

# **Council of Arts Accrediting Associations**

## **ACCREDITING COMMISSION FOR COMMUNITY AND PRECOLLEGIATE ARTS SCHOOLS**

# **Handbook 2024**

- **Standards and Guidelines for Accreditation**
- **Code of Ethics for Schools**
- **Rules of Practice and Procedure for Schools  
and for the Commission**

**January 2024**

This text is subject to editorial change and/or correction at any time. The date(s) of any revision to the ACCPAS *Handbook 2024* will be indicated immediately below.

Original Publication Date: January 19, 2024

The information contained in the ACCPAS *Handbook 2024* is current as of January 2024.

Readers are encouraged to consult the [ACCPAS website](#) for the latest information concerning policies, procedures, and proposed and/or approved standards revisions.

Institutions undergoing review for accreditation or reaccreditation should refer to the ACCPAS website for the most recent guidance and procedures for self-study and preparations for an on-site review. Information and all applicable forms and procedures documents can be found within the section titled "[Accreditation Materials](#)."

Additional print copies of the *Handbook* may be requested from the National Office.

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# FOREWORD

The Accrediting Commission for Community and Precollegiate Arts Schools (ACCPAS) was founded in 2000 for the following purposes: providing voluntary accreditation services for community and precollegiate schools emphasizing arts study; supporting those institutions and their programs in the arts disciplines in their quests for educational excellence; and when appropriate, connecting the development of artistry and intellect from the early years through higher education. ACCPAS is sponsored by the Council of Arts Accrediting Associations (CAAA), which is incorporated in the Commonwealth of Virginia as a non-profit organization. The Council was formed in 1980. Its members are the National Association of Schools of Music, founded 1924; the National Association of Schools of Art and Design, founded 1944; the National Association of Schools of Theatre, founded 1965; and the National Association of Schools of Dance, founded 1980. The primary purpose of these four organizations is to accredit institutions and programs offering degrees and credentials of higher education in the arts disciplines. Each association member of the Council is recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education as the accrediting body in its field, under statutes that connect such accreditation with federal purposes supporting higher education.

The Council of Arts Accrediting Associations appoints members of the Accrediting Commission for Community and Precollegiate Arts Schools. In developing the work of ACCPAS, CAAA cooperates with the National Guild of Community Schools of the Arts, and the International Network of Schools for the Advancement of Arts Education. CAAA encourages all community and precollegiate arts schools to participate in these organizations which CAAA recognizes as the preeminent service organizations in their fields.

Schools completing a successful review by ACCPAS are accorded accreditation. ACCPAS is not a membership organization. ACCPAS accreditation may provide eligibility for membership in other organizations. Detailed information is provided in the ACCPAS *Handbook*. Accreditation by ACCPAS is on a voluntary basis.

The work of ACCPAS is intended to support artistic and academic excellence with:

1. Threshold standards that define the fundamentals of quality and thus provide a framework supporting specific institutional and programmatic purposes.
2. Review procedures that evaluate relationships among purposes, curricula and programs in the arts disciplines, capabilities, aspirations, and resources, all in the context of each school's mission and achievements.
3. A philosophy that promotes creativity in the definition, pursuit, and evaluation of artistic and academic quality.
4. Services that enhance the ability of schools to analyze themselves for purposes of improvement.

# Standards and Guidelines for ACCPAS Accreditation

## INTRODUCTION

In presenting the following Standards and Guidelines statements, ACCPAS reaffirms its special commitment to those principles of voluntary accreditation which encourage differences among institutions and respect for operational integrity within institutions.

These Standards and Guidelines are presented as a synthesis of current thought about community and precollegiate education and training in the various arts to be used as part of the peer-review process of accreditation, not as a set of rules and regulations to be enforced through rigid procedures.

In this process, standards and guidelines provide a basis for:

1. the dialogue within the institution as part of the self-study process,
2. the institution's interaction with the visiting team, and
3. the exchange of views between the institution and ACCPAS.

Therefore, the Standards and Guidelines statements must be viewed along with the ACCPAS Code of Ethics, Rules of Practice and Procedure, and accreditation procedures if a comprehensive picture of the ACCPAS accreditation process is to be obtained.

The Standards and Guidelines are also intended to provide the public at large with a comprehensive document outlining the attributes of education and training programs. These attributes are presented as a framework within which each institution develops the specifics of its unique community education or precollegiate programs. In no case should "standards and guidelines" be construed as indicating standardization.

The accreditation of community and precollegiate arts schools is based upon:

1. the goals and objectives set forth by the individual school;
2. the manner in which these goals and objectives relate to standards for accreditation generally characteristic of educational institutions;
3. the comprehensive presentation of the educational philosophy and concepts that determine these goals and objectives;
4. the degree to which these goals and objectives have been achieved.

Standards are applied recognizing that:

1. a unique relationship exists in each school between operations (goals, objectives, resources, policies, etc.) and programs (lessons, curriculum, presentations, research, public service, etc.), and
2. evaluation and management of this relationship are crucial to the effectiveness with which the school shapes its programs, relates them to its mission and goals, and produces educational results.

Standards concerning operations and those concerning disciplinary content are used in the context of this relationship as the institution undertakes self study, as on-site visitors review the school, as ACCPAS reaches the accreditation decision, and as the institution continues working on its own terms to develop and evaluate its programs.

The standards below address content and competencies for various arts programs. Accreditation evaluations are conducted on the basis of content and competencies rather than on course or program titles. Identification of specific content or competencies in the standards text does not indicate the necessity of a specific, separate course or program dedicated to that area.

## ORGANIZATION AND TERMINOLOGY

ACCPAS standards and guidelines are presented in four sections: (1) basic criteria for accreditation, (2) operational standards, (3) standards in the arts disciplines, and (4) appendices.

Since each school decides what it will offer, not every standard is applicable to every school. For example, a school may offer programs in only one or two arts disciplines. Therefore, the standards for the other disciplines would not apply. The same principle holds for levels of instruction. Further, the standards do not promote standardization. While each school will have a mission, no two will be exactly alike. While each accredited school must demonstrate adequate finances, no two institutions will approach this matter in the same way. The standards address functions to be served rather than methodologies to be employed.

When reviewing language in the ACCPAS *Handbook*, it is important to understand the specific language that is used and how that language should be interpreted.

Criteria and provisions in the text of the *Handbook* are applied with careful attention to distinctions among standards, guidelines, recommendations, and other statements.

1. Statements using terms such as *shall*, *must*, and *essential* outline threshold standards.
2. Statements using the terms *normally* or *usually* provide guidelines that indicate one or more of the numerous conditions commonly present when there is compliance with a threshold standard.
3. Statements using the terms *should*, *recommend*, or *suggest* indicate recommendations, which are actions consistent with standards compliance, but that are not in and of themselves threshold standards.
4. Other statements provide comments, definitions, and statements of fact that indicate advice or shared knowledge based on consensus of the professions.

Accreditation is based on assurance that an institution meets the threshold standards established for ACCPAS by CAAA. Guidelines and advice, while related to fulfillment of functions required by the standards, are not themselves threshold standards.

Throughout the standards, the term *school* is used to designate the entire community and/or precollegiate program being reviewed for accreditation by ACCPAS. Thus, *school* may refer to free-standing institutions or to departments or schools that are part of larger institutions, or to programs administered by two or more administrative units. In the case of free-standing community and precollegiate schools of the arts, the terms *institution* and *school* designate the same entity. Where the community or precollegiate program is part of a larger entity, the term *institution* designates the larger entity, while *school* designates the community and precollegiate education program. Most often, the term *program* is used to indicate a particular type or course of study within a school.

# STANDARDS FOR COMMUNITY AND PRECOLLEGIATE ARTS SCHOOLS AND PROGRAMS

## I. BASIC CRITERIA FOR ACCREDITATION

### A. Introduction

The Accrediting Commission for Community and Precollegiate Arts Schools reviews and accredits only institutions and programs concerned with community and/or precollegiate education.

*Community and precollegiate arts education* refers to programs of study for children, youth, and adults in the institution's local community, or for students in day or boarding schools. These range from private lessons to large institutionalized programs with specialized professional faculty and administration. "Community School," "Magnet School," "Charter School," "Preparatory Program," and "Community Division" are among the many titles used to designate such programs. Although they may lead to or include a certificate or high school diploma, programs of these organizations do not lead to degrees or other postsecondary credentials.

All community and precollegiate arts programs must produce results consistent with their purposes and provide the best possible environment for education and training. Such an environment should foster an understanding of the arts and an attitude of respect for their potential contribution to society.

In addition to the offerings of independent schools that are strictly non-degree-granting, community and precollegiate arts programs may be found in independent degree-granting schools, in multipurpose higher education institutions offering degree and non-degree programs in the various arts, and as a component of an arts, civic, or religious organization.

### B. Basic Criteria

Regardless of organizational structure, an institution offering community and precollegiate programs, as well as any parent institution, must meet the following basic criteria for accreditation:

1. The mission must reflect intent to offer study in one or more of the arts in an institutional context.
2. The institution shall have a statement of purposes that includes an arts focus and one or more programs in dance or music or theatre or the visual arts or creative writing or other arts disciplines consistent with that mission.
3. The institution shall maintain an enrollment sufficient to support its programs.
4. An independent institution shall have been in operation for at least three consecutive years.
5. The institution shall maintain its programs or sequences on a regular academic-year or year-round basis and shall provide continuous offerings of lessons or classes within a time span and of an intensity appropriate to the teaching and learning objectives.
6. Published materials in any format must accurately reflect the programs and policies of the institution.
7. All policies regarding the admission, registration and retention of students, those pertaining to the school's evaluation of progress through its educational program, and those pertaining to financial support, financial aid, and scholarships shall be clearly defined in materials published by the institution.



8. All tuition, fees, and other charges, all policies pertaining thereto, as well as all financial aid policies, shall be clearly described in the institution's published literature.
9. Faculty members shall be qualified by educational background and/or professional experience for their specific teaching assignments. The institution shall list its faculty in its published literature.
10. The institution shall have facilities and equipment adequate to the needs of its educational program.
11. The institution shall either have learning and information resources adequate for its educational programs, or shall have made arrangements for its students and faculty to have access to appropriate resources in the immediate area.
12. The institution shall be licensed or chartered to operate as required by local and state legal codes. The institution shall meet all legal requirements to operate wherever it conducts its activities.
13. The institution demonstrates commitment to a program of continued self-evaluation.

Freestanding community or precollegiate arts schools for which ACCPAS is the only or primary accreditor must also meet the requirements in Appendix I.A. Proprietary schools must also meet the requirements in Appendices I.A. and I.B.

## **II. PURPOSES AND OPERATIONS**

### **A. Purposes of the School**

#### **1. Standards**

- a. Each school chooses the specific terminology it uses to state its purposes. Although terms such as vision, mission, goals, objectives, and action plans are widely used, specific terminologies and the structures they imply are not required.
- b. There must be at least one or more statements indicating overall purposes. Standards regarding purposes for specific curricular programs are found in Section III.
- c. In multipurpose institutions, the overall purposes of the arts teaching components must have a viable relationship to the purposes of the institution as a whole.
- d. Statements regarding overall purposes must:
  - (1) indicate that fundamental purposes are educational;
  - (2) encompass and be appropriate to the level(s) of program or curricular offerings;
  - (3) be consistent with specific institutional and programmatic responsibilities and aspirations for teaching and learning in one or more art forms;
  - (4) be compatible with ACCPAS standards;
  - (5) be published and made available in one or more texts appropriate for various constituencies, including the general public;
  - (6) guide and influence decision making, analysis, and planning, including each of these as they shape and fulfill relationships among curricular offerings, operational matters, and resources;

- (7) be used to determine the extent to which policies, practices, resources, and curricular and other program components work together conceptually, structurally, and operationally to achieve stated expectations for teaching and learning.

## 2. Guidelines, Recommendations, and Comment

- a. There are numerous specific definitions of common terms, but usually:
  - (1) *purposes* is a generic term referring to statements that when reviewed together, define the special, perhaps unique, function of an institution or program in the larger context of educational and artistic endeavor;
  - (2) *vision statements* normally define what an entity aspires to be and often, who it intends to serve;
  - (3) *mission statements* articulate broad connections between the institution's efforts in specific arts disciplines and the world of art and intellect;
  - (4) *goals* are broad statements of aim, the specific needs toward which efforts are directed, normally less remote and more definitive than mission;
  - (5) *objectives* are the specific steps for reaching goals, normally measured in time among other indicators;
  - (6) *action plans* are specific means for achieving objectives, normally measured in dollars among other indicators.
- b. Areas normally addressed in statements of purposes include, but are not limited to: specific arts disciplines; students and communities to be served; learning; teaching; creative work and research; service; performance; and the policies and resources needed for effectiveness in these areas.
- c. To guide and influence the work of community/precollegiate arts schools, statements of purposes are normally the basis for:
  - (1) creating a common conceptual framework for all participants;
  - (2) making educational and artistic decisions;
  - (3) long-range planning, including the development of new curricula, innovative activities, expansion or reduction of programs or enrollments;
  - (4) operational decisions, including admission practices, selection of faculty and staff, allocation of resources, evaluation, and administrative policies.

## B. Size and Scope

### 1. Standards

Schools shall maintain sufficient enrollment to support the specific programs offered including:

- a. an appropriate number of faculty and other resources;
- b. offerings such as lessons, classes, ensembles, and presentation opportunities when published as being available or as the necessary component of an educational program.

## 2. Guidelines

Schools are expected to demonstrate a positive and functioning relationship among the size and scope of arts programs, the goals and objectives of these programs, and the human, material, and fiscal resources available to support these programs.

## C. Finances

*Independent schools see also Appendix I.A., item I.B. Proprietary schools see also Appendix I.A., item I.B. and Appendix I.B., items I.3. and 4.*

### 1. Standards

- a. Financial resources shall be adequate in terms of:
  - (1) the purposes of the school and each of the specific arts programs it offers;
  - (2) the size and scope of the school.
- b. Budget allocations for personnel, space, equipment, and materials must be appropriate and sufficient to sustain the programs offered from year to year.
- c. Evidence must be provided demonstrating that financial support is sufficient to ensure continued operation of the school and its programs in accordance with applicable ACCPAS standards for the projected period of accreditation.
- d. The school shall publish all regulations and policies concerning tuition, fees, and other charges, and those concerning financial aid. If tuition is charged, it shall develop a tuition refund policy that is equitable to both the institution and the student.
- e. The school shall maintain accurate financial records according to legal and ethical standards of recognized accounting practice.
  - (1) For privately supported schools this means an annual audit with opinion prepared by an independent certified public accountant. Such audit is normally completed within 120 days, and must be completed within 180 days, after the close of each fiscal year.
  - (2) For tax-supported schools, this means a periodic audit with opinion or a review as mandated by the legislative or executive branch of the government entity supporting the institution.
- f. The audited financial statements of the school shall reveal sound financial management in support of the educational program.
- g. Evidence of past and potential financial stability and long-range fiscal and financial planning must be demonstrated.

