

**NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS OF MUSIC**

## **Procedures for Visiting Evaluators**

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

## National Office

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Users of the *NASM Procedures for Visiting Evaluators* also need the *NASM Procedures for the Self-Study Document* (*Format A, Format B, Format C, or Custom*) used by the institution, and the latest edition of the *NASM Handbook* and any current addenda. All texts are available on the NASM Web site, except for Custom Formats, each of which must be provided by the institution in its Self-Study.

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 Visiting Evaluators

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# Procedures for Visiting Evaluators

NOTE: This manual is an integral part of NASM's orientation and training program for visiting evaluators.

## I. ORIENTATION

The following instructions are intended to serve as guidelines for NASM visiting evaluators to institutions seeking Membership or renewal of Membership. Although the instructions are detailed, three points of paramount importance are provided as overall guidance.

### A. Responsibilities of the Visiting Evaluators

1. The primary functions of the visiting evaluators are (a) to verify the Self-Study, (b) to gather and assess information in a comprehensive manner, (c) to review student work, and (d) to prepare a factually based evaluative report that enables thorough Commission review of the total music program.
2. Evaluators must have detailed knowledge of standards and guidelines and their application, and must develop thorough understanding of an institution's Self-Study.
3. The observations and written evaluations of visitors are particularly important in areas such as performance and reviews of student work, and the relationship of student work to curricula.
4. In carrying out these functions, visitors are expected to reflect the service-oriented accreditation philosophy of NASM and thus to produce an appropriate context for the institution's receipt of Commission action.
5. In all phases of the process, evaluators work together as a team. Fulfilling specific responsibilities does not preclude common effort and shared decision-making.
6. The visiting evaluators do not accredit, make definitive accreditation judgments, or make official recommendations to the institution on behalf of NASM. These functions are served only by the Commissions on Accreditation.
7. In their contacts at the visited institution, visiting evaluators may be able to serve as consultants to a limited extent, but this is a secondary role. It should be confirmed as consultative at the time, and should not interfere with the primary function of the visit. Advisory comments must be clearly identified as such, so they are not construed as official positions of NASM.

### B. Concerns of the Visiting Evaluators

1. In addition to particular standards issues, visiting evaluators consider the larger issues, such as the effectiveness of teaching, artistic goals and quality, curricula, competencies being developed by students, administration of the program, validity of information and conclusions reached through self-study, and crucial futures issues.
2. The Visitors' Report reflects careful attention to these significant factors. It presents an objective analysis that summarizes (a) the state of the music unit, (b) the extent to which NASM Standards appear to be met, (c) strengths and areas for improvement, (d) major futures issues for the music unit, and (e) constructive suggestions for future development of the music unit.

## **C. Protocols**

1. Evaluators shall base their reviews on NASM Standards, Guidelines, and Procedures in the context of the visited institution rather than on personal opinions, favored methodologies, or practices at their home institutions.
2. In accordance with NASM policies on institutional autonomy, evaluators shall not enter local debates on the merits of specific approaches to particular issues or concerns.
3. NASM visiting evaluators are to comport themselves with dignity, courtesy, kindness, and professionalism, and should exhibit an attitude of encouragement. Contentiousness, antagonism, condescension, or personal promotion has no place.
4. Visitors are to show respect for all individuals and to refrain from any appearance of harassment, substance abuse, or any other behavior that would raise questions about the integrity or objectivity of the process, or otherwise shift focus from evaluation and improvement of the music unit.

## **II. PROCEDURES FOR THE VISIT**

### **A. Invitation and Response**

1. Invitations to serve at specific institutions come from the NASM Executive Director. The invitation letter describes the specifics of the visit.
2. Each visiting evaluator responds as requested in the invitation letter as quickly as possible after considering (a) the proposed time frame; (b) whether their service would be, or could be, construed as a conflict of interest; and (c) whether their schedule permits requisite attention to the Self-Study, the on-site visit, and timely preparation of the Visitors' Report.

### **B. Combined Visits**

NASM visiting evaluators may be involved with other accrediting agencies in one of the following ways.

#### **1. NASM Evaluators Serving Multiple Purposes at the Institution**

In this case, NASM evaluators conduct a regular NASM evaluation and at the same time or with additional time, serve another review purpose for the institution. Protocols for each such visit must be approved in advance by the NASM Executive Director or Associate Director. Reporting responsibilities are to NASM and to the institution. Planning for these visits will include specific decisions about reporting timetables and formats and particular attention to avoiding conflicts of interest. For example, NASM visitors may not receive compensation from institutions for work done jointly, concurrently, or in sequence with the NASM on-site review.

#### **2. Concurrent Accreditation Visits**

In this case, the NASM evaluators conduct a regular NASM visit at the same time as that of another accrediting agency, but are not members of the other agency's team. Although impressions may be shared with the other team, the NASM evaluators devote their full time to NASM accreditation procedures. Their reporting responsibilities are solely to NASM.

### 3. Joint Accreditation Visits

- a. In this case, the NASM evaluators conduct a regular NASM visit at the same time as that of another accrediting agency. Visitors serve both as evaluators for NASM and as team members for the other agency. A minimum of two full days must be devoted to the NASM visit. Joint visits may take more than two days in order that NASM evaluators may fulfill their separate responsibilities to NASM and to the other agency.
- b. Joint visits may also be conducted at institutions wishing to gain accreditation and/or reaccreditation of their degree-granting and community education units.
- c. During the planning stage, a decision will be made concerning the format of the Visitors' Report(s) directed to the NASM Commission.

