

# Addendum to the NASM Handbook 2024-25

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS OF MUSIC

November 2025

---

As noted below, the NASM Commission on Accreditation, Commission on Community College Accreditation, and membership approved these revisions via electronic votes that began in October 2025.

---

## Bylaws

— Action by the NASM Membership —

NASM Handbook 2024-25—Pages 6–8

Bylaws

Article I., Membership

Section 4. Special Statuses

*Amend Article I., Section 4. as follows:*

**Section 4. Special Statuses**

**A. Administrative Warning Status.** After due notice from NASM requesting clarification or remediation, member institutions failing to (1) pay dues or meet other financial obligations, (2) provide any response to requests of the Committee on Ethics, or (3) maintain administrative requirements of the NASM Code of Ethics or the NASM Rules of Practice and Procedure may be placed on administrative warning by the appropriate accrediting Commission. Administrative warning status may extend from one to twelve months, and is removed as soon as the administrative issue is resolved. Failure to resolve the issue(s) may result in probation, or revocation of NASM accreditation, and thus of institutional Membership.

Administrative warning status is not a negative or adverse action and is not published. Institutions with administrative warning status retain accredited institutional Membership and thus do not lose their voting or other rights and responsibilities.

**B. Accreditation Warning Status.** After due notice from NASM requesting clarification or remediation, any accredited member institution failing to (1) apply for reaccreditation, (2) file annual reports, or (3) provide any response to requests of the accrediting Commissions may be placed on accreditation warning status by the appropriate accrediting Commission. Accreditation warning status may extend from one to twelve months, and is removed as soon as the accreditation-related issue(s) is/are resolved. Failure to resolve the issue may result in probation, or revocation of accreditation, and thus of institutional Membership.

Accreditation warning status is not a negative or adverse action and is not published. Institutions with accreditation warning status retain accredited institutional Membership and thus do not lose their voting or other rights and responsibilities.

**C. Probationary Status.** After due notice from NASM, any accredited member (1) failing to respond satisfactorily to issues that resulted in being placed on administrative warning status or accreditation warning status, (2) failing to maintain the required standards, (3) failing to respond satisfactorily to the requests of the appropriate accrediting Commission, or (4) found to be in violation of one or more aspects of the Code of Ethics or Rules of Practice and Procedure may be placed on probation by the appropriate accrediting Commission with notice of right to request reconsideration.

With regard to extreme matters of institutional viability and integrity, when a Commission has cause to believe that the institution's non-compliance with standards and/or provisions of the Code of Ethics threatens its fundamental viability or integrity, the institution will be placed on probation by the appropriate accrediting Commission with notice of right to request reconsideration (see Rules of Practice and Procedure, Part II, Article IV., Section 5.A.).

The probationary period shall extend not fewer than three months and no more than two years, the specific period to be determined by the appropriate Commission at each time such action is taken. A comprehensive evaluation including a Self-Study Report and visitation may be required for the removal of probation.

Probation is not an adverse action. However, notice of probation is forwarded to the U.S. Secretary of Education, the appropriate state licensing or authorizing agency, and the appropriate accrediting agencies at the same time the institution is notified, and the public within one business day of notification to the institution. All such notices are provided not later than thirty days after the date of Commission action (see Rules of Practice and Procedure, Part II, Article XI., Section 2.).

Institutions on probation must disclose the sanction of probation to current and prospective students within seven business days of receipt of notice (see Rules of Practice and Procedure, Part II, Article XI., Section 2.B. Note).

Institutions on probation do not lose their accredited status, or their voting or other membership rights and responsibilities.

**D. Automatic Suspension of Accreditation Status.** This status can be applied only to free-standing music institutions of higher education.

Automatic suspension of accreditation will occur under the following circumstances:

1. The filing of Chapter 11 or Chapter 7 bankruptcy proceedings by the institution.
2. A change in ownership or major change in control with less than five days' advance notice in writing to NASM. This includes, but is not limited to:
  - a. The sale of the institution or the majority of its assets.
  - b. The transfer of the liabilities of an institution to its parent corporation.
  - c. The transfer of the controlling interest of stock in the institution or its parent corporation.
  - d. The merger of two or more institutions.
  - e. The division of one or more institution(s) into two or more institutions.
  - f. Change in status as a for-profit, non-profit, or public institution.
  - g. Change in over seventy-five percent of board membership during a ninety-day period.
  - h. The complete replacement of one set of board members of the accredited institution by another within a six-month period.
3. Failure to report to NASM in writing any transfer of assets or liabilities between the institution and the parent corporation or other entity that would substantially alter the ability of the institution to (a) remain in compliance with current NASM standards, or (b) provide information necessary to document current or on-going compliance with NASM standards.
4. The establishment without prior notice of a branch campus or similar entity offering degrees and programs eligible for accreditation by NASM.

5. The designation of NASM as the institution's gatekeeper for the purpose of eligibility and participation in federal Title IV programs without prior confirmation by the appropriate NASM accrediting Commission of the institution's compliance with all applicable standards in Standards for Accreditation XXI.
6. Significant expansion of affiliative uses of the institution's name without prior notice to NASM.

Following automatic suspension, accreditation may be reinstated only upon application to, and approval by the appropriate NASM accrediting Commission. Because this suspension results without action or prior approval on the part of a Commission, this change in status does not constitute formal withdrawal of accreditation, and thus, is not an action that is subject to review of adverse decision or to appeal.

It is expected that institutions with automatic suspension status will regain their accredited status at the earliest feasible time, or resign from the Association. Failure to move expeditiously, or to establish an appropriate timeline for renewing accredited status, will result in revocation of Membership. Revocation of Membership is not automatic and must be approved by the appropriate NASM accrediting Commission. Failure to move from suspended accreditation status to regular accreditation status within a period not to exceed the earlier of six months or the expiration of the institution's current accreditation period will cause the appropriate NASM accrediting Commission to consider revocation of Membership.

When evidence concerning remediation of the reasons for automatic suspension is submitted and judged adequate by the appropriate NASM accrediting Commission, reinstatement of accreditation is made, along with time and other stipulations for future reviews. If Commission action is not taken by the expiration of the previous grant of accreditation, the institution must then follow procedures for initiating accreditation.

Automatic suspension is an adverse action. Notice of automatic suspension is forwarded to the U.S. Secretary of Education, the appropriate state licensing or authorizing agency, and the appropriate accrediting agencies at the same time the institution is notified, and the public within one business day of notification to the institution. All such notices are provided no later than thirty days after the date of Commission action (see Rules of Practice and Procedure, Part II, Article XI., Section 2.).

Institutions with automatic suspension status are suspended as members of the Association and thus lose their voting rights during the suspension period.

## **NASM Handbook 2024-25—Page 8**

### **Bylaws**

#### **Article I., Membership**

#### **Section 6. Revocation of Membership**

##### ***Amend Article I., Section 6. as follows:***

**Section 6. Revocation of Membership.** Member institutions (1) failing to maintain ~~the~~ required standards, or (2) failing to respond appropriately to administrative warning status, accreditation warning status, probationary status, or suspension of accreditation status, may have their Membership revoked by vote of the appropriate accrediting Commission, with notice of right to request reconsideration and right to appeal.

With regard to extreme matters of institutional viability and integrity, if information is not forthcoming within the time stipulated, or a Commission finds that, with respect to the institution or the music unit, institutional viability has been lost, is in jeopardy, or that institutional integrity has been seriously undermined, the appropriate accrediting Commission will (1) issue an order requesting that the institution show cause why its membership status should not be revoked, and providing an appropriate timeline for reply and suggested corrective actions; or (2) immediately sever the relationship between the institution and NASM by revoking accreditation (see Rules of Practice and Procedure, Part II, Article IV., Section 5.B.2.a.–b.). The institution may appeal the decision of a Commission in accordance with the NASM appeals procedure.

An institution whose membership has been revoked ~~Such institutions~~ may apply for accreditation ~~reinstatement~~ through the usual Membership procedures of the Association. An ~~application for accreditation request for~~ ~~readmission to Membership~~ will not be considered until two years have elapsed and until any outstanding financial obligations of the applicant institution to the Association have been satisfied.

Final action to revoke Membership is an adverse action. Notice of revocation of Membership is forwarded to the U.S. Secretary of Education, the appropriate state licensing or authorizing agency, and the appropriate accrediting agencies at the same time the institution is notified, and the public within one business day of notification to the institution. All such notices are provided no later than thirty days after the date of Commission action (see Rules of Practice and Procedure, Part II, Article XI., Section 2.).

## Rules of Practice and Procedure, Part II

### — Action by the NASM Commission on Accreditation and Commission on Community College Accreditation —

#### NASM Handbook 2024-25—Page 29

##### Rules of Practice and Procedure, Part II Article I., Institutional Membership Section 7. Withdrawal

*Amend Article I., Section 7. as follows:*

**Section 7. Withdrawal.** Any institution holding any accredited institutional Membership has the right to **voluntarily** withdraw from such membership at any time.

#### NASM Handbook 2024-25—Page 30

##### Rules of Practice and Procedure, Part II Article II., Application for Membership and renewal of Membership Section 3. Application Procedures

*Amend Article II., Section 3. as follows:*

**Section 3. Application Procedures.** Institutions making application for Membership or renewal of Membership shall follow the procedures outlined by the Association, including preparing a Self-Study Report and arranging for an on-site evaluation.

At least two visiting evaluators are required for each on-site visitation. In all cases, the specific size and composition of the total team is determined according to NASM visitation procedures.

Applicant degree-granting institutions for which regional accreditation is not available will be evaluated by a visiting team normally composed of at least four persons: two persons to evaluate the music component of the program, one of whom shall be designated as the team chair; one person to evaluate the program in general education; and one person to evaluate the financial stability and business policies of the institution.

Applicant degree-granting institutions seeking accreditation of affiliated community education divisions or other non-degree-granting units will be evaluated by a team comprising one or more persons, in addition to the team assigned to the degree-granting component.

An institution may **voluntarily** withdraw its request for accreditation at any time prior to the accreditation decision made by the appropriate Commission.

An institution has the right to seek legal counsel during all phases of the accreditation process.