### 2. Guidelines and Recommendations

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

## D. Governance and Administration

*Independent schools see also Appendix I.A., item 1.C. Proprietary schools see also Appendix I.A., item I.C. and Appendix I.B., items I.2. and 6.*

### 1. Standards

- a. Governance and administrative structures and activities shall:
  - (1) Serve and work to fulfill the purposes of the school.
  - (2) Assure fundamental educational, artistic, administrative, and financial continuity and stability, and show evidence of long-range planning.
  - (3) Include a board with legal and financial responsibilities and adequate public representation. Examples are board of trustees, a board of directors, a school board.
  - (4) Exhibit relationships among board members, administration, faculty, staff, and students that demonstrate a primary focus on support of teaching and learning:
    - (a) the board is legally constituted to hold the property, assets, and purposes of the institution in trust with responsibility for sustaining the institution and exercising ultimate and general control over its affairs;
    - (b) the administration is empowered by the board to operate the school, provide optimum circumstances for faculty and students to carry out these purposes, and provide effective communications channels both inside and outside the school;
    - (c) the faculty has a major role in developing the artistic and academic program and in evaluating and influencing the standards and conditions that pertain directly to instruction, creative work, and research;
    - (d) students' and parents'/guardians' views and judgments are sought as applicable in those matters in which they have a direct and reasonable interest.
- b. The governance and administrative relationships of each organizational component of the school, including the process by which they function and interrelate, shall be stated clearly in written form.
  - (1) Administrators, faculty, and staff shall understand their duties and responsibilities and know the individuals to whom they are responsible.
  - (2) The school executive's responsibilities shall be clearly delineated and executive authority shall be commensurate with responsibility.
  - (3) In multidisciplinary institutions, the arts programs must have adequate representation to deliberative bodies whose work has a direct impact on their educational and artistic endeavors and results.
- c. The administration must provide mechanisms for communication among all components of the school.

### 2. Guidelines and Recommendations

- a. Normally, in community schools, stakeholders such as residents of the community and representatives of school constituencies are members of the board, and the composition of the board reflects the community served by the school.

- b. Normally, the school executive exercises leadership in program evaluation and planning, encourages faculty development, and promotes among all faculty and staff a spirit of responsibility, understanding, and cooperation.
- c. The school executive should nurture an environment that contributes to the school’s pursuit of its artistic, intellectual, and educational purposes.
- d. Written descriptions of governance and administrative relationships should be publicly available.

## **E. Faculty and Staff**

### **1. Qualifications**

#### **a. Standards**

- (1) The school shall maintain faculties and staff whose aggregate individual qualifications enable the school and the specific educational programs offered to accomplish their purposes.
- (2) Faculty members (including part-time faculty) shall be qualified by earned degrees and/or professional experience and/or demonstrated teaching competence for the subjects and levels they are teaching.
- (3) All faculty must be able to guide student learning and to communicate personal knowledge and experience effectively.

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

- (1) Standard II.E.1.a. applies to studies and coursework taken at the school or under cooperative arrangements with another educational or performing institution, or in any other third-party arrangement.
- (2) Teachers of creation and/or performance in the arts normally are, or have been, deeply involved as practicing artists and teachers in the specific disciplines or specializations they are teaching.
- (3) Academic degrees are a pertinent indicator of the teacher’s qualifications for instructing in theoretical, historical, and pedagogical subjects associated with the arts.

### **2. Number and Distribution**

#### **a. Standards**

- (1) The number of faculty positions must be (a) sufficient to achieve the school’s purposes, (b) appropriate to the size and scope of the school’s programs, and (c) consistent with the nature and requirements of specific programs offered.
- (2) The school must have clear, published definitions of any faculty classifications in use (for example, full-time, part-time, and visiting).
- (3) A school shall distinguish in its printed literature between regular and guest faculty. For these purposes, regular faculty shall be defined as those employed to teach on a regularly scheduled basis (at least biweekly) throughout a program of study.

**b. Recommendation**

Multiple faculty involved in any specific area of specialization should represent a diversity of background and experience in their field of expertise.

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

**a. Standards**

- (1) The school must have or be subject to procedures for appointing, evaluating, advancing, and compensating faculty that promote objectivity and that ensure appropriate connections between personnel decisions and purposes, especially as aspirations and purposes concern teaching, creative work, performance, research, scholarship, and service.
- (2) The school must have procedures for the regular evaluation of all faculty.

**b. Guidelines and Recommendation**

Effective and fair evaluation of faculty and staff is based on clear and accurate statements regarding responsibilities and expectations made at the time of employment and subsequently. Normally, elements, perspectives, and priorities used to determine the quality of faculty and staff work are articulated as clearly as possible.

**4. Responsibilities and Time Conditions**

**a. Standards**

- (1) Faculty assignments shall be such that faculty members are able to carry out their duties effectively.
- (2) Faculty members shall have adequate time to prepare and provide effective instruction, advise and evaluate students, continue professional growth, and participate in service activities expected by the school.

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

- (1) Institutions use a variety of methods for calculating teaching loads. The choice of method is the prerogative of the institution. When determining loads, it is recommended that institutions consider the means (such as on ground, hybrid, fully online) by which educational programs are delivered.
- (2) The teaching responsibilities of those having administrative and consultative duties should be carefully developed to ensure an effective balance between teaching and administration.

**5. Student/Faculty Ratio**

**Standard**

The student/faculty ratio must be consistent with the size, scope, goals, and the specific purposes and requirements of the programs offered.

## 6. Class Size

### Standards

- (1) When classes are offered, their size shall be appropriate to the subject matter and instructional form of each class, with regard to such considerations as materials and equipment requirements, safety, and the amount of student and faculty time necessary to accomplish the purpose of the class.
- (2) When individual faculty attention to individual student work is required during class, class size shall be such that students can receive regular critiques of meaningful duration during the regular class period.

## 7. Faculty Development

### a. Standard

Schools must encourage continuing professional development, even if funding is limited.

### b. Recommendation and Comment

- (1) Professional leaves; participation in activities that foster exchanges of ideas; cooperative activities and research, scholarship, and course preparation support are encouraged.
- (2) Whatever the institution's faculty development policies and mechanisms, the primary initiative for professional growth rests with each faculty member.

## 8. Support Staff

### a. Standard

Support staff shall be provided commensurate with the school's purposes, size, and scope, and with the demands of programs in the arts disciplines.

### b. Guideline

Secretarial, technical, production, artistic, and other types of staff are included in the scope of Standard II.E.8.a.

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

*Independent schools see also Appendix I.A., item I.D.*

### 1. Standards

- a. Facilities and equipment shall be adequate to support teaching and learning in all curricular offerings and for all faculty and students engaged in them, and be appropriately specialized consistent with the nature and levels of programs offered.
  - (1) As applicable to school offerings, facilities include but are not limited to studios, classrooms, and spaces for performance, exhibition, and administration. Facilities may also include spaces for costume and scene construction, student practice rooms, ensemble rehearsal rooms, computer facilities, maintenance and storage facilities, and dressing and shower facilities.

- (2) As applicable to school offerings, equipment includes but is not limited to materials, equipment, and technology for production in the visual arts; acoustic and electronic instruments; computers; audio and video playback equipment; lighting equipment; set construction equipment; supplies; and audio-visual aids.
- b. Space allotted to any teaching and learning function must be of adequate size and appropriately equipped for the effective conduct of that function.
- c. Budget plans and provisions shall be made for adequate maintenance of the physical plant and for adequate acquisition, maintenance, and replacement of equipment.
- d. Schools with goals and objectives in disciplines or specializations that require constant updating of equipment must demonstrate their capacity to remain technologically current.
- e. All instructional facilities shall be accessible, safe, and secure, and shall meet the standards of local fire and health codes.
- f. Ventilation, acoustical, and safety treatments shall be provided as appropriate to the disciplines offered.
- g. Schools with programs in the visual arts, or in costumes or set construction, must apprise all students, faculty, and staff engaged in these programs of health and safety hazards and procedures inherent in the use of materials and equipment associated with such programs; the school must provide instruction in the proper handling of materials and equipment as applicable to the nature and level of student engagement.
- h. Schools must have specific procedures to protect the health and safety of their students, including clearly defined emergency response plans.
- i. Schools must have a plan for reviewing and addressing health and safety issues on a regular basis.

## **2. Guidelines and Recommendations**

- a. Normally, the school maintains a multi-year plan for the regular upkeep of its facilities and upkeep and replacement of equipment. The plan is developed consistent with purposes, the size and scope of the school, programs offered, and prospective changes.
- b. All facilities and equipment should produce an environment conducive to learning and be sufficient to enable faculty and students to focus on artistic and academic endeavors.
- c. If applicable to program offerings, provisions should be made for students to have access to adequate facilities at times other than regularly scheduled classes.
- d. Schools should assist students to acquire knowledge from qualified professionals and authoritative medical sources regarding the maintenance of professional health and the prevention of injuries.

## **G. Learning and Information Resources**

### **Standards**

- a. Adequate library and/or learning and/or information resources (for example, library materials, electronic access, teaching collections) must be readily available to support both the programs offered and the needs of faculty and enrolled students.
- b. Learning materials must be current and relevant to the programs offered.



- c. Schools providing access to learning resources off-site must demonstrate that the collection is adequate to support the program, and that policies and procedures for access are appropriate to the needs of the students and faculty.

## **H. Recruitment, Enrollment, Financial Aid, Retention, Record Keeping, and Advisement**

### **1. Standards**

- a. Communications with prospective students and parents must be accurate and must present the school and its programs in an authentic manner.
- b. A school must make clear the extent to which enrollment in the school and its programs are open or selective.
- c. As a matter of sound educational practice, schools with selective enrollment policies must endeavor to recruit and admit students only to programs or curricula for which they show aptitudes and prospects for success.
- d. Admission and recruitment goals, policies, and procedures shall be ethical, controlled by the school, and compatible with the purposes of the school.
- e. Admissions evaluation procedures and advising services must be clearly related to the goals and objectives of the school's arts programs.
- f. Enrollment in or admission to particular programs of study must be correlated to the institution's ability to provide the requisite instruction at the appropriate level for all students enrolled.
- g. Student retention policies must be:
  - (1) appropriate to the purposes of the school's curricular programs;
  - (2) clearly defined;
  - (3) published for students and faculty;
  - (4) applied with rigor and fairness.
- h. Policies and procedures for financial aid must be codified and applied consistently.
- i. Having informed a student of the curriculum, standards, and procedures for obtaining any certificate or diploma for which the student is enrolling, the school shall not impose, ex post facto, a revision of the curriculum, standards, or procedures for the certificate or diploma, to the detriment of the student's normal educational progress.
- j. When it has been determined that a student is not making satisfactory progress toward any diploma or certificate for which the student is enrolled, the parents/guardians and the student shall be so informed.
- k. The school shall maintain accurate, up-to-date records of each student's educational progress, which may include particular courses taken, grades, and/or credits earned, performances or exhibitions associated with program requirements, and the results of other appropriate evaluations.

### **2. Guidelines and Recommendations**

- a. Normally, community schools offer financial aid or subsidized programs that serve the needs of the community.

- b. Community schools should develop recruitment and financial policies that reflect awareness of the demographic composition of the community.
- c. Community and comprehensive schools should engage students with specific career goals in a continuous advisement program related to their area of specialization.
- d. Advisement should reflect concern for the student’s goals and should provide assistance with the selection of lessons and courses that serve as appropriate preparation for advanced study.
- e. Each student should have access to information concerning available career options in the student’s primary arts discipline.

**I. Published Materials and Websites**

**1. Standards**

- a. Published materials concerning the school shall be clear, accurate, and readily available.
- b. A catalog or similar document(s) shall be published at least biennially and shall cover:
  - (1) purposes;
  - (2) size and scope;
  - (3) programs or curricula;
  - (4) faculty;
  - (5) administrators and board members;
  - (6) locale;
  - (7) facilities;
  - (8) costs and refund policies including scholarship offerings and policies;
  - (9) rules and regulations for conduct;
  - (10) any quantitative, qualitative, and time requirements for admission, retention, and completion of programs, including, if applicable, any school, district, or state requirements governing the award of diplomas or certificates;
  - (11) school calendar;
  - (12) grievance procedures;
  - (13) accreditation status with ACCPAS and, if applicable, other appropriate accrediting agencies.
- c. Costs; qualitative, quantitative and time requirements; and academic calendars shall have an evident and appropriate relationship to purposes, curriculum, and subject matters taught.
- d. Program and degree titles shall be consistent with content.
- e. When a school or program offers work that is given academic credit by another institution, the source of the credit and any credential it leads to must be clear.

- f. Through means consistent with its purposes and resources the school shall routinely provide reliable data and information to the public concerning the achievement of its purposes.
- g. The school shall have readily available valid documentation for any statements and/or promises regarding such matters as program excellence, educational results, success in placement, and achievements of graduates or faculty.
- h. Published materials must clearly distinguish those programs, courses, services, and personnel available every academic year from those available on a less frequent basis.
- i. Publications shall not list as current any courses not taught for two consecutive years that will not be taught during the third consecutive year.

**2. Guidelines**

- a. Published materials include Internet websites and any other forms of information distribution.
- b. In addition to a standard catalog, schools should maintain published documents of sufficient clarity and detail to facilitate understanding about all aspects of their work among administrators, faculty, students, parents/guardians, and other constituencies.

**J. Branch Campuses and Other Entities**

Programs in these categories must meet application requirements in Appendix I.C.

**K. Community Involvement and Relationships with Other Schools**

**1. Standards**

- a. Policies concerning community alliances, partnerships, and the like shall be consistent with the school’s purposes, clearly stated, and approved by the governing board or authority of the institution.
- b. Schools must publish any formal relationships and policies concerning community involvement.

**2. Guideline**

Schools vary in the intensity of their community involvement according to their various objectives and types of program offerings. Normally, all schools enjoy reciprocal benefits from cooperating with local schools, colleges, conservatories, universities, performing groups, arts, and other community-based organizations.

**L. Relationship with Parents/Guardians**

Each school serving children and youth must have policies and procedures that facilitate communication between parents/guardians and the school, including regular reports of student progress.

**M. Evaluation, Planning, and Projections**

**1. Standards**

- a. The school shall evaluate, plan, and make projections consistent with and supportive of its purposes and its size and scope.

- (1) Techniques, procedures, resources, time requirements, and specific methodologies used for evaluation, planning, and projections shall be developed by the school appropriate to the natures of the disciplines offered at the institution and with a logical and functioning relationship to overall financial conditions impacting the institution.
  - (2) The school shall ensure that appropriate individuals (for example, administrators, faculty, board members, parents/guardians, and students) are involved and appropriate information is available to accomplish the goals and scope of each evaluation, planning, and projections project.
  - (3) Each school must determine the scope, breadth, and degree of formal, systematic attention to the connected activities of evaluation, planning, and projection as it makes decisions pertaining to:
    - (a) purposes;
    - (b) present and future operational conditions;
    - (c) resource allocation and development;
    - (d) specific programs and services.
  - (4) Reviews and evaluations must demonstrate consideration of the purposes, structure, content, and results of each specific program of study.
  - (5) Evaluation, projection, and planning associated with adding, altering, or deleting offerings must address multiple, long-term programmatic and resource issues.
  - (6) Evaluation, planning, and projection must be pursued with sufficient intellectual rigor and resource allocations to accomplish the purposes established.
- b. The school shall demonstrate that the educational development of students is first among all evaluative considerations.
- (1) Regular, systematic attention shall be given to internal and external indicators of student achievement.
  - (2) Indicators of student achievement shall be analyzed and organized sufficiently to produce an overall picture of the extent to which the educational and artistic purposes of the school and its arts discipline programs are being attained.
  - (3) When various levels of programs are offered in the same field of study, differences in expectations about achievement must be specified.
  - (4) The school shall be able to demonstrate that students completing programs have achieved the artistic and educational levels and competencies consistent with applicable ACCPAS standards.

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

- a. Evaluations provide analyses of current effectiveness; planning provides systematic approaches to the future; and projections create understanding of potential contexts and conditions.
- b. There is a broad range of evaluation techniques that produce indicators of achievement such as juries, critiques, course-specific and comprehensive examinations, institutional reviews, peer reviews, and the performance of students in various settings. Information gained should

be used as an integral part of planning and projection efforts. However, the school should ensure and make clear that evaluation, planning, and projection exist to serve the school's programs, rather than the reverse.

