. Please do not transmit by e-mail or facsimile completed submissions to the Commission(s). Copies of materials in appropriate number must be forwarded to NASM by mail or courier service.

H. Joint or Concurrent Accreditation Visits

1. If the institution wishes the NASM visit to be joint or concurrent with that of another accrediting agency, or if the institution wishes to schedule a joint visit with NASM for review of its community education division and its degree-granting program, the NASM National Office should be so informed on the Notice of Intention to Apply form. Preferably, this notice is preceded by a telephone call to the National Office.
2. When applicable, joint visits are encouraged for independent schools of music. If the institution wishes the NASM evaluators to visit jointly for NASM and other accrediting agencies, the NASM National Office should be advised at the same time as the national office of the other accrediting body, and at least two years before the scheduled visit. Normally, at least one on-site NASM staff consultation and NASM staff presence during the visit are required for joint visits.

I. Consolidation and Coordination with Other Reviews

1. NASM encourages institutions to consolidate, coordinate, or correlate accreditation reviews with other internal or external reviews of the music unit. NASM will do everything possible to help institutions and programs maintain a reasonable evaluation load and avoid duplication of effort.
2. When more than one arts discipline is in the same college or department as the music unit, procedures are available to review the other units at the same time.
3. The National Office staff will facilitate consolidation or coordination consistent with NASM procedures. Requests in this regard should be made as early as possible in the application process, preferably at least two years in advance of the on-site visit. Specific protocols for each consolidation or coordination must be approved in advance of the visit by the NASM Executive Director or Associate Director.

J. Higher Education Arts Data Services (HEADS)

1. Separate HEADS data surveys are available for degree-granting and non-degree-granting institutions.
2. Institutions preparing to apply to NASM for the first time are encouraged to participate in the HEADS project annually. However, institutions applying to NASM for the first time must include the latest HEADS Data Survey in its Self-Study as part of the *Management Documents Portfolio*.
3. The NASM Bylaws require Member institutions to file annual reports. The HEADS Data Survey serves as the NASM Annual Report form for each accredited institution. As part of its application for reaccreditation, each Member institution also must include the three most recent HEADS Data Surveys in its Self-Study as part of the *Management Documents Portfolio*.

K. Institutions with Music Therapy Curricula

Information regarding music therapy curricula should be submitted along with all other curricular information set forth in the Self-Study. To obtain information regarding the relationship of NASM accreditation to the field of music therapy, institutions with music therapy curricula should obtain a copy of the document entitled *Accreditation of Baccalaureate and Graduate Degree Programs in Music Therapy*. This document may be requested from the [NASM National Office](#).

L. Curricular Requirements

1. NASM will grant Membership or renewal of Membership only when *every* curricular program in music of the applicant institution (including graduate work, if offered) meets the Standards of the Association. The particular administrative structure used to manage music curricula in multipurpose institutions has no effect on the applicability of this rule.
2. Some institutions have degree-granting and non-degree-granting units. The most common example is a postsecondary degree-granting unit with an affiliated community education program or unit that does not grant degrees. Such institutions may seek Membership for either or both of these units. In such cases, in applying the above curricular requirements, NASM distinguishes between degree-granting and non-degree-granting units.

For further information, see “Special Instructions for Postsecondary Institutions that Operate Community Education Programs in Music” in the various Self-Study formats.

M. Terminology

The term *unit* is used to designate the entire music program being reviewed for accreditation. Thus, *unit* may refer to free-standing institutions or to departments or schools that are part of larger institutions, or to music programs administered by two or more administrative units.

III. FUNDAMENTAL POLICIES

A. NASM *Handbook* – Accreditation Function

1. The NASM *Handbook* and any current addenda contain all Standards and Guidelines used in the accreditation process. It is the only statement of operational and curricular requirements for accreditation. NASM Standards and Guidelines are established by vote of the entire Membership of the Association.
2. The *Handbook* is published every year; addenda reflecting Membership action will be published as necessary.
3. Commission decisions are made using the *Handbook* and any addenda current at each Commission meeting with due consideration to avoid *ex post facto* actions.
4. The Self-Study, the Visitors' Report, and other accreditation documents are best prepared with constant reference to the current *Handbook* and any current addenda.

B. Confidentiality

1. Members of the Commissions, visitors, and staff treat as confidential all information about programs reviewed and all discussions and decisions made in connection with the review.
2. NASM also considers all material generated for the accreditation review by the program and by NASM as confidential. However, NASM encourages appropriate dissemination within the institution. The Self-Study document is considered to be the property of the institution.
3. For further information, see NASM *Handbook*, "Rules of Practice and Procedure."

C. The Accreditation Role of the NASM Staff

1. The NASM staff manages the accreditation process, and ensures that all procedures, policies, and operations established by the membership, the Board of Directors, and the Commissions are carried out fairly and in accordance with Association practice.
2. The staff does not engage in accreditation evaluations of institutions or programs, nor does the staff take overt responsibility for operating the accreditation process at specific institutions. However, the staff is responsible for providing consultative services when requested to do so. The staff is also involved extensively in the development of literature, workshops, and other services to assist institutions in structuring their own uses of requisite accreditation Standards and procedures.
3. Each member of the NASM staff avoids conflicts of interest in the accreditation process by declining to (a) act inconsistently among Member and applicant institutions; (b) make unilateral accreditation personnel decisions affecting any institution where the staff member was a student or employee; (c) direct institutions and programs concerning internal policy decisions; (d) make definitive judgments or promises concerning acceptability of the content of documents submitted for Commission review; (e) accept positions on boards, councils, or development groups associated with specific institutions of higher education; or (f) accept personal remuneration, gratuities, or favors of any kind for services associated with the accreditation process.

D. Focus

While accreditation is a process with numerous procedural elements, the focus should be on the content and substance of the art of music as addressed by each institution's specific set of missions, goals, and objectives for teaching, learning, creative work, performance, research, scholarship, service, and so forth.

E. Accreditation and Institutional Autonomy

1. NASM has established Standards for accreditation that are applied only at the invitation of institutions. These Standards are developed and approved by accredited member institutions acting autonomously. The Standards provide benchmarks for reviewing the extent to which operational, curricular, and evaluative functions associated with particular degree programs and areas of study are being fulfilled.
2. As they evolve continuously, NASM Standards for accreditation are designed to allow considerable variation within broad principles applicable to degree programs and areas of study. Failure to follow the specific approaches indicated or implied by a standard will not necessarily preclude accreditation; however, if deviations exist, the institution must provide an acceptable rationale documenting how functions required by the standard are being fulfilled, or how required competencies are being developed.
3. NASM Standards are applied with profound respect for the rights, responsibilities, and aspirations of institutions and programs to identify, designate, and control (a) their purposes – missions, goals, and objectives; (b) artistic, educational, and philosophical principles and methodologies used to pursue functions implicit in their various purposes – missions, goals, and objectives; (c) specific repertoires, texts, and other teaching materials used for study and presentation; (d) agendas and areas of study pursued through scholarship, research, criticism, and policy development; (e) specific personnel choices, staffing configurations, and other operational decisions; and (f) content and methodologies of tests, evaluations, and assessments.

F. Observers with Visiting Teams

On rare occasions, observers will be permitted to accompany NASM visiting teams, but only if (a) a required governmental or educational function is being served by the observer(s), or (b) the presence of the observer(s) has been agreed upon by the institution and the NASM Executive Director or Associate Director, and (c) there is a written protocol establishing purposes and conditions for the presence of the observer(s). All observers must agree in writing to protect the confidentialities required in NASM policies and procedures and to observe the Association's policies regarding conflict of interest. Observers are not official members of an NASM visiting team, and therefore have no role in the discussion of an institution's apparent compliance or noncompliance with NASM Standards or the preparation of any part of the NASM Visitors' Report.