### 4. NASM Evaluators Serving Other Agencies

In this case, the NASM evaluators are not acting in any capacity for NASM. At the request of either the institution or another agency, the Executive Director of NASM nominates NASM evaluators to serve solely as representatives of the other agency. The other agency shall be responsible for all arrangements and shall provide all appropriate instructions and guidelines to the visiting evaluators.

## C. Special Instructions for Visitors to Degree-Granting Institutions that Operate Community Education Programs in Music

1. Many degree-granting music units offer non-degree-granting programs of study for children, youth, and adults in their communities. These range from private lessons with collegiate instructors to large, institutionalized programs with specialized professional faculty and administration. *Community music school, preparatory program, laboratory school, and community division* are among the many titles used to designate such programs when they have a specific published identity.
2. If a community education program does not have a separate published identity and at least one specifically designated administrator, the institution will comment on the program only in the Self-Study section titled "Community Involvement," and in Section III. as applicable. The institution will not provide information in a separate Self-Study section.

In this case, primary comments regarding the program, if any, are discussed in Section K. of the Visitors' Report.

3. If a community education program has a separate identity and at least one specifically designated administrator, and the institution is not seeking separate listing of its curricular offerings in NASM publications, the institution will comment on the program only in the Self-Study section titled "Non-Degree-Granting Programs for the Community," and in Section III. as applicable.

In this case, primary comments regarding the program are discussed in Section L. of the Visitors' Report.

4. If a community education program seeks separate listing of its curricular offerings in NASM publications, the program will be discussed in every section of the Self-Study or in a separate Self-Study.

In this case, comments regarding the program are considered applicable in every section of the Visitors' Report except those titled "Community Involvement" and "Non-Degree-Granting Programs for the Community." Also, one or more team members will be assigned specifically to review the community education program.

5. For further information, see *NASM Handbook*, "Rules of Practice and Procedure," Article I. Institutional Membership, Section 3. Curricular Requirement.

For assistance in interpreting these instructions, please contact the NASM National Office.

#### **D. Preliminary Arrangements**

The visiting evaluators should make the following arrangements before arriving on campus:

1. Establish dates for the NASM visit
  - a. Contact the music executive of the institution to be visited, arrange mutually convenient dates for the visit, and consult with the music executive concerning the agenda for the visit. See *Procedures for Institutions*. The institution shall provide the visiting evaluators with the opportunity to visit every major program.
    - (1) *For applications reviewed by the Commission on Accreditation*, the latest date for the visit is June 1 for consideration in November, or February 15 for consideration in June.
    - (2) *For applications reviewed by the Commission on Community/Junior College Accreditation*, the latest date for the visit is June 1 for consideration in November.
  - b. The institution shall inform the NASM National Office of the dates for the visit.
2. In degree-granting institutions, determine the status and structure of reviews for any non-degree or community education programs.
3. Require that the music executive send a copy of the Self-Study and one copy of all supportive materials to each evaluator. These materials must be received by the visiting evaluators at least four weeks before the visit.
4. Ensure that arrangements have been made to provide (a) opportunities to visit classes/lessons; (b) opportunities to hear student performers and review student work as indicated in the Visitors' Report outline; (c) opportunities to meet with administrators, faculty, staff, and students (in the case of independent institutions, a meeting with representative members of the trustees/board must be arranged); (d) efficient access to student transcripts; lists of graduates; theses; projects; appointment, promotion, and tenure guidelines; course syllabi, and compilations of recital programs; and (e) a location for visitors to work.
5. Complete plans and reservations for travel to the institution and inform the institution of arrival and departure times. Team members travel as inexpensively as possible, and when feasible, schedule travel on days that allow the greatest savings.
6. Confirm housing and other logistics with the music executive. Separate, non-dormitory, overnight accommodations should be made available for each evaluator. Accommodations shall be commensurate with the professional character of the accreditation process.
7. Ensure that the Self-Study includes all required parts, including curricular charts in the NASM format. Note that Self-Studies may be prepared according to different overall formats recommended by or agreed to by NASM.

8. Analyze the Self-Study thoroughly as soon as it is received, noting issues to be covered during the visit. The team chair confers with members of the team about arrangements and preliminary impressions of the Self-Study.

In fulfilling these functions, the visiting evaluators determine:

- a. The extent to which the Self-Study contains all information required for review by the Commission, including curricular information in the NASM format for resident and distance or correspondence learning programs, and evidence that all programs document artistic and educational results.
  - b. The extent to which the Self-Study is sufficiently evaluative and projective.
  - c. The extent to which there is consistency among information in various parts of the Self-Study, and among the Self-Study and supporting materials such as the institutional catalog and the *Management Documents Portfolio*.
  - d. The extent to which NASM operational and curricular Standards appear to be met.
  - e. Issues that need further information or clarification.
  - f. Functions, operations, or program areas that seem to require special attention either to preserve their strengths or to address the need for improvement.
  - g. Strategies for addressing areas of concern.
  - h. Key persons to interview.
9. Keep perspective. Although the Self-Study document carries great weight in the review, visiting evaluators should not confuse evaluation of the Self-Study document with an evaluation of the music unit. An insufficient or ineffective Self-Study document does not necessarily indicate a weak music unit. The reverse is also true.
  10. If the visiting team concludes that further documentation or clarification is needed before the visit, contact should be made with the National Office staff before making a request to the institution.