- c. Over-reliance on quantitative measures is inconsistent with the pursuit of quality in the arts. The higher the level of achievement, the more this is true.
- d. Evaluation, planning, and projection should contribute to general understanding about the relationships of parts to wholes, both for the school and its component programs, and, as applicable, the relationship of the school to its constituencies and communities. Evaluation, planning, and projections should result in successful management of contingencies, opportunities, and constraints. They should produce realistic short- and long-term decisions. They should ensure a productive relationship between priorities and resource allocations.

**N. Operational Standards for All Institutions for which ACCPAS is the Institutional Accreditor**

Additional operational standards that apply to institutions for which ACCPAS is the institutional accreditor may be found in Appendix I.A. Such institutions may or may not have regional or other institutional accreditation; they may be not-for-profit or proprietary.

**O. Operational Standards and Procedures for Proprietary Institutions**

Additional operational standards that apply to all proprietary institutions may be found in Appendix I.B.

**III. ARTS DISCIPLINE PROGRAMS**

**A. Basic School Types**

ACCPAS recognizes two distinct types of schools and programs:

**1. Community Arts Schools**

- a. These schools offer programs of arts study for children, youth, and adults, in the institution's local community. These range from early childhood programs to private instruction to large institutionalized programs with specialized professional faculty and administration. Normally, these schools do not offer elementary, middle, or high school studies that include general education.
- b. The following arts discipline standards are applied as applicable to each discrete program offering of the school, whether lessons, classes, ensembles, or studios. Community arts schools may or may not offer curricula. A curriculum is a specified course of study, often involving more than one educational experience.

**2. Precollegiate Arts Schools Offering General Education or the High School Diploma**

- a. Precollegiate arts schools may offer elementary, middle school, or secondary education; the high school diploma; or the arts component of a program that meets elementary/secondary education or high school diploma requirements of the states or other governing entities.
- b. ACCPAS will process applications for accreditation from precollegiate schools when at least 20% of the time required or the credits necessary for graduation are in precollegiate or pre-professional programs in creation, performance, history, analysis or other studies in one or more of the arts.
- c. The following arts discipline standards are applied as applicable to each discrete arts program of the school. Normally, such schools offer the arts as part of a larger curriculum. This larger

curriculum shall be coherent with respect to achieving goals both for arts study and for general studies, and for the relationship between the two. All such schools must meet ACCPAS general standards for specific certificates and diplomas in the arts disciplines offered. These are outlined in Sections III.E., F., and G. below.

- d. High schools intending to prepare students to become arts discipline majors at the collegiate level normally demonstrate how programs develop the precollegiate certificate competencies for the various disciplines offered by the school. These competencies are outlined in Sections III.E. and F. below. However, the elements of the certificate—creation/performance, analysis, history, final projects—may be integrated in the high school diploma course. No separate certificate need be awarded.
- e. ACCPAS encourages all precollegiate schools offering general education to be accredited by the appropriate regional or institutional agency. If such accreditation is not available or appropriate, ACCPAS may require additional evaluators to address the comprehensive nature of the program. In such cases where ACCPAS is the sole institutional accreditor, an additional set of standards apply (see Appendix I.A.). These standards contain the ACCPAS philosophy concerning the importance of a general education for students specifically interested in the arts.

## **B. Fundamental Purposes and Principles**

### **1. Purposes**

Each institution is responsible for developing and defining the specific purposes of its overall program in each arts discipline, and, if applicable, of each program it offers in each arts discipline.

### **2. Relationships: Purposes, Content, and Expectations—General**

- a. For each program, there must be logical and functioning relationships among purposes, structure, content, and levels of study or competency or proficiency expected.
- b. For each program, the program or curricular structure and any requirements for admission, continuation, or completion must be consistent with program purposes and content.
- c. Titles of programs must be consistent with their content.

### **3. Relationships: Purposes, Content, and Expectations—Arts Disciplines**

#### **a. Specific Disciplines**

##### **(1) Dance**

Purposes must indicate the degree of involvement with any of the following content areas that are offered: performance, choreography, design/technology, analysis, dance history, and other subjects or fields central to the school’s mission. Choices among the areas and emphases within each area are the prerogatives of each institution.

##### **(2) Music**

Purposes must indicate the degree of involvement with any of the following content areas that are offered: performance, aural skills and analysis, composition and improvisation, repertory and history, technology, and other subjects or fields central to the school’s mission. Choices among the areas and emphases within each area are the prerogatives of each institution.

**(3) Theatre**

Purposes must indicate the degree of involvement with any of the following content areas that are offered: performance, design/technology, playwriting, analysis, theatre history, and other subjects or fields central to the school’s mission. These may include film/video if offered by the institution. Choices among the areas and emphases within each area are the prerogatives of each institution.

**(4) Visual Arts**

Purposes must indicate the degree of involvement with any of the following content areas that are offered: studio, analysis, art/design history, technology, and other subjects or fields central to the school’s mission. These may include film/video if offered by the institution. Choices among the areas and emphases within each area are the prerogatives of each institution.

**(5) Other Arts**

Purposes must indicate the degree of involvement with any of the following content areas that are offered: creation and/or performance, analysis, history of the art form, technology, and other subjects or fields central to the school’s mission. Choices among the areas and emphases within each area are the prerogatives of each institution.

**b. All Arts Discipline Programs**

- (1) Choices must be consistent with overall purposes and with the requirements of specific program offerings.
- (2) Work in any of these content areas offered by an institution is pursued and evaluated as appropriate to students’ ages and degrees of involvement.

**C. Programs Involving Distance Learning, Disciplines in Combination, or with a Focus on Electronic Media**

Programs in these categories must meet applicable requirements in Appendices I.D., E., and F.

**D. Resources**

Resources must be sufficient to support the purposes, goals, objectives, and content of each program offered and must meet ACCPAS operational requirements in this regard (see Section II.).

**E. Specific Community or Precollegiate Programs**

The standards applicable to each non-degree-granting program comprise those referenced in Section III.B. (and C., if applicable) as well as those outlined for specific programs that follow in item E. (and in F. or G., if applicable).

A review of each institutional offering in the arts must demonstrate that:

1. program purposes are specific and clear with regard to the levels of what students are expected to study, know, and be able to do in terms of content or subject matter and technique;
2. any prerequisites or equipment and technology requirements are clearly stated;
3. students are constantly achieving a measurable degree of advancement toward the fulfillment of program purposes;
4. students are appropriately engaged and/or are developing an effective work process;

5. students are acquiring a body of knowledge and skills sufficient to be evaluated and a level of competence acceptable for presentation within and/or beyond the school;
6. for arts high schools, curricular structures and requirements provide sufficient time on task to produce the competence expected;
7. for arts high schools, transcripts of graduates are consistent with the curricular and other requirements stated in the institution’s publications.

To attain these objectives, it is assumed that work at the introductory/foundation level will be followed by increasingly advanced work.

#### **F. Pre-Professional Certificate and Arts High School Programs**

See also Section III.A.2.d. Please note: In arts high schools, these standards normally apply to the programs of the school in the various arts disciplines and specializations.

In community arts schools, these standards may apply to programs that enroll small numbers of students.

*These standards are specific because they address curricula that lead to a certificate.*

##### **1. General Standards and Guidelines**

- a. The pre-professional certificate program is a formal course of studies in an arts discipline offered by the school to provide training on the secondary level that develops disciplinary competence at least equivalent to the entrance requirements of NASAD (art and design), NASD (dance), NASM (music), and NAST (theatre) member institutions offering professional baccalaureate degrees.
- b. Though policies and procedures concerning admission to the pre-professional certificate program will vary among institutions, essential components include:
  - (1) a determination of student potential for advanced study;
  - (2) a thorough explanation of the requirements of the certificate program.
- c. Through an appropriate and structured advising process, the matters listed above and information concerning future study and professional opportunities should be discussed with students and parents/guardians throughout the duration of the program.

##### **2. Essential Competencies, Experiences, and Opportunities—Dance**

###### **a. Performance**

- (1) Achievement of the highest possible level of accomplishment in the field or fields chosen. It is assumed that study will continue throughout the entire certificate program.
- (2) Opportunities for presentation and critique in a variety of formal and informal settings.
- (3) Opportunities for study and/or experiences in more than one area. In most cases, study of more than one dance style or genre is appropriate and should be encouraged.



**b. Analysis and Dance History**

- (1) Students should develop fundamental understanding of the elements of dance and abilities to respond to, interpret, create, analyze, and evaluate their own performances or works and those of others.
- (2) Students should develop a basic knowledge of some of the major achievements in dance history.

**c. Final Project**

A final project before certification is essential. Although most students will choose to perform in fulfillment of this requirement, students who show exceptional promise and inclination toward dance history, choreography, or analysis may undertake other appropriate projects.

**3. Essential Competencies, Experiences, and Opportunities—Music**

**a. Performance**

- (1) Achievement of the highest possible level of performance. It is assumed that study in the major performing medium will continue throughout the entire certificate program.
- (2) Solo and ensemble experience in a variety of formal and informal settings.
- (3) Opportunities for study in secondary performance areas. In most cases, keyboard study is appropriate and should be encouraged.

**b. Basic Musicianship**

- (1) Students develop fundamental musicianship, including basic understanding of musical properties such as rhythm, melody, harmony, timbre, texture, and form; abilities to respond to, interpret, create, analyze, and evaluate music; and sight-reading and aural skills.
- (2) Students develop a general knowledge of music history through performance, listening, and discussion to enable them to place compositions in historic and stylistic perspective.
- (3) Evidence of achievement in basic musicianship must be determined through formal examination procedures.

**c. Final Project**

A final project before certification is essential. Although most students will choose to perform a public recital in fulfillment of this requirement, students who show exceptional promise and inclination toward composition or music history may undertake other appropriate projects in lieu of the recital.

**4. Essential Competencies, Experiences, and Opportunities—Theatre**

**a. Performance and/or Design/Technology or Playwriting**

- (1) Achievement of the highest possible level of accomplishment in the field or fields chosen. It is assumed that study will continue throughout the entire certificate program.
- (2) Opportunities for presentation and critique in a variety of formal and informal settings.
- (3) Opportunities for study and/or experiences in more than one area are appropriate and should be encouraged.

**b. Analysis and Theatre History**

- (1) Students should develop fundamental understanding of the elements of theatre and abilities to respond to, interpret, create, analyze, and evaluate their own work and the work of others.
- (2) Students should develop a basic knowledge of some of the major achievements in theatre history.

**c. Final Project**

A final project before certification is essential. Although most students will choose to present acting or design technology or playwriting work in fulfillment of this requirement, students who show exceptional promise and inclination toward theatre history or analysis may undertake other appropriate projects.

**5. Essential Competencies, Experiences, and Opportunities—Visual Arts****a. Studio**

- (1) Achievement of the highest possible level of studio accomplishment in such areas as one or more of the arts, design, media, film/video, etc. It is assumed that studio study will continue throughout the entire certificate program.
- (2) Opportunities for presentation and critique in a variety of formal and informal settings.
- (3) Opportunities for study and/or experiences in more than one area.

**b. Analysis and Art/Design History**

- (1) Students develop fundamental understanding of the elements of art/design and abilities to respond to, interpret, create, analyze, and evaluate their own works and the works of others in one or more specializations.
- (2) Students develop a basic knowledge of some of the major achievements in visual arts and/or design and/or film history.

**c. Final Project**

A final project before certification is essential. Although most students will choose to present studio work in fulfillment of this requirement, students who show exceptional promise and inclination toward art/design history or analysis may undertake other appropriate projects in lieu of an exhibition.

**6. Essential Competencies, Experiences, and Opportunities—Creative Writing and Other Arts****a. Creation and/or Performance**

- (1) Achievement of the highest possible level of accomplishment in the art form. It is assumed that study will continue throughout the entire certificate program.
- (2) Opportunities for presentation and critique in a variety of formal and informal settings.
- (3) Opportunities for study and/or experiences in more than one area.

**b. Analysis and History**

- (1) Students should develop fundamental understanding of the elements of the art form and abilities to respond to, interpret, create, analyze, and evaluate their own performances or works and those of others.
- (2) Students should develop a basic knowledge of some of the major achievements in the history of the art form.

**c. Final Project**

A final project before certification is essential. Although most students will choose to present creative work and/or a performance in fulfillment of this requirement, students who show exceptional promise and inclination toward history or analysis in the art form may undertake other appropriate projects.

**G. Other Elementary/Secondary Certificate Programs**

1. The awarding of a certificate implies the successful attainment of certain competencies at the elementary and/or secondary level either through coursework or individual study.
2. Certificate programs usually provide a curriculum of performance or studio studies combined with other studies in the art form. Certificates indicating a level of achievement, such as Junior, Intermediate, Senior, and College Preparatory Certificates, are examples of this type. In certain instances, however, a course of study that has a specific emphasis may be appropriate. Examples are Certificates in Basic Musicianship, Art History, Technical Theatre, or Dance Performance.
3. It is essential that the school provides a clear statement of the entrance requirements, objectives, level of the program, and completion requirements for all types of certificate programs offered. This information shall be available to students and parents/guardians, and opportunities for counseling and discussion in this regard shall be provided.

## NOTES ABOUT APPENDICES

The following appendices consist of various documents that are supplementary to the standards, guidelines, policies, and procedures outlined in the main body of this *Handbook*. They are grouped into three categories:

1. **Standards (Appendices I.A.–B.).** Operational and curricular standards which apply to institutions for which ACCPAS is the institutional accreditor.
2. **Standards (Appendices I.C.–E.).** Requirements for curricula engaged with distance learning and/or multi-disciplinary curricula, and/or electronic media.
3. **Policies (Appendices II.A–C.).** These appendices range from statements of a general philosophy of arts accreditation to specific policies followed by the ACCPAS staff and CAAA/ACCPAS officials regarding accreditation matters.

# APPENDIX I.A.

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## SPECIFIC OPERATIONAL STANDARDS FOR ALL INSTITUTIONS FOR WHICH ACCPAS IS THE INSTITUTIONAL ACCREDITOR

The following standards apply only to independent community or precollegiate institutions that offer education and training in one or more arts disciplines and for which ACCPAS is the institutional accreditor. A high school, or other school offering general education that is in this category, would not have regional or other institutional accreditation. Any institution may be not-for-profit or proprietary. Proprietary schools must also meet the standards in Appendix I.B.

### I. STANDARDS FOR ACCREDITATION

In addition to meeting all operational and curricular standards of ACCPAS appropriate to the scope of programs offered, institutions for which ACCPAS serves as the institutional accreditor shall meet the following standards:

#### A. Title

The descriptive title of the institution shall be appropriate to its purpose, size, and complexity.

#### B. Finances

1. The institution must demonstrate that tuition and other fees are reasonable and appropriate in relation to subject matters taught; to the goals, objectives, and time requirements of the programs offered; and to any other relevant variables.
2. The institution must have an annual audit with opinion prepared by an independent certified public accountant. The annual audit must be completed within 180 days after the close of each fiscal year.
3. If the institution supplements tuition revenue with contributions private or public or earnings from endowment, evidence must be provided that there are sufficient policies, plans, procedures, and volunteer and/or professional resources to generate sustainable non-tuition revenue sufficient for the needs of the school.

#### C. Governance and Administration

**NOTE:** Paragraphs 1 and 6 below apply to not-for-profit institutions. The remaining paragraphs apply to both not-for-profit and proprietary institutions.

