

Addendum to the ACCPAS Handbook 2023

ACCREDITING COMMISSION FOR COMMUNITY AND PRECOLLEGIATE ARTS SCHOOLS

January 2024

As noted below, the CAAA Board of Trustees approved these revisions during a vote in January 2024.

Standards and Guidelines for ACCPAS Accreditation

— Action by the CAAA Board of Trustees —

ACCPAS Handbook 2023—Pages 2–3

Standards and Guidelines for ACCPAS Accreditation

Amend as follows:

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.

~~Criteria and provisions in the following texts are applied with careful attention to distinctions among standards, guidelines, and recommendations. Statements using terms such as “shall,” “must,” and “essential” outline threshold standards. Statements using the word “normally” indicate one or more of the numerous conditions usually present when there is compliance with a threshold standard. Statements using the word “should” represent guidelines. Statements using the terms “recommendation” or “suggestion” indicate advice based on consensus of the profession. 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.~~

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.

Appendix I.A.

— Action by the CAAA Board of Trustees —

ACCPAS Handbook 2023—Page 29

Appendix I.A., Specific Operational Standards for All Institutions for which ACCPAS is the Institutional Accrerator

II. Procedural Requirements

B. Starting a Branch Campus or Similar Entity

Amend II.B.2. as follows:

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.**

Appendix I.C.

— Action by the CAAA Board of Trustees —

ACCPAS Handbook 2023—Page 34

Appendix I.C., Branch Campuses and Other Entities

B. Guidelines and Policy

Amend B.3. as follows:

3. A branch campus, **or similarly functioning entity**, is a physical facility ~~normally considered an additional location of a school~~ that is geographically **separate from** ~~apart from and independent of~~ 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 ~~and~~ 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; ~~and~~
- 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.

Appendix I.D.

— Action by the CAAA Board of Trustees —

ACCPAS Handbook 2023—Page 35

Appendix I.D., Distance Learning

1. Definitions

Amend 1. as follows:

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.

Appendix I.D., Distance Learning

3. Standards Applications

Amend 3. as follows:

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~~ ~~Programs in which more than 40% of their requirements are fulfilled~~ through distance learning means will be designated as ~~such distance learning programs~~ 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.

Appendix II.A.

— Action by the CAAA Board of Trustees —

Appendix II.A., Accreditation Eligibility for Community and Preparatory Arts Institutions and Programs

I. Free-Standing Schools

Amend I. as follows:

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 review by~~ 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.

Appendix II.B.

— Action by the CAAA Board of Trustees —

ACCPAS Handbook 2023—Page 44

Appendix II.B., Accreditation Directory List

I. CAAA/ACCPAS Directory List

Amend I. as follows:

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.

Rules of Practice and Procedure

— Action by the CAAA Board of Trustees —

ACCPAS Handbook 2023—Page 51

Rules of Practice and Procedure

Article I., Accreditation Policies

Section 4. Accreditation and Institutional Autonomy

Amend Article I., Section 4. as follows:

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.

ACCPAS Handbook 2023—Page 52

Rules of Practice and Procedure

Article II., Application for Accreditation and Renewal of Accreditation

Section 4. Application Procedures

Amend Article II., Section 4. as follows:

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 dues.

ACCPAS Handbook 2023—Page 58

Rules of Practice and Procedure

Article VIII., New Curricula: Plan Approval and Final Approval for Listing

Section 1. Procedure

Amend Article VIII., Section 1. as follows:

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 National Office. 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.

ACCPAS Handbook 2023—Page 58

Rules of Practice and Procedure

Article IX., Procedures for Reviewing Complaints Directed Against Institutions Accredited by ACCPAS

Section 1. Purpose

A. ACCPAS

Amend Article IX., Section 1.A. as follows:

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 designated~~ personnel are the sole bases for reviewing complaints. ACCPAS does not consider complaints on issues that are beyond the scope of these documents.

ACCPAS Handbook 2023—Page 61

Rules of Practice and Procedure

Article IX., Procedures for Reviewing Complaints Directed Against Institutions Accredited by ACCPAS

Section 3. Authority

Amend Article IX., Section 3.A. as follows:

- 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 designated~~ and staff ~~officials~~ 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.

ACCPAS Handbook 2023—Page 64

Rules of Practice and Procedure

Article X., Requests for Reconsideration of ACCPAS Accreditation Actions

Section 2. Disclosure and Confidentiality

Amend Article X., Section 2. as follows:

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

Rules of Practice and Procedure

Article X., Requests for Reconsideration of ACCPAS Accreditation Actions

Add Article X., Section 5. as follows:

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 materially 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.

ACCPAS Handbook 2023—Page 65

Rules of Practice and Procedure

Article XI., Appeals of Adverse Decisions Concerning Accreditation

Section 1. Definition

Amend Article XI., Section 1. as follows:

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

ACCPAS Handbook 2023—Page 65

Rules of Practice and Procedure

Article XI., Appeals of Adverse Decisions Concerning Accreditation

Section 5. Grounds for Appeal

Amend Article XI., Section 5. as follows:

Section 5. Grounds for Appeal. The grounds on which an institution may appeal a decision of ACCPAS which denies or revokes ~~or terminates~~ 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.

ACCPAS Handbook 2023—Page 66

Rules of Practice and Procedure

Article XI., Appeals of Adverse Decisions Concerning Accreditation

Section 10. Decision on an Appeal

Amend Article XI., Section 10. as follows:

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 committee shall render a final decision,~~ either to (a) deny the appeal and sustain the decision of ACCPAS, or (b) sustain the appeal and remand the decision to ACCPAS for ~~correction of errors or omissions and 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 chief executive officer of the institution and to the Chair of ACCPAS.~~

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 the~~ 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.

ACCPAS Handbook 2023—Page 67

Rules of Practice and Procedure

Article XII., Publication of Accreditation Actions by ACCPAS

Amend Article XII., Section 1. as follows:

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

ACCPAS Handbook 2023—Page 67

Rules of Practice and Procedure

Article XII., Publication of Accreditation Actions by ACCPAS

Amend Article XII., Section 2. as follows:

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 upon request and upon payment of an appropriate fee~~. 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.