## E. The Visit

The visiting evaluators do the following, all in relation to the purposes and size and scope of the institution, in order to produce a comprehensive and effective Visitors' Report addressing issues contained in NASM Standards:

**All programs (i.e., non-degree, undergraduate, and graduate; resident, distance and correspondence learning) must be reviewed as applicable in each of the following areas.** Please see Appendix I in this document.

### 1. Content

- a. Undertake a thorough review of all music major programs (i.e., non-degree, undergraduate, and graduate; resident, distance and correspondence learning) irrespective of where the programs are administered. Arrangements should be made to do this in a manner that causes as little disruption as possible to artistic and educational routine.

- b. Observe classes, lessons, and rehearsals. The evaluators should select at random certain classes, lessons, and rehearsals 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 scores, 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 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 relation to the goals and objectives of (1) the music unit or a whole area, (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.

*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. These transcripts will be reviewed by the evaluators on-site.

- 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 Visitors to Degree-Granting Institutions that Operate Community Education Programs in Music,” *Procedures for Visiting Evaluators*, page 3.

## **2. Operations**

- a. Inspect libraries (books, periodicals, scores, recordings, information technologies, ensemble music, etc), 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. Consider documentation and conditions associated with health and safety, including (1) policies and practices regarding student information and injury prevention, and (2) compliance with local health and safety codes.
- e. As necessary, consider documentation concerning governance and appointment, promotion, and tenure.
- f. Review policies and procedures for evaluation, planning, and making projections, and review the extent to which they influence thoughtful decisions about change.

## **3. Meetings**

- a. Meet with the music executive at the beginning to discuss visit plans, share issues, and gain perspective.
- b. Meet with the chief executive (or a designee) of the institution and with other senior administrators as requested by the institution. This provides an opportunity to gain insight

into their 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 trustees/board members 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 is made 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.
- 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; and (2) analytical results in other categories such as strengths and areas for improvement, short- and long-term futures issues; and if requested, consultative advice that are beyond threshold accreditation Standards. See Section V., items P. and Q. of this document for further guidance.
- 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.

#### **F. Expense Reimbursement**

1. All evaluators send their expense forms with all receipts to the NASM National Office.
2. Each evaluator should submit only one expense form per visit. Evaluators are asked to consolidate all expenses related to the visit into a single expense form to be submitted with all receipts.
3. If one consolidated expense form is not possible for any reason, evaluators should contact the NASM National Office staff. NASM reimburses the visiting evaluators directly and bills the institution for visiting evaluators' expenses.
4. The following expenses are considered customary and reasonable:
  - a. Public transportation by air or surface, or by private automobile at mileage rate consistent with GSA norms. These are specified on the expense reimbursement form. Air travel is expected to be at minimum fare class unless this is unavailable. If minimum fare class is

not available, high travel costs should be discussed with the music executive before tickets are purchased. Mileage claimed may not exceed the cost of coach air travel between the same two points. Typically, it is unnecessary for evaluators to rent automobiles. Automobiles are to be rented only upon permission from the institution.

- b. Food and lodging
  - c. Taxi or bus fares
  - d. Cost of typing and duplicating the report
  - e. Tips
5. Among expenses not covered are extra days not associated with the visit, laundry, movies and other extra activities, home/child/pet sitting, and substitute teachers.

### **III. PROCEDURES FOR COMPLETING AND FILING THE VISITORS' REPORT**

#### **A. Team and Staff Responsibilities**

1. The Visitors' Report must be submitted to NASM as a single, joint report. Team members may divide the responsibilities in advance in the way they think best.
2. A copy of the Visitors' Report will be sent to the institution by the NASM National Office.
3. Visiting evaluators are encouraged to complete as much of the joint report as possible during the visit.
4. The team chair is responsible for submitting one copy of the final report electronically to the NASM National Office.
5. The NASM staff will review the report, contact the team chair as necessary, secure a final report that meets NASM requirements, and make copies for the institution and the appropriate Commission.
6. Once the Visitors' Report is forwarded to the institution for comment, the visitors' work is completed, and further communication about the process is between the institution and the appropriate Commission through the NASM National Office.

#### **B. Filing Deadline**

All Visitors' Reports must be received at the NASM National Office **within six weeks of the on-site visit**.

#### **C. Disposition of the Self-Study**

The Self-Study shall be destroyed or forwarded to the NASM National Office after the Visitors' Report has been submitted and accepted by the National Office staff.

## IV. PROTOCOLS AND DEFINITIONS FOR WRITERS OF THE VISITORS' REPORT

### A. Requirements and Guidelines

1. The Visitors' Report is a presentation of facts, observations, and evaluations.
2. If the visited institution offers programs in music at various levels, all categories must be covered thoroughly in the visitation and in the Visitors' Report. *Please follow the outline in this regard.*
3. Visitors must follow the NASM Visitors' Report outline in this document under Section V. "Specifications for the Visitors' Report."