G. Questions, Anxieties, Malfunctions

The NASM National Office staff should be contacted without delay whenever information is needed or if a concern exists about any aspect of the accreditation effort. With teamwork, the vast majority of problems can be resolved quickly and simply.

IV. NASM COMMISSIONS AND THEIR JURISDICTIONS

NASM has two accreditation Commissions. Each has a separate jurisdiction as noted in items IV.A. and B. It is important that applicant institutions follow the schedule for review by the appropriate Commission.

A. Commission on Accreditation

1. Associate, baccalaureate, and graduate degree programs offered by four-year baccalaureate and/or graduate degree-granting institutions
2. Postsecondary non-degree-granting programs offered by baccalaureate and graduate degree-granting institutions
3. Free-standing, postsecondary, professional non-degree-granting institutions at all levels
4. Community education non-degree-granting programs under certain circumstances. See “Special Instructions for Postsecondary Institutions that Operate Community Education Programs in Music” section within the *Procedures for the Self-Study Document* for each format.

B. Commission on Community/Junior College Accreditation

1. Associate degree programs offered by community/junior colleges
2. Postsecondary non-degree-granting programs offered by associate degree-granting institutions organized as community/junior colleges
3. Community education non-degree-granting programs under certain circumstances. See “Special Instructions for Postsecondary Institutions that Operate Community Education Programs in Music” section within the *Procedures for the Self-Study Document* for each format.

V. THE NOTICE OF INTENTION TO APPLY FORM

- A. The Notice of Intention to Apply form may be downloaded from the NASM Web site. See the main heading “Membership Procedures” and, beneath that, “Accredited Institutional Membership” to “Official NASM Standards and Procedures for New and Renewal Applications” to “Basic Resources and Forms” to “**Two Required Forms**,” or follow this link:

<http://nasm.arts-accredit.org/index.jsp?page=Two%20Required%20Forms>

- B. In order for the institution to be assured of an evaluation during the preferred or required time period, one copy of this form should be submitted at least two years before the projected date of the NASM on-site visit. However, the Notice of Intention to Apply form must be received by the NASM National Office no later than one year prior to the on-site visit date. For recommended visitation periods, please see “Selection of the Visit Dates” on page 11.

VI. INTERNAL COMMUNICATION PLAN

Before the accreditation process begins, music executives are strongly encouraged to ensure that a plan for inter-institutional communication about the review and its various aspects is developed and understood by all appropriate parties. This includes establishing a local distribution list and system for written communications from NASM. NASM sends copies of Commission Action Reports to the applicant institution's music executive, with copies to the president or chancellor, provost, and dean. All other communications decisions are the prerogative of the institution. For assistance, see "Internal Communications" on the NASM Web site. This may be found in the "Brochures and Advisory Papers" section under the main heading "Publications," or follow this link:

<http://nasm.arts-accredit.org/index.jsp?page=Internal+Communications>

VII. SELECTION OF THE VISITING EVALUATORS

A. NASM Nomination and Institutional Preference

1. Upon receipt of the Notice of Intention to Apply form, the Executive Director of NASM nominates a proposed slate of visiting evaluators who have completed intensive orientation and training conducted by the Association.
2. Nominations are based on the backgrounds and experience of the evaluators in relation to the stated objectives and characteristics of the institution. Normally, the slate includes nominees affiliated with institutions of various types and sizes. This practice is based on the interrelationship that exists among all programs. It reflects NASM policies requiring that all evaluators base their judgments on NASM Standards as related to the visited institution's mission, not on a comparison of the visited institution with the evaluators' institutions or against any other criteria.
3. The Executive Director will consider institutional requests of a general nature such as areas of specialization, but will not consider requests for specific individuals to comprise the evaluation team. The suggestion of a specific individual by institutional representatives will cause that individual to be disqualified.
4. The slate shall include separate nominations for team chair and member(s) of the visitation team.
5. Following receipt of this slate, the institution responds promptly—no later than two weeks—indicating a numerical order of preference and whether any suggested evaluators are unacceptable, taking special note of NASM policies concerning conflict of interest.

B. Numbers of Visitors and Length of Visit

1. Within NASM procedures, the institution may determine the size of the visiting team and the length of the on-site visit. Institutions wishing to expand the number of visitors or the number of days beyond NASM minimum requirements should contact the NASM Executive Director or Associate Director when the Notice of Intention to Apply form is submitted.
2. At least two evaluators for two full days of program review are required for all institutions. However, this normally produces a three- or four-day visit schedule in order to accommodate orientation activities, two days of program review, and concluding and report-drafting activities.

3. Three visitors are required for institutions that offer programs at all three of the following levels: baccalaureate, master's, and doctorate. In these cases, one of the evaluators will be assigned special but not exclusive responsibility for reviewing the graduate program.
4. Three or more visitors are normally required when NASM is the institution's sole accreditor; and, if the institution participates in federal student loan programs, one of the evaluators will be assigned special, but not exclusive, responsibility for reviewing general education, finances, institutional governance, and management. Such evaluators may have training and evaluation experience with another nationally recognized accrediting organization.
5. Applicant degree-granting institutions seeking a separate accreditation listing of programs offered by affiliated community education units will be evaluated by a team comprising one or more persons in addition to the team assigned to the degree-granting component.
6. The number of visitors and the number of visitation days may be increased as requested or required for community education units with large programs, multicampus programs, or large/complex programs. In these cases, the number of visiting evaluators or the number of days for the visitation shall be determined in consultation with the Executive Director or Associate Director of NASM.

C. Conflict of Interest Policies

1. Institutional representatives and NASM visiting evaluators are expected to avoid even the slightest potential for conflict of interest. Conflicts that arise may be based on personal association, past or projected affiliations, past or current financial relationships, geographic proximity, or other causes.
2. Questions concerning conflicts of interest should be referred to the NASM Executive Director or Associate Director.
3. To illustrate NASM's conflict of interest approach, the Executive Director will not knowingly nominate or assign as a visiting evaluator any person:
 - a. Who is from the same state or the immediate region of the institution to be visited;
 - b. Who has expressed public opinions about the accreditability of the music unit, or ideological views about the institutional type;
 - c. Who was or is a potential employee of the institution;
 - d. Who was or is a student at the institution;
 - e. Who has a family member with a student, faculty, administrative, trustee, or similar relationship with the institution; or
 - f. Who has served or will serve as an independent consultant to the institution during the last or next accreditation cycle.
4. Visitors and institutional representatives are formally required to avoid conflict of interest in the formation of NASM visiting teams.

D. Invitation of Visiting Evaluators

1. After receiving the institution's order of preference, the Executive Director of NASM will invite specific visiting evaluators and inform the institution of the visitors invited. The process of invitation and response is continued until the team is finalized.

2. At least one member of each assigned visiting team shall not be a member of the NASM Commission that will review the application.

VIII. SELECTION OF THE VISIT DATES

A. Setting the Date

1. After the team is confirmed, the dates of the visit are arranged by the visiting evaluators and the music executive of the applicant institution. See Sections XII. and XIII. below for outlines of visit expectations.
2. Visits shall not be scheduled during examination periods.
3. The minimum visit period is two full working days. Evaluators are requested to arrive the evening before the first day of the visit and to leave no sooner than the evening following the second day of the visit. Time may be extended due to the size and scope of the music program. Whatever schedule is determined, all team members are to be present and focused the entire time.
4. Visitors may not schedule, attend, or conduct any other business engagements or personal activities during the period of an on-site review.
5. Visitations may be scheduled concurrently with those of other accrediting agencies if applicable and if requested.