Associate Membership or Membership shall become effective after positive action by the appropriate Commission. Continuation of accredited status is contingent upon meeting NASM requirements, including payment of annual dues.

**NASM Handbook 2024-25—Page 32**

**Rules of Practice and Procedure, Part II  
Article IV., Commission Policies  
Section 2. Information Reviews and Requests**

***Amend Article IV., Section 2. as follows:***

**Section 2. Information Reviews and Requests.** Information provided by institutions in annual statistical reports (HEADS), Accreditation Audits, Affirmation Statements, and in Supplemental Annual Reports, applications for Commission review in various categories, and in other categories is subject to regular review by the National Office staff, and as applicable under NASM procedures and rules, the Commission(s) on Accreditation.

Upon receipt of information from and pertaining to institutions, whether this information is intended to fulfill accreditation responsibilities (i.e., payment of dues, submission of Annual Reports, etc.) or to address requests articulated in Commission Action Reports, as may be necessary, the staff and/or the Commission(s) may will seek additional information and documentation from institutions, including, but not limited to, that which (a) clarifies conditions at or the status of an institution with regard to one or more issues, (b) documents efforts request documentation regarding improvement and/or remediation, (c) produces the basis for a determination by a the Commission(s) regarding the institution's current or continuing compliance with applicable NASM standards or rules, and/or (d) fulfills any other purpose associated with maintaining the requirements for accredited institutional Membership. Issues of a procedural nature are addressed by staff.

As part of its responsibilities, a Commission also may seek additional information and documentation that (a) clarifies conditions at or the status of an institution with regard to one or more issues, (b) documents efforts regarding improvement and/or remediation, (c) produces the basis for a determination by a Commission regarding the institution's current or continuing compliance with applicable NASM standards or rules, and/or (d) fulfills any other purpose associated with maintaining the requirements for accredited institutional Membership. With regard to all such reviews and requests, accreditation status is determined and maintained only by action of the Commission(s) on Accreditation. However, under a restricted number of specified conditions, accreditation status may be suspended automatically for free-standing music institutions of higher education (see Bylaws, Article I., Section 4.D.).

**NASM Handbook 2024-25—Pages 32–33**

**Rules of Practice and Procedure, Part II  
Article IV., Commission Policies  
Section 3. Policy Concerning Commission Action and Timelines**

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

**~~Section 3. Policy Concerning Commission Action and Timelines~~**

~~**A.—Action.** After the second consecutive request from a Commission for information sufficient to enable an accreditation decision, should an application of a member institution fail to indicate compliance with a specific standard, the Commission shall adopt one of the following motions upon third consideration of the application:~~

- ~~1.—To require a response from the institution for the next Commission meeting demonstrating compliance with any standard cited;~~

2. ~~To require a response from the institution for the next Commission meeting showing why the institution:
  - a. ~~should not be placed on probation, or~~
  - b. ~~should not have its membership revoked.~~~~
3. ~~To place the institution on probation; or~~
4. ~~To revoke membership.~~

**NOTE:** ~~An institution placed on probation is reminded of the timelines pertaining to this sanction (see Bylaws, Article I., Section 4.C.) and to its responsibility to disclose the sanction to current and prospective students (see Rules of Practice and Procedure, Part II, Article XI., Section 2.B.).~~

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

## **B. ~~Timelines~~**

1. ~~**Compliance.** Institutions are asked to demonstrate compliance at the earliest possible time and must demonstrate compliance as noted below:
  - a. ~~When NASM serves as a programmatic accrediting body, the total time period allotted for demonstrating compliance with a standard shall not exceed the lesser of four years or 150 percent of the length of the program.~~
  - b. ~~When NASM serves as an institutional accrediting body, the total time period allotted for demonstrating compliance with the standard shall not exceed the lesser of four years or 150 percent of the length of the longest program at the institution.~~
  - c. ~~A Commission may extend the timeline for compliance for good cause.~~
  - d. ~~If an institution or program is unable to come into compliance within the timelines outlined above, a Commission may take action to revoke the institution's membership.~~~~
2. ~~**Extenuating Circumstances.** When an institution or program is working to address a circumstance beyond its control such as that precipitated by a national disaster or other catastrophic event which impacts an institution's or program's operations or significant and documented local or national economic changes, such as an economic recession, the institution must demonstrate compliance within three years unless a Commission extends this period of time for good cause. In addition, the institution must demonstrate that this period of non-compliance will not (a) contribute to the cost of the curricular program in question without prior student consent, (b) create any undue hardship on, or harm to, students, or (c) compromise the program's academic quality.~~

- C. ~~**Good Cause.** A Commission may grant an extension of time exceeding the applicable timelines noted above for good cause and as may be warranted. Good cause is defined as a concerted and comprehensive effort and activity on the part of the institution to maintain compliance with all relevant standards. Extensions for good cause are typically one year in length but may be extended for two years, should positive circumstances or developments at the institution warrant an additional year.~~

### Section 3. Protocols and Procedures Pertaining to Commission Actions

**A. Actions.** Upon receipt of information from an institution, a Commission will review and consider the information in thorough detail, taking action as appropriate. Basic decision frameworks available to a Commission include the following:

**1. Approval.**

Action: *The application is approved.* This action is taken when an institution is found to be in compliance with all applicable standards. Nothing further is requested from or required of the institution.

**NOTE:** If this action is indicative of the institution's successful completion of a comprehensive review, the institution will receive a Completion of Process notification confirming (a) that the current comprehensive review process has been successfully completed, and (b) the academic year of the institution's next comprehensive review.

**2. Approval with Follow Up.**

Action: *The application is approved with a request for a Progress Report.* This action is taken when an institution is found to be in compliance with all applicable standards and efforts to advance institutional initiatives remain ongoing. In such cases a Commission may request an update related to the institution's progress to advance/complete initiatives underway.

**NOTE:** A Commission may request multiple Progress Reports.

**NOTE:** Possible subsequent actions include (a) Approval, or (b) Approval with a Request for a Progress Report.

**3. Further Information Required.**

Action: *The application is tabled with a request for a report which addresses issues requiring further information and/or further and more comprehensive discussion and documentation.* This action is taken when additional information necessary for a Commission to make an informed decision is required.

**NOTE:** The information requested must be submitted in time for review at the next meeting of the appropriate accrediting Commission. In cases where further information is required by a Commission, an institution's application may be tabled only once.

**NOTE:** Possible subsequent actions include (a) Approval, (b) Approval with a Request for a Progress Report, or (c) Findings of Substantial Compliance. If compliance is not demonstrated, possible subsequent actions include (a) Non-Compliance, (b) Probation, (c) Show Cause as it pertains to Revocation, or (d) Revocation.

**4. Substantial Compliance.**

Action: *The institution is found to be in substantial compliance. A Monitoring Report discussing and documenting the institution's attention to full compliance with standards cited is requested.* This action is taken when an institution demonstrates that it is in substantial compliance with applicable standards such that planned, defined, and directed initiatives intended to address all standards issues cited by a Commission are underway.

**NOTE:** A Commission may request multiple Monitoring Reports.

**NOTE:** As noted in federal regulation, the timeline for demonstrating compliance shall not exceed the lesser of four years or 150 percent of the (a) length of the program in the case of a programmatic accrediting agency; or (b) length of the longest program at the institution in the case of an institutional accrediting agency (see Rules of Practice and Procedure, Part II, Article IV., Section 3.C.).

**NOTE:** Possible subsequent actions include (a) Approval, (b) Approval with a Request for a Progress Report, or (c) Findings of Substantial Compliance. If compliance is not demonstrated, possible subsequent actions include (a) Non-Compliance, (b) Probation, (c) Show Cause as it pertains to Revocation, or (d) Revocation.

## 5. Non-Compliance.

*Action: The institution is found to be in non-compliance. A Compliance Report discussing and documenting the institution's attention to and compliance with standards cited is requested.* This action is taken when an institution is unable to demonstrate that it is in compliance with applicable standards in that planned, defined, and directed initiatives intended to address cited standards have yet to be provided by the institution.

**NOTE:** A Commission may request several Compliance Reports.

**NOTE:** As noted in federal regulation, the timeline for demonstrating compliance shall not exceed the lesser of four years or 150 percent of the (a) length of the program in the case of a programmatic accrediting agency; or (b) length of the longest program at the institution in the case of an institutional accrediting agency (see Rules of Practice and Procedure, Part II, Article IV., Section 3.C.).

**NOTE:** Possible subsequent actions include (a) Approval, (b) Approval with a Request for a Progress Report, or (c) Findings of Substantial Compliance. If compliance is not demonstrated, possible subsequent actions include (a) Non-Compliance, (b) Probation, (c) Show Cause as it pertains to Revocation, or (d) Revocation.

## 6. Administrative Warning Status.

*Action: The institution is placed on Administrative Warning.* This action is taken after due notice from NASM requesting clarification or remediation is provided to any accredited member failing to (1) pay dues or meet other financial obligations, (2) provide any response to requests of the Committee on Ethics, or (3) maintain administrative requirements of the NASM Code of Ethics or the NASM Rules of Practice and Procedure.

**NOTE:** Administrative warning status may extend from one to twelve months and is removed as soon as the administrative issue is resolved.

**NOTE:** Failure to resolve the issue may result in probation, or revocation of NASM accreditation and thus institutional Membership.

**NOTE:** Administrative warning status is not a negative or adverse action and is not published. Institutions placed on administrative warning retain accredited institutional Membership and thus do not lose their voting or other rights and responsibilities.

## 7. Accreditation Warning Status.

Action: *The institution is placed on Accreditation Warning.* This action is taken after due notice from NASM requesting clarification or remediation is provided to any accredited member institution failing to (1) apply for reaccreditation, (2) file annual reports, or (3) provide any response to requests of the appropriate accrediting Commission.

**NOTE:** Accreditation warning status may extend from one to twelve months and is removed as soon as the accreditation-related issue is resolved.

**NOTE:** Failure to resolve the issue may result in probation, or revocation of NASM accreditation and thus institutional Membership.

**NOTE:** Accreditation warning status is not a negative or adverse action and is not published. Institutions placed on accreditation warning retain accredited institutional Membership and thus do not lose their voting or other rights and responsibilities.