*Do not use the NASM Handbook outline for the Visitors' Report.*

4. Since the institution will receive a copy of the Visitors' Report, it must be so written that it can be transmitted without change, editing, or deletion, and each report should reflect the high professionalism of the field.
5. The Visitors' Report should be as succinct as possible, but it must contain sufficient substantive information to enable the Commission to take action.
6. Material presented in the Self-Study should not be repeated; however, Self-Study material may be referenced, citing specific page, section, and item numbers.
7. Although the Visitors' Report considers separate operational and curricular issues, all sections of the report should show a focused relationship to the educational and artistic purposes of the music unit. The primary focus is student competency development. What students are learning is more important than what the institution has or does.

### B. NASM Standards

1. In each section of the Visitors' Report, the text should reflect thorough consideration of all Standards contained in the most recent NASM *Handbook* and any current addenda. Concerns about deviations from those Standards should be clearly identified, explained, and referenced to the appropriate sections of the NASM *Handbook* and/or any current addenda. The questions asked in Sections V.A. through P. below provide a starting point.
2. The overarching question to be addressed in Sections A. through P. of the Visitors' Report is the extent to which the institution appears to meet NASM Standards for purposes, operations, program components, curricula, and competency development published in the *Handbook*, including any current addenda. Therefore, the *Handbook* Standards have priority over questions and issues posed in the outline below that reflect but do not replicate the *Handbook*.
3. All references in the Visitors' Report regarding Standards compliance shall use language such as, "it appears that the institution...." Such citations should be referenced to the *Handbook*, including any current addenda; please cite specific section, item, paragraph (i.e., NASM *Handbook* [date], II.B.1.c.). Please do not cite page numbers.

4. There are many ways to develop the text of a Visitors' Report; however, regardless of the approach or style used, readers at the institution and on the Commission must be able to distinguish between the following two distinct types of items in every section of the Visitors' Report:
  - a. **Type 1.** Issues raised about threshold compliance—the presence of conditions and efforts essential to meeting fundamental requirements of applicable NASM Standards now or during the projected accreditation period.

Language such as the following may be used:

- (1) The institution appears/does not appear to meet....
- (2) The institution appears/does not appear to meet...with the (possible) exception of...
- (3) The institution appears/does not appear to meet...now, but may/may not by [a specific time period] due to...
- (4) More information/explanation/documentation is needed [and may be provided in the Optional Response].

Explanations and *Handbook* references must be given in the text of the Visitors' Report each time Standards questions are raised. It is important to connect both operational and curricular concerns to the development of student competencies.

- b. **Type 2.** Issues discussed for other purposes; for example: status reports, background information, strengths, areas for improvement beyond threshold compliance, recommendations to help the institution reach its aspirations, futures issues, matters critical to maintaining or enhancing the quality or reputation of the program, etc.

### C. Definitions of Curricular Status

NASM uses the following terms to assign review status to all degrees, certificates, diplomas, and programs:

1. Institutions applying to NASM for the first time:
  - Programs that have been in existence and that have requisite transcript evidence (two transcripts for graduate programs, and three transcripts for all other types of programs) are to be submitted for **Plan Approval and Final Approval for Listing**.
  - Programs approved by the institution that either have not yet begun enrolling students or have not met the requisite transcript evidence as stated above are to be submitted for **Plan Approval**.
2. Member Institutions:
  - Programs that have previous Final Approval for Listing from NASM are to be submitted for **Renewal of Final Approval**.

- Programs having Plan Approval that do not yet have requisite transcript evidence (two transcripts for graduate programs, and three transcripts for all other types of programs) are to be submitted for **Renewal of Plan Approval**.
- Programs in existence that have requisite transcript evidence (two transcripts for graduate programs, and three transcripts for all other types of programs) but that have not been reviewed by NASM are to be submitted for **Plan Approval and Final Approval for Listing**.
- Programs approved by the institution that have not been reviewed by NASM and are not yet enrolling students are to be submitted for **Plan Approval**.
- Programs approved by the institution that have begun enrolling students, but that have not been reviewed by NASM and do not yet have requisite transcript evidence (two transcripts for graduate programs, and three transcripts for all other types of programs) are to be submitted for **Plan Approval**.
- Programs having Plan Approval that now have requisite transcript evidence (two transcripts for graduate programs, and three transcripts for all other types of programs) are to be submitted for **Final Approval for Listing**.

## V. SPECIFICATIONS FOR THE VISITORS' REPORT

*(An electronic template is available on the NASM Web site. See "[Resources for Visiting Evaluators](#)" under the main heading "[Membership Procedures](#)."*)

### TITLE PAGE

The first page of the Visitors' Report must include the following information:

- Name of institution
- Location
- Name of music executive
- Date of visit
- Names of the visiting evaluators, noting team chair
- Degrees/Programs

Please check the Self-Study and the institution's published materials and recent curricular changes, and be precise about degree and program titles and options. If there are discrepancies among these listings, please provide an explanation. Degree and program listings should not be copied verbatim from the Self-Study title page or the institution's current listing in NASM publications if the visitors have found discrepancies in either listing. Any such discrepancies should be explained.

Programs or degrees (including all emphases) must be listed on the title page under the appropriate headings and subheadings as follows:

#### For Institutions Seeking Membership for the First Time

- Programs or degrees for which Final Approval for Listing is sought.
- Programs or degrees for which Plan Approval is sought.

#### For Institutions with Membership or Associate Membership

- Programs or degrees for which renewal of Final Approval is sought.
- Programs or degrees for which Plan Approval and Final Approval for Listing are sought at the same time.
- Programs or degrees for which Plan Approval is sought.
- Programs or degrees for which Final Approval for Listing is sought.
- Programs or degrees for which renewal of Plan Approval is sought.