B. Visit Schedules and Commission Review

The following visitation periods are recommended:

1. Baccalaureate and Graduate Degree-Granting and Non-Degree-Granting Institutions
September 1 – February 15 for Commission action in June, or
February 15 – June 1 for Commission action in November.
2. Community/Junior Colleges
September 1 – June 1 for Commission action in November.
3. Institutions wishing to use other schedules should contact the NASM National Office staff.

C. Notifying NASM

When specific dates for the visit have been fixed, the institution shall notify the NASM National Office of the visit dates.

IX. SELF-STUDY

The self-study is often regarded as the most important part of the accreditation or reaccreditation process. The institution looks at its programs, components, and their relationships with regard to its purposes and aspirations, as well as in relation to NASM Standards. Well conducted self-studies serve as useful tools for music units well beyond their purposes for NASM accreditation. Often they result in a renewed common effort to develop and improve.

A. Fundamentals

1. The Self-Study Process

The process is the review that the institution conducts. It includes evaluative methods, procedures, timetables, and various ways personnel are engaged. The institution has primary responsibility for determining the specific process it will use.

2. The Self-Study Document

The document is a written summary of the results of the process. It provides descriptions, evaluations, and projections that advance the work of the music unit and demonstrate fulfillment of all applicable NASM Standards. The institution produces one document following NASM procedures.

3. Institutional Responsibilities

The NASM Standards, *Procedures for Institutions*, and Self-Study document formats provide frameworks. Within one or more of these frameworks, the institution makes specific self-study decisions about such matters as purposes, scope, depth, intensity, content, time allocations, and wording. Each institution is responsible for the efficiency, approach, working patterns, productivity, and documentation of its own Self-Study.

4. Essential Resource Documents

- a. The Standards portion of the current NASM *Handbook*, including appendices applicable to programs offered by the institution. The NASM Standards are found only in the current NASM *Handbook* and any addenda. It is essential to use a current *Handbook* in conjunction with the NASM self-study process.
- b. NASM *Procedures for Institutions*.
- c. NASM *Procedures for the Self-Study Document* for the format chosen. See Section IX.D. below.
- d. *Instructions for Preparing Curricular Tables in the NASM Format*.

5. Basic Considerations

Decisions about the following are related to each other:

- a. Purposes – What do you want the self-study to achieve?
- b. Document Format – What evaluative approach and format outline will best serve your needs? See Section IX.D. below.
- c. Processes and Resources – Are your processes and resources adequate to achieve the purposes and produce the Self-Study document in the format you have chosen?

B. Self-Study Purposes and Specific Music Unit Aspirations

1. Typical Purposes

Self-Studies typically exhibit one or more of the following purposes. Other purposes may be chosen.

- a. Conduct a comprehensive periodic review.
- b. Evaluate what exists or is projected using NASM Standards.
- c. Examine the effectiveness of parts and wholes, and especially the relationships of parts to wholes.
- d. Develop common perspectives on conditions and issues by involving constituencies in analysis, forecasting, or policy-making.
- e. Focus personnel on futures issues.
- f. Orient new administrators and faculty.
- g. Consider program deletions and additions.
- h. Generate lists of concerns and needs.
- i. Develop a planning document.
- j. Create priorities.
- k. Prepare for specific evaluations.
- l. Produce a reference document for the music unit.
- m. Produce a detailed explanatory document for others.
- n. Look at specific challenges for the future.
- o. Determine readiness to address challenges and opportunities.
- p. Focus on one or more components or programs.

2. Your Self-Study Purposes and Priorities Among Them

- a. What are the most productive choices now? Among purposes chosen, what is the order of priority?
- b. Given the purposes chosen, what goals or specific aspirations are already known or determined as you begin? For example: We have a mandate to enlarge our graduate program by 20%, or to determine whether we should continue a certain program.

3. Consistency of Institutional, Music Unit, and Self-Study Purposes

- a. Are current institutional and music unit statements of purposes sufficient to serve as fundamental reference points for self-evaluation and projection?
- b. Is the self-study process expected to influence the creation or alteration of all or some of the unit's purposes?
- c. How will the purposes and goals for the institution, music unit, and self-study relate to each other and the self-study process and document?

C. Basic Influences on Self-Study Decisions

In addition to institutional, music unit, and self-study purposes, the following normally influence specific decisions about process:

1. Size of the unit and institution.
2. Number of degrees and programs offered or projected.
3. Current speed, nature, and content of changes present within the unit, institution, and within larger state systems, if applicable.
4. Current issues of importance to the field, faculty, students, unit, and/or institution.
5. Depth and breadth of self-study specific goals.
6. New or projected initiatives.
7. Time.
8. Financial support.
9. Experience, attitudes, and involvement of administrators and faculty.
10. Patterns for review already in place.
11. Review and planning documents recently completed.
12. Relationships between the self-study process and document.

D. Choosing Among Document Formats

NASM provides four format options: three (*Formats A, B, and C*) under the title *Procedures for the Self-Study Document*, and the option of creating a custom format. Within the eligibility requirements below, each institution determines which format will best serve its needs at the time of the self-study. Each format provides a framework. Using this framework as a basis, the institution summarizes the results of its self-study process, and documents its fulfillment of NASM Standards.

The formats have common elements and address the same types of issues, but provide different ways to consider present conditions and future plans. For example: In *Format A*, the framework does not emphasize one evaluation perspective over any other; *Format B* emphasizes situational analysis and planning for the music unit as a whole; and *Format C*, analysis and planning for component programs. For custom formats, the music unit creates its own evaluation perspectives and emphases. Before choosing a format, please review items D.1., 2., 3., 4., 5., and 6. below.

1. *Procedures for the Self Study Document: Format A*

a. Eligibility for *Format A*

All institutions applying for NASM Membership or renewal of Membership.

b. Structure for *Format A*

- (1) This format poses specific questions derived from requirements presented in operational and curricular Standards and Guidelines in the *NASM Handbook*.
- (2) It is imperative that the outline presented in *Procedures: Format A* be used, rather than the outline of the *NASM Handbook*.

- (3) *Format A*, for the most part, follows the order but not the outline letters and numbers of first the operational and then the curricular Standards and Guidelines in the *NASM Handbook*. One section of the operational standards – “Evaluation, Planning and Projections” – is taken completely out of order and addressed in Section III. of *Format A*.
- c. Several considerations among many regarding *Format A*
- (1) *Format A* may be most appropriate if the music unit:
 - (a) Is applying for NASM Membership for the first time;
 - (b) Seeks to focus most on evaluating what exists or is projected in terms of fulfilling NASM Standards;
 - (c) Seeks to develop or update a baseline reference document about operations, curricula, and future needs, including updating a Self-Study document in the *Standard Format* of the 2003 *NASM Procedures for Institutional Membership*, or the Self-Study document of the 1998 *NASM Procedures for Institutional Membership*.
 - (2) *Format A* may not be appropriate if the music unit:
 - (a) Wishes to focus on an integrated analysis of component parts;
 - (b) Seeks to conduct a comprehensive futures study of all specific program areas;
 - (c) Has demonstrated fulfillment of NASM Standards in many previous reviews and seeks a Self-Study focused more on improvement, next steps, strategic planning, a concentrated review of a particular area, or similar objectives.
- d. *Format A* Instructions and Templates

To review and print a complete set of requirements and instructions for this format, proceed to the [“Self-Study Formats and Associated Procedures”](#) section of the NASM Web site under the main heading “Membership Procedures.” Versions of the same documents are provided in both MS Word (.doc) and Adobe Acrobat (.pdf). The .doc version may be used and adapted by the institution for the creation of templates.