1. A not-for-profit institution must have a governing board (for example: board of directors, board of trustees, school board) consisting of at least five members, which has the duty and authority to ensure that the overall mission of the institution is carried out. The governing board must be the legal body responsible for the institution that it holds in trust. The presiding officer of the board, along with a majority of other voting members, must have no contractual, employment, or personal or familial financial interest in the institution. The board must have adequate representation of the public interest recognizing that institutions serve a public purpose when they provide educational services and opportunities. Public representatives receive no financial benefit from the operation of the institution.

2. For all institutions, the duties of the board include securing financial resources to support the achievement of institutional mission, goals, and objectives. The board is responsible for approving the annual budget, reviewing periodic fiscal audits, participating in and overseeing any non-tuition revenue gathering and management, and approving the specific or applicable long-range financial plan.
3. In all institutions, the board shall maintain policies concerning conflict of interest, both with respect to its own actions and to actions of administration, faculty, and staff.
4. All institutions must have, and state in, an official document, policies that define board size, duties, responsibilities, and operations. These include the number of members, length of service, rotation, policies, organization, and committee structure for overseeing areas such as finance, governing properties, programs, and frequency of regular scheduled meetings. Board policies shall clearly state that no member or committee acts in place of the board, except by formal delegation of authority by majority vote of the board of directors.
5. If the institution is involved with multi-campus, off-campus, continuing education, evening and weekend programs, etc., governance and administrative procedures must be clearly defined and appropriately integrated and incorporated into the total governance and administration system.
6. In all not-for-profit institutions, the institution must have a paid chief executive officer whose primary responsibility is to the institution and who is a full-time employee of the institution. The board selects and regularly evaluates the institution's chief executive officer using consultative mechanisms described in the official document outlining duties of the board. The chief executive officer must not be the presiding officer of the board, but may be an ex officio member of the board. The board must delegate to the chief executive officer and, as appropriate, to other officers whose primary responsibilities are to the institution, the requisite authority and autonomy to manage the institution effectively and formulate and implement policies compatible with the overall structures and intents established by the board.
7. For all institutions, the administrative structure of the institution must be sufficient in size and competence to cover business, registrar, maintenance, security, safety, and student services functions. The institution shall have appropriate administrative and physical capabilities to protect the permanent records of students and any other permanent records as board policies may dictate.

#### **D. Facilities and Equipment**

If the institution depends on facilities, equipment, or resources outside of its direct control (for example, rehearsal and performance facilities, studios, library resources, recording studios, galleries), there must be a clear, fixed understanding with those controlling the outside resources which ensures the reasonable continued availability of those resources during the accreditation period. The institution must provide clear guidelines and procedures for its constituents' use of such resources and must ensure that such descriptions are readily available to students whose programs of study require use of these resources.

#### **E. Administrative and Staff Appointments**

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

**F. Schools Offering General Education** (*not applicable to community schools*)

Public and private day and boarding schools provide pre-school, elementary, middle, and high school education. When these schools enable students to focus on studies in one or more arts disciplines, they must also ensure that students receive an effective general education. The knowledge and skills gained through general education are essential for pursuing advanced work or careers in the arts. Schools must demonstrate how they fulfill general educational responsibilities at the level of programs offered. General education includes but is not limited to competency development in languages, mathematics, the sciences, geography, history, and the arts beyond the area of specialization. Health and physical education are important subjects for students engaged in the arts. Technical knowledge and skills provide tools for present and future work. Foreign language is highly recommended.

High schools indicating specific goals for precollegiate or pre-professional preparation in one or more of the arts disciplines must demonstrate how students are developing fluency in English, including reading, writing, speaking, and interpretation.

Schools must:

1. offer instruction in subject matter required by applicable law,
2. have a coherent, written, sequential curriculum that demonstrates continuity from grade to grade both in general education and in studies in the arts,
3. demonstrate how arts and general studies curricula are related to each other, and
4. have means for evaluating student achievement against general curricular and specific subject matter goals.

Institutions offering early childhood programs must have staff trained in the specific field. All faculty shall be able to address the developmental needs at the age level of their students.

**G. Student Services** (*not applicable to community schools*)

Consistent with its mission, goals, and objectives, the institution shall provide a physical, philosophical, and human environment that fosters the artistic, intellectual, and personal development of students.

If the institution is a boarding school, the institution's program of student services is derived from the relationship between specific goals for student development and the purposes of the institution. All types of services shall be available to all students. Student services shall be organized and managed by individuals with appropriate training, experience, and abilities. Institutions must provide an effective orientation program that acquaints new and transfer students with all aspects of the institution related to their course of study and their personal well-being. The institution shall provide and/or facilitate access to education, counseling, and professional care associated with the maintenance of physical and mental health. The institution shall provide and/or facilitate access to counseling covering personal, social, vocational, and financial issues.

If the institution administers a program of financial aid, such aid shall be provided and administered in an organized and accessible manner. Records shall be clearly documented. Awards are based on the equitable application of clear and published criteria. The financial aid program must be audited at least once a year.

If provided, housing must be conducive to individual well-being and personal development. Housing controlled by or affiliated with the institution must meet recognized standards of health, safety, and security, and be appropriately staffed.

If provided, food service must meet recognized standards of nutrition, sanitation, and safety. Food services must be professionally administered and operated.

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

If a day or boarding school, the institution must maintain policies concerning student responsibilities and rights, including complaint procedures. These must be clearly stated, well publicized and readily available, and administered fairly and consistently.

If a day or boarding school, the institution should provide opportunities for student leadership consistent with its mission, goals, objectives, and policies. Students should be encouraged to develop the abilities to work with people in as many settings and contexts as feasible. Opportunities to be involved in appropriate institutional decision-making processes are highly desirable.

## II. PROCEDURAL REQUIREMENTS

In addition to meeting all procedural requirements of ACCPAS appropriate to the scope of programs offered, institutions for which ACCPAS serves as the institutional accrediting body shall be subject to the following procedures:

### A. Major Changes in Control

Accreditation is not automatically transferable when there is a major change in control. 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 of over seventy-five percent of board membership at any one time. All such changes must be reported in advance to ACCPAS, or if the possibility of such changes is not known in advance, they must be reported immediately after the change. Institutions with major changes in control will be subject to special ACCPAS procedures, described herein and in separate documents. Continuation of accreditation will depend upon the institution's demonstration that it continues to meet requisite ACCPAS standards for all programs offered. This review will be conducted in accordance with standard evaluation and operational procedures or with appropriate monitoring when an institution is being closed.

A review for change of control may include a visit to the institution by ACCPAS evaluators to determine the extent to which a change of control has affected conditions for maintenance of accreditation. Normally, such a visit will be scheduled within six months of a change of control. The institution will assume the responsibility for fees and expenses associated with this visit.

### B. Starting a Branch Campus or Similar Entity *(an entity with a separate faculty, significant programmatic independence, and a separate administrative structure)*

If an accredited institution plans to establish a new branch campus, or similar entity that functions in the same manner, in the U.S. or elsewhere, the following materials must be submitted at least six months prior to the opening of the branch/similar entity:

1. A business plan. At minimum, the business plan must contain a complete description of:
  - a. the educational program to be offered and the delivery systems to be used at the branch campus/similar entity;
  - b. the projected revenues and expenditures and cash flow at the branch campus/similar entity;



- c. the operation, management, and physical resources at the branch campus/similar entity.

At the same time, the institution must provide:

- d. information showing the financial and administrative relationship of the branch/similar entity to the main campus;
  - e. the most recent audited financial statement of the institution.
2. Information in the standard ACCPAS format demonstrating compliance with operational standards and applicable curricular standards.

If required by ACCPAS, within six months of the opening of a branch campus or similar entity, the branch/similar entity must schedule a site visit and host a team of ACCPAS visiting evaluators, and the team must conduct and complete the visit.

### **C. Automatic Actions**

#### **1. Automatic Review**

The following circumstances will cause an automatic review of the institution's accreditation status:

- a. Declaration or evidence of financial exigency.
- b. State or local governmental action that results in challenges to the institution's license to operate.
- c. Change in ownership or major change in control, provided ACCPAS is given at least five days advance notice in writing. This includes but is not limited to (1) the sale of the institution or the majority of its assets, (2) the transfer of the controlling interest of stock of the institution 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 controlling interest of stock of the institution to its parent corporation, (6) the transfer of the liabilities of the institution to its parent corporation, (7) change in over seventy-five percent of board membership at any one time, and (8) the complete replacement of one set of board members by another within a six-month period.

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, ACCPAS must be notified within five days of the occurrence.

- d. Notice to establish a branch campus or similar entity that would offer programs eligible for review by ACCPAS, or notice of intent to significantly expand affiliative uses of the institution's name to other educational programs.
- e. Failure to gain accreditation or candidacy status upon application to another nationally recognized institutional accrediting agency, or loss of accreditation or candidacy status held with such agency.

#### **2. Automatic Suspension**

Automatic suspension of accreditation will occur under the following circumstances:

- a. The filing of Chapter 11 bankruptcy proceedings by the institution.
- b. The filing of Chapter 7 bankruptcy proceedings by the institution.

- c. Change in ownership or major change in control without five days advance notice in writing to ACCPAS. This includes but is not limited to (1) the sale of the institution or the majority of its assets, (2) the transfer of the controlling interest of stock of the institution 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 controlling interest of stock of the institution to its parent corporation, (6) the transfer of the liabilities of the institution to its parent corporation, (7) change in over seventy-five percent of board membership at any one time, and (8) the complete replacement of one set of board members by another within a six-month period.
- d. The establishment, without prior notice, of a branch campus or similar entity offering programs eligible for review by ACCPAS, or significant expansion, without prior notice, of affiliative uses of the institution's name to other educational programs.

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

#### **D. Policies and Protocols**

##### **1. Arbitration Rule**

The institution shall agree to submit any dispute involving the final denial, withdrawal or termination of ACCPAS accreditation to initial arbitration prior to any other legal action.

##### **2. Change in Ownership or Major Change of 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 ACCPAS procedures. The institution will assume the responsibility for fees and expenses associated with this visit.

# APPENDIX I.B.

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## SPECIFIC OPERATIONAL STANDARDS FOR PROPRIETARY SCHOOLS

Proprietary institutions shall not differ significantly in their educational operations from those of public or nonprofit institutions.

### I. Standards for Accreditation

In addition to meeting all operational standards of ACCPAS and other requirements appropriate to the scope of programs offered, proprietary institutions shall demonstrate the following:

1. Documentation that the institution has a charter and/or formal authority of incorporation and state recognition and/or licensure.
2. The operation of the school under the guidance of a board of directors, at least one-third of whom shall have no financial investment in the institution, and at least two-thirds of whom shall have no kinship with the principal owners. The membership of the board shall reflect the public interest. This is to assure that the governing body includes individuals who do not represent per se the interests of the administration, faculty, or students, or of the proprietors; and that such representation is not merely a token representation but has an effective, although not necessarily a majority, vote in the affairs of the governing body.
3. The complete structure of the financial organization including an annual financial audit with opinion prepared by a certified public accountant independent of relationships with the institution and such balance sheets, operating statements, budgets, salary determinations, etc., that will produce a complete fiscal picture of the institution.
4. An established record of fiscal allocation and management which demonstrates that the fundamental purpose is educational excellence, and evidence that such policies will be continued. The distribution of gross income in support of educational purposes and goals is especially significant in this regard.
5. The existence and operation of ethical policies and procedures concerning student services and record-keeping; admission policies and practices; enrollment and tuition; recruitment; advertising; and promotion. These policies and procedures shall be written in detail and shall be publicly available. Written agreements between the student and the school shall be required for all financial transactions and upon enrollment. Such agreements shall be drafted according to the recognized codes of fair practice and shall in no case be misleading to the student.
6. The existence of clearly defined roles based upon individual qualifications for the owner(s), manager(s), administrative personnel, and faculty.

### II. Requirements for Change in Ownership to Maintain Eligibility for Accreditation

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 ACCPAS within two weeks after purchase (or sale) of an ACCPAS accredited institution:

1. exact date of purchase (or sale);
2. curriculum vita of new owner (or new management);
3. a true and complete copy of the Sale Agreement (Bill of Sale);

4. financial statement of new ownership by an outside accounting firm;
5. current financial statement of the institution by an outside accounting firm;
6. current program enrollment;
7. a notarized statement by buyer and seller assuring ACCPAS and any interested parties such as students, financial institutions, state and government agencies, et cetera, 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;
8. documentation that the institution still maintains its state license or approval;
9. all other pertinent information relative to changes in location, programs, refund policy, tuition, faculty, and administration.

A visit to the institution shall be made by ACCPAS within six months of the date of sale 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 ACCPAS procedures.

# APPENDIX I.C.

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## BRANCH CAMPUSES AND OTHER ENTITIES (such as additional locations, extension programs, and other external programs)

### I. Branch Campuses and Other Entities

See I.B.2. through 6. of this appendix for descriptions.

#### A. Standards

1. The school shall protect the use of its name and by doing so, protect the integrity of its accredited status.
2. Branch campuses/other entities must have and advertise the same name as the main campus, and must be identified in the catalog or catalog supplement and in other publications of the main campus.
3. It is not necessary for the branch campus/other entity to offer all of the programs that are offered at the main campus; however, the catalog of the main campus must clearly identify the programs offered only at the branch campus/other entity.
4. Extension and other external programs may be affiliated with either the main campus or branch campus, and, as appropriate, must be identified in the catalog of either the main or the branch campus.
5. The school must ensure that all branch campus and other entity activities:
  - a. are considered integral parts of the institution as a whole;
  - b. maintain the same standards as courses and programs offered on the main campus;
  - c. receive sufficient support for instructional and other needs.
6. Students involved in branch or other entity programs must have convenient access to all necessary learning resources.
7. The institution must maintain direct and sole responsibility for the academic quality of all aspects of all programs and must ensure adequate resources.
8. If programs or courses use instructional delivery systems such as computers, television, videotape, or audiotape, appropriate opportunities must be provided for students to question and discuss course content with faculty.
9. The nature and purpose of any use of the institution's name must be clearly and accurately stated and published.
10. Schools must keep ACCPAS informed of discussions and actions leading to the establishment of branch campuses or other entities or to any expanded affiliative uses of the institution's name.
11. Accreditation by ACCPAS does not automatically transfer when a branch campus becomes independent or if an other entity becomes a branch campus.

**B. Guidelines and Policy**

1. Various terminologies are used to describe affiliated entities and activities. The terminology used in Appendix I.C. designates functions and organizational structures. ACCPAS policies and standards are applied according to these functions and organizational structures, irrespective of the terminology used to designate them.
2. A branch campus is normally considered a separate institution within the same corporate structure as the main campus.
3. A branch campus, or similarly functioning entity, is a physical facility that is geographically separate from the main campus of the institution and within the same ownership structure of the institution, and that also is independent from the main campus, meaning the location typically:
  - a. is permanent in nature;
  - b. offers a complete program leading to an academic credential or provides community education services, and has a significant amount of local responsibility for administrative control and program decision making;
  - c. holds appropriate authority and autonomy in matters related to faculty and administration, and budget and hiring practices; and
  - d. has its own budgetary and hiring authority.
4. A branch may publish its own catalog.
5. Other entities ordinarily do not offer complete programs of study leading to an academic credential. Other entity programs normally share faculty with, offer the same programs as, and are under the administrative programmatic control of the main school.
6. With regard to other entity programs, main campus faculty have a substantive role in their design and implementation.

# APPENDIX I.D.

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## 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 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 ACCPAS 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 ACCPAS 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 ACCPAS to offer arts programs delivered either entirely or partially through distance learning means will be designated as such in the CAAA/ACCPAS Directory List.
- c. Institutions approved by ACCPAS to offer distance learning programs shall provide, in institutional publications as appropriate, a listing, or designation, or indication of all arts 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 credit (if any). 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) The institution must use processes that protect student privacy and notify students of any projected or additional student charges associated with verification of student identity at the time of registration or enrollment in distance education programs.
- (4) 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 or otherwise communicating with instructors and students as required.