### DISCLAIMER

Following the cover page, the text of the Visitors' Report must be preceded with this notice:

"The following report and any statements therein regarding compliance with NASM accreditation Standards represent only the considered opinion of the visitors at the time of the visit. Definitive evaluation of compliance and the accreditation decision will be made by the appropriate Commission following a complete review of the application, including the Self-Study, the Visitors' Report, and any Optional Response to the Visitors' Report submitted by the institution."

## NOTE

It is strongly recommended that each institution submit an Optional Response to the Visitors' Report, which may be used to (1) correct errors of fact and any conclusions based on those errors, and (2) document any changes made since the on-site review. In particular, information in the Optional Response should address noted issues of apparent noncompliance and any such areas where further information has been deemed advisable.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Visitors may acknowledge the hospitality and courtesy of the host institution. It is appropriate to indicate individuals by name and/or by title that were interviewed or otherwise provided assistance.

### PLEASE NOTE:

- The acknowledgments section is the only section in which names can be stated. Please refrain from using names and first person writing (I, we, our, us) in the body of the Visitors' Report.
- All sections of the Visitors' Report outline must be included. Please state "Not Applicable" or "N/A" for appropriate sections.
- Student learning is the central purpose of the institution and thus the central reference point for all sections of the Visitors' Report. For this reason, item N. has first priority in terms of analytical attention and description. The Visitors' Report must provide an evaluation of the quality of student work as requested in item N. that addresses every area of each major program offered.
- A summary of all issues and questions regarding compliance with Standards is provided in item P. A summary of issues associated with program strengths and recommendations for improvement are provided in item Q. These functional distinctions need to be maintained throughout the Visitors' Report as well as in the texts of items P. and Q.

## USE OF STANDARDS

Visitors must base their evaluations on NASM Standards, as published in the latest edition of the *Handbook* and any current addenda, associated with each section in the outline that follows. The annotations below provide a guide; however, they are not a substitute for the Standards themselves.

### A. Purposes

### B. Size and Scope

### C. Finances

How compatible and effective are relationships among purposes, size and scope, and financial resources? (Purposes statements normally indicate expectations and aspirations for student learning.)

1. The visiting evaluators should note any inappropriate purposes or any discrepancies between the stated purposes and the evaluators' impression of what the actual purposes are.

2. Indicate briefly the extent to which the institution has sufficient enrollment to cover the size and scope of music programs offered, including (a) an appropriate number of faculty and other resources; (b) sufficient advanced courses in music appropriate to major areas of study at degree or program levels being offered; and (c) requisite ensemble experience (1) at an advanced level and (2) consistent with major areas of study and degree or program levels.

*Consider in separately marked sections as applicable:*

- a. *non-degree-granting programs*
  - b. *associate programs*
  - c. *baccalaureate programs*
  - d. *graduate programs*
3. If the information in the Self-Study does not cover the enrollment breakdown for the academic year in which the visit is made, please review on-site, discuss in the Visitors' Report, and suggest to the institution that the information be submitted as part of the Optional Response.
  4. The visiting evaluators should note the extent to which the annual budget is adequate to support the music unit's purposes and the size and scope of its curricular and other programs. The visitors should also comment on (a) long-range financial planning; (b) prospects for sustaining the programs of the music unit during the projected term of accreditation; (c) the involvement of the music executive in the budget development process; and (d) if applicable, the fund-raising and development program for the music unit.

#### **D. Governance and Administration**

1. **Overall Effectiveness.** How effective is the institution's governance structure (a) in serving applicable purposes, and (b) in relation to the size and scope of the music unit? How effective is the administration? Discuss such issues as support of student learning, continuity, stability, and long-range planning.
2. **Policy-Making.** How are curricular and educational policies established? To what extent is the faculty involved? Are meetings of the full music faculty held? How often? By what means are salary, promotion, and tenure decisions made? Is the present policy-making structure understood by the faculty? Is it effective? Consider the general characteristics of the institution and the specific practices in the music unit.

*Consider in separately marked sections as applicable:*

- a. *non-degree-granting programs*
  - b. *associate programs*
  - c. *baccalaureate programs*
  - d. *graduate programs*
3. **Music Executive's Load and Responsibilities.** What is the music executive's total load during the current term? Does the executive have time, energy, and staff to execute effectively his or her administrative duties and teaching responsibilities, if any? Are responsibilities clearly delineated and understood, and is authority commensurate with responsibility?
  4. **Communication.** How effective is communication among various components of the music unit and, if applicable, between the music unit and the institution as a whole?

## **E. Faculty and Staff**

Summarize your impressions of (1) faculty education and competence; (2) the number of faculty and distribution of faculty expertise in relation to purposes; curricular offerings; and to size and scope; and (3) the effect of the full-time/part-time faculty ratio on the education of students and fulfillment of academic functions such as counseling and project guidance. What is your impression of faculty morale? Describe the extent to which the following policies are working effectively: (1) appointment, evaluation, and advancement; (2) teaching loads; (3) student/faculty ratio; and (4) faculty development. Comment on the effectiveness of contributions by graduate assistants and support/technical staff.