2. Procedures for the Self Study Document: Format B

- a. Eligibility for *Format B*
 - Institutions applying for NASM Membership after Associate Membership;
 - Institutions applying for renewal of Membership;
 - Institutions applying for Membership for the first time, with the advice and consent of the NASM Executive Director or Associate Director.
- b. Structure for *Format B*
 - (1) This format poses a set of related planning questions about the operational aspects of the music unit as addressed by NASM Standards, followed by a descriptive evaluation of each curricular program and a projection regarding the music unit’s future.
 - (2) It concludes with a summary section on challenges, opportunities, and prioritization of work for improvement in operational and curricular areas.

- (3) In sections dealing with music unit operations and/or projections and futures, it seeks evaluative essays rather than answers to specific questions.
- c. Several considerations among many regarding *Format B*
- (1) *Format B* may be appropriate if the music unit:
 - (a) Seeks to document fulfillment of NASM Standards but to focus most on the strategic issues and opportunities facing the unit as a whole;
 - (b) Wishes to consider in some depth the relationships among various program elements such as purposes, size and scope, finances, faculty, facilities and equipment, etc., using NASM Standards as a reference point;
 - (c) Plans to use the Self-Study as a futures or strategic planning document in contexts other than NASM review; or
 - (d) Seeks to update a Self-Study text written in the *Portfolio Format* of the 2003 *NASM Procedures for Institutional Membership*.
 - (2) *Format B* is probably not appropriate if the music unit:
 - (a) Wishes to focus the Self-Study on specific curricular areas or programs more than on the music unit as a whole;
 - (b) Wants to conduct the NASM review primarily in terms of Standards compliance; or
 - (c) Would be challenged to allocate administrative and faculty time necessary for the organizational, analytical, and writing requirements of the format.
- d. *Format B* Instructions and Templates

To review and print a complete set of requirements and instructions for this format, proceed to the “[Self-Study Formats and Associated Procedures](#)” section of the NASM Web site under the main heading “Membership Procedures.” Versions of the same documents are provided in both MS Word (.doc) and Adobe Acrobat (.pdf). The .doc version may be used and adapted by the institution for the creation of templates.

3. *Procedures for the Self Study Document: Format C*

- a. Eligibility for *Format C*
 - Institutions holding NASM Membership for five (5) years of more, with the advice and consent of the Executive Director or Associate Director;
 - Institutions for which NASM is not the designated institutional accreditor.
- b. Structure for *Format C*
 - (1) This format begins with informational and evaluative questions regarding each curriculum and area of emphasis.
 - (2) Its core feature poses strategic questions regarding programs within the music unit. These questions may be answered separately or in an integrated way. To determine programs, the unit divides its entire set of offerings into groupings, usually by specialization—composition, performance, music theory, etc., and/or by function—

undergraduate musicianship, library, ensembles, etc. These questions provide a means for connecting program futures issues with operational and curricular issues—purposes, size and scope, finances, etc. that are found in the NASM Standards.

- (3) It concludes with a summary list of music unit goals and objectives for future development, based on a synthesis of the findings regarding the programs, and plans and prospects for realizing those goals and objectives.

c. Several considerations among many regarding *Format C*

(1) *Format C* may be appropriate if the music unit:

- (a) Has degree programs at more than one degree level in the same area of specialization – e.g.. B.M., M.M., PhD. in Theory; B.M., M.M. in Music Education, etc.
- (b) Has specific programs such as undergraduate theory, ensembles, library, outreach, etc. that it wishes to review.
- (c) Wishes to engage the faculty in looking at the future of the programs that constitute their areas of specialization and responsibility;
- (d) Wishes to take an operational or curricular component (sometimes referred to as a “cross-cutting” issue) and have it reviewed from the perspectives of various programs; or
- (e) Seeks to update a Self-Study text written in the *Strategic Analysis Format* of the 2003 NASM *Procedures for Institutional Membership*.

(2) *Format C* may not be appropriate if the music unit:

- (a) Wishes the music unit as a whole to be the main perspective from which the Self-Study is conducted;
- (b) Is concerned that separate program reviews would adversely affect a sense of common purpose or future cooperation;
- (c) Wants to conduct the NASM review primarily in terms of Standards compliance;
- (d) Would be challenged to allocate administrative and faculty time, resources and skills to organizing, coordinating, reporting, and synthesizing the separate program studies; or
- (e) Has just completed or has other regular evaluative procedures that accomplish specialized program reviews that focus on strategic futures analysis.

d. *Format C* Instructions and Templates

To review and print a complete set of requirements and instructions for this format, proceed to the “[Self-Study Formats and Associated Procedures](#)” section of the NASM Web site under the main heading “Membership Procedures.” Versions of the same documents are provided in both MS Word (.doc) and Adobe Acrobat (.pdf). The .doc version may be used and adapted by the institution for the creation of templates.

4. Custom Formats

- a. Ideally, NASM Self-Study *Formats A, B, and C* allow for sufficient flexibility so that each Self-Study will be somewhat customized. However, if none of the formats fit the Self-Study needs of the institution, a custom format may be developed.
- b. Custom formats may be particularly appropriate when the NASM review is combined with an internal review, or if the institution wishes to combine features of the NASM formats.
- c. The Executive Director or Associate Director of NASM should be contacted at least two years in advance of the projected site visit to discuss the creation of a custom format.
- d. The NASM Executive Director, Associate Director, or a staff designee will work with the music unit to develop a Self-Study that meets the needs of the institution and satisfies the needs of the Commission(s).
- e. One or more on-site staff consultations may be required.

5. Optional Supplemental Questions

NASM provides optional sets of questions for self-study that can be used to orient any self-study process, format, document, or section in particular ways. For more information, see Section IX.F. “Aids to Self-Study” below. These questions are available on the NASM Web site. The Association encourages institutions to develop sets of questions that meet their needs for self-evaluation.

6. Common Elements of All Formats

All of the Self-Study formats include a *Management Documents Portfolio* and an *Instructional Programs Portfolio*. Requirements are outlined in their entirety when the complete text of a format is obtained from the Web site. To review separate texts of these portfolios, please proceed to the [“Self-Study Formats and Associated Procedures”](#) section of the NASM Web site under the main heading “Membership Procedures.” For Member institutions, information requested in these portfolios can often be updated from previous Self-Study documents.

E. Organization of the Process

Only general principles for conducting the self-study can be provided here, since the detailed organization and application must fit the purposes, document format chosen, circumstances, and personnel of the institution.

1. To the fullest extent possible, focus the process on results of the educational program in music and the implications of these results for the future work of the music unit. In this way, the evidence of institutional effectiveness is used to improve the institution’s programs and processes on a continuing basis.
2. Develop effective and efficient patterns of review and consultation. Because a self-study is an evaluative project that addresses the responsibilities of faculty, administration, students, the governing board, and so forth, each constituency should be involved as appropriate to the goals for self-study and the process chosen. In addition to individuals and groups, consider ways to gain perspectives from collaborating units, constituencies beyond the institution, the music unit as a whole, and the institution as a whole.

3. Determine how your procedures for gathering ideas and information will be related to evaluation or analysis, compilation or synthesis of results, and development of next steps.
4. Organize the self-study so that the work represents the entire music unit. It is important that the self-study bring the music unit into focus, emphasize relationships among as well as results within various sub-units, and instigate healthy cross-fertilization of ideas. NASM Standards should serve as references and departure points for this process.
5. Select an approach that uses recent or current institutional research or self-evaluation materials.
6. Respect the current order of institutional or music unit priorities. To the extent possible, important internal priorities and problems should not be set aside while the accreditation review is underway.
7. Make the authority and office of the chief music executive an essential component of the success of the whole project.
 - a. The executive's role is to keep maximum emphasis on the project, to stimulate the project without dominating it, and to see that the results are translated into immediate action and/or long-range plans.
 - b. In most cases, the chief music executive will serve as the principal coordinator of the project with responsibilities for planning the work, holding it in balance, suggesting new approaches, and editing the final report.
 - c. Many institutions will find it useful to develop a steering committee with the music executive or a designee serving as the chair.
 - d. In any case, the principal coordinator is the key person in the enterprise. In larger institutions, the task of the coordinator—with its demands on time, energy, intelligence, and tact—is a major assignment, possibly calling for special recognition and load allowance.
8. Adopt a definite timetable. This timetable should be realistic, and the coordinator of the self-study should insist on maintaining it.
 - a. Accompanying this document is a checklist to be used in the planning and execution of the self-study. NASM strongly encourages that this checklist be used as a departure point, and for ensuring all necessary steps and deadlines are accomplished.