# APPENDIX I.E.

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## MULTI-DISCIPLINARY CURRICULA

### I. Standards Applicability

To some extent, every program represents a combination of modes of thought and inquiry, and thus, some combination of disciplinary perspectives. However, when an institution decides to offer an arts curriculum which is explicitly designated as a multi- or interdisciplinary combination and in which an arts discipline is either the primary or home discipline or constitutes over 25% of program content, the following operational standards apply in addition to those applicable to all other programs.

### II. 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. ways of combining the disciplines involved.
- B. Operations shall reveal 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.
- 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.

### III. Arts Discipline Content

Programs expressing objectives in specific arts discipline content are reviewed in terms of that content and the level and type of achievement expected.

# APPENDIX I.F.

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## PROGRAMS OR CURRICULA IN OR BASED ON ELECTRONIC MEDIA

### I. Standards Applicability

- A. In reviewing programs or curricula 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 arts 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 specialization.
- 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 multidisciplinary programs.

### II. Purposes, Options, and Characteristics

Computers and associated electronic media have expanded possibilities for the education in the arts disciplines. 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 arts disciplines, computers, design, digital media, animation, film/video, the sciences, languages, psychology, and many others. Within the arts disciplines, 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.

#### 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 the Arts Disciplines**

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. Other Disciplines**

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.

**III. 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 Sections II.A. through G.). The level of the competency expected shall be consistent with the level of the degree or program offered.
- G. The institution must be able to substantiate any claims for preparation of students for entry into higher education or to specific vocations or professions.
- H. Information required in items III.A., B., F., and G. above must be presented in catalogs and promotional materials available to the public.

# APPENDIX II.A.

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## ACCREDITATION ELIGIBILITY FOR COMMUNITY AND PREPARATORY ARTS INSTITUTIONS AND PROGRAMS

### I. Free-Standing Schools

#### A. Independent Community Schools of the Arts

These schools offer instruction in one or more arts disciplines to children, youth, and adults in their local community. The institution is not an elementary, middle, or high school, nor is it a degree or professional diploma-granting postsecondary institution.

#### B. Arts-Centered Public and Private Schools and Preparatory Institutions

This type of school offers a pre-school, elementary, or middle school education, or a high school credential and allows at least 20% of the time or the credits for graduation to be focused in at least one of the art forms.

Schools described in items I.A. and B. above, with programs in one or more of the following arts disciplines: dance, music, theatre, and the various visual arts, and meeting the Basic Criteria for Accreditation and the standards for accreditation may be accredited by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Precollegiate Arts Schools. ACCPAS grants accreditation status only.

Schools described in items I.A. and B. above with arts programs in music only or in dance only may seek accredited institutional membership with the National Association of Schools of Music (music) or the National Association of Schools of Dance (dance). Such membership in NASM or NASD requires a comprehensive ACCPAS review.

ACCPAS accreditation of dance or music programs produces eligibility for accredited institutional membership in NASD or NASM, as applicable and upon payment of dues, ratification by the appropriate NASD or NASM commission, and fulfillment of other obligations. Such membership is optional. Theatre or visual arts programs with ACCPAS accreditation may establish a correspondent relationship with NAST or NASAD.

### II. Community, Preparatory, and Precollegiate Programs Affiliated with Colleges, Conservatories, Professional Schools, and Universities that have or are seeking Accredited Institutional Membership in NASAD, NASD, NASM, or NAST

#### A. Basic Review

Affiliated programs in a specific discipline named as a separate entity and provided with a designated administrator are automatically reviewed by NASAD, NASD, NASM, or NAST and included in the accreditation status of the parent institution.

#### B. Intensive Review

Affiliated programs in dance or music may volunteer to seek a more intensive review by NASD or NASM through the process of full listing with those Associations. Any institution with affiliated programs in dance, music, theatre, or visual arts may seek an intensive review by ACCPAS. Except in unusual circumstances, the ACCPAS review will always be undertaken jointly with a review for accreditation in one or more of the other disciplines, and in the case of music and dance, be equivalent to a comprehensive review by NASM or NASD.

### **III. Multi-Discipline Programs in Postsecondary Institutions**

If a postsecondary institution has as community, preparatory, or precollegiate unit that offers two or more arts disciplines, it may elect to have the program reviewed by ACCPAS.

## APPENDIX II.B.

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### ACCREDITATION DIRECTORY LIST

#### I. CAAA/ACCPAS Directory List

A directory of accredited community and preparatory schools is published by the Council of Arts Accrediting Associations and includes in separate sections:

1. institutions and programs accredited by ACCPAS;
2. community, preparatory, and precollegiate institutions and programs accredited by NASD and NASM when the institution has voluntarily sought an intensive review of these programs that results in "full listing;"
3. community, preparatory, and precollegiate programs or divisions of postsecondary institutions accredited by NASAD, NASD, NASM, and NAST through the basic review process that is part of a regular postsecondary accreditation review.

#### II. Other Directories

The NASAD Directory List will contain in a separate section a listing of visual arts schools and programs accredited by ACCPAS. The NASD, NASM, and NAST directories will do likewise for their respective disciplines.

#### III. Institutional Listings

In all directories, the date following the address of the institution indicates the date of accreditation by ACCPAS.

The date in brackets indicates the year of the last on-site evaluation.

The dates in parentheses indicate the academic year in which the next accreditation review is scheduled.

#### IV. Program Listings

Each Directory List contains a listing of programs and curricula offered by each accredited institution, as indicated above. Although a Directory List may be useful in guidance situations, its primary function is as an annual record of the status of accredited institutions.

Programs in schools for which Plan Approval has been granted, but for which transcripts or other completion evidence are not yet available for review, appear in italics.

It is expected that accredited institutions will submit any new program plan to ACCPAS for review and approval.

# APPENDIX II.C.

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## CODE OF GOOD PRACTICE FOR THE ACCREDITATION WORK OF ACCPAS

To fulfill its values, principles, and responsibilities in accreditation, ACCPAS:

### **Section 1. Pursues its mission, goals, and objectives, and conducts its operations in a trustworthy manner.**

- A. Focuses primarily on educational quality, not narrow interests, political action, or educational fashions.
- B. Demonstrates respect for the complex interrelationships involved in the pursuit of excellence by individual institutions or programs.
- C. Exhibits a system of checks and balances in its standards development and accreditation procedures.
- D. Maintains functional and operational autonomy.
- E. Avoids relationships and practices that would provoke questions about its overall objectivity and integrity.
- F. Analyzes criticism carefully and responds appropriately by explaining its policies and actions and/or making changes.

### **Section 2. Maximizes service, productivity, and effectiveness in the accreditation relationship.**

- A. Recognizes that teaching and learning, not accredited status, are the primary purposes of institutions and programs.
- B. Respects the expertise and aspirations for high achievement already present and functioning in institutions and programs.
- C. Uses its understanding of the teaching and learning focus and the presence of local expertise and aspirations as a basis for serving effectively at individual institutions and programs.
- D. Keeps the accreditation process as efficient and cost-effective as possible by minimizing the use of visits and reports, and by eliminating, wherever possible, duplication of effort between accreditation and other review processes.
- E. Works cooperatively with other accrediting bodies to avoid conflicting standards, and to minimize duplication of effort in the preparation of accreditation materials and the conduct of on-site visits.
- F. Provides the institution or programs with a thoughtful diagnostic analysis that assists the institution or program to find its own approaches and solutions, and that makes a clear distinction between what is required for accreditation and what is recommended for improvement of the institution or program.

### **Section 3. Respects and protects institutional autonomy.**

- A. Works with issues of institutional autonomy in light of the commitment to mutual accountability implied by participation in accreditation, while at the same time, respecting the diversity of effective institutional and programmatic approaches to common goals, issues, challenges, and opportunities.



- B. Applies its standards and procedures with profound respect for the rights and responsibilities of institutions and programs to identify, designate, and control:
  1. Their respective missions, goals, and objectives.
  2. Educational and philosophical principles and methodologies used to pursue functions implicit in their various missions, goals, and objectives.
  3. Specific choices and approaches to content.
  4. Agendas and areas of study pursued through scholarship, research, and policy developments.
  5. Specific personnel choices, staffing configurations, administrative structures, and other operational decisions.
  6. Content, methodologies, and timing of tests, evaluations, and assessments.
- C. With respect to professional schools and programs, recognizes the ultimate authority of each academic community for its own educational policies while maintaining fundamental standards and fostering consideration of evolving needs and conditions in the profession and the communities it serves.

**Section 4. Maintains a broad perspective as the basis for wise decision-making.**

- A. Gathers and analyzes information and ideas from multiple sources and viewpoints concerning issues important to institutions, programs, professions, publics, governments, and others concerned with the content, scope, and effectiveness of its work.
- B. Uses the results of these analyses in formulating policies and procedures that promote substantive, effective teaching and learning, that protect the autonomy of institutions and programs, and that encourage trust and cooperation within and among various components of the larger higher education community.

**Section 5. Focuses accreditation reviews on the development of knowledge and competence.**

- A. Concentrates on results in light of specific institutional and programmatic missions, goals, objectives, and contexts.
- B. Deals comprehensively with relationships and interdependencies among purposes, aspirations, curricula, operations, resources, and results.
- C. Considers techniques, methods, and resources primarily in light of results achieved and functions fulfilled rather than the reverse.
- D. Has standards and review procedures that provide room for experimentation, encourage responsible innovation, and promote thoughtful evolution.

**Section 6. Exhibits integrity and professionalism in the conduct of its operations.**

- A. Creates and documents its scope of authority, policies, and procedures to ensure governance and decision making under a framework of “laws not persons.”
- B. Exercises professional judgment in the context of its published standards and procedures.
- C. Demonstrates continuing care with policies, procedures, and operations regarding due process, conflict of interest, confidentiality, and consistent application of standards.
- D. Presents its materials and conducts its business with accuracy, skill, and sophistication sufficient to produce credibility for its role as an evaluator of educational quality.

- E. Is quick to admit errors in any part of the evaluation process, and equally quick to rectify such errors.
- F. Maintains sufficient financial, personnel, and other resources to carry out its operations effectively.
- G. Provides accurate, clear, and timely information to the higher education community, to the professions, and to the public concerning standards and procedures for accreditation, and the status of accredited institutions and programs.
- H. Corrects inaccurate information about itself or its actions.

**Section 7. Has mechanisms to ensure that expertise and experience in the application of its standards, procedures, and values are present in members of its visiting teams, Commission, and staff.**

- A. Maintains a thorough and effective orientation, training, and professional development program for all accreditation personnel.
- B. Works with institutions and programs to ensure that site teams represent a collection of expertise and experience appropriate for each specific review.
- C. Conducts evaluations of personnel that involve responses from institutions and programs that have experienced the accreditation process.
- D. Conducts evaluations of criteria and procedures that include responses from reviewers and those reviewed.

# CODE OF ETHICS FOR COMMUNITY AND PRECOLLEGIATE SCHOOLS ACCREDITED BY ACCPAS

## ARTICLE I BASIC RESPONSIBILITIES

**Section 1.** Each institution shall ensure that administrators, faculty members, and staff understand and abide by (a) the ethical and operational procedures and codes subscribed to by the institution, including the ACCPAS Code of Ethics and Rules of Practice and Procedure, and (b) the laws and regulations applicable to the work of the institution as ratified, implemented, and adjudicated by federal, state, and local authorities.

**Section 2.** An institution's personnel shall not discredit other member institutions by disparaging the character, nature, quality, value, or scope of their courses of instruction or services; or by imputing to them dishonorable conduct, or by adversely reflecting on them in any other material respect.

## ARTICLE II STUDENT RECRUITMENT

**Section 1.** Institutions shall meet ACCPAS standards regarding published materials and websites in fulfillment of their responsibility to provide accurate public information.

**Section 2.** Students are free to attend the institutions of their choice. However, at an appropriate point in time, a mutual commitment in writing may be made between students/parents/guardians and institutions. Any such mutual agreement must clearly state the nature of the commitments and obligations they impose on administrators, faculty members, students/parents/guardians, and all other parties, as well as the schedules for their implementation, the conditions under which such commitments may be released by any or all of the parties, and the institutional offices responsible for areas addressed in the commitment statement.

## ARTICLE III FINANCIAL AID

**Section 1.** For the purposes of this Code of Ethics in its entirety, financial aid is an award made directly to the student based at least in part on demonstrated talent, this in addition to need-oriented aid.

**Section 2.** Consistent with Article II., Section 2. above, financial aid shall be awarded according to the criteria and through the procedures established by the accredited institution granting the award.

**Section 3.** Any offer of admission with a talent-based scholarship made within one calendar month of the semester of matriculation is normally considered a transfer under provisions of the Code of Ethics, Article IV.

## ARTICLE IV TRANSFER STUDENTS

**Section 1.** No accredited institution may affirmatively recruit a student presently enrolled in another institution, unless that student will complete the normal program of study for which the student is enrolled prior to the time of transfer. It is ethical, of course, to accept for transfer a student who applies for and achieves admission to another institution of the student's own volition.

**Section 2.** Institutions recognize that students are free to make inquiries about study at any institution at any time. However, if a student with financial aid begins to make an application for transfer, the institution to which the student is applying must inform the student of its procedures, conditions, and criteria for considering such applications, including the extent to which credit earned at the present institution can or will be considered for acceptance by the prospective new institution.

## **ARTICLE V FACULTY APPOINTMENTS**

**Section 1.** Article V. of the ACCPAS Code of Ethics is intended to apply to the conduct of ACCPAS accredited institutions and their employees or agents who are involved in the negotiation of faculty employment agreements or appointments on behalf of their respective institutions. It is not intended to govern the activities of individual faculty members who may seek employment with other institutions. The purpose of the provision is to encourage communications between institutions so as to avoid, to the extent possible, last-minute disruptions in faculty coverage that could significantly impact an institution's ability to fulfill its artistic and academic obligations to its students.

**Section 2.** Inquiries about an individual's interest in and conversation concerning a new, full-time academic appointment are in order at any time of the year.

**Section 3.** Institutions hiring faculty who are employed full-time at other institutions under a written contract that contemplates continuation of such employment for some or all of the next academic year shall be mindful of their responsibility to secure the approval of the chief administrative officer of the original institution when an employment offer in the form of a written contract is made during, or so close to the ensuing academic period as to threaten major disruptions in the original institution's ability to fulfill its artistic and academic obligations to its students during that period.

Those institutions using an academic calendar should contact the chief administrative officer of the original institution when such offers of employment are made after April 1 for the following academic year.

## **ARTICLE VI COMPLIANCE**

If the parties involved cannot resolve an alleged violation, an appeal, in the form of a detailed letter, shall be filed with the ACCPAS Executive Director, who shall then institute the process outlined in the Procedures for Reviewing Complaints Directed Against Accredited Institutions of the Accrediting Commission for Community and Precollegiate Arts Schools (see Rules of Practice and Procedure).

## **ARTICLE VII AMENDMENTS**

The Code of Ethics may be amended by a majority vote of the delegates (1) present and voting at any Annual Meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Council of Arts Accrediting Associations at which a quorum is present, and (2) voting at a meeting or in a poll conducted through electronic means when the same quorum requirements are met, provided a written notice of the proposed amendment be sent for comment to all Trustees and all institutions accredited by ACCPAS at least four weeks prior to said meeting.

# RULES OF PRACTICE AND PROCEDURE

## ARTICLE I ACCREDITATION POLICIES

**Section 1. Accreditation Defined.** Accreditation is a process whereby an agency recognizes an institution as having met certain qualifications or standards. This process focuses on two principal concerns: educational quality and institutional probity.