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

Are facilities and equipment adequate for the music programs offered in terms of floor space, lighting, temperature and humidity control, audio equipment, sound control, technological currency, etc.? Are the facilities and equipment sufficient to support all curricular and associated activities, including lectures, laboratories, studio instruction, individual practice, ensemble rehearsals, and performance? Are facilities and equipment safe and secure? Are there any conditions that appear to merit a review by qualified building or safety professionals, especially to verify that local codes are being met? Are there adequate plans and provisions for the maintenance, repair, and replacement of technology and equipment?

Are there documented policies and means for informing students and others regarding health and safety issues, hazards, and procedures inherent in practice, performance, teaching, and listening both in general and as applicable to their specialization, including but not limited to hearing, vocal, and musculoskeletal health and injury prevention?

With regard to injury prevention, do policies, protocols, and daily operational expectations (1) promote musicians' health, (2) maintain the fitness and safety of equipment and technology, and (3) address acoustic and other health related concerns present in practice, rehearsal, and performance facilities?

If the Self-Study does not contain documentation addressing NASM Standards regarding health and safety and injury prevention in the main body of the report or in the Management Documents Portfolio, please indicate in the Visitors' Report that such documentation needs to be submitted in an Optional Response prior to Commission review.

## **G. Library and Learning Resources**

Evaluate holdings and electronic access in relation to (1) what is normally needed for the composite curricula offered, (2) the purposes of the music unit and its component programs, and (3) the size and scope of the music unit. To what extent are the annual appropriations for the library adequate? How effective is the library operation? To what extent are the music collections centralized and readily available? To what extent is library equipment such as computers, projectors, microfilm or microcard readers, etc., accessible and adequate? To what extent is use of the library integrated into curricular requirements, course work, and final projects? To what extent do faculty members and students use the music library?

Comment on the effectiveness of the acquisition, preservation, and replacement program, including interactions on these questions between music faculty and library staff.

Consider in separately marked sections as applicable:

- a. non-degree-granting programs
- b. associate programs
- c. baccalaureate programs
- d. graduate programs

## H. Recruitment, Admission-Retention, Record Keeping, and Advisement

- 1. Recruitment, Admission, Retention.** Evaluate recruitment and admission policies and procedures for the institution and the music unit. Also, evaluate retention policies and procedures for the institution and the music unit. To what extent are these (a) appropriate to purposes of curricular programs, (b) clearly defined, (c) published for students and faculty, and (d) applied with rigor and fairness? Please note: Standards regarding admission are found under the Purposes and Operations section of the *NASM Handbook*, and also in sections for non-degree-granting, undergraduate, and graduate programs.

Consider in separately marked sections as applicable:

- a. non-degree-granting programs
- b. associate programs
- c. baccalaureate programs
- d. graduate programs

- 2. Record Keeping.** What is the quality of record keeping in the institution and the music unit? If necessary, clarify what student records are maintained in the music unit.

Consider in separately marked sections as applicable:

- a. non-degree-granting programs
- b. associate programs
- c. baccalaureate programs
- d. graduate programs

- 3. Advisement.** How effective is the advisement and counseling system?

Consider in separately marked sections as applicable:

- a. non-degree-granting programs
- b. associate programs
- c. baccalaureate programs
- d. graduate programs

## I. Published Materials and Web Sites

Summarize your observations about the clarity, accuracy, comprehensiveness, and effectiveness of the catalog and other published materials.

## J. Branch Campuses, External Programs, Use of the Institution's Name for Educational Activities Operated Apart from the Main Campus or the Primary Educational Program (if applicable)

To what extent does the institution meet all applicable Standards for institutions with programs in these categories as set forth in the *NASM Handbook* and any current addenda?

## **K. Community Involvement; Articulation With Other Schools**

The visiting evaluators should note the institution's efforts to be a cultural resource for its surrounding community and, if applicable, its efforts and procedures regarding articulation with other institutions.

## **L. Non-Degree-Granting Programs for the Community (if applicable)**

*See "Special Instructions for Visitors to Degree-Granting Institutions that Operate Community Education Programs in Music," page 3.*

To what extent does the institution meet all applicable Standards for institutions with programs in this category as set forth in the *NASM Handbook* and any current addenda?

## **M. Review of Specific Operational Standards for (1) All Institutions of Higher Education for which NASM is the Designated Institutional Accreditor and/or (2) Proprietary Institutions (if applicable)**

To what extent does the institution meet all applicable Standards for institutions with programs in these categories as set forth in the *NASM Handbook* and any current addenda?

## **N. Programs, Degrees, and Curricula**

### **1. Credit Hours**

#### a. Review:

- (1) The institution's definition of credit and methods of assigning credit, and its policies for granting course credit for the transfer students normally provided in Section MDP II.A. of the Self-Study;
- (2) The procedures the institution uses to make credit hour assignments for courses, programs, and other requirements consistent with its credit hour policies applicable to its offerings; and
- (3) The means employed by the institution to ensure accurate and reliable application of its credit hour policies and procedures.

If this information is not provided in the Self-Study, please review it on-site, discuss it in the Visitors' Report, and indicate the necessity of its inclusion in an Optional Response to the Visitors' Report to be submitted by the institution.

- b. Indicate the extent to which institutional definitions and music unit practices seem to comply with NASM Standards (Section III. Credit and Time Requirements) and seem to be within the range of commonly accepted practices in music units, including but not limited to the norms indicated by NASM credit hour Standards. The results of this evaluation must be stated in the Visitors' Report.
- c. Indicate the extent to which any new or experimental or atypical formats or methods for delivering instruction and awarding credit seems logical, fair, and consistent in applying fundamental principles for establishing verifiable relationships among instructional and study time, achievement, and lengths of courses and programs.