## 8. Probation.

Action: *The institution is placed on probation.* This action is taken (a) after due notice from NASM is provided to any accredited member (1) failing to respond satisfactorily to issues that resulted in being placed on administrative warning status or accreditation warning status, (2) failing to maintain required standards, (3) failing to respond satisfactorily to the requests of the appropriate accrediting Commission, (4) found to be in violation of one or more aspects of the Code of Ethics or Rules of Practice and Procedure; or (b) with regard to extreme matters of institutional viability and integrity, when a Commission has cause to believe that the institution's non-compliance with standards and/or Code of Ethics threatens its fundamental viability or integrity (see Rules of Practice and Procedure, Part II, Article IV., Section 5.A.).

**NOTE:** An institution placed on probation is reminded of the timelines pertaining to this sanction (see Bylaws, Article I., Section 4.C.).

**NOTE:** As noted in federal regulation, the timeline for demonstrating compliance shall not exceed the lesser of four years or 150 percent of the (a) length of the program in the case of a programmatic accrediting agency; or (b) length of the longest program at the institution in the case of an institutional accrediting agency (see Rules of Practice and Procedure, Part II, Article IV., Section 3.C.).

**NOTE:** NASM provides written notice of probation to the appropriate accrediting agencies, the appropriate state licensing or authorizing agency, and the U.S. Secretary of Education at the same time it notifies the institution or program of the decision, but no later than thirty days after it makes a final decision (see Rules of Practice and Procedure, Part II, Article XI., Section 2.B.).

**NOTE:** NASM provides written notice to the public of a decision to place an institution on probation within one business day of its notice to the institution or program (see Rules of Practice and Procedure, Part II, Article XI., Section 2.B.1.–2.).

**NOTE:** It is the institution's responsibility to disclose the sanction of probation to current and prospective students within seven business days of receipt (see Rules of Practice and Procedure, Part II, Article XI., Section 2.B.).

**NOTE:** Possible subsequent actions include (a) Approval, (b) Approval with a Request for a Progress Report, or (c) Findings of Substantial Compliance. If compliance is not demonstrated, possible subsequent actions include (a) Non-Compliance, (b) Probation, (c) Show Cause as it pertains to Revocation, or (d) Revocation.

## 9. Revocation of Membership.

*Action:* To revoke the institution's accredited institutional membership. This action is taken (a) after show cause notice from NASM is provided to any accredited member (1) failing to maintain required standards, or (2) failing to respond satisfactorily to issues that resulted in being placed on administrative warning status, accreditation warning status, probationary status, or suspension of accreditation status; or (b) with regard to extreme matters of institutional viability and integrity, (1) if information is not forthcoming within the time stipulated, or (2) a Commission finds that the institution has been unable to demonstrate compliance with applicable standards and therefore, with respect to the institution or the music unit, institutional viability has been lost, is in jeopardy, or that institutional integrity has been seriously undermined, the appropriate accrediting Commission will (a) issue an order requesting that the institution show cause why its membership status should not be revoked, and provide an appropriate timeline for reply and suggested corrective actions; or (b) immediately sever the relationship between the institution and NASM by revoking accreditation (see Rules of Practice and Procedure, Part II, Article IV., Section 5.B.2.a.–b.).

**NOTE:** An institution whose accredited institutional membership is revoked should review provisions pertaining to revocation (see Bylaws, Article I., Section 6.).

**NOTE:** NASM provides written notice of revocation to the appropriate accrediting agencies, the appropriate state licensing or authorizing agency, and the U.S. Secretary of Education at the same time it notifies the institution or program of the decision, but no later than thirty days after it makes a final decision (see Rules of Practice and Procedure, Part II, Article XI., Section 2.C.).

**NOTE:** NASM provides written notice to the public of a decision to revoke accreditation within one business day of its notice to the institution or program (see Rules of Practice and Procedure, Part II, Article XI., Section 2.B.1.–2.).

**NOTE:** NASM makes available to the public, the appropriate state licensing or authorizing agency, and the U.S. Secretary of Education, no later than sixty days after the decision, a brief statement summarizing the reasons for NASM's decision and the official comments that the affected institution or program may wish to make with regard to that decision, or evidence that the affected institution has been offered the opportunity to provide official comment, and did not choose to do so in the time stipulated.

**NOTE:** It is the institution's responsibility to disclose the sanction of revocation to current and prospective students within seven business days of receipt (see Rules of Practice and Procedure, Part II, Article XI., Section 2.C.).

- B. Communication of Commission Actions.** All actions described in A.1.–9. above are the purview of and therefore taken by the appropriate accrediting Commission. Actions of a Commission are communicated through the provision of Commission Action Reports, each of which is delivered to each applicant institution in written form within thirty (30) days of a Commission action. All actions, requests, and notes; and recommendations, commendations, and due dates (as may be applicable) are outlined in detail in each Commission Action Report.

**C. Timelines Pertaining to Institutional Replies to Commission Requests.** With regard to issues pertaining to compliance, should the institution wish to provide its reply sooner than the deadline specified in the Commission Action Report, it may do so. With regard to:

1. The action described above in A.2., the timeline specified is directly related to the nature of the request and may be extended until just prior to the institution's next comprehensive review. However, due dates typically range from six (6) months to two (2) years after the initial Commission action was taken.
2. The action described above in A.3., the institution's reply is due in time for consideration at the next meeting of the appropriate accrediting Commission.
3. The action described above in A.4., the institution's reply is due no later than one year from the date the action requesting the information was taken.
4. The action described above in A.5., the institution's reply is due no later than the next meeting of the appropriate accrediting Commission. Should a Commission find the need to review the institution's reply before the next regularly scheduled Commission meeting, the Commission may shorten the deadline and convene in special session to review the materials requested.
5. The action described above in A.6. and A.7, the institution is asked to address and remedy the issue promptly.
6. The action described above in A.8., the institution's reply is due no later than the next meeting of the appropriate accrediting Commission. Should a Commission find the need to review the institution's reply before the next regularly scheduled Commission meeting, the Commission may shorten the deadline and convene in special session to review the materials requested.
7. The action described above in A.9., the institution's reply to a request for show cause is due no later than the next meeting of the appropriate accrediting Commission. Should a Commission find the need to review the institution's reply before the next regularly scheduled Commission meeting, the Commission may shorten the deadline and convene in special session to review the materials requested.

**NOTE: Timeline for Compliance.** As noted in federal regulation, the timeline for compliance may not exceed the lesser of four years or 150 percent of the (a) length of the program in the case of a programmatic accrediting agency; or (b) length of the longest program at the institution in the case of an institutional accrediting agency. NASM serves as a programmatic accrediting agency for multi-purpose institutions and an institutional accrediting agency for free-standing institutions. The timeline for compliance begins at the time issues of compliance have been cited by a Commission as offered in a Commission Action Report.

**NOTE: Timeline Modifications for Good Cause.** A Commission may grant an extension of time exceeding the applicable timelines noted above for good cause. Good cause is defined as a concerted and comprehensive effort and associated activity on the part of an institution to maintain compliance with all relevant standards. Modifications for good cause are typically provided until the next meeting of the appropriate accrediting Commission, should positive circumstances or developments at the institution warrant the additional time.

**NOTE: Timeline Modifications for Extenuating Circumstances.** When an institution or program is working to address a circumstance beyond its control such as that precipitated by a national disaster or other catastrophic event which impacts an institution's or program's operations or significant and documented local or national economic changes, such as an economic recession, the institution must demonstrate compliance within three years unless the appropriate accrediting Commission extends this period of time for good cause. In addition, the institution must demonstrate that this period of non-compliance will not (a) contribute to the cost of the curricular program in question without prior student consent, (b) create any undue hardship on, or harm to, students, or (c) compromise the program's academic quality.

**NOTE:** An institution unable to come into compliance within the timelines outlined above may face revocation of its accredited institutional membership.

#### **D. Replies Required of Institutions**

Institutions asked by a Commission to provide replies regardless of the action taken, should prepare and provide (a) a thorough, detailed, and cogent discussion of the issues, (b) documentation supporting the discussion, and (c) if issues regarding standards have been cited, how the institution's practices attend to applicable standards as may have been cited by the appropriate accrediting Commission.

#### **NASM Handbook 2024-25—Pages 34–35**

##### **Rules of Practice and Procedure, Part II**

##### **Article IV., Commission Policies**

##### **Section 5. Commission Procedures in Extreme Matters of Institutional Viability and Integrity**

*Amend Article IV., Section 5. as follows:*

##### **Section 5. Commission Procedures in Extreme Matters of Institutional Viability and Integrity**

- A. When a Commission has cause to believe that an institution's noncompliance with NASM consensus-based standards and/or provisions of the Code of Ethics threaten its fundamental viability or integrity because:
1. The fundamental purposes of the institution or music unit cannot be fulfilled; or
  2. There are serious conditions that cause major adverse effects on the overall financial viability or operational integrity of the institution or music unit; or
  3. The program or programs, or courses or study, offered in the academic catalog of the institution cannot be delivered; or
  4. The institution or music unit is deliberately misrepresenting itself or its program(s) to students and the public in categories of published information required by NASM standards; ~~the~~ **the Commission will place the institution on probation requesting that may request** the institution ~~to~~ provide written information documenting the relationship between conditions at the institution and/or the music unit and compliance with applicable NASM standards.
- B. If information is not forthcoming within the time stipulated, or a Commission finds that, with respect to the institution or the music unit, institutional viability has been lost, is in jeopardy, or that institutional integrity has been seriously undermined, a Commission will:
1. With regard to an institution that is an applicant, but not yet a member, cease the application process.
  2. With regard to a member institution,
    - a. Issue an order requesting that the institution show cause why its membership status should not be revoked, providing an appropriate timeline for reply and suggested corrective actions; or
    - b. In extreme cases, immediately sever the relationship between the institution and NASM by revoking accreditation.

The institution may appeal the decision of the Commission in accordance with the NASM Appeals Procedure.

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

**NASM Handbook 2024-25—Pages 35–38**

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

***Amend Article V. as follows:***

**ARTICLE V  
SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE**

**Section 1. Procedure.** Institutions are required to gain prior approval of substantive change occurring between regular accreditation visits. Substantive changes occurring during accreditation review periods are reported and considered as part of the self-study, on-site visit, and Commission review. The Association also offers the opportunity for member institutions to receive an optional consultative review of proposed substantive changes by the appropriate Commission(s) prior to submission of an official request for substantive change. Procedures and submission requirements for substantive change may be found on the NASM website.