The review of educational quality is made according to nationally recognized standards developed by the agency. These standards are applied as appropriate to the objectives of the institution. The appropriateness of the institution's objectives is also considered.

The review of probity is made by judging whether the institution is indeed providing the educational services it says it is offering to the public and whether its own stated operational procedures are being followed.

The two processes basic to all accreditation are institutional self-study and peer evaluation, both occurring on a regular cycle.

The basic goals of accreditation are as follows:

- To foster excellence in education and training through the development of criteria, standards, and guidelines for assessing educational effectiveness.
- To encourage improvement through continuous self-study and planning.
- To assure the educational community, the profession, the general public, and other agencies or organizations that an institution, school, or program has both clearly defined and appropriate objectives, maintains conditions under which their achievement can reasonably be expected, appears in fact to be accomplishing them substantially, and can be expected to continue to do so.
- To provide counsel and assistance to established and developing institutions and programs.
- To encourage the diversity of American education, and help institutions to achieve their particular objectives and goals.
- To endeavor to protect institutions against encroachments that might jeopardize their educational effectiveness or academic freedom.

**Section 2. Determination of Readiness for Application.** All institutions are advised to determine their readiness to apply for accreditation by consulting Articles III. and IV. of these Rules, the Basic Criteria for Accreditation, and by self-evaluation in terms of the appropriate curricular and operational standards published for ACCPAS by CAAA.

Each applicant must agree to abide by the appropriate Operational and Curricular Standards, the Code of Ethics, and the Rules of Practice and Procedure adopted by the Council of Arts Accrediting Associations for ACCPAS.

Accredited institutions are responsible for annual fees as stipulated in Article IV. of these Rules.

**Section 3. Program Requirements.** ACCPAS will grant accreditation or renewal of accreditation only when every community or precollegiate education program in the arts offered by an applicant institution or an administrative unit thereof meets the standards and guidelines of ACCPAS. This provision applies to all programs of an institution demonstrating objectives consistent with the ACCPAS standards. The particular administrative structure used to manage curricula in multipurpose institutions has no effect on the applicability of this rule.

**Section 4. Accreditation and Institutional Autonomy.** The Council of Arts Accrediting Associations has established standards for ACCPAS accreditation that are applied only at the invitation of institutions. The standards provide benchmarks for reviewing the extent to which operational, curricular, and evaluative functions associated with particular programs and areas of study are being fulfilled.

As they evolve, ACCPAS standards for accreditation are continuously designed to allow considerable variation within broad principles applicable to programs and areas of study. Failure to meet the exact provisions of a specific standard will not preclude accreditation if it can be shown that artistic, intellectual, educational, and developmental functions indicated by the standard are and can continue to be fulfilled by appropriate means.

Standards for ACCPAS accreditation are applied with profound respect for the rights and responsibilities of institutions and programs to identify, designate, and control (a) their missions, goals, and objectives; (b) artistic, educational, and philosophical principles and methodologies used to pursue functions implicit in their various missions, goals, and objectives; (c) specific repertoires, texts, and other teaching materials utilized for study and presentation; (d) agendas and areas of study pursued through scholarship, research, criticism, and policy development; (e) specific personnel choices, staffing configurations, and other operational decisions; and (f) content and methodologies of tests, evaluations, and assessments.

Respect for institutional mission as required in Article I., Section 4., paragraph 3. above, and throughout ACCPAS published materials includes respect for religious mission. ACCPAS bases its decisions regarding accreditation on its published standards and shall not use as a negative factor the institution's religious mission-based policies, decisions, and practices in consideration of areas related to the arts such as curricula; faculty; facilities, equipment, and supplies; student support services; and recruiting and admission practices, academic calendars, publications, grading, and advertising. ACCPAS may require an institution to include in its curricular programs all core components as specified in applicable standards.

**Section 5. Withdrawal.** Any institution holding accreditation has the right to withdraw from such accredited status at any time.

## ARTICLE II APPLICATION FOR ACCREDITATION AND RENEWAL OF ACCREDITATION

**Section 1. Application Materials.** ACCPAS publishes documents that provide detailed descriptions of all aspects of the application process. These and the appropriate application forms are available from the ACCPAS website.

**Section 2. Application Fees.** An application for accreditation or renewal of accreditation, accompanied by the application fee, payable to the Council of Arts Accrediting Associations, should be filed with the National Office.

The application fee covers the cost of administering the accreditation process. ACCPAS evaluators receive no compensation.

Application fees for accreditation are \$500.00 for each evaluation. In addition to the application fee, all institutions are responsible for reimbursement to ACCPAS of expenses incurred by the visiting evaluators. Expense reimbursement is due and payable when requested by the National Office.

**Section 3. ACCPAS Evaluators Serving Other Agencies.** When an institution specifically requests an ACCPAS visitor as part of a visitation in which ACCPAS accreditation or renewal of accreditation is not involved, the agency served will be responsible for all arrangements.

**Section 4. Application Procedures.** Institutions making application for accreditation or renewal of accreditation shall follow the ACCPAS procedures outlined by CAAA, including preparation of a Self-Study Report and arranging for an on-site evaluation.

At least two visiting evaluators are required for each on-site visit, and at least one visitor for each arts discipline offered.

An institution may withdraw its request for accreditation at any time prior to the accreditation decision made by ACCPAS.

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

Accreditation or renewal of accreditation shall become effective after positive action by ACCPAS. Continuation of accredited status is contingent upon meeting ACCPAS requirements, including payment of annual fees.

### **ARTICLE III ACCREDITATION FOR COMMUNITY AND PRECOLLEGIATE ARTS SCHOOLS**

**Section 1. Accredited Status.** Eligible institutions meeting ACCPAS standards for accreditation shall be accorded accreditation following review under applicable ACCPAS procedures.

It is the policy of ACCPAS to re-examine accredited institutions on a regular cycle, the period of which shall not exceed ten years. When necessary, ACCPAS has the authority to require review or re-examination at any time upon prior notification of the institution.

Institutions approved for accreditation are granted five-year periods of accreditation. At the end of five years, the institution is expected to apply for renewal of accreditation.

Institutions approved for renewal of accreditation are granted ten-year periods of accreditation.

#### **Section 2. Special Statuses**

1. *Administrative Warning Status.* Institutions failing to (1) pay fees or meet other financial commitments, (2) file annual reports, (3) apply for reaccreditation after due notice, (4) provide any timely response to requests of ACCPAS, or (5) maintain administrative requirements of the ACCPAS Code of Ethics or the ACCPAS Rules of Practice and Procedure may be placed on administrative warning by ACCPAS. Before this action is taken, ACCPAS shall send a show-cause letter requesting (1) remediation of the problem, or (2) an explanation of why administrative warning should not be invoked. 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 may result in revocation of accreditation.

Administrative warning status is not a negative action and is not published. Institutions with administrative warning status retain accreditation.

2. *Probationary Status.* Any accredited institution (1) failing to maintain the required standards, (2) failing to respond satisfactorily to the requests of ACCPAS, or (3) found to be in violation of qualitative aspects of the Code of Ethics or Rules of Practice and Procedure may be placed on probation with notice of right to request reconsideration. The probationary period shall extend not fewer than five months or more than five years, the specific period to be determined by ACCPAS at each time such action is taken. A self-evaluation and visitation may be required for the removal of probation. Probationary status is not published until the probationary period extends beyond one year. Institutions on probation do not lose their accredited status, nor their rights and responsibilities.
3. *Suspension of Accreditation Status.* This status can be applied only to independent institutions for which ACCPAS is the institutional accreditor. It cannot be applied to institutions with regional or other nationally recognized institutional accreditation. Automatic suspension of accreditation will occur under the following circumstances:
  - a. the filing of Chapter 11 or Chapter 7 bankruptcy proceedings by the institution;
  - b. change in ownership or major change in control without previous notice as stipulated in ACCPAS policies, standards, and procedures for such institutions;
  - c. the establishment without prior notice of a branch campus or other entity offering programs eligible for accreditation by ACCPAS, or significant expansion of affiliative uses of the institution's name to other educational programs without prior notice.

Following automatic suspension, accreditation may be reinstated only upon application to, and approval by ACCPAS. Because this suspension results without action or prior approval on the part of the Commission, this change in status does not constitute formal withdrawal of accreditation, and thus, is not a negative 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 ACCPAS. Failure to move expeditiously or to establish an appropriate timeline for renewing accredited status will result in revocation of accreditation. Revocation of accreditation is not automatic and must be approved by ACCPAS. Failure to move from suspended accreditation status to regular accreditation status within a period of six months will cause ACCPAS to consider revocation of accreditation.

When evidence concerning remediation of the reasons for automatic suspension is submitted and judged adequate by ACCPAS, reinstatement of accreditation is made, along with time and other stipulations for future reviews. If ACCPAS 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 not published. The ACCPAS accreditation status of institutions with automatic suspension status is suspended. Thus, such institutions lose the rights of ACCPAS accredited institutions during the suspension period.

**Section 3. Automatic Review.** Conditions for automatic review applied to institutions for which ACCPAS is the institutional accreditor are found in Appendix I.A, "Specific Operational Standards for All Institutions for Which ACCPAS Is the Institutional Accreditor." If, as the result of such automatic review, accreditation is revoked, the institution may be reinstated only after an application has been approved by ACCPAS through regular ACCPAS procedures for renewal of accreditation.

**Section 4. Revocation of Accreditation.** Accredited institutions failing to maintain the required standards, or failing to respond appropriately to administrative warning status, suspension of accreditation status, or probationary status, may have their accreditation revoked by vote of ACCPAS, with notice of right to request reconsideration and right to appeal. Such schools may apply for reinstatement through the usual procedures of ACCPAS. A request for readmission to accredited status will not be considered until two years have



elapsed and until any previous financial obligations of the applicant institution to ACCPAS have been satisfied. Final action to revoke accreditation is published.

**Section 5. Requests for Reconsideration and Appeals.** ACCPAS shall provide recourse procedures for accreditation and other decisions as outlined in Articles X. and XI. of the Rules of Practice and Procedure.

#### ARTICLE IV FEES

**Section 1.** Annual correspondence fees for all accredited institutions are payable annually on July 1. The fee shall be \$275 per year.

**Section 2.** Notice of non-payment of fees shall be sent to delinquent institutions on November 15 of each year. If the fees of any accredited institution remain unpaid on the following February 15, accreditation may be revoked. Revocation is not automatic and must be acted upon by ACCPAS. Resignation shall not be accepted from delinquents.

#### ARTICLE V INSTITUTIONAL PROCEDURES

**Section 1. ACCPAS Objectives and Standards.** Accredited institutions must support the objectives of ACCPAS and maintain in their daily operations the curricular, ethical, and operational standards of ACCPAS as outlined in the *ACCPAS Handbook*.

**Section 2. Institutional Code of Ethics.** Although only federal and state governments shall have legal jurisdictional powers and responsibilities in matters of public law, accredited institutions should develop an appropriate code of ethical standards governing institutional and programmatic practices that recognizes social concerns relevant to quality education.

**Section 3. Annual Report.** Accredited institutions shall complete and file with the National Office the Annual Report Form provided by ACCPAS.

Failure to return a completed form for three consecutive years will cause the accreditation status of the institution to be reviewed by ACCPAS under Article III., Sections 2. and 4. above.

**Section 4. Closing an Institution or Program.** Accredited institutions shall advise ACCPAS as far in advance as possible prior to the closing of an accredited institution or a community education unit within a postsecondary institution. Advance notice allows the development of appropriate procedures to protect the accreditation status of any credentials received by former and current students and to provide for safekeeping of important records.

#### ARTICLE VI ACCPAS PROCEDURES

**Section 1. ACCPAS Policies and the Public Interest.** The Council of Arts Accrediting Associations has established and provided to ACCPAS standards and guidelines for community and precollegiate education programs in the arts disciplines, a Code of Ethics, Rules of Practice and Procedure, and other policy statements to govern CAAA and ACCPAS activities conducted on behalf of institutions, students, and the public.

Both CAAA and ACCPAS are voluntary and non-governmental. As such, CAAA and ACCPAS do not have the responsibility or the staff to exercise the regulatory control of state and federal governments, or to apply their mandates regarding collective bargaining, affirmative action, and the like. Nor does CAAA or ACCPAS substitute for or replace the function of the civil or criminal courts.

Institutions may wish to review the publications and policies of other governmental and non-governmental agencies; however, ACCPAS does not enforce the standards of other accrediting agencies, other associations, or other non-governmental organizations.

ACCPAS works strictly according to its own rules and standards and expects that institutions and those involved in the accreditation process on behalf of ACCPAS will apply these with integrity, imagination, and an attitude of humane concern for student and public interests.

**Section 2. Conflict of Interest.** ACCPAS works to avoid conflict of interest or the appearance of conflict of interest in any aspect of its accreditation activities and in its other operations. All individuals involved in any relationship with ACCPAS or CAAA are expected to declare potential conflicts of interest as they appear. In the accreditation process, potential conflicts of interest may arise based on personal associations, past or projected affiliations, past or current financial relationships, geographic proximity, or for other reasons. Questions concerning conflicts of interest should be addressed to the office of the Executive Director.

No member of ACCPAS shall participate in any way in accrediting decisions in which that member has a pecuniary or personal interest (or the appearance of same) or with respect to which, because of present institutional or program association, the member has divided loyalties or conflicts (or the appearance of same) on the outcome of the decision. This restriction is not intended to prevent participation and decision-making in a general run of cases which do not directly or substantially affect the institution or program with which the ACCPAS member is associated or its competitive position with a neighboring institution or program under review.

If a conflict of interest issue arises, the matter shall be forwarded to the Executive Director, who shall gather information, solicit advice as appropriate, and attempt to resolve the matter to the satisfaction of all concerned, consistent with the published policies and procedures of ACCPAS and with consideration of standard practice within the arts accreditation community. Should the Executive Director be unable to achieve resolution, the Executive Director shall bring the matter to CAAA. CAAA shall seek resolution through procedures developed to address the specifics of each case.

**Section 3. Nondiscrimination Policy.** It is the policy of CAAA and ACCPAS that no person shall be subject to discrimination in whatever relationship with ACCPAS because of sex, race, color, creed, religion, or national origin.

**Section 4. Students at Visited Institutions.** An ACCPAS consultant or visitor is prohibited from interviewing or auditioning an individual minor student or any child under 18 years of age during an ACCPAS institutional review unless at least one other adult is present.

In their relationships with ACCPAS applicant or accredited institutions, neither ACCPAS nor any ACCPAS consultants or visitors shall (a) permit reference to any student by name in an ACCPAS consultant report or visitors' report; (b) collect, sell or otherwise distribute the name, address or other personal information concerning any student; or (c) initiate personal contact with any student before or after an ACCPAS visit. Responses to student or parent/guardian inquiries concerning applications for admission to educational institutions or programs are not prohibited under this Rule.

**Section 5. Consulting Service.** Upon request, ACCPAS will supply a consulting service to schools and programs (whether accredited, seeking accreditation, or not) having questions relative to their future development or to assist in the resolution of problems.

Resource persons to provide information about ACCPAS accreditation are also available on the same terms as those for consultants.

In special circumstances, and at its discretion, ACCPAS may suggest to an applicant or accredited school that it take advantage of the consulting service to assist in the resolution of troublesome problems.

Requests for this service should be sent to the ACCPAS National Office.

### **Section 6. Policy Concerning Commission Action and Timelines**

**A. Action.** After the second consecutive request from the Commission for information sufficient to enable an accreditation decision, should an application of an accredited 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 accreditation revoked.
3. To place the institution on probation; or
4. To revoke accreditation.