For example, after considering the NASM evaluation calendar, set a publication date for the Self-Study of at least five weeks before the evaluation team is due to arrive so that the text can be in the hands of the visiting evaluators four weeks before the visit. Having determined the finish date, allow two weeks preceding that for final editing and duplicating. Then work back toward the beginning, allowing the necessary intervals for each stage.

- b. In estimating time allowances, remember the scope and depth of the self-study process and how many people will be involved. The self-study must deal with the separate aspects of the music unit's life, but it must go beyond them in its concern with their relationships. It must deal with overall educational impact as well as with the efficiency of each of the component parts. If this procedure is to be carried out effectively, an appropriate amount of time must be budgeted.

9. Use the approach chosen to produce a concise, readable, substantive Self-Study document that can be used as a basis for (a) the internal use of faculty members, administrators, trustees, and others; (b) the informational use of NASM visiting evaluators and Commissioners; and (c) future action. The Self-Study document should go beyond mere description and dwell primarily on evaluation, interpretation, and projection.

F. Aids to Self-Study

1. The *Sourcebook for Futures Planning – Supplement IV: Creating Your Self-Study* is especially recommended. This text may be downloaded from the NASM Web site. See “Publications,” [“Assessment and Policy Studies.”](#)
2. NASM holds a workshop on self-study at each annual meeting.
3. The following documents contain sets of assessment or planning questions and may be useful:
 - *Optional Supplemental Questions for Self-Study;*
 - *The Assessment of Undergraduate Programs in Music;*
 - *The Assessment of Graduate Programs in Music;*
 - *The Assessment of Community Education Programs in Music;*
 - *Development and Assessment of Undergraduate Programs Combining Studies in Music, Business, Music Industry;*
 - *Local Assessment of Music Libraries and Information Services: The Present and the Future;*
 - *Local Assessment of Evaluation and Reward Systems for Arts Faculties in Higher Education;*
 - *NASM Sourcebook for Futures Planning.*

All are available for download or purchase from the NASM Web site; see “Publications,” [“Assessment and Policy Studies.”](#)

4. The Achievement and Quality Web site at <http://aqresources.arts-accredit.org> has additional resources and sets of questions concerning evaluation of individual and institutional work.

G. Electronic Storage and Future Revisions

The NASM Self-Study formats are designed to facilitate electronic storage and updating. Institutions are encouraged to keep these possibilities in mind as the specific text is created. Use of excerpts for other purposes and keeping an updated version can save time and energy in both NASM and other contexts.

H. The Text of Your Self-Study Document

Use the instructions for the Self-Study format you have chosen to produce the Self-Study document. See one of the following: *Procedures for the Self-Study Document: Format A*, or *Format B*, or *Format C* in the [“Self-Study Formats and Associated Procedures”](#) section of the NASM Web site under the main heading “Membership Procedures.”

X. FILING APPLICATION MATERIALS

A. Send to NASM

1. The Application Fee

- a. Use the NASM Fee Schedule current at the time of evaluation. A current fee schedule may be found on the [NASM Web site](#).
- b. All Member institutions will be invoiced for the application fee during the month of August of the academic year in which they are to be reviewed.
- c. All potential Member institutions should forward the application fee with the copies of the Self-Study and Application Form.

2. The Application Form, Self-Study Document, and Supportive Materials

- a. Three complete hard copies (two for community/junior colleges) are due in the NASM National Office at least four weeks before the visit.
- b. NASM will notify the institution in writing regarding receipt of materials and, if applicable, any additional materials that are due.
- c. For complete information regarding the preparation of materials, see *Procedures for the Self-Study Document* for the format you are using.

B. Send to Each Visitor

The Self-Study Document and Supportive Materials

One copy each of the Self-Study document and supportive materials should be sent as early as possible, and must arrive at least four weeks before the visit so that the visitors have ample time for study and reflection before arrival.

- C. Please Note:** Visits may be postponed or cancelled by the Executive Director or Associate Director of NASM after consultation with the visiting team if satisfactory materials are not available to the visiting team at least four weeks before the visit.

XI. PREPARATIONS FOR THE VISIT

A. Operating Principles

Working together, the visiting team and representatives of the institution develop the overall visit schedule, including lists of interviews, auditions, rehearsals, and appointments. Normally, primary contact is between the team chair and the music executive. Social engagements for team members or the team as a whole are to be avoided.

B. Sample Agenda

A typical visit agenda is provided below as a basis for developing specific schedules tailored to the needs of each institution.

Travel and Preparation Day

- Team arrival
- Initial team meeting
- Orientation meeting with music executive and/or institutional representatives
- Detailed planning session — logistics and content

First Day

- Review of facilities and equipment
- Interviews, classes, auditions, rehearsals, and appointments
- Team meeting (review, discuss, plan)

Second Day

- Interviews, classes, auditions, rehearsals, and appointments
- Team meeting (review findings, reach consensus, prepare for exit interviews)

Late Afternoon of the Second Day or Morning of the Third Day

- Outline contents of Visitors' Report
- Agree on arrangements and schedules to complete the Visitors' Report
- Exit interviews with music executive and other appropriate administrators and representatives
- Team departure

C. Institutional Arrangements for Visitors

1. After completion of Section XI.A., designated representatives of the institution schedule all aspects of the visit with institutional personnel.
2. The music executive ensures that arrangements have been made to provide all that is required in Section XII. below and in the "Required On-Site" portion of the Self-Study format chosen.
3. Designated representatives of the institution make appropriate logistical arrangements such as hotel accommodations and on-site travel arrangements. They advise the team of these arrangements in advance of arrival. Team members must have (a) single rooms, all at one location, and (b) secure, on-campus facilities for meeting in conference.

D. Local Orientation

The music executive orients all involved regarding the purpose, scope, and character of the NASM visit and distributes to music faculty and appropriate administrators copies of the documents entitled (a) *NASM Information*, (b) *A Philosophy for Accreditation in the Arts Disciplines*, and (c) *NASM Accreditation Information for Faculty*, all available from the NASM Web site in the Publications section under the heading "[Brochures and Advisory Papers](#)." The music executive is responsible for keeping appropriate administrators, faculty, students, and staff informed of the accreditation process and its progress.

E. Visitors' Preparation Responsibilities

1. All members of the team are responsible for (a) making their own transportation arrangements to and from the institution and (b) advising the team chair and institutional representatives of their schedule. Team members travel as inexpensively as possible and, when feasible, schedule travel on days that allow the greatest savings. Saturday night stay-overs should be discussed in advance with the music executive.
2. The team chair makes specific observation, interview, and writing assignments in consultation with other team members.
3. All team members gain comprehensive understanding of the music unit through in-depth analysis of the Self-Study and supportive materials. Team members must also refamiliarize themselves with the *NASM Handbook* including any current addenda, and the *NASM Membership Procedures Documents 2008*.
4. The team informs the NASM National Office if the Self-Study and other materials have not been received at least four weeks before the visit, or if at any time it appears that the institution is not or will not be prepared for the visit.