**Section 2. Definition. Significant Growth.** Growth experienced by an institution sufficient to result in the requirement of a special review is defined in the agency’s Substantive Change policy as being “significant” (see *NASM Handbook*, Rules of Practice and Procedure, Part II, Article V.). When considering the impact growth may have on an institution, many individual factors must be considered, including the availability of resources to support the growth, as well as related factors such as the size and scope of the music unit, relationships and balances that must be maintained between size and scope (see *NASM Handbook*, Standards for Accreditation II.B.), and the effect growth will have on the institution’s ability to continue to meet applicable standards as they pertain to operations and curricular programs. For this reason, NASM considers each instance of growth, including, but not limited to, rapid enrollment growth, in light of the impact ~~such growth~~ ~~it~~ has on these factors singly and in ~~combination~~ ~~relationship~~. In the aggregate, conditions and ~~requirements~~ ~~texts~~ associated with assessing the impact of growth for the purposes described ~~throughout NASM documents~~ constitute NASM’s operating definition and means for determining the significance of growth in specific instances.

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

**Section 32. Definition.** *Substantive change* includes, but is not limited to:

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

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

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

- G. ~~As it relates to successful completion of a program, a~~ substantial increase or decrease in:
  1. The number of clock or credit hours awarded ~~for successful completion of a program; or;~~
  2. ~~The level of the credential awarded; or~~
  3. ~~2-~~ The length of a program.
- H. Adding a branch campus or other entity (such as an additional location, extension program, other external program) at which the institution offers ~~at least fifty percent of any an~~ educational program in music, regardless of how many such campuses or other entities have been approved previously by NASM.

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

- I. Participation in an agreement to teach-out students from an institution or program that is closing. ~~(Institutions to which Standards for Accreditation XXI. pertain must review and demonstrate compliance with Standards for Accreditation XXI., Section 1.K.)~~

**NOTE:** Institutions that have designated NASM as their gatekeeper for the purpose of eligibility for participation in federal Title IV programs must review and demonstrate compliance with Standards for Accreditation XXI., Section 1.K.

- J. The addition of a permanent location at a site at which the institution is conducting a teach-out for students of another institution that has ceased operating before all of the students have completed their programs of study.
- K. ~~1-~~ An institution's designation of NASM as its gatekeeper for the purpose of eligibility for participation in federal Title IV programs, irrespective of whether:
  1. The institution is accredited as a single-purpose institution by NASM and does not currently participate in Title IV programs, but plans to apply for participation in federal Title IV; or
  2. The institution is accredited as a single-purpose institution by NASM and another Secretary-recognized institutional accrediting agency, has designated the other institutional accrediting agency as its gatekeeper for the purpose of eligibility for federal Title IV participation, and plans to relinquish such other institutional accreditation entirely; or

3. The institution is accredited as a single-purpose institution by NASM and another Secretary-recognized institutional accrediting agency, has designated the other institutional accrediting agency as its gatekeeper for the purpose of eligibility for federal Title IV participation, and plans to retain the other institutional accreditation and relinquish the connection between that accreditation and Title IV participation.

L. ~~K.~~ With regard to an institution that has designated NASM as its gatekeeper for the purpose of eligibility for participation in federal Title IV programs ~~if NASM accreditation enables the institution to seek eligibility to participate in Title IV Higher Education Act (HEA) programs~~, the entering into written arrangement under 34 CFR 668.513 under which an institution or organization not approved to participate in Title IV Higher Education Act (HEA) programs offers more than twenty-five percent but less than fifty percent of one or more of the NASM accredited institution's educational programs.

**NOTE:** With regard to Section ~~32.LK.~~ above, upon receipt of a materially complete request, the appropriate Commission will review the institution's application for Substantive Change and make a final decision within 90 days unless there are significant circumstances related to the Substantive Change that require a review by the appropriate Commission to occur within 180 days.

M. With regard to an institution that has designated NASM as its gatekeeper for the purpose of eligibility for participation in federal Title IV programs that has been placed on probation or an equivalent status, has been subject to negative action by NASM over the prior three academic years, or is under provisional certification, as provided in 34 CFR 668.13:

1. An aggregate change of twenty-five percent or more of the clock hours, credit hours, or content of a program since the agency's most recent accreditation review.
2. The development of customized pathways as defined in 34 CFR 602.22(b)(3)(i)-(ii).
3. Entering into a written arrangement under 34 CFR 668.513 under which an institution or organization not certified to participate in the Title IV, HEA programs offers up to twenty-five percent of one or more of the accredited institution's educational programs.

N. The addition of a direct assessment program.

O. Other **substantial major** changes that would impact continuing compliance with NASM standards applicable to **operations and/or** degrees and programs being offered.

**Section 43. Specific or Comprehensive On-Site Evaluations.** In most cases, applications for approval regarding substantive changes can be reviewed through written documentation. However, substantive changes proposed or made may result in the necessity of on-site verification regarding the specific change or changes, with or without the need for additional documentation. On-site verification may be stipulated by provisions in published NASM standards and procedures, or required by the appropriate Commission.

In certain cases, changes proposed or made may result in a requirement to conduct a comprehensive on-site review with full documentation, under conditions and during a period to be stipulated by the appropriate Commission. Criteria for requiring a comprehensive review in the context of substantive change include, but are not limited to:

A. A fundamental, comprehensive change of purposes resulting in complete replacement, in terms of content, of substantially all of the educational program(s) previously reviewed and approved with a substantially different set of programs. (Changes of this magnitude normally do not include evolutions or consolidations of previously-approved programs, deletions of specific programs when multiple programs are offered, title changes to existing or continuing programs consistent with NASM standards, or the additions of new programs as addressed in the Rules of Practice and Procedure, Part II, Article VI.); and/or

- B. Indications from documentation that changes could affect the ability of the institution or the music unit as a whole to fulfill its purposes, maintain fundamental financial viability or operational integrity, or deliver the entire set of curricula offered or proposed to be offered in the catalog; and/or
- C. Documented conditions causing the appropriate Commission to act under provisions of the Bylaws, Article IV., Section 1.A. and B., concerning the maintenance of standards and the observance of published commitments by accredited institutions.

**Section 54. Additional Standards and Procedures.** Additional standards and procedures regarding substantive change applicable to free-standing music institutions are found in Standards for Accreditation XXI.

All standards and procedures published by the Association are applicable as appropriate to reviews regarding substantive change.

**Section 65. Accreditation Record Date.** The date of formal notification of Commission or other official action is the effective accreditation record date of any approval of substantive change.

#### **NASM Handbook 2024-25—Pages 49–50**

##### **Rules of Practice and Procedure, Part II**

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

##### **Section 10. Decision on an Appeal**

***Amend Article X., Section 10. as follows:***

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

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

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

#### **NASM Handbook 2024-25—Pages 51–52**

##### **Rules of Practice and Procedure, Part II**

##### **Article XI., Publication of NASM Accreditation Actions**

***Amend Article XI., Section 2. as follows:***

##### **Section 2.**

- A. NASM provides written notice of the following types of decisions to the public, appropriate accrediting agencies, the appropriate state licensing or authorizing agency, and the U.S. Secretary of Education no later than thirty days after it makes the decision:

1. To award initial accreditation to an institution or program.
  2. To renew an institution's or program's accreditation.
- B. NASM provides written notice of the following types of decisions to the appropriate accrediting agencies, the appropriate state licensing or authorizing agency, and the U.S. Secretary of Education at the same time it notifies the institution or program of the decision, but no later than thirty days after it makes a final decision, ~~and requires the institution or program to disclose such an action within seven business days of receipt to all current and prospective students:~~
1. To place an institution or program on probation or the equivalent.
  2. To initiate adverse action.

**NOTE:** Institutions under any of the sanctions noted in Section 2.B. above must disclose the sanction to current and prospective students within seven business days of receipt of notice.

- C. NASM provides written notice of the following types of decisions to the appropriate accrediting agencies, the appropriate state licensing or authorizing agency, and the U.S. Secretary of Education at the same time it notifies the institution or program of the decision, but no later than thirty days after it makes a final decision:
1. To deny, withdraw, suspend, revoke, or terminate the accreditation of an institution or program.
  2. To take any other adverse action.

**NOTE:** Institutions under any of the sanctions noted in Section 2.C. above must disclose the sanction to current and prospective students within seven business days of receipt of notice.

- D. NASM provides written notice to the public of the decisions listed in the Rules of Practice and Procedure, Part II, Article XI., Section 2.B.1.–2. and 2.C.1.–2. within one business day of its notice to the institution or program.
- E. For any decision listed in the Rules of Practice and Procedure, Part II, Article XI., Section 2.C.1.–2., NASM makes available to the public, the appropriate state licensing or authorizing agency, and the U.S. Secretary of Education, no later than sixty days after the decision, a brief statement summarizing the reasons for NASM's decision and the official comments that the affected institution or program may wish to make with regard to that decision, or evidence that the affected institution has been offered the opportunity to provide official comment, and did not choose to do so in the time stipulated.
- F. NASM notifies the appropriate accrediting agencies, the appropriate state licensing or authorizing agency, the U.S. Secretary of Education, and upon request, the public, if an accredited institution or program:
1. Decides to withdraw voluntarily from accreditation, within ten business days of receiving notification from the institution or program that it is withdrawing voluntarily from accreditation; or
  2. After due notice from the appropriate Commission stipulating one or more deadlines, allows its accreditation to lapse, within ten business days of the date on which accreditation lapses.

**Rules of Practice and Procedure, Part II  
Article XIII., Disclosure and Confidentiality**

***Amend Article XIII. as follows:***

**ARTICLE XIII  
DISCLOSURE AND CONFIDENTIALITY**

**Section 1.** NASM provides numerous services that include the publication of policy statements, reports, and surveys. These are available to the public, some for a fee. Upon request, NASM will provide the academic and professional qualifications of the members of its policy and decision-making bodies and its administrative personnel.