## 2. Specific Curricula

- a. If applicable, discuss the extent to which general content and competency Standards applicable to all degrees or programs of a certain type or level are met. For example, all professional undergraduate degrees in music, all master's degrees in music, etc.
- b. Discuss **each curriculum** individually with regard to items (1) through (6):
  - (1) **Status.** Note if the program has recently received Plan Approval or is being proposed for initial Plan Approval. See Section IV.C. in this document.
  - (2) **Curriculum.** Compare the curriculum with NASM criteria for similar degrees, curricula, and programs as published in the NASM *Handbook* and any current addenda. Focus on content and competency development. Discuss percentages for curricular distribution only in conjunction with the achievement of competencies, and never as the single indicator of quality or compliance with NASM Standards. For example, if percentages are low, what content or competency development is missing?
  - (3) **Title/Content Consistency.** Evaluate the extent to which degree/program titles are appropriate for and accurately reflect degree/program content.
  - (4) **Student Work.** Comment on the quality of student work in the curriculum. (See Appendix I.) Reflect on the quality of performance, written work, final projects, etc. To what extent are majors gaining the knowledge, skills, and craft expected, and the abilities to apply them to produce the quality of work in the specialization appropriate for the purpose and level of the specific credential to be awarded? Focus on knowledge, skill, and craft rather than the specific approach or interpretation in the specific work(s) reviewed.
  - (5) **Development of Competencies.** Provide an assessment of the institution's success in evaluating and ensuring the development of requisite competencies and fulfillment of institutional requirements.
  - (6) **Overall Effectiveness.** Provide the visiting evaluators' judgment of the effectiveness of each curriculum in relation to its stated goals and objectives. Focus on solid evidence concerning the achievement of results set forth in (a) applicable NASM Standards, and (b) levels established by the institution.

**(Please Note:** If a curriculum is associated with **distance or correspondence learning**, or involves **disciplines in combination**, or is based in **electronic media**, visitors must evaluate the extent to which it meets Standards set forth in the applicable operational and curricular sections of the NASM *Handbook*, including any current addenda. The results of this evaluation must be stated in the Visitors' Report. For programs associated with distance or correspondence learning, this statement must verify that the institution has provided documentation of the processes it uses to (a) establish that the student who registers in a distance or correspondence education course or program is the same student who participates in and completes the course or program and receives academic credit, and (b) protect student privacy and notify students of any additional charges associated with the verification of student identity at the time of registration or enrollment. This documentation is normally provided in Section MDP II.C. of the Self-Study and/or Section B.3.c. of the Instructional Programs Portfolio for each distance or correspondence learning program.)

Any significant departures from Standards or common practice associated with meeting Standards must be noted and evaluated. Visitors should be aware that NASM grants Membership to institutions only when every curricular program meets the Standards of the Association.

*In responding to items N.1.a. and b., consider in separately marked sections as applicable:*

- a. non-degree-granting programs*
- b. associate programs*
- c. baccalaureate programs*
- d. graduate programs*

### **3. Study of the Transcripts of Recent Graduates and Comparison with Catalog**

**Statements.** For institutional preparation and on-site procedures for visitors, please review “Verify Transcripts” in Section II.E.1.h. above.

The visitors verify and report using the applicable categories in italics noted below regarding whether the composite set of transcripts reviewed on-site (following guidelines in Section II.E.1.h. above) demonstrates consistency with program requirements as published in institutional materials.

If inconsistencies are found in specific instances or in such numbers that cannot be explained on-site, these are noted in the Visitors’ Report, and the institution is asked to provide further information and transcript or other documentation in an Optional Response to the Visitors’ Report.

In reviewing transcripts, evaluators verify the correlation of credit hours granted to the institution’s stated curricular requirements. The same policies apply to clock hours.

If institutions holding accredited institutional Membership are applying for Final Approval for Listing (FAL) for a program with Plan Approval, or for Plan Approval and Final Approval for Listing (PA/FAL) for a program that NASM has not reviewed previously, requisite numbers of transcripts (two for each graduate programs, three each for all other types of programs) must be provided in the Self-Study document. In such cases, visitors comment on these transcripts by specific program in terms of the plan previously approved by NASM and institutional requirements. If transcripts for applications in FAL and PA/FAL categories only are not provided in the Self-Study document, the visitors so note in their report, and ask that the institution provide the requisite number of transcripts and any other appropriate documentation in an Optional Response to the Visitors’ Report. Transcripts for programs in other categories need not be provided in the Self Study, but shall be reviewed by the evaluators on-site and discussed in this section of the Visitors’ Report.

*Consider in separately marked sections as applicable:*

- a. non-degree-granting programs*
- b. associate programs*
- c. baccalaureate programs*
- d. graduate programs*

- 4. Performance.** Comment on the total performance program (student, faculty, guests) that evolves from or supports the work of the music unit. For example, to what extent does the performance program support the achievement of NASM Standards and music unit objectives for (a) all students; (b) students enrolled in specific areas of specialization?
- 5. Music Studies for the General Public.** Comment on (a) the nature of music course offerings to non-major students; (b) the institution’s approach to faculty assignments for

these courses; (c) the number of non-major students enrolled in music course offerings; and (d) the appropriateness of the program to the music unit's purposes and to its size and scope.