**NOTE:** An institution placed on probation is reminded of the timelines pertaining to this sanction (see Rules of Practice and Procedure, Article III., Section 2., 2.).

**NOTE:** In extreme cases, the Commission may take immediate action to sever an institution's relationship with ACCPAS by revoking accreditation when it has been determined that such an action is warranted (see Rules of Practice and Procedure, Article VI., Section 7.B.2.b.).

### **B. Compliance**

1. Institutions are asked to demonstrate compliance at the earliest possible time.
2. The Commission may extend the timeline for compliance for good cause 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.
3. If an institution or program is unable to come into compliance as noted in A. above, the Commission may take action to revoke the institution's accreditation.

### **Section 7. Procedures in Extreme Matters of Institutional Viability and Integrity.**

**A.** When the ACCPAS Commission has cause to believe that an institution's non-compliance with ACCPAS consensus-based standards and/or Code of Ethics threaten its fundamental viability or integrity because

1. the fundamental purposes of the institution or its arts programs 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 its arts programs; 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 is deliberately misrepresenting itself or its program(s) to students and the public in categories of published information required by ACCPAS standards;

the ACCPAS Commission may request the institution to provide written information documenting the relationship between conditions at the institution and its arts programs and compliance with applicable ACCPAS standards.

- B. If information is not forthcoming within the time stipulated, or the ACCPAS Commission finds that, with respect to the institution or its arts programs, institutional viability has been lost, is in jeopardy, or that institutional integrity has been seriously undermined, the Commission may:
  1. With regard to an institution that is an applicant, but not yet accredited, cease the application process.
  2. With regard to an accredited institution,
    - a. issue an order requesting that the institution show cause why its accreditation status should not be revoked, and providing an appropriate timeline for reply and suggested corrective actions; or
    - b. in extreme cases, immediately sever the relationship between the institution and ACCPAS by revoking or terminating accreditation.

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

## ARTICLE VII 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. ACCPAS also offers the opportunity for accredited institutions to receive an optional consultative review of proposed substantive changes by the Commission prior to submission of an official request for substantive change. Procedures and forms for substantive change may be obtained from the National Office.

Under certain conditions, on-site visits may be required at the discretion of ACCPAS.

**Section 2. Definition.** “Substantive Change” includes but is not limited to:

1. Any fundamental change in the established mission, goals, or objectives of the institution or a major arts unit therein.
2. Any change in the legal status, form of control, or ownership of the institution.
3. The acquisition of any other institution or any program or location of another institution.
4. The addition or amendment of curricular programs that represent a significant departure, in terms of either the content or method of delivery, from those that were offered when ACCPAS most recently evaluated the institution. (These programs are normally considered in the Plan Approval process described in Article VIII. below.)
5. Starting a branch campus or other program.
6. Other major changes that would impact continuing compliance with ACCPAS standards applicable to programs being offered.

**ARTICLE VIII  
NEW CURRICULA: PLAN APPROVAL  
AND FINAL APPROVAL FOR LISTING**

**Section 1. Procedure.** When instituting new or substantially revised curricula, accredited institutions are required to submit documentation to ACCPAS in order to remain in compliance with Article I., Section 3., of the ACCPAS Rules of Practice and Procedure.

ACCPAS also offers the opportunity for accredited institutions to receive an optional consultative review of new curricula by the Commission prior to the submission of an official request for Plan Approval.

Submission procedures and forms regarding curricula may be secured from the ACCPAS website. There are separate procedures for Plan Approval and Final Approval for Listing.

ACCPAS does not ordinarily send visitors to examine a new curriculum, but may request the executive concerned to meet with it to discuss the program in detail.

**Section 2. Plan Approval.** Plan Approval is required after initial institutional approval and before students are admitted into a new program. The application for Plan Approval normally includes information concerning the structure of the new program as well as data concerning the faculty, library, equipment, and/or other resources necessary for its support.

When a program has received Plan Approval, it is listed in ACCPAS publications in italics.

**Section 3. Final Approval for Listing.** Final Approval for Listing is granted when ACCPAS has reviewed an application including validation of the Plan Approved curriculum through evidence of completion. Evidence for three students is required. The format for submitting evidence consistent with Plan Approval documentation should be secured from the National Office.

When the curriculum has received Final Approval for Listing, the program is listed in ACCPAS publications in regular type.

**ARTICLE IX  
PROCEDURES FOR REVIEWING COMPLAINTS DIRECTED AGAINST  
INSTITUTIONS ACCREDITED BY ACCPAS**

**Section 1. Purpose.**

**A. ACCPAS**

Occasionally, ACCPAS receives complaint inquiries or complaints against accredited institutions. The policies and procedures in Article IX. are only for the purpose of addressing questions of compliance with ACCPAS standards, procedures, rules, and the Code of Ethics as published in the ACCPAS *Handbook*, including any addenda to the *Handbook*, current at the time of the inquiry or complaint. These texts and their interpretation by ACCPAS staff and elected personnel are the sole basis for reviewing complaints. ACCPAS does not consider complaints on issues that are beyond the scope of these documents.

**B. Potential Complainants**

Individuals considering filing a complaint against an ACCPAS accredited institution must give careful consideration to the nature of the potential complaint and match what they hope to achieve with the means, procedures, and remedies available. Accrediting organizations are non-governmental and thus, do not have governmental powers. Their scopes of review are limited, operating only within their own published materials. Many types of complaints fall outside the purview of accrediting bodies and can only be addressed and adjudicated by the internal complaint procedures of educational institutions, or

by external structures such as law enforcement agencies, courts of law, state or federal administrative agencies, or private sector organizations associated with business practices or dispute resolution. Matters of a criminal nature are the responsibilities of law enforcement, public prosecutors, or the attorneys general of the several states. Individuals with intentions of filing complaints against ACCPAS accredited institutions should ensure that the nature and intent of the complaint fall within the scope of ACCPAS by studying Section 2. below.

## **Section 2. Eligibility**

### **A. General Principles**

1. ACCPAS policies and procedures for reviewing complaints are not judicial (parties are not found guilty; awards are not made; reversals of decisions cannot be mandated); they serve only as a method or means to communicate allegations, determine facts, and resolve issues within the stated purposes and scope of ACCPAS accreditation, i.e., whether the institution is in compliance with the ACCPAS consensus-based standards, rules, and Code of Ethics currently in effect.
2. In order to be considered, complaints must report and document conditions that jeopardize the overall quality of an institution's educational program in one or more of the arts and/or the general welfare of the institution to the extent that the institution is no longer in compliance with ACCPAS standards or requirements. Unless documentation shows a pattern of behavior, action, or inaction that impairs attainment of the institution's stated purposes or otherwise suggests direct violation of ACCPAS standards, rules, and/or Code of Ethics for accredited institutions, ACCPAS is not authorized to intervene.

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

1. Is presented in writing.
2. Is forwarded to the ACCPAS National Office by U.S. Mail or courier service. Email, facsimile, and verbal transmissions are not acceptable.
3. Is signed by the complainant.

**PLEASE NOTE:** ACCPAS will not confirm receipt of or respond to complaints that do not meet the requirements outlined in items B.1., 2., and 3. above.

4. Includes a signed copy of the ACCPAS Official Complaint Form.
5. Presents itemized issues or concerns directly related to specific ACCPAS standards, rules, or the Code of Ethics as published in the *ACCPAS Handbook* and any addenda to the *Handbook* current at the time of the complaint, and includes specific, factual documentation corroborating each concern raised.
6. Presents evidence that the institutional review or grievance procedures available and applicable to the complaint and complainant have been completed or exhausted.
7. Is not subject to the criteria set forth in Section C. below.

### **C. A complaint is not eligible for review if it:**

1. Contains inflammatory and/or undocumented defamatory statements regarding an individual or an institution.
2. Alleges criminal conduct.

3. Seeks a review or adjudication of individual problems or grievances with an institution or its decisions regarding issues such as, but not limited to:
  - a. student admission;
  - b. retention;
  - c. dismissal;
  - d. application of academic policies;
  - e. granting or transfer of credits;
  - f. grades and other evaluations;
  - g. scholarship awards;
  - h. fees;
  - i. disciplinary matters;
  - j. collective bargaining;
  - k. faculty appointments and dismissals; or
  - l. other contractual rights and obligations.
4. Is or constitutes a request to serve as a grievance or appeals body when the outcome of institutional grievance or appeals procedures is unsatisfactory to the complainant.
5. Is, at the time of filing the complaint, the subject of administrative or institutional proceedings, or if such proceedings are known to the complainant to be forthcoming.
6. Is the subject of prosecution or litigation in which the ACCPAS accredited institution or its employees are in any way engaged, or if prosecution or litigation is known to the complainant to be forthcoming.
7. Seeks action or otherwise seeks to engage ACCPAS in matters associated with compensation, damages, redress, or readmission on behalf of an individual or group.
8. Is submitted on behalf of another adult individual; a parent or guardian may submit on behalf of a minor.
9. Is a copy of a complaint submitted to other entities or parties.
10. Has not been submitted to, and fully processed and exhausted by, the institution's complaint or grievance procedure.
11. Has been submitted for review by another accrediting association with broader institutional responsibility than that of ACCPAS.
12. Is beyond the scope or the jurisdiction of ACCPAS at a multidisciplinary institution.
13. Repeats substantially the same allegations by the same party regarding the same institution that has previously been the subject of a completed review by the ACCPAS Commission.

14. Is the subject of published articles that have resulted from attempts by the complainant to focus public attention on the behavior, actions, or inactions of the institution that is the subject of the Complaint immediately prior to and especially during the course of the ACCPAS Complaint Procedure.

### **Section 3. Authority**

- A. ACCPAS accredits schools on a voluntary basis. The only requirement of its accreditation is compliance with its published consensus-based standards, rules, procedures, and Code of Ethics. The sole and final authorities regarding compliance are the elected officials and staff of ACCPAS operating under the requirements of the Association's *Handbook*, including any addenda to the *Handbook* current at the time of the inquiry or complaint.
- B. Procedural authority for the review of complaints outlined in Article IX. is vested in the Executive Director of ACCPAS.
- C. Decision-making authority regarding complaints under Article IX. is vested as specified in the various provisions of this Article.
- D. The Executive Director shall have the authority to stop the complaint process at any point or any time upon the appearance of evidence that would disqualify the complaint under policies outlined above, or in Article IX., Section 1. of the Rules of Practice and Procedure, or if the complaint otherwise moves beyond the scope or jurisdiction of ACCPAS.

### **Section 4. Time**

#### **A. Review Schedules**

1. ACCPAS will resolve complaints against member institutions in a timely manner, moving as quickly as feasible between stages of the Complaint Procedure.
2. The Executive Director shall have the authority to establish timelines for each specific step of the process.
3. Unless circumstances require alternative timeframes, as determined by the Executive Director:
  - a. 30 business days is the period for each stage outlined in Sections 6., 8., or 9. below;
  - b. business to come before ACCPAS will be scheduled at regular meetings.
4. The time required to conduct inquiries in Section 7. below may vary based on the nature and circumstances of the complaint, as determined by the Executive Director.

#### **B. Time Restrictions**

Except under circumstances the Executive Director deems extraordinary, complaints will not be considered after two years or more from the date of the last incident or incidents that are the subject of the complaint.

### **Section 5. Multiple Complaints**

If a number of individual complaints over time suggest a pattern of noncompliance by the institution, ACCPAS may be informed during the course of a review under Sections 8. below.



## **Section 6. Initial Review**

- A. Consistent with provisions outlined in Section 4. above, the National Office staff will acknowledge a formal written complaint within 15 business days of its receipt.
- B. Within 30 business days after acknowledging receipt of the complaint, the National Office staff will:
  - 1. Review the complaint and its documentation.
  - 2. Determine whether the complaint meets the eligibility criteria outlined in Section 2. above.
  - 3. Inform the complainant regarding the disposition of the complaint using one of the following statements:
    - a. No further action will be taken because the complaint does not meet the eligibility requirements of Section 2., or there is insufficient documentation.
    - b. The decision regarding further action is postponed while the complainant is given 20 business days to provide additional documentation. The complainant is then informed that the decision regarding the complaint is that described in either Section 6., items B.3.a. or c.
    - c. The complaint has sufficient substance to warrant the opening of a proceeding for further review.
- C. The Executive Director of ACCPAS, at the Executive Director's sole discretion, makes the final determination regarding all provisions of Section 6., including determination whether the complaint raises issues that are directly relevant to an institution's accreditation or membership status.

## **Section 7. Executive Director Negotiations**

- A. If the decision in the initial review is to open a proceeding as specified in Section 6., item B.3.c., the Executive Director of ACCPAS contacts the executive of the institution against which the complaint has been filed, advises of the complaint, provides the complaint and documentation submitted by the complainant, and seeks information from the institution(s) involved regarding circumstances surrounding the complaint. The Executive Director may also seek additional information from other sources, as the Executive Director deems appropriate.
- B. The Executive Director, using procedures and personnel the Executive Director determines, and in correspondence with the institution(s) and the complainant, attempts to negotiate, mediate, or otherwise develop a resolution of the complaint without further formal action. The Executive Director may appoint an agent to serve on the Executive Director's behalf. The Executive Director or the Executive Director's agent may recommend mediation or arbitration by third parties.
- C. If the complaint is resolved, the Executive Director informs the complainant and the institution(s) in writing.
- D. If the complaint is not resolved, the Executive Director initiates ACCPAS review (see Section 8.).

## **Section 8. Commission Review of Complaints Involving the Standards or Code of Ethics**

- A. The Executive Director develops a dossier containing the following:
  - 1. the formal complaint with complete documentation;
  - 2. information obtained from the institution(s) involved regarding the circumstances surrounding the complaint;
  - 3. information from the procedure outlined in Section 7.;

4. the relevant section(s) of the ACCPAS standards (or Rules) or Code of Ethics.
- B. The Executive Director informs the ACCPAS Commission that a complaint has been filed and places the dossier on the agenda of the Commission.
  - C. ACCPAS reviews the dossier and formulates a decision concerning the case. Possible decisions are:
    1. the institution is found to be in compliance with the standards or Code of Ethics;
    2. the institution is found to be generally in compliance with the standards or Code of Ethics, but the complaint has merit in this particular circumstance; or
    3. the institution is found to be not in compliance with the standards or Code of Ethics.
  - D. If the recommendation is C.1. above, the complainant and the institution are so informed in writing by the Executive Director.
  - E. If the recommendation is C.2. or C.3. above, ACCPAS may require the institution to submit a response within a specified time showing satisfactory resolution of the complaint and compliance with the standards or Code of Ethics. The response may require the report of an on-site consultant. The procedure for establishing and operating such consultancy shall be that in effect for on-site accreditation visits.

ACCPAS shall review the response when received and take one of the following actions:

1. Accept the response and consider the complaint resolved. The institution and complainant are notified in writing; the action is not made public.
  2. Accept the response and consider the complaint resolved, but request a progress report(s) to determine further compliance with the standards or Code of Ethics. The institution and complainant are notified in writing; the action is not made public.
  3. Acknowledge receipt of the response, but consider the complaint unresolved and the institution to be in noncompliance with the standards or Code of Ethics. In this case, the institution is placed on probation and required to submit a probationary response to ACCPAS within a specified time. Upon receipt of the probationary response, the ACCPAS Commission either removes probation or revokes accreditation. Revocation of accreditation status is made public through appropriate ACCPAS published materials.
  4. If the initial response is not received within the specified time, the institution is placed on probation by the Commission; the action is not made public. The institution is requested to submit a probationary response within a specified time.
  5. If a probationary response is not received within the specified time, the accreditation of the institution is revoked and membership status is made public through appropriate ACCPAS published materials.
- F. Either the complainant or the institution may appeal any decision of the Commission consistent with eligibility requirements of the applicable procedures outlined in Articles X. and XI. of the "Rules of Practice and Procedure."