**Section 2.** Upon request, NASM will make publicly available all information about an institution that is published in NASM literature (see Rules of Practice and Procedure, Part II, Article XI., Section 3.). NASM will also indicate whether or not an institution holds or has held accredited Membership.

**Section 3.** NASM will not make publicly available any information supplied by the institution or by representatives of NASM in the course of the accreditation process. This includes Self-Study Reports, Visitors' Reports, and correspondence. While NASM encourages institutions to make publicly available information about their accredited status and to share accreditation materials with individuals and agencies having legitimate claim to information beyond that available to the general public, the Association regards all accreditation materials as the property of the institution. Therefore, release of these materials is either through the institution or by its permission.

**Section 4.** Should an institution release information regarding its NASM accreditation status, the content of documents submitted in support of an NASM accreditation application, and/or notice of accreditation actions taken by an NASM Commission, each must be clear, true, and accurate. NASM will monitor an institution's attention to this requirement and those pertaining to "Published Materials and Websites" as a matter of course during accreditation reviews and reviews of required annual reports (see Rules of Practice and Procedure, Part II, Article III., and Standards for Accreditation II.I.1.).

**Section 54.** NASM will not make publicly available any information provided in third-party comment or an institution's response to third-party comment or any correspondence related to third-party comment (see Rules of Practice and Procedure, Part II, Article IV., Section 1.).

**Section 65.** If an institution releases information that misrepresents or distorts any action by NASM with respect to any aspect of the accreditation process, or the status of affiliation with NASM, the chief executive officer of the institution and the program director, where applicable, will be notified by the NASM Executive Director and informed that corrective action must be taken. If the misrepresentation or distortion is not promptly corrected, NASM, at its discretion, may release a public statement in such a form and content as it deems necessary to provide the correct information.

The same rule and sequence are applied to individuals and organizations misrepresenting or distorting accreditation actions of NASM.

NASM reserves the right to correct false or misleading information at any time.

**Section 76.** Certain relationships yield information which legally cannot be disclosed without the consent of the person who provides it—for example, the relationship between physician and patient, between attorney and client, between clergy and penitent, etc. Should such information, or other information that is protected under law by a comparable privilege or safeguard, come into the hands of NASM or an NASM evaluation team, its disclosure to persons other than the immediate recipients is forbidden.

# Standards for Accreditation

— Action by the NASM Membership —

NASM Handbook 2024-25—Page 71

## Standards for Accreditation

### II. Purposes and Operations

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

##### 2. Guideline and Recommendations

*Amend II.F.2. as follows:*

##### 2. Guideline and Recommendations

- a. Normally, the music unit maintains a multi-year plan for the regular maintenance of its facilities and upkeep and replacement of equipment and technology. The plan is developed consistent with purposes, the size and scope of the music unit, programs, and prospective changes.
- b. All facilities, equipment, and technology should produce an environment conducive to learning and be sufficient to enable faculty and students to focus on artistic and academic endeavors.
- c. Normally, institutions or music programs (1) have policies and protocols that maintain strict distinctions between the provision of general musicians' health information in the music program, and the specific diagnosis and treatment of individuals by licensed medical professionals, and (2) identify for the benefit of students and other personnel as appropriate or as requested, resources that will enable them to make contact with such professionals for specific treatment or other medical care.
- d. Normally, institutions and music programs develop their specific methods for addressing the maintenance of health and safety in consultation with qualified professionals, for example, licensed medical personnel and/or authoritative sources providing information to students and faculty regarding the maintenance of professional health **and wellness**, and the prevention of performance injuries.

NASM Handbook 2024-25—Pages 74–75

## Standards for Accreditation

### II. Purposes and Operations

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

*Amend II.H. as follows:*

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

###### 1. Standards

- a. Communications with prospective students and parents must be accurate and presented with integrity.
- b. As a matter of sound educational practice, institutions recruit and admit students only to programs or curricula for which they show aptitudes and prospects for success.
- c. Recruitment goals, policies, and procedures shall be ethical, controlled by the institution, compatible with the goals and objectives of the music unit, and free of practices that compensate recruiters directly on an individual or aggregate per-student-yield basis or otherwise create conflicts of interest for recruitment personnel or the institution.

- d. Admissions evaluation procedures and advising services must be clearly related to the goals and objectives of the institution's music programs.
- e. Admission to particular programs of music study must be correlated to the institution's ability to provide the requisite coursework and experiences at the appropriate level for all students enrolled.
- f. Student retention policies **and procedures** must be:
  - (1) Appropriate to the purposes of the institution's curricular programs;
  - (2) Clearly defined;
  - (3) Published for students and faculty; and
  - (4) Applied with rigor and fairness.
- g. The institution shall inform a student promptly if it is determined that the student is not acceptable as a candidate for a degree, certificate, or diploma.
- h. The institution shall maintain accurate, up-to-date records of each student's educational progress, including courses taken, grades, repertory studied, performances associated with degree or program requirements, and the results of other appropriate evaluations.
- i. Institutional members shall maintain documents pertinent to the awarding of graduate degrees, including theses, dissertations, compositions, recital programs, and audio recordings.
- j. Advising must address program content, program completion requirements, potential careers or future studies, and music-specific student services consistent with the natures and purposes of music degrees and programs being offered. Institutions must provide students with written documents and advising that describe all requirements and the purposes of their programs.

## **2. Recommendations**

- a. Students with specific career goals should be engaged in a continuous advisement program related to their area of specialization.
- b. Advisement should reflect concern for the student's goals and should provide assistance with the selection of courses that serve as appropriate preparation for advanced study.
- c. Students should have access to information concerning specialization at the graduate level and available career options in music.

**Standards for Accreditation**

**III. Music Program Components**

***Amend III. as follows:***

**III. MUSIC PROGRAM COMPONENTS**

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

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

**1. Program Lengths**

- a. Associate degrees require a minimum of 60 semester or 90 quarter credit hours and the equivalent of two academic years.
- b. Baccalaureate degrees require a minimum of 120 semester or 180 quarter hours and the equivalent of four academic years.
- c. Post-baccalaureate degrees require a minimum of 30 semester or 45 quarter hours and the equivalent of one academic year and must meet additional credit and time requirements according to degree level and title.
- d. Postsecondary professionally-oriented non-degree-granting programs in degree-granting institutions have semester, quarter, clock hour, and/or other time requirements commensurate with the subject matter and purposes of specific programs.
- e. The total time requirement for any postsecondary program must be commensurate with the number of credit or clock hours required to complete the program. Reasonable total time requirements must be formulated and published.
- f. Community education or precollegiate programs have time requirements commensurate with the subject matter and purposes of specific programs. Except for this item, the standards in Standards for Accreditation III.A. do not apply to these programs.

**2. Awarding Credit**

- a. Credit shall be awarded consistently according to the published credit policies of the institution and in compliance with NASM standards. Institutional policies shall establish the credit hour in terms of time and achievement required. The minimum time requirement shall be consistent with or reasonably approximate the following: (1) a semester hour of credit represents at least 3 hours of work each week, on average, for a period of fifteen to sixteen weeks; (2) a quarter hour of credit represents at least 3 hours of work each week for a period of ten or eleven weeks. Credit for other kinds of academic requirements or offerings that are in different formats, use different modes of delivery, or that are structured to take a different amount of time is computed on the same basis in terms of representing at least the equivalent amount of work. Policies concerning achievement shall be consistent with the principle that credit is earned only when curricular, competency, and all other requirements are met and the final examination or equivalent is satisfactorily passed.

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

- b. In lecture-discussion courses, normally 1 hour of credit is given for one period of recitation (50 minutes) plus 2 hours of preparation each week of the term. In laboratory courses, normally 1 hour of credit is given for two to three 50-minute recitation periods per week. Institutions vary significantly in ways credit is granted for ensembles. Some regard ensembles as laboratory courses, either implicitly or explicitly; others grant credit based on factors such as, but not limited to the nature and size of the ensemble; whether the ensemble is coached or conducted; the amount of student preparation required; and relationships to other credit requirements in the total curricular program.
- c. It is recommended that 1 credit hour be given for each 3 hours per week of practice, plus the necessary individual instruction, with a maximum of six credits per term allowed for the major subject in music performance.
- d. When institutions offer programs and courses for abbreviated time periods, or in independent study, they must ensure that students completing such programs or courses acquire levels of knowledge, competence, and understanding comparable to that expected of students completing work in the standard time period. For example, in order to earn 1 hour of credit during a summer session, students must attend approximately the same number of class hours and make the same amount of preparation as they would in attending a 1-hour-per-week course for one term during the regular academic year.
- e. Institutions or curricular programs using a clock-hour system must ensure that their system for dealing with matters such as clock hour assignments or requirements and the relationship of clock hours to program completion is consistent with and equivalent, but not necessarily identical, to credit and time requirements as stated in Standards for Accreditation III.A. (see also the Note in Standards for Accreditation III.A.2.a.). Meeting this standard does not require the conversion of clock hour-based programs to credit hour-based programs. Normally, institutions participating in federal Title IV programs also follow federal regulations regarding clock hour definitions, calculation, equivalencies, and policies.
- f. Any credit awarded for short-term workshops should be computed on the same basis as other coursework during the academic year. Institutional members of NASM should not award credit for short-term workshops or attendance at meetings sponsored by themselves, other institutions, or organizations unless such credit is acceptable toward specific undergraduate or graduate programs, or non-degree-granting professional programs at their own institutions.

### **3. Transfer of Credit**

- a. Presentation of a satisfactory transcript from a collegiate institution accredited by an agency or association recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education is one criterion for transferring credit.
- b. In granting course credit to transfer students, the receiving institution shall maintain policies to assure that the overall educational experience of the transferring student is at least equal in quality to that of the student taking all of the student's work at the member school.
- c. Transfer credit shall be granted for courses taken at another institution only when the coursework involved and the level of the transfer applicant's achievement in it permit the student to complete the remaining coursework successfully.

d. Accreditation by the Association carries with it no obligation to accept, without examination, music credits from other member schools.