XII. THE VISIT

Further Information: NASM Procedures for Visiting Evaluators, September 2008, available online on the "[Self-Study Formats and Associated Procedures](#)" section of the NASM Web site under the main heading "Membership Procedures."

A. Purpose

The primary purpose of the visit is to develop an external perspective on the work of the music unit. This perspective is considered by the appropriate Commission along with (1) materials submitted by the institution and (2) NASM Standards as published in the *Handbook* and any current addenda.

B. Protocols

Individuals involved in the visit are expected to (1) maintain a professional, collegial, peer-review approach; (2) keep the process focused on the institution, its programs, and its effectiveness; (3) contribute to the factual accuracy of the Visitors' Report; and (4) cause as little disruption as possible to the artistic and educational routine of the music unit.

C. Local Arrangements

Local arrangements must be made that enable the evaluators to do the following:

1. Content

- a. Undertake a thorough review of all music major programs (i.e., non-degree, undergraduate, and graduate) irrespective of where the programs are administered.

- b. Observe classes, lessons, and rehearsals. The evaluators should select at random certain classes and lessons to visit. As applicable, all levels of instruction must be reviewed. If possible, include at least one in each of the following categories: (1) basic musicianship; (2) performance—individual (or group) studio lessons, small ensemble rehearsals, large ensemble rehearsals; (3) composition; (4) theory (critical analysis); (5) teacher preparation; (6) history and literature; and (7) music for the general college student.
- c. Review recordings, videos, documents, and other materials demonstrating the quality of student work in each degree or program offered, including supporting final project documents for degrees.
- d. As necessary, consider course syllabi, compilations of recital and event programs, etc.
- e. Audition a sampling of student performers, or (preferably) attend a recital by several representative students at various levels. If the institution offers professional degrees or programs in performance at one or more levels (i.e., baccalaureate, master’s, doctoral), hear a sampling of performers at each level, either in person or on a recording.
- f. Consider the effectiveness of institutional policies and procedures for ensuring that student competencies are met.
- g. Consider the total performance program (student, faculty, guest) and its quality and comprehensiveness in relationship to the goals and objectives of (1) the music unit or a whole area, and (2) specific curricular programs.
- h. Verify transcripts. Paper or electronic access to transcripts or copies thereof for graduates from each undergraduate or graduate degree or postsecondary non-degree-granting program for the past three years must be available to the visiting evaluators.

If a program has had no graduates in the past three years, transcript access for the past five years must be provided.

Transcripts or copies must be arranged or clearly identified by program title.

Visitors must be able to select and review at random from among all or a selection of transcripts from each degree or postsecondary non-degree-granting program offered. Ideally, two or three transcripts for each program are chosen and considered by the visitors.

If the institution requires that permission be granted by each graduate for the review of transcripts, this must be accomplished prior to the visit.

Section 438(b)(1)(G) of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 stipulates that institutions may release without threat of loss of federal funding, student records to “accrediting organizations in order to carry out their accrediting functions.”

The institution should provide on-site assistance to the visitors in comparing transcripts with NASM standards and the institution’s program requirements.

Note for Current Member Institutions Only:

Member institutions requesting in the Self-Study (1) Final Approval for Listing (FAL) for one or more programs that currently hold Plan Approval and are listed in italics by NASM,

or (2) Plan Approval and Final Approval For Listing (PA/FAL) for one or more programs that have not been previously reviewed by NASM, must do the following:

Provide as requested in Section II.B.16 of Format A **or** Section II.B.16 of Format B **or** Section I.B.16 of Format C two transcripts for each graduate program, and/or three transcripts for each program in any other category. The Commission cannot take action on requests for Final Approval for Listing unless it reviews the requisite number of transcripts in person.

For such programs, separate on-site review of transcripts beyond those contained in the Self-Study is not required.

Member institutions submitting continuing programs listed in regular type by NASM for Renewal of Final Approval, and in all other categories except FAL and PA/FAL mentioned above, should not provide transcripts for those programs with the Self-Study.

- i. Observe student intern teachers, and other internships when possible.
- j. Consider community education programs according to NASM procedures and as presented in the Self-Study. (See “Special Instructions for Postsecondary Institutions that Operate Community Education Programs in Music” in the “General Instructions” section of the *Procedures for the Self-Study Document* for the format chosen.)

2. Operations

- a. Inspect libraries (books, periodicals, scores, recordings, information technologies, ensemble music), and consider collection development in relation to the size, scope, and objectives of the music unit.
- b. Consider financial support for the music unit.
- c. Inspect physical plant and equipment and consider repair, maintenance, and replacement policies and plans.
- d. As necessary, consider documentation concerning appointment, promotion, and tenure; and governance.
- e. Review policies and procedures for evaluation, planning, and making projections, and review the extent to which they influence thoughtful exchange.

3. Meetings

- a. Meet with the music executive to discuss the visit plans, share issues, and gain perspective.
- b. Meet with the chief executive (or a designee) of the institution. This provides an opportunity to gain insight into his/her views of (1) the music unit’s role in the institution; (2) general institutional philosophy, goals, objectives, resource issues; and (3) future plans. Visitors to independent schools of music also meet with the chair of the board to review these matters.
- c. Interview faculty members, professional staff, and students, both individually and in groups, in pre-arranged meetings and, if requested, in appointments arranged on-site. In large programs where it may be impossible to meet with all faculty, visitors should ensure contact with a representative cross-section.

- d. Hold concluding conferences with the music executive, and also with the chief executive and other senior administrators if requested by the institution. (The conference may be held jointly if requested or if deemed appropriate.) In these conferences, the visiting evaluators ask any final questions, report general observations, review the overall findings that will be in the Visitors' Report, and describe the next steps in the accreditation process, including the institution's opportunity to provide an Optional Response to the Visitors' Report. In addition to these presentations, the visitors provide opportunities for questions and dialogue. The visitors must not attempt to predict the action of the Commission(s).
- e. During exit interviews, as well as in previous discussions, the visiting evaluators must make clear distinctions between (1) assessments concerning threshold operational and curricular Standards for accreditation; (2) analytical results in other categories such as strengths and areas for improvement, short- and long-term futures issues; and (3) if requested, consultative advice that are beyond threshold accreditation Standards.
- f. The visiting evaluators should remind the institution's representatives that NASM visitors do not suggest a final accreditation action to the Commission.

4. Synthesis

Consider the extent to which various operational, educational, and programmatic components (a) have an interrelationship sufficiently viable to achieve the music unit's purposes both at present and in the future; (b) meet NASM Standards; and (c) can continue to meet NASM Standards during the projected accreditation period.

XIII. PROCEDURES PRIOR TO COMMISSION ACTION

A. NASM Visitors' Report

1. Immediately following the visit, the visiting evaluators prepare a report for the institution and the Commission according to NASM procedures.
2. The Visitors' Report:
 - a. Compares visitors' impressions of conditions, evaluations, and projections with those described in the Self-Study.
 - b. Identifies the extent to which there appears to be compliance with NASM Standards.
 - c. Recommends specific improvements.
 - d. Makes suggestions concerning opportunities or problems not yet apparent.
3. The Visitors' Report is expected in the NASM National Office within six weeks of the visit.
4. The NASM staff reviews the Visitors' Report and consults as necessary with the visitors. When the review is complete, the National Office sends to the music executive of the applicant institution a copy of the Visitors' Report marked: "NASM Visitors' Report — For Internal Distribution According to Institutional Protocols — Any Optional Response Due (date)." The music executive distributes the report according to the plan developed by the institution (see Section VI., "Internal Communication Plan" above).