#### **O. Music Unit Evaluation, Planning, and Projections**

1. Comment on evaluation, planning, and projections development regarding their (a) interrelationships with the achievement of purposes; (b) appropriateness to the size and scope of the music unit; (c) development and use of student achievement indicators; and (d) overall effectiveness and efficiency.
2. Comment on the completeness and effectiveness of the Self-Study.

#### **P. Standards Summary**

*(Please note: All issues concerning apparent noncompliance with accreditation Standards should be included or referenced in this section.)*

Provide a summary of each area of apparent noncompliance with specific NASM Standards previously discussed in Sections A. through O. Use language such as "it is not clear how" or "does not appear to comply."

The summary should list all Standards issues by bullet or number and referenced by where they may be found in the text of the Visitors' Report, and in the NASM *Handbook* and/or any current addenda.

Summary statements must be provided in Section P.; detailed explanation and discussion are to be provided in Sections A through O.

If there appear to be no operational or curricular Standards issues for the institution as a whole, the Visitors' Report should so state, using language such as "there do not appear to be any operational or curricular issues..."

#### **Q. Overview, Summary Assessment, and Recommendations for the Program**

*(Please note: Issues concerning apparent noncompliance with accreditation Standards should not be included in this section.)*

After careful consideration of the institution's purposes and of the local context, visitors produce an overall analysis that provides:

1. A list outlining strengths.
2. A list of recommendations for short-term improvement beyond threshold compliance with accreditation Standards.
3. An indication of the primary futures issues facing the music unit, perhaps including, but always going beyond, finances.
4. Constructive suggestions for long-term development during the projected accreditation period, based on the observations contained in the Visitors' Report.

**The summaries in Sections P. and Q. are usually the most important written contribution the evaluators can make to the visited institution.**

## APPENDIX I

### National Association of Schools of Music Advisory for NASM Visitors

#### Evaluating Student Work in NASM Reviews

All NASM on-site reviews must include opportunities for visitors to review student work. Student work reveals the results of programs offered by the institution. The primary purpose of reviewing student work is to obtain an understanding of the levels of performance and creation, scholarship, and other specialization proficiencies being achieved by students and whether that level is appropriate to the degree title and major, consistent with NASM Standards, and a fulfillment of the institution's published goals and objectives. Student work, however, can generate other kinds of impressions and evaluations, and it is important to consider how these relate to the NASM review.

Every evaluator is a highly trained music professional. Each carries a set of personal aesthetic and other preferences. It is possible for two evaluators to review work produced by a fully-credentialed professional and agree on the competency of the performer, composer, or scholar, but disagree, even significantly, on whether the work or performance in a particular instance was good or not. One might hear: "there is no question but that X is a fine composer, but in this case, his conception was faulty. I do not like the way this effort turned out." Or, "Z is a great performer, but I was really disappointed in the interpretation of a particular piece in this performance." Or, "M is a renowned scholar, but I disagree with the thesis of her article on A." This approach applied to the review of student work in any major during an NASM visit could be problematic.

Because individual preferences can be so strong, for NASM purposes, it is important that visitors keep distinct functions and levels in mind when writing about student work and performances. While it is not always easy to separate craft from aesthetic, content, or philosophical preferences, it is essential that NASM visitors make clear distinctions, qualifications, and connections when commenting on student work.

Failure to be clear can inadvertently mislead the institution and the Commission. Comments such as "The student work was not satisfactory" leave unanswered questions about whether the level of student work was inadequate in some or all areas, or whether some or all of the students showed excellent education and training, but presented work that the visitors did not like on aesthetic or other grounds or in particulars for which the students had no responsibility. Such an approach does not distinguish which aspects of knowledge and skill development are judged to be weak or in need of further attention or explanation in the Optional Response to the Visitors' Report.

In preparing to go on-site, visitors are always asked to work closely with the institution to ensure that: (a) student performances will be presented in various formats appropriate to the offerings of the music unit, (b) the quality of work in each area or major is sufficient to gain a comprehensive sense of student achievement, and (c) work is labeled or identified by level in order to evaluate both the progression through the curriculum and final projects.

In conducting reviews and writing reports, visitors should consider issues such as the following:

1. What does student work reveal about the competence students are developing in the craft of their professional discipline(s)?
2. Are students gaining or have they gained technical and conceptual proficiencies consistent with (a) their program levels and majors, (b) NASM Standards, and (c) the published purposes of the institution with regard to the specific program in which they are enrolled?
3. To what extent does student work appear to (a) be consistent with, (b) provide evidence of, (c) show relevance to, and (d) be supportive of the work seen in the classes and experiences that constitute the required curriculum?
4. If aspects of student work are judged to be problematic, do the works presented reveal generic pedagogical or other problems that could impact the specific or overall education of students?

Such questions are important because NASM visitors are the eyes and ears of the Commission. Only they view student performances and other work that show the levels of student achievement. Only they can correlate the quality of student work and student learning. Their Report is critical in exploring, explaining, and clarifying the extent of the institution's educational success in preparing students to create and perform works of music and/or to function as teachers, scholars, etc., at the level implicit in the degree(s) or program(s) being offered. This major responsibility creates a context for considering the student work the visitors see during the course of a visit.

Questions about reviewing student work before, during, or after visits should be forwarded to the Associate Director or the Executive Director in the National Office.