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

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

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

5. **Transcript Evidence.** Transcripts of graduates must be consistent with the curricular and other requirements stated in the institution's publications applicable to the degree or credential being awarded. Applicability is defined by the published policies of the institution.
6. **Institutional Procedures.** The institution must have procedures to make credit hour assignments for courses, programs, and other requirements consistent with its credit hour policies applicable to those offerings, and the means to ensure accurate and reliable application of its credit hour policies and procedures. Consistent with the Note in Standards for Accreditation III.A.2.a., it is recognized that institutions may have different policies or procedures for different types of programs or delivery systems.
7. **Notification Rule.** As a USDE-recognized accrediting agency, NASM is required to file a specific report to the U.S. Secretary of Education when an institution is found in systemic noncompliance with the NASM standards and policies regarding credit hours either within a specific program of study or unit or, if applicable, within an institution as a whole. In this instance, systemic refers to organization- or unit-wide policies, procedures, or practices, including but not limited to, continuous noncompliance. Normally, specific instances or lapses promptly clarified or remediated are not considered systemic. Opportunities for the institution to remediate problems and document compliance with NASM standards and policies normally precede such notification to the Secretary. The Rules of Practice and Procedure, Part II., Article IV., Section 4. and federal regulations as amended from time to time provide one protocol framework for communication and notification between NASM and the Secretary.

**B. Time on Task, Curricular Proportions, and Competencies** (*always applicable in postsecondary institutions*)

1. Curricular structures and requirements must provide sufficient time on task to produce the competencies required and expected.
2. Curricular proportions indicated as benchmarks in the standards below represent the amounts of time normally needed to reach the levels of achievement expected for graduation.
3. In calculating curricular structures, the Association uses a four-year degree program of 120 semester hours, or 180 quarter hours, as the basis for determining percentages of various components. For institutions with program requirements beyond 120 semester hours or 180 quarter hours, the combined percentage of the components will exceed 100%. For associate degrees, the basis is 60 semester hours or 90 quarter hours. For initial master's degrees, the basis is 30 semester hours or 45 quarter hours.
4. At the undergraduate level all students in professional programs are normally required to have a minimum of 1 hour (60 minutes) of individual instruction per week, or a comparable equivalent arrangement of individual and/or small group instruction, in the principal performing area(s).

5. Professional undergraduate and graduate programs in music are shaped by the realities and expectations in the field to seek the development of competencies at the highest possible levels. At these levels, competencies are far beyond minimum learning expectations and are usually not amenable to evaluation in purely mathematical terms. The higher the level of achievement, the more each work is judged by experts on the terms and expectations it sets for itself.

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

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

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

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

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

1. Forms of instruction chosen for any specific curricular program must have a logical and functioning relationship to the purposes of that program and to expectations for learning and achievement specified by NASM standards and by the institution. Forms of instruction include, but are not limited to: lecture courses; labs; private, independent, or small group study; ensembles; internships; and so forth.

2. It is the prerogative of the institution to establish course requirements and the extent to which a particular curriculum will contain any opportunities for free electives or electives chosen from a specified set of courses or experiences. For each curriculum, this determination must have a logical and functioning relationship to purposes and expectations for learning and achievement specified by NASM standards and by the institution.
- E. ~~D~~ Individual Program Continuity** (*always applicable*). Institutions shall not impose new or revised degree or program requirements on continuing students. Enrolled students shall have the option to complete the degree or program requirements in effect at the time of their admission into a degree or program.
- F. ~~E~~ Residence** (*always applicable*). No degree or other credential shall be granted by a member school of NASM unless the student has fulfilled any established residence policy of the institution applicable to that program.
- G. ~~F~~ New Programs** (*always applicable*):
1. Institutions planning to (a) offer new programs or (b) offer a program for the first time, must receive Plan Approval from the Commission on Accreditation or the Commission on Community College Accreditation, as applicable, before the matriculation of students (see Rules of Practice and Procedure, Part II, Article I., Section 3.; and Article VI.).
  2. Institutions planning to offer a master's or doctoral degree for the first time should inquire of the National Office for appropriate additional procedures.
- H. ~~G~~ Independent Study** (*applicable to programs that contain or are based on independent study*):
1. **Definition.** Each offering institutions must publish information that includes its definitions of independent study and its policies for the conduct of independent study on campus or through distance learning. Normally, for academic management purposes, individual applied instruction in music is considered as a category of its own, and not as independent study.
  2. **Policies and Resources**
    - a. Institutions offering degrees extensively based on independent study must provide the instruction, tutorials, critiques, evaluations, and resources essential to degree programs of that type, and to each specific degree being offered.
    - b. At the doctoral level, institutions may not wish to specify course or credit requirements, other than the satisfactory completion of certain examinations, project reviews, or a dissertation.
  3. **Student Requirements**
    - a. The content and expectations for each independent study course or program or degree must be clearly stated to the student in writing before each independent study begins.
    - b. When independent study is used to substitute for a required course, the institution must ensure that the content, scope, depth, and learning expectations of the required course are fulfilled by the independent study.
  4. **Degree Requirements.** Each institution determines the extent to which independent study is to be a means for meeting the requirements for each degree that it offers. However, if a degree is based primarily on course requirements that are to be taken in formal classes, normally, independent study is not substituted for more than 20% of such required courses.

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

1. **Definitions**

a. **Distance Learning.** Involves programs of study delivered entirely or partially away from regular face-to-face interactions between teachers and students in studios, classrooms, tutorials, and laboratories associated with coursework, degrees, and programs on the campus. Normally, distance learning uses technologies to deliver instruction and support systems, and enable regular and substantive interaction between instructor and student either synchronously or asynchronously. Technologies include, but are not limited to:

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

b. **Substantive Interaction.** Involves engaging students in teaching, learning, evaluation, and assessment as related to the course of study in which the student is enrolled. It also includes, but is not limited to, at least two of the following:

- (1) Providing direct instruction;
- (2) Assessing and/or providing feedback to students regarding their course of study;
- (3) Providing information and/or responding to questions regarding the content of a course and/or required competencies;
- (4) Facilitating group discussion regarding the content of a course and/or required competencies; and
- (5) Other instructional opportunities and/or initiatives deemed appropriate by the institution and in compliance with applicable NASM operational and curricular standards intended to support and advance a student's course of study.

2. **Means.** The distance aspect of these programs may be delivered through a variety of means, including teaching and learning through electronic systems. Regardless of the means employed, an institution shall ensure that regular interaction between a student and an instructor(s), prior to the student's completion of a course of study, takes place through:

- a. The provision of opportunities for substantive interactions with the student on a predictable and regular basis commensurate with the length of time and the breadth of the student's course of study; and
- b. Monitoring the student's academic engagement and success, and ensuring that instructors are responsible for promptly and proactively engaging in substantive interaction with a student as needed as indicated by such monitoring, or upon request by the student.

3. **Standards Applications**

a. Distance learning programs must meet all NASM operational and curricular standards for programs of their type and content. This means that the functions and competencies required by applicable standards are met even when distance learning mechanisms predominate in the total delivery system.

- b. Institutions approved by NASM to offer music programs delivered either entirely or partially through distance learning means will be designated as such in NASM publications.
- c. Institutions approved by NASM to offer distance learning programs shall provide, in institutional publications as appropriate, a listing, or designation, or indication of all music programs offered either entirely or partially through distance learning means. Institutions shall designate in publications whether required courses are offered through distance learning (i.e., online, hybrid) and/or on ground in-person means.

#### **4. Standards**

##### **a. Purposes and Resources**

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

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

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

##### **c. Technical Prerequisites**

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

##### **d. Program Consistency and Equivalency**

- (1) The institution shall have mechanisms for assuring consistency in the application of policies, procedures, and standards for entering, continuing, and completing the course or program.

- (2) When an identical program, or a program with an identical title, is offered through distance learning as well as on campus, the institution must be able to demonstrate functional equivalency in all aspects of each program. Mechanisms must be established to assure equal quality among delivery systems.
- e. Communication with Students.** Instructions to students, expectations for achievement, and evaluation criteria must be clearly stated and readily available to all involved in a particular distance learning program. Students must be fully informed of means for asking questions and otherwise communicating with instructors and students as required.
- 5. Notification Rule.** A special notification rule applies to institutions that participate in federal Title IV programs and to which Standards for Accreditation XXI., Section 2.D. apply.
- J. ↗ Disciplines in Combination** (*applicable when an institution offers inter-, multi-, co-disciplinary programs, etc.*):
- 1. Standards Applicability.** To some extent, every curriculum represents a combination of modes of thought and inquiry, and thus, some combination of disciplinary perspectives. However, when an institution decides to offer any study program or degree which is explicitly designated as a multi- or interdisciplinary combination and in which music is either the primary or home discipline or constitutes over 25% of the total program content, the following standards apply in addition to those applicable to all other music programs.
  - 2. Standards**
    - a. A specific coherent set of purposes shall be developed and published that include, but are not limited to:
      - (1) Title or basic identification of the primary focus of the program in terms of fields of study or areas of inquiry, or both.
      - (2) Specific content, techniques, and perspectives used to pursue the primary focus, including aspirations and expectations regarding:
        - (a) Specific intellectual, disciplinary, or artistic engagement.
        - (b) Breadth and depth in various disciplines and specializations.
        - (c) Juxtaposition, combination, application, integration, or syntheses of the disciplines involved.
    - b. Operations shall reveal coherent achievement of purposes.
    - c. Terminology shall reflect accurately the type(s) of disciplinary combinations represented or used.
    - d. Program titles shall be consistent with their curricular content. Published materials shall be clear about the status of any curricular program with respect to constituting a major, a minor, or field for independent study, etc.
    - e. Applicable prerequisites for courses or curricula shall be clearly stated, especially with regard to levels of competence in specific disciplines that are to be combined.
    - f. There must be clear descriptions of what students are expected to know and be able to do upon completion, consistent with Standards for Accreditation III.↗.2.a.
    - g. Guidance, advising, and mentoring shall be adequate to support the achievement of purposes.

h. Evaluation mechanisms shall be consistent with the goals defined for specific courses, projects, programs, or curricula, and to the collaborative approach(es) involved.

3. **Music Content.** Programs expressing objectives in specific music content are reviewed in terms of that content and the level and type of achievement expected.