B. Optional Response to the Visitors' Report

1. The institution has the option of responding to the Visitors' Report with respect to (a) errors of fact, (b) conclusions based upon such errors, and (c) documented changes made in the program since the visit.
2. Any Optional Response to the Visitors' Report should be submitted to the NASM National Office according to the following schedule:
 - a. Baccalaureate and Graduate Degree-Granting, and Non-Degree-Granting Institutions: Before May 1 for Commission action in June; before October 15 for Commission action in November.
 - b. Community/Junior Colleges: Before October 15 for Commission action in November.
3. Procedures for filing the Optional Response will be provided with the copy of the Visitors' Report sent to the institution.

C. Institutional Evaluation of the NASM Review Thus Far

The Visitors' Report is accompanied by a brief questionnaire that provides the institution with an opportunity to evaluate the process through the site visit and before Commission action. Filing instructions are provided with the questionnaire.

D. Withdrawal of the Application for Membership

An application for Membership may be withdrawn at any time prior to the decision of any Commission, without refund of fee or release of responsibility to reimburse the Association for applicable expenses, including those of the visiting evaluators.

XIV. COMMISSION ACTION

A. Meeting Dates

The Commission on Accreditation meets semiannually in June and November to review application materials, all supporting documentation, Visitors' Reports, and Optional Responses. The Commission on Community/Junior College Accreditation meets annually in November to accomplish the same purposes.

B. Report to the Institution

Following the meetings, a written communication describing Commission action based on the application materials—(1) the institution's Self-Study, (2) the Visitors' Report and, if applicable, (3) the institution's Optional Response—is transmitted to the applicant institution's music executive, president or chancellor, provost, and dean. The communication will contain a clear statement of the official accreditation action and may contain recommendations. However, the text distinguishes between accreditation actions and other matters.

C. Possible Commission Actions on First-Time Applications for Membership

1. The institution is approved for Associate Membership for a period of five years.
2. The institution is approved for Membership for a period of five years.

3. The institution is approved for Associate Membership or Membership for a period of five years with a request for one or more progress reports confirming implementation of plans and/or completion of ongoing issues as outlined by the Commission.
4. Action on the application of the institution is deferred pending one or more of the following:
 - a. Receipt of additional information necessary to determine whether the institution meets NASM Standards;
 - b. Response to the stated concerns of the Commission about failure to meet NASM Standards;
 - c. Response indicating the correction of deficiencies as outlined by the Commission.

(See next section titled "Further Explanation of Deferral.")

Normally, responses are requested in the form of written submissions.

5. The application for Membership is denied with notice of rights to request reconsideration or to appeal.

D. Possible Commission Actions on Applications for Membership or Renewal of Membership

1. The institution with Associate Membership is granted Membership for a period of five years.
2. The institution with Membership is continued in good standing for a period of ten years.
3. The institution with Associate Membership is granted Membership for a period of five years with a request for one or more progress reports confirming implementation of plans and/or completion of ongoing issues as outlined by the Commission.
4. The institution with Membership is continued in good standing for a period of ten years with a request for one or more progress reports confirming implementation of plans and/or completion of ongoing issues as outlined by the Commission.
5. The current Membership status of the institution is continued, but action on the application of the institution for Membership or renewal of Membership is deferred pending one or more of the following:
 - a. Receipt of additional information necessary to determine whether the institution meets NASM Standards;
 - b. Response to the stated concerns of the Commission about failure to meet NASM Standards;
 - c. Response indicating the correction of deficiencies as outlined by the Commission.

(See next section titled "Further Explanation of Deferral.")

Normally, responses are requested in the form of written submissions.

6. The institution is issued a show-cause statement with regard to administrative warning.
7. The institution is given an administrative warning.
8. The institution is placed on probation with notice of right to request reconsideration.
9. The application for Membership or renewal of Membership is denied with notice of rights to request reconsideration or to appeal.

E. Policies and Procedures Applied as Appropriate to Commission Motions Regarding Membership and Renewal of Membership

1. Approval

- a. Notice of Associate Membership, Membership, or renewal of Membership is accompanied by a brief questionnaire that provides the institution with an opportunity to evaluate the entire accreditation process. Filing instructions are provided with the questionnaire.
- b. Institutions receiving Associate Membership, Membership, or renewal of Membership should review sections of the NASM “Rules of Practice and Procedure” that pertain to publication of accreditation actions, printed recognition of Membership, and disclosure and confidentiality (see *NASM Handbook*).
- c. Progress reports may be requested at any time or periodically throughout the term of accreditation.

2. Deferral, Administrative Warning

(See next section titled “Further Explanation of Deferral” and NASM Handbook, Bylaws, Article I, “Administrative Warning Status.”)

- a. Deferral actions and reports, and administrative warning actions and reports each are structured within specific time periods. Normally, deferral periods are from six to eighteen months. Administrative warning periods extend from one to twelve months.
- b. If the application is deferred, the institution responds in writing to the Commission as directed, and the application is reconsidered by the Commission at the specified regular meeting following the response. The same process applies to administrative warning.

3. Probation, Denial

- a. In cases of probation or several consecutive deferrals of action on the application, a new Self-Study and/or visit may be required.
- b. If Membership or renewal of Membership is denied, a new Self-Study and visit will be required upon reapplication after the specified time period has elapsed.

4. Personal Appearances

- a. When circumstances arise that cannot be clarified through written communications, the music executive of an applicant institution may request of the Executive Director of NASM an appointment with the Commission to discuss pending Commission action.
- b. The Commission may request an appearance by a music executive to clarify points relevant to an application.

F. Notice to USDE

The Executive Director of NASM shall notify the United States Secretary of Education within thirty days of (1) any final decision by the Commission(s) to revoke accreditation status from an institution or program, or (2) any institution that voluntarily withdraws from NASM Membership, or (3) any final decision by the Commission(s) to place an institution on probation.

XV. FURTHER EXPLANATION OF DEFERRAL

In the accreditation process, an accrediting Commission often finds a situation in which an institution cannot be granted initial accreditation or renewal of accreditation on the basis of evidence presented. This may be because the institution clearly does not meet the Standards as outlined in the *NASM Handbook* and any current addenda, or because sufficient information has not been provided.

Rather than deny accreditation or place the institution on probation, the Commission defers any action until certain conditions are met that clarify the situation and/or bring the institution into compliance. Deferral is not a negative action, but rather a mechanism for dialogue between the Commission and an institution. The deferral concept is intended to prevent short review cycles and to obviate the need for other review procedures that would be expensive to the institution.

Member institutions whose applications are deferred continue their current Membership status and maintain all rights and responsibilities of Membership. Deferral does not mean that an institution has lost its accreditation, or its right to vote during the Annual Meeting, or its listing in the *NASM Directory*. Deferral simply indicates that the institution has one or more issues that need to be addressed, reviewed, or explained in more detail before the institution's application can be approved.

There is no public notice of deferral. NASM sends copies of Commission Action Reports only to the music executive, to the designated institutional representative to NASM if someone other than the music executive, the applicant institution's president or chancellor, provost, and dean if the institution's music executive is not a dean. All other communication decisions are the prerogative of the institution. The NASM National Office staff does not discuss an institution's status or application with anyone other than the music executive or other designated administrative officials of the institution.

XVI. PROCEDURES REGARDING REVIEW OF ACCREDITATION DECISIONS

When an action of a Commission causes a serious disagreement that cannot be resolved through normal NASM procedures, the institution and the individuals therein follow, as appropriate, one of the following "Rules of Practice and Procedure" in the *NASM Handbook*: "Requests for Reconsideration of Actions by an Accrediting Commission" or "Appeals of Adverse Decisions Concerning Accredited Institutional Membership."

XVII. THE REEVALUATION CYCLE

After Associate Membership and/or original Membership is granted, reevaluation is scheduled in five years.

For continuing Members, reevaluation normally occurs on a ten-year cycle.