**ARTICLE X**  
**REQUESTS FOR RECONSIDERATION OF**  
**ACCPAS ACCREDITATION ACTIONS**

**Section 1. Actions Eligible for Reconsideration.** A request for reconsideration may be filed with the Executive Director of ACCPAS regarding the following actions: denial of accreditation, or denial of renewal of accreditation, or revocation of accreditation, or the placing of an institution on probation, or denial of a request for approval of new programs.

In eligible cases, a request for reconsideration is not a precondition for filing an appeal of an adverse decision described in Article XI.; a request for reconsideration may precede but may not follow an appeal of an adverse decision.

**Section 2. Disclosure and Confidentiality.** The reconsideration process operates under the ACCPAS Rules of Practice and Procedure statement on Disclosure and Confidentiality. ACCPAS considers the reconsideration process to be confidential and, at all times during the course of the reconsideration, will maintain complete confidentiality of all documents and information supplied or reviewed during the reconsideration, as well as the deliberations and decision-making process relating to the reconsideration or the decision under reconsideration. However, should a potential or actual petitioner publicly disclose a pending or actual reconsideration or decision based on such reconsideration, or publicly characterize or make misleading or inaccurate representations about the reconsideration process, the decision that may be, or is subject to, the reconsideration process, or the concluding decision, whether before, during, or after the reconsideration, ACCPAS reserves the right to respond immediately and publicly through the appropriate medium or media to correct or clarify such inaccurate or misleading representations or characterizations.

Statements regarding disclosure and confidentiality appearing in the ACCPAS Rules of Practice and Procedure and above are consistent with ACCPAS's responsibility under law and regulation to inform various governmental authorities (as or if required) when decisions are reached at the conclusion of accreditation or appeals procedures.

**Section 3. Grounds for Reconsideration.** In the event of a decision by ACCPAS in the categories outlined in Section 1. which cannot be resolved through normal procedures, the grounds for reconsideration shall be allegations concerning bias, injustice, departure from stated procedures, factual error of such magnitude as to warrant reconsideration in this manner, failure to consider all the evidence and documentation presented in favor of an application, or new evidence that would affect the decision.

**Section 4. Procedures for Reconsideration**

1. Not later than thirty (30) days from the date of the Commission action letter, the institution or applicant shall notify the Executive Director of ACCPAS in writing of its intention to seek reconsideration of the decision, and not later than sixty (60) days from the same date, it shall submit written documentation supporting its request.
2. The Executive Director shall determine whether the request for reconsideration meets criteria necessary to proceed as outlined in this Article, and so inform the institution.
3. If the request meets the criteria, the Executive Director places the request for reconsideration on the next agenda of ACCPAS.
4. The Commission acts on the request using its normal procedures, and the institution is informed of the Commission's action within thirty (30) days after the Commission's action is completed.
5. The status of any institution shall remain unchanged during the reconsideration. There shall be no public notice of the decision until the review is completed and a final determination in the matter is reached.

### Section 5. Special Rule Concerning Financial Standards

1. An institution may seek reconsideration of the following ACCPAS actions: denial of accreditation, denial of renewal of accreditation, or revocation of accreditation under this rule if all of the following conditions are met:
  - a. The adverse action listed in Section 5.A. above is based solely and exclusively on failure to meet a standard or criterion concerning finances;
  - b. There is significant financial information that was not available to the institution prior to the ACCPAS decision to take an action listed in Section 5.A. above;
  - c. The new financial information bears materially upon the financial deficiencies identified by ACCPAS;
  - d. Within thirty (30) days from the date of the ACCPAS Commission Action Report, the institution has notified the ACCPAS Executive Director in writing of its intent to seek reconsideration under this rule;
  - e. Within sixty (60) days from the date of the ACCPAS Commission Action Report of the same date indicated in item 1.d. above, the institution has submitted documentation supporting its request along with a notarized statement signed by the chief executive officer of the institution stating the following:
 

[Name of Institution] understands and agrees that any determination by ACCPAS made with respect to the request for reconsideration, new information submitted by the institution, or any decision or action described in any item of Article X. is not separately appealable, and thus not eligible for further reconsideration or appeal.
2. The Executive Director of ACCPAS selects three (3) reviewers with the advice and unanimous consent of the CAAA Trustees. Those selected shall not have participated in any phase of the decision listed in Section 5.A. above. The three reviewers determine whether the documentation submitted meets the criteria of significance and materiality indicated in Section 5.A.2. and 3. above. The Executive Director shall serve as non-voting secretary of the review committee.
3. Following review and decision of the review committee, the Executive Director either informs the institution that the reconsideration may proceed, or that the reconsideration process is terminated, and that the institution is not eligible for further reconsideration or appeal.
4. If the reconsideration proceeds:
  - a. The Executive Director places the request for reconsideration on the next agenda of ACCPAS.
  - b. ACCPAS acts on the request using its normal procedures, and the institution is informed of ACCPAS's action within thirty (30) days after ACCPAS's action is completed.
5. When the institution is informed of ACCPAS's decision, the institution is notified that the decision is not separately appealable and thus not eligible for further reconsideration or appeal.
6. The status of any institution shall remain unchanged during the reconsideration process. There shall be no public notice of the decision until the reconsideration review is completed and a final determination in the matter is reached.

**ARTICLE XI  
APPEALS OF ADVERSE DECISIONS  
CONCERNING ACCREDITATION**

**Section 1. Definition.** An adverse decision shall be defined as a decision of ACCPAS that denies or revokes accreditation.

**Section 2. Procedural Authority.** The Council of Arts Accrediting Associations shall adopt written procedures for considering the appeal of an adverse decision of ACCPAS. These procedures shall be consistent with and supportive of all sections of Article XI. of the Rules of Practice and Procedure.

**Section 3. Counsel.** The institution and any other party participating in the appeal determines the extent to which it will be advised or represented by legal counsel in any aspect of the appeal process for which it is responsible or in which it participates.

**Section 4. Disclosure and Confidentiality.** The appeals process operates under ACCPAS Rules of Practice and Procedure statement on Disclosure and Confidentiality. ACCPAS considers the appeals process to be confidential and, at all times during the course of the appeal, will maintain complete confidentiality of all documents and information supplied or reviewed during the appeal, as well as the deliberations and decision-making process relating to the appeal or the decision under appeal. However, should a potential or actual appellant publicly disclose a pending or actual appeal or appeal decision, or publicly characterize or make misleading or inaccurate representations about the appeals process, the decision that may be, or is subject to, an appeal, or the appeals decision, whether before, during, or after the appeal, ACCPAS reserves the right to respond immediately and publicly through the appropriate medium or media to correct or clarify such inaccurate or misleading representations or characterizations.

Statements regarding disclosure and confidentiality appearing in ACCPAS Rules of Practice and Procedure and above are consistent with ACCPAS's responsibility under law and regulation to inform various governmental authorities when decisions are reached at the conclusion of accreditation or appeals procedures.

**Section 5. Grounds for Appeal.** The grounds on which an institution may appeal a decision of ACCPAS which denies or revokes accreditation shall be (a) that ACCPAS's decision was not supported by substantial evidence in the record upon which the decision was based; and/or (b) that ACCPAS in making its decision departed significantly from its written procedures.

**Section 6. Meaning of Appeals Decisions.** Decisions on appeals concern only matters outlined in Section 4. (a) and (b) above. After the appeals process is complete, decisions concerning accreditation remain the responsibility of ACCPAS. Decisions on appeals are made only on evidence available at the time of the decision being appealed.

**Section 7. Time of Filing an Appeal.** An institution wishing to appeal a decision of ACCPAS shall file with the Executive Director of ACCPAS either in person or by certified mail not later than thirty (30) days following the date of the ACCPAS action letter a notice of intent to appeal, which shall be the official action of the governing board of the institution, along with the required filing fee determined as policy by the Board of Trustees of the Council of Arts Accrediting Associations (CAAA) and published in the written procedures for appeals noted in Article IX., Section 2., of the Rules of Practice and Procedure. The institution shall file with the Executive Director of ACCPAS either in person or by certified mail not later than thirty (30) days following the date of its notice of intent to appeal a written appeal document setting forth evidence and argument in support of its appeal. Failure of an institution to file notice of intent to appeal, the required filing fee, or its appeal document in a timely fashion shall void the appeal.

**Section 8. Initial Response.** The Executive Director of ACCPAS shall ensure that the institution's appeal document meets all preconditions for review by an appeals committee. Immediately upon receiving an appeal document that meets all preconditions for review, the Executive Director shall forward to the Chair of

ACCPAS a copy of the document and shall acknowledge receipt of the document in writing to the chief executive officer of the institution. Within thirty (30) days of receipt of the appeal documents, the Chair of ACCPAS shall provide a written response to the appeal stating the reason for the decision. The response shall be sent to the Executive Director, who forwards copies to the chief executive officer of the institution filing the appeal.

### **Section 9. Appeals Committee**

1. The Executive Director, with the approval of the Chair and Vice Chair/Treasurer of CAAA, shall appoint the Chair and members of an appeals committee comprising three persons, none of whom shall be members of the ACCPAS Commission or of the Board of Trustees of CAAA.
2. Each person invited to participate in the appeals committee shall be asked to consider whether any conflict of interest arises from service on the committee. Conflict of interest includes, but is not limited to, participating in any way in the process leading to the decision being appealed; coming from the same state as the institution appealing; having had any prior or projected alumni, employment, or financial relationship with the institution appealing; or having any other prior or projected relationship with the appealing institution that could influence or be construed as influencing the outcome of the appeal. If conflict of interest is found, that person may not serve on the appeals committee. In addition, appeals committee members are subject to ACCPAS policies concerning conflict of interest.
3. The appeals committee shall receive from the institution making the appeal written materials detailing its appeal and from the Chair of ACCPAS a written response to the appeal, and will hear in person representatives of the institution and of ACCPAS who choose to appear.

**Section 10. Decision on an Appeal.** After following procedures established by the Council of Arts Accrediting Associations (see Section 2. of this Article above), the appeals committee's final decision shall be either to (a) deny the appeal and sustain the decision of ACCPAS, or (b) sustain the appeal and remand the decision to ACCPAS for reconsideration 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, ACCPAS must act in a manner consistent with published ACCPAS 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 shall be distributed to the arts executive and the chief executive officer of the institution and to the Chair of ACCPAS.

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 Section 4. of this article.

**Section 11. Reconsideration by ACCPAS.** If the appeal is denied, ACCPAS has no power to consider new evidence produced since the original decision.

If the appeal is sustained and the decision remanded to ACCPAS, ACCPAS in making a new decision shall take into account changes made by or occurring in the institution since the original decision. ACCPAS in its reconsideration shall utilize written materials submitted by the institution, the report from an ACCPAS visit to the institution, and such other materials or procedures as are appropriate in correcting the errors and omissions identified by the appeals committee and in reaching a new decision on the institution's accreditation. The institution may be assessed such fees as are established by ACCPAS for such procedures, except that the institution may not be assessed fees for actions taken solely to correct errors and omissions identified by the appeals committee. The institution is responsible, however, for reimbursing the expenses of any ACCPAS visitors according to ACCPAS procedures.

**Section 12. Effective Date of Action.** Until the final decision of the appeals committee, the decision under appeal shall not be in effect, and the accreditation status of the institution shall remain as it was before the decision under appeal was made.

If the appeal is denied, the ACCPAS decision under appeal shall become effective on the date of final adoption by the appeals committee of the recommendation that the appeal be denied and the decision be sustained.

If the appeal is sustained, the decision being appealed is void, and until ACCPAS takes a new action, the accreditation status of the institution shall remain as it was before the decision under appeal was made.

## **ARTICLE XII PUBLICATION OF ACCREDITATION ACTIONS BY ACCPAS**

**Section 1.** After official notification in writing to institutions considered by ACCPAS, the National Office posts a summary report of each ACCPAS meeting to the ACCPAS website. This report includes all final actions concerning accreditation status in ACCPAS, including voluntary withdrawal from accredited status.

**Section 2.** For the benefit of accredited institutions, arts organizations, educational institutions, and the general public, CAAA publishes annually a listing of ACCPAS accredited schools. Such listings of accredited schools are revised subsequent to ACCPAS meetings. The Directory List is available to educational institutions and administrators and other interested agencies, organizations, and individuals on the ACCPAS website. A Directory List of ACCPAS accredited institutions must include the following information:

1. the name and address of the institution;
2. dates indicating the first year of ACCPAS accreditation, the year of the last visit for accreditation, the academic year of the next ACCPAS visitation;
3. a statement of institutional characteristics indicating whether the institution is proprietary or not-for-profit, public or private, and a description of the administrative structure of the institution or unit being accredited;
4. the names of appropriate administrative officers;
5. telephone number;
6. programs approved by ACCPAS.

**Section 3.** ACCPAS recommends that the administrators of educational institutions consider making ACCPAS evaluation reports available to the faculty members and others directly concerned. Neither visiting team members nor CAAA or ACCPAS personnel are authorized to disclose the information obtained during evaluation visits or from discussions held during ACCPAS meetings. The extent to which public access may be given to the contents of evaluation reports is determined by the chief administrator of the educational institution and, if applicable, in consultation with the administrator of the community education program offered by the institution.

**Section 4.** The use of excerpts from accreditation materials in advertising or promotional contexts is considered to be a violation of Articles IV. and V. of the Code of Ethics and Article XIII. of the Rules of Practice and Procedure.

**ARTICLE XIII  
PRINTED RECOGNITION OF ACCREDITATION**

**Section 1. Accreditation.** If a statement regarding accreditation in ACCPAS appears in the institution’s catalogue or other publications, the statement shall read:

“The (name of school) is accredited by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Precollegiate Arts Schools....”

**Section 2. Advertising.** In any advertising by an accredited institution, such institution is limited to making mention of ACCPAS by using the phrase, “Accredited by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Precollegiate Arts Schools.”

**ARTICLE XIV  
DISCLOSURE AND CONFIDENTIALITY**

**Section 1.** ACCPAS provides services that include publications. These are available to the public for a fee. Upon request, ACCPAS 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, ACCPAS will make publicly available all information about an institution that is published in the CAAA/ACCPAS Directory List (see Article XII., Section 2.). ACCPAS will also indicate whether or not an institution holds or has held accreditation.

**Section 3.** ACCPAS will not make publicly available any information supplied by the institution or by representatives of ACCPAS in the course of the accreditation process. This includes Self-Studies, Visitors’ Reports, and correspondence. While ACCPAS 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, ACCPAS 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.** If an institution releases information that misrepresents or distorts any action by ACCPAS with respect to any aspect of the accreditation process, or the status of affiliation with ACCPAS, the chief executive officer of the institution and any program director, where applicable, will be notified and informed that corrective action must be taken. If the misrepresentation or distortion is not promptly corrected, ACCPAS, at its discretion, may release a public statement in such a form and content as it deems necessary to provide the correct information.

**Section 5.** 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 ACCPAS or an ACCPAS evaluation team, its disclosure to persons other than the immediate recipients is forbidden.

**ARTICLE XV  
AMENDMENTS**

The Rules of Practice and Procedure may be amended by majority vote of the Board of Trustees of the Council of Arts Accrediting Associations (1) present and voting at a meeting of the Board of Trustees at which a quorum is present, or (2) voting at a meeting or in a poll conducted through electronic means when the same quorum requirements are met, provided written notice of the proposed amendment is sent to all Trustees and all ACCPAS accredited institutions for comment at least two weeks before the vote.