**K. ↴ Majors in or Based on Electronic Media** (*applicable when programs are focused on content addressed in Standards for Accreditation III.K.2.a. and b.*):

1. **Standards Applicability**

a. In reviewing majors in or based on electronic media and technology, the Commission will consider the extent to which electronic technology is used in the context of programs in the standard music disciplines discussed elsewhere in the *Handbook*. Given the extent to which electronic media and technology are the focus of such programs, the standards in this section may apply along with the standards for the home field.

b. Programs centered on new approaches and combinations will be reviewed by the standards in this section and, as applicable, by those that address distance learning and disciplines in combination.

2. **Purposes, Options, and Characteristics.** Computers and associated electronic media have expanded possibilities for the education of musicians and other artists. Institutions have a large number of options for establishing goals for curricula and coursework. Choices include, but are not limited to, the following categories:

a. **Discipline(s).** Programs may concentrate in, represent combinations of, or integrate studies in such areas as the standard music disciplines, computer science, engineering, design, digital media, animation, film/video, languages, the psychology of perception, and many others. Within music, new technologies may develop additional fields.

Programs may seek to use electronic media and technology as a tool to do work in a pre-existing field. Programs may also combine fields in various ways to develop new sets of knowledge and skills for various applications. Institutions may also seek to create new fields, or to address emerging niches in particular job markets.

b. **Technology.** Content goals range from how a technology works, to how to work it, to how to work with it, to how to do work with it, to how to understand it, to how to integrate it. Programs may concentrate on one or more technologies. Technology goals may also include how to build technologies, how technologies evolve, or the impacts of technology.

c. **Problem Solving.** Each program represents a particular set of approaches and expectations for identifying and solving problems. The level, nature, and complexity of the problems to be solved delineate the program's character and the projected accomplishments of its graduates.

d. **Delivery System.** A wide variety of practices work as long as within each program or curriculum delivery systems are consistent with the specific achievements necessary to the success of that program. In addition to traditional formats, team-based teaching, learning, projects, and evaluations are common in electronic media programs.

e. **Specialization.** The range here includes programs that provide a broad foundation as the basis for future specializations to programs that are specifically focused on a particular field or subparts thereof. Connections and specializations involving music, various design fields, photography, animation, digital media, film/video, web/Internet applications, movement and dance, theatre, computer science, multimedia, and pedagogies at various levels are among the most usual areas of focus.

- f. **Education in Music.** Each program makes a choice regarding the extent to which it addresses foundation principles and techniques in and of themselves or in some combination with a more specialized purpose.
- g. **General Liberal Education.** A determination is made regarding the extent to which elements or composite expectations for education in the humanities, sciences, social sciences, and other arts are included in the program.

### 3. Standards

- a. A specific coherent set of purposes shall be developed and published that include, but are not limited to:
    - (1) Titles or basic identification of subject matter, techniques, technologies, disciplines, or issues to be addressed.
    - (2) Specific content, methods, and perspectives used to consider subject matter, techniques, technologies, disciplines, or issues to be addressed, including expectations regarding:
      - (a) Specific artistic, intellectual, or disciplinary engagement.
      - (b) Breadth and depth in disciplinary components.
      - (c) The development of problem setting and solving capabilities.
  - b. Curriculum and other program requirements shall be consistent with goals and objectives.
  - c. Program titles shall be consistent with their curriculum content.
  - d. Applicable prerequisites for courses or curricula shall be clearly stated, especially with regard to levels of competence in specific disciplines or technologies central to the artistic or educational purposes and content of the program. The institution must have means for assessing the extent to which prospective students meet these requirements before they are accepted or enrolled.
  - e. The institution must determine and publish any technical equipment requirements for each program or course. The institution must have means for assessing the extent to which prospective students meet these requirements before they are accepted or enrolled.
  - f. There must be clear descriptions of what students are expected to know and be able to do upon completion, and effective mechanisms for assessing student competencies against these expectations. Normally, expectations and competencies can be related to all or several of the seven purposes areas outlined above (see Standards for Accreditation III.KJ.2.a.–g.). The level of the competency expected shall be consistent with the level of the degree or program offered.
- L. ~~K~~ Non-Degree-Granting Programs for the Community** (*applicable according to provisions of Standards for Accreditation III.LK.1.*):
- 1. **Standards Applicability.** Many postsecondary music units offering liberal arts or professional degrees or programs also 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.

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

## 2. Standards

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

3. **Opportunities.** Community education programs are encouraged to provide cultural opportunities to the communities they serve. When planning programs of study and community activities, consideration should be given to, and informed by, the heritage(s) of the community in which the institution operates.

**M. ↵ Content, Repertories, and Methods** (*policies that establish a conceptual framework or guidelines for the application of curricular standards*):

1. NASM standards address bodies of knowledge, skills, and professional capacities. At times, the standards require breadth, at other times, depth or specialization. However, the standards do not mandate specific choices of content, repertory, or methods.
2. With regard to specifics, music has a long history, many repertories, multiple connections with cultures, and numerous successful methodologies. Content in and study of these areas is vast and growing. Each music unit is responsible for choosing among these materials and approaches when establishing basic requirements consistent with NASM standards and the expectations of the institution.
3. In making the choices outlined in Standards for Accreditation III.ML.2., the institution is responsible for decisions regarding breadth and depth and for setting proportions among them.

4. Choices and emphases, as well as means for developing competencies, reflect institutional and program purposes and specific areas of specialization. The result is differences among programs regarding attention given to specific content, repertoires, and methods and to various perspectives through which music may be studied.

**N. ~~M.~~ Flexibility and Innovation** (*policies that establish a conceptual framework or guidelines for the application of curricular standards*):

1. NASM standards constitute a framework of basic commonalities that provides wide latitude for the creativity of faculty, students, and institutions.
2. There are many ways to achieve excellence. Innovative and carefully planned experimentation is encouraged. Experimentation might lead to programs of study not specifically indicated in Standards for Accreditation IV.–XVI.
3. 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.

**O. ~~N.~~ Quality Policies** (*establish a conceptual framework or guidelines for the application of curricular standards*):

1. Quality is developed and enabled by combinations of competence, capacity, aspiration, and dedication supported by essential resources. Artistic and academic quality is created primarily through the work of individuals and groups of faculty and students.
2. With regard to quality:
  - a. NASM standards set thresholds that establish basic but demanding requirements for studies in music.
  - b. NASM reviews of institutions and programs analyze, recognize, and promote artistic, intellectual, and programmatic quality and their relationships through and beyond the standards of the Association.
  - c. In addition to the requirements set by the NASM standards, the faculty and administration of individual schools define and implement specific expectations for levels of quality to be reached by students and graduates.
  - d. NASM standards and reviews, and sets of institutional expectations primarily delineate characteristics, indicators, and conditions of quality. Ultimately, quality itself is manifested in the work that students and graduates are able to produce.
3. After fundamental competencies have been achieved, judgments about quality are best made by professionals who through education, training, and experience are able to determine high levels of artistic and intellectual achievement. Operational applications of this principle are the prerogative of the institution.

**P. ~~O.~~ Undergraduate Musicianship Studies** (*an advisory description of the purposes and content associated with the term musicianship*):

1. **Purpose.** Musicianship is the body of knowledge, skills, practices, and insights that enables music-making at any level. To some extent, every musician functions regularly as performer, listener, historian, composer, theorist, and teacher. Completion of an undergraduate program in music indicates acquisition of sufficient musicianship to perform these functions appropriate to the areas of concentration and to communicate effectively across the specializations of musical practice.

For this reason, certain subjects, learning processes, and approaches to creativity are common to all baccalaureate programs in music. The particular format and details of the curricula utilized to achieve such breadth are the responsibility of each institution. Purposes, size, scope, and resources shape the means used to fulfill this responsibility. Specific means will vary from institution to institution.

- 2. Content.** Musicianship begins with acquisition of fundamental competencies, such as aural and rhythmic skills, the reading of notation, and the use of musical terminologies. Development then proceeds through constant use and expansion of previously acquired skills.

The content of traditional coursework in musicianship such as sight-singing, ear-training, harmony, keyboard harmony, counterpoint, orchestration, conducting, and music literature is important. However, this content can be organized and taught in a variety of ways to produce comprehensive musical competence.

Consequently, as the standards for degree programs show, undergraduate musicianship studies develop or provide: (1) conceptual understanding of musical components and processes; (2) continued practice in creating, interpreting, presenting, analyzing, and evaluating music; (3) increased understanding of musical achievements from various analytical, historical, and cultural perspectives; (4) musical perspectives informed by studies of various cultures and historical periods; (5) enhanced capacities to integrate musical knowledge and skills; and (6) a set of capabilities for independent work in the music professions.

**Q. P- Responsibilities for Music in General Education** (*policy recommending actions for development of the field through curricular and other efforts*)

Institutions that train professional musicians have responsibilities for addressing issues of music in general education. NASM expects member institutions to make significant commitments to these efforts in both human and material resources.

The following should be pursued as appropriate to institutional objectives, resources, and locale:

- 1. Music Education for the General College Student.** The institution should provide non-major students with opportunities to develop awareness and understanding of music as an integral part of the liberal education and the human experience.
- 2. The Education and Training of the Professional Musician.** The professional musician should be placed in a learning environment that fosters interest in the development of musical awareness in the general population. Course offerings, experiences, and opportunities should be provided to support such interest.
- 3. Faculty and Administrative Involvement.** Program structures should encourage faculty and administrative involvement in the education of non-majors. Policies for promotion and tenure should recognize the significance of faculty attention to music in general education.
- 4. The Local Community.** The institution should be involved with the local community on behalf of music.
- 5. Media.** Institutions should develop and maintain effective working relationships with the media.
- 6. Arts and Arts Education Policy Development.** Institutions should show concern for the development of arts and arts education policy, and should prepare professional musicians to participate in policy development.

For specific recommendations concerning the programs appropriate for carrying out the objectives in Standards for Accreditation III.QP.1.–6., see Appendix II.A.

## R. ~~Q~~ Proficiency Examinations

A proficiency exam may be administered at the prerogative of a specific institution to ascertain whether a student has successfully mastered specific subject matter content. Such examinations need not be administered should the student successfully complete specific course requirements as designated by that institution.