Neither the five-year nor the ten-year review period is extended because of deferred actions or requests for progress reports.

For cause, the Commission has the right to require a review and/or visit at any time.

Postponement may be granted for cause. If postponement seems advisable, contact the NASM National Office.

XVIII. MAINTAINING ACCREDITED STATUS

A. HEADS/Dues

Each accredited institution submits an annual report (the HEADS survey) and pays annual dues.

B. Continuing Compliance with NASM Standards

1. Accredited institutions agree to maintain their programs in compliance with NASM Standards as they are developed, and participate in the continuing development of Standards and Guidelines.
2. If an institution wishes to add a new music major program or to amend a previously approved program substantially, a request for Plan Approval must be filed and approved before students are admitted to the new program. Procedures for Plan Approval may be obtained from the NASM Web site. See *NASM Handbook*, Rules of Practice and Procedure, “New Curricula: Plan Approval and Final Approval for Listing.”
3. Institutions/music units are required to gain prior approval of substantive changes occurring between regular accreditation visits. See *NASM Handbook*, Rules of Practice and Procedure, “Substantive Change.”

Substantive changes to purposes – mission, goals, and objectives; offering degrees or credentials at a new level; changes from clock to credit hours or vice versa, changes in credit policies or length of program, as well as changes mentioned in the following paragraph, must be reviewed by the Commission before they are implemented.

4. If an accredited music unit proposes to (a) become affiliated with or become an integral part of another educational institution; (b) implement substantial changes in institutional or collegiate organization and administrative structure; (c) make a change in ownership or a fundamental, comprehensive change of control; (d) establish a branch campus offering degrees or programs eligible for accreditation by NASM; or (e) make arrangements for affiliative use of the institution’s or music unit’s name, the music unit must inform the Executive Director or Associate Director of NASM and, prior to implementation, demonstrate to the Commission that changes will not affect compliance with accreditation Standards.

EVALUATION CALENDAR

**FOR BACCALAUREATE AND GRADUATE DEGREE-GRANTING INSTITUTIONS OR
POSTSECONDARY, PROFESSIONAL NON-DEGREE-GRANTING INSTITUTIONS
APPLYING FOR NASM MEMBERSHIP OR RENEWAL OF MEMBERSHIP**

— Commission on Accreditation —

ACTION	For Consideration at the Commission Meetings in JUNE	For Consideration at the Commission Meetings in NOVEMBER
Notice of Intention to Apply Form* to the NASM National Office <i>(Please see note below)</i>	Preferably two years before the projected date of the NASM on-site visit, and not later than one year prior to the visit	Preferably two years before the projected date of the NASM on-site visit, and not later than one year prior to the visit
Self-Study Document, Institutional Catalogues, and Supportive Material to the NASM Visiting Evaluators	At least four weeks before the visit	At least four weeks before the visit
Application, Self-Study Document, Institutional Catalogues, and Supportive Material to the NASM National Office	At least four weeks before the visit	At least four weeks before the visit
Application Fee to the NASM National Office	<i>Members:</i> upon receipt of invoice <i>Non-members:</i> with Self-Study	<i>Members:</i> upon receipt of invoice <i>Non-members:</i> with Self-Study
Visitation Period	September 1 – February 15 (or as arranged)	February 15 – June 1 (or as arranged)
Visitors' Report to the NASM National Office	Within six weeks of visit	Within six weeks of visit
Institution's Optional Response to the Visitors' Report to the NASM National Office	As early as possible and not later than May 1	As early as possible and not later than October 15
NASM Commission Meets	First week in June	Third week in November
Institution Notified of Commission Action	Within thirty days of Commission meeting	Within thirty days of Commission meeting

***Please Note:**

In order to be assured of an evaluation during the preferred time period, institutions should submit the Notice of Intention to Apply form two years before the projected date of the on-site visit; however, this form must be received in the NASM National Office no later than one year prior to the on-site visit date.

EVALUATION CALENDAR
FOR COMMUNITY/JUNIOR COLLEGES
APPLYING FOR NASM MEMBERSHIP OR RENEWAL OF MEMBERSHIP
— Commission on Community/Junior College Accreditation —

ACTION	For Consideration at the Commission Meetings in November
Notice of Intention to Apply Form* to the NASM National Office <i>(Please see note below)</i>	Preferably two years before the projected date of the NASM on-site visit, and not later than one year prior to the visit
Self-Study Document, Institutional Catalogues, and Supportive Material to the NASM Visiting Evaluators	At least four weeks before the visit
Application, Self-Study Document, Institutional Catalogues, and Supportive Material to the NASM National Office	At least four weeks before the visit
Application Fee to the NASM National Office	<i>Members:</i> upon receipt of invoice <i>Non-members:</i> with Self-Study
Visitation Period	September 1 – June 1 (or as arranged)
Visitors' Report to the NASM National Office	Within six weeks of visit
Institution's Optional Response to the Visitors' Report to the NASM National Office	As early as possible and not later than October 15
NASM Commission Meets	Third week in November
Institution Notified of Commission Action	Within thirty days of Commission meeting

***Please Note:**

In order to be assured of an evaluation during the preferred time period, institutions should submit the Notice of Intention to Apply form two years before the projected date of the on-site visit; however, this form must be received in the NASM National Office no later than one year prior to the on-site visit date.

SAMPLE INSTITUTIONAL SCHEDULE AND CHECKLIST: PREPARATION FOR ON-SITE VISIT

Please feel free to use this sample schedule as a basis for developing the specific steps and schedule appropriate for your music unit.

INITIATION OF THE ACCREDITATION PROCESS

In order to be assured of an evaluation during the preferred time period, the institution should submit the Notice of Intention to Apply form two years prior to the projected date of the on-site visit; however, this form must be received in the NASM National Office no later than one year before the scheduled visit date. First steps to initiate the accreditation process, establish a visiting team, and finalize the dates for the visit are:

- Submit Notice of Intention to Apply Form
- Create Internal Communications Plan
- Receive Slate of Nominations for Evaluators
- Return Evaluator Preference
- Finalize Evaluation Team
- Finalize Visit Dates with the Evaluators
- Notify the NASM National Office Staff of the Final Visit Dates

THE SELF-STUDY AND PREPARATIONS FOR THE VISIT

The following are guidelines only. An institution may wish to complete any of the following steps earlier than the timelines suggested.

- MONTH 1:**
 - Formalize Basic Self-Study Format, Purposes, Approach, Design, Outline
(Seek approval from NASM in special circumstances described herein)
 - Assign a Self-Study Coordinator or Steering Committee
 - Make Data Collection, Analysis, and Writing Assignments
- MONTH 2:**
 - Begin Compiling and Writing the Self-Study
- MONTHS 3 – 5:**
 - Continue Self-Study, Continue Compilation
- MONTH 6:**
 - Continue Self-Study, Continue Compilation
 - Make Hotel Reservations for Evaluators
- MONTH 7:**
 - Continue Self-Study, Continue Compilation
- MONTH 8:**
 - Continue Self-Study, Continue Compilation
 - Make Arrangements to Present Student Work *(recitals, tapes, written work, etc.)*
- MONTH 9:**
 - Produce Preliminary Draft of Complete Self-Study and Seek Community Review of the Draft
- MONTH 10:**
 - Finalize and Polish Self-Study
 - Establish Basic Schedule with Chair of the Visiting Team
- MONTH 11:**
 - Forward Self-Study and Supportive Materials to Evaluators
 - Forward Self-Study, Supportive Materials, Application Form, and Application Fee *(if applicable)* to NASM National Office
 - Confirm All Logistics of Visit with Evaluators
- MONTH 12:**
 - Complete All Schedules of Appointments and All Arrangements for Access to Transcripts, Student Work, etc.
 - Host On-Site Visit