### NASM Handbook 2024-25—Pages 160–161

#### Standards for Accreditation

#### XXI. Specific Operational Standards for Free-Standing Music Institutions of Higher Education

#### Section 2. Procedural Requirements

#### C. Major Changes in Control

*Amend XXI., Section 2.C. as follows:*

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

1. **NASM Policy.** Accreditation is not automatically transferable when there is a **change in ownership and/or** major change in control.
2. **Definition.** ~~Major change includes but is not limited to sale; transfers of stock, assets, and liabilities; mergers; divisions; the complete replacement of one set of board members by another, in less than a six-month period; or the change in over seventy-five percent of board membership at any one time.~~ Change in ownership and/or major change in control includes, but is not limited to:
  - a. The sale of the institution or the majority of its assets.
  - b. The transfer of the liabilities of an institution to its parent corporation.
  - c. The merger of two or more institutions.
  - d. The division of one or more institution(s) into two or more institutions.
  - e. The transfer of the controlling interest of stock in the institution or its parent corporation.
  - f. Change in over seventy-five percent of board membership during a ninety-day period.
  - g. The complete replacement of one set of board members of the accredited institution by another within a six-month period.
  - h. Change in status as a for-profit, non-profit, or public institution.
3. **Institutional Responsibility.** All such changes must be reported **at least five days** in advance to NASM, or if the possibility of such changes is not known in advance, they must be reported immediately after the change. ~~Failure to provide required advance notice may result in automatic suspension (see Bylaws, Article I., Section 4.D.) and will result in automatic review (see Standards for Accreditation XXI., Section 2.F.1.b.).~~ Institutions with **change in ownership and/or** major changes in control will be subject to special NASM procedures, described herein and in separate documents.
4. **NASM Review.** Continuation of accreditation will depend upon the institution's demonstration that it continues to meet requisite NASM standards for all programs offered.
  - a. This review will be conducted in accordance with standard evaluation and operational procedures or with appropriate monitoring when an institution is being closed.

- b. A review for change in ownership and/or major change in ~~of~~ control ~~will~~ ~~may~~ include a visit to the institution by NASM evaluators to determine the extent to which a change in ownership and/or major change in ~~of~~ control has affected conditions for maintenance of accreditation. A report of the visit will be submitted to the appropriate accrediting Commission for review and action concerning continuation of accreditation status. Preparation for the visit, the visit, Commission review, and Commission action shall follow regular NASM procedures. ~~Normally, S~~uch a visit will be scheduled, conducted, and completed by NASM within six months of a change in ownership and/or major change in ~~of~~ control. The institution will assume the responsibility for fees and expenses associated with this visit.

**NOTE:** Please also see protocols pertaining to “Special Statuses” found in the Bylaws, Article I., Section 4. and “Automatic Actions” found in Standards for Accreditation XXI.2.F.

5. **Substantive Change.** A change in ownership and/or major change in control is considered a substantive change; therefore, an application for substantive change is required (see Rules of Practice and Procedure, Part II, Article V.).
6. **Requirements for Change in Ownership and/or Major Change in Control.** Accreditation is not automatically transferrable with a change in ownership and/or major change in control. Therefore, to maintain eligibility for accreditation, the following information in the form of a substantive change application must be prepared, fully documented, and submitted to NASM within two weeks after the change in ownership and/or major change in control of an NASM accredited institution:
  - a. Exact date of change in ownership and/or major change in control.
  - b. Curriculum vita of new owner (or new management).
  - c. A true and complete signed and dated copy of the Sale or Transfer Agreement.
  - d. An audit with opinion of financial statements prepared by an independent certified public accountant for the two most recently completed fiscal years prior to the change in ownership for both the existing and new owners.
  - e. Current music program enrollments, by curricular program.
  - f. A notarized statement by the buyer and seller or other transferring parties assuring NASM and any interested parties such as students, financial institutions, state and government agencies, etc., that appropriate provisions have been made for all tuition refunds now due or which may become due for all students to whom the institution has an obligation.
  - g. Signed and dated documentation that the institution holds and will maintain its state license or approval.
  - h. Any substantial changes realized or planned (see Rules of Practice and Procedure, Part II, Article V.).

**Standards for Accreditation**

**XXI. Specific Operational Standards for Free-Standing Music Institutions of Higher Education**

**Section 2. Procedural Requirements**

**F. Automatic Actions**

**1. Automatic Review**

***Amend XXI., Section 2.F.1.b. as follows:***

b. Change in ownership **and/or** major change in control, provided NASM is given at least five days' advance notice in writing of the date of the change. This includes, but is not limited to:

- (1) The sale of the institution or the majority of its assets.
- (2) The transfer of the ~~liabilities of an controlling interest of stock in the~~ institution ~~to or~~ its parent corporation.
- (3) The merger of two or more institutions.
- (4) The division of one or more institution(s) into two or more institutions.
- (5) The transfer of the controlling interest of stock in the institution to its parent corporation.
- (6) Change in over seventy-five percent of board membership during a ninety-day period.
- (7) The complete replacement of one set of board members of the accredited institution by another within a six-month period.
- (8) **Change in status as a for-profit, non-profit, or public institution.**

However, the five-day advance notice rule does not apply in cases where transfer of ownership occurs by right of survivorship upon the death of an owner, or similar circumstances. In these cases, NASM must be notified within five days of the occurrence.

**Standards for Accreditation**

**XXI. Specific Operational Standards for Free-Standing Music Institutions of Higher Education**

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

**B. Arbitration Rule**

***Amend XXI., Section 3.B. as follows:***

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

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

**Standards for Accreditation**

**XXI. Specific Operational Standards for Free-Standing Music Institutions of Higher Education**

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

**C. Change in Ownership or Major Change of Control**

*Amend XXI., Section 3.C. as follows:*

**C. Change in Ownership and/or Major Change in Control.** ~~Change in ownership or major change of control will result in an on-site review within six months of the change. The preparation for the visit, the visit, Commission review, and Commission action shall follow regular NASM procedures. The institution will assume the responsibility for fees and expenses associated with this visit.~~

- 1. NASM Review.** Continuation of accreditation will depend upon the institution’s demonstration that it continues to meet requisite NASM standards for all programs offered.
  - a. This review will be conducted in accordance with standard evaluation and operational procedures or with appropriate monitoring when an institution is being closed.
  - b. A review for change in ownership and/or major change in control will include a visit to the institution by NASM evaluators to determine the extent to which a change in ownership and/or major change in control has affected conditions for maintenance of accreditation. A report of the visit will be submitted to the Commission for review and action concerning continuation of accreditation status. Preparation for the visit, the visit, Commission review, and Commission action shall follow regular NASM procedures. Such a visit will be scheduled, conducted, and completed by NASM within six months of a change in ownership and/or major change in control. The institution will assume the responsibility for fees and expenses associated with this visit.

**NOTE:** Standards for Accreditation XXI., Section 2.C. apply to not-for-profit institutions and proprietary institutions unless noted otherwise. Standards for Accreditation XXII. apply to proprietary institutions only. See also: Automatic Suspension (Bylaws, Article I., Section 4.D.) and Automatic Review (Standards for Accreditation XXI., Section 2.F.1.b.).

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

**Standards for Accreditation**

**XXII. Specific Operational Standards for Proprietary Institutions of Higher Education**

**Section 2. Requirements for Change in Ownership to Maintain Eligibility for Accreditation**

*Amend XXII., Section 2. as follows:*

**Section 2. Requirements for Change in Ownership and/or Major Change in Control ~~to Maintain Eligibility for Accreditation~~**

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

~~A change of ownership may be effected in a number of ways, including but not limited to outright sale or purchase, and/or sale or purchase of stock, and/or inheritance of stock. Accreditation is not automatically transferable with change in ownership. Therefore, to maintain eligibility for accreditation, the following information is to be fully documented and submitted to NASM within two weeks after change of ownership of an NASM-accredited institution:~~

~~A.—Exact date of change of ownership.~~

~~B.—Curriculum vita of new owner (or documentation regarding new management).~~

~~C.—Legal documentation of the transfer of assets from one party to another.~~

~~D.—Financial statement by an outside accounting firm documenting that the new ownership is fiscally capable of continuing the work of the institution.~~

~~E.—Current financial statement of the institution by an outside accounting firm.~~

~~F.—Any changes in music program enrollments due to change of ownership.~~

~~G.—A notarized statement by buyer and seller or other transferring parties assuring NASM and any interested parties such as students, financial institutions, state, and government agencies, etc., that appropriate provisions have been made for all tuition refunds now due or which may become due for all students to whom the institution has an obligation.~~

~~H.—Documentation that the institution still maintains its state license or approval, and that its license or approval has been transferred to the new owners.~~

~~I.—All other pertinent information regarding changes in location, programs, refund policy, tuition, faculty, and administration caused by the transfer of ownership.~~

~~A visit to the institution shall be made by NASM if the institution qualifies under Standards for Accreditation XXI., Section 3.C., or at the discretion of the appropriate NASM-accrediting Commission based upon the response of the institution to Standards for Accreditation XXI., Section 2.A.—I. Any such action shall take place within six months of the date of change of ownership to cover the points above, as well as to determine that educational conditions consistent with the original accreditation continue to be met. A report of the visit will be submitted to the Commission for review and action concerning continuation of accredited status. The visit, Commission review, and Commission action shall follow regular NASM procedures.~~

#### **NASM Handbook 2024-25—Page 165**

#### **Standards for Accreditation**

#### **XXII. Specific Operational Standards for Proprietary Institutions of Higher Education**

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

***Amend XXII., Section 3. as follows:***

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

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

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

## Appendix III.B.

— Action by the NASM Membership —

NASM Handbook 2024-25—Page 261

### Appendix III.B., Policies Concerning Listings in NASM Publications

#### Section 3. Institutional Listings

*Amend Section 3. as follows:*

#### Section 3. Institutional Listings

The date following the name of each member institution designates the year when the institution was first elected to Membership in the Association. The letter C following the year 1928 indicates that the institution is a charter member. The date in brackets designates the year of the most recent review for accreditation. The academic year in parentheses indicates the year in which the next NASM evaluation is scheduled to occur. *Pending* implies that institutional re-evaluation is overdue. *Suspension implies that the institution's accreditation has been suspended (see Bylaws, Article I. Section 4.D.).*