

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS OF ART AND DESIGN

11250 Roger Bacon Drive, Suite 21

Reston, VA 20190

Telephone: (703) 437-0700

Facsimile: (703) 437-6312

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MEMORANDUM

To: NASAD Visiting Evaluators

From: Karen P. Moynahan, Executive Director

Re: The Work of Visiting Evaluators

NASAD deeply appreciates your service as a visiting evaluator. Thank you for the hours you have spent and will spend in service to institutions undertaking NASAD accreditation reviews.

As visit activity for the 2015-16 academic year is now in progress, we offer the following general reminders regarding the work of visiting evaluators to those receiving invitations for NASAD accreditation/reaccreditation visits and those scheduled to conduct visits. A thorough and comprehensive set of guidelines and instructions, which have been recently amended, may be found in the [NASAD Procedures for Visiting Evaluators](#). Visitors are asked to obtain, review, and use the current edition of the *Procedures for Visiting Evaluators* for each visit.

THE INVITATION PROCESS

- Please **accept or decline** invitations as quickly as possible and no later than two weeks after receipt of an invitation. Please confirm your availability or lack thereof directly with the institution and copy Nora Hamme (nhamme@arts-accredit.org) in the NASAD National Office.
- Although NASAD staff is available to assist at any time, once you have accepted an invitation to serve, please **communicate directly** with the institutional representative of the institution being visited to discuss visitation dates and logistics. Please confirm visitation dates with Nora Hamme (nhamme@arts-accredit.org) in the NASAD National Office.
- After acceptance of an invitation, if you are **unable to serve** on a team for any reason, please contact the institution and the NASAD National Office (nhamme@arts-accredit.org) at the earliest possible time.

THE SELF-STUDY REPORT

- Institutions are required to submit copies of the Self-Study to the visitors and the NASAD National Office at least **four weeks prior** to the visit. If you have not

received the Self-Study within four weeks, or upon review of the Self-Study find that the Self-Study is not adequate to support the visitation, please contact Kyle Dobbeck (kdobbeck@arts-accredit.org) in the NASAD National Office. Visitations may be postponed if either of these two conditions exists.

- Please **review the Self-Study**, all supportive materials, and the institution's website carefully and comprehensively prior to your arrival on campus.

THE VISITORS' REPORT

- Each report must be written **giving careful attention to the instructions and using the format** found in the [NASAD Procedures for Visiting Evaluators](#). Specific instructions pertaining to writing the Visitors' Reports and the format for the report are found in Section V., "Specifications for the Visitors' Report." Please do not use the format of the *Handbook* as the format for a Visitors' Report, or any previous version of the *Procedures for Visiting Evaluators*, or the previously provided template. Although the two formats (*Procedures* and *Handbook*) are somewhat similar, the format found in the current NASAD *Procedures for Visiting Evaluators* is crafted to offer the most expeditious way for evaluators to address all applicable standards for each institution.
- Visitors' Reports must be completed and sent to the National Office as soon as possible and **no later than six weeks after the visit**. Please send reports electronically to Ben Thompson (bthompson@artsaccredit.org).
- The staff will read each report and a) if/as necessary, offer comment and return the report to the team chair for further review and possible editing, or b) release the report to the institution. Staff comment may consist of correction of typographical and grammatical errors, notes regarding report format, requests for inclusion of all appropriate sections/information as requested in the [NASAD Procedures for Visiting Evaluators](#), and/or suggested considerations. If a **report is returned to the team chair**, the chair should make edits as appropriate and return an electronic copy of the report to bthompson@arts-accredit.org in the NASAD National Office as quickly as possible and **no later than two weeks after receipt**.
- Evaluators should not send a copy of a Visitors' Report directly to an institution, nor should they **continue discussions** with an institutional representative after the Visitors' Report has been finalized. Staff will send a copy of the final report to the institution and will assist each institutional representative to complete the evaluative process. Evaluators should direct an institutional representative with questions to the [NASAD National Office staff](#).

STANDARDS VS. GUIDELINES

- Visitors are asked to pay careful attention to the **use of language** in the *Handbook*, particularly the distinctions among standards and guidelines, benchmarks, norms, recommendations, and/or suggestions. For example, standards are indicated by use of the words "must," "shall," and "essential competency," whereas guidelines, benchmarks, norms, recommendations, and/or

suggestions are earmarked by words such as “should,” “normally,” “norm,” “benchmark,” “recommendation,” “suggested,” and “percentage.”

- Issues of **apparent non-compliance** can only be cited if it is not clear how an institution is addressing a standard. All issues of apparent non-compliance must include the appropriate *Handbook* citation. Apparent non-compliance cannot be referenced to guidelines, benchmarks, norms, recommendations, or suggestions.

CURRICULAR PROGRAMS

- Each Visitors’ Report must include a **cover page**. It is important to note that the cover page need not match the most recent NASAD *Directory Listing*. Rather, it must be an accurate reflection of current offerings as confirmed by the current Self-Study, institutional catalog(s), and printed material. Requiring an institution to maintain only those curricular programs currently listed in the NASAD *Directory Listing* would preclude an institution from creating new programs. NASAD welcomes the submission of new curricular programs. Visitors should address each new program in the Visitors’ Report under the category of Plan Approval.
- Please review and discuss **non-degree-granting postsecondary programs**. Standards and guidelines for such programs are found in the NASAD *Handbook 2014-15* (Standards for Accreditation XVIII.-XX.). NASAD will list non-degree-granting undergraduate programs requiring 30 or more semester hours, and graduate programs requiring 15 or more semester hours (or the quarter hour equivalent). These programs should be included on the cover page of the Visitors’ Report and discussed separately in Section N. of the Visitors’ Report.
- Please ensure that institutions are cognizant of and address standards with regard to **Credit and Time Requirements** (NASAD *Handbook 2014-15*, Standards for Accreditation III.A.2., 3., 4., and 6.). Please discuss the institution’s apparent compliance with each of these standards.
- Please review and include a discussion of all **distance learning programs**. Address the institution’s ability to meet curricular standards, and apparent compliance with Distance Learning standards (NASAD *Handbook 2014-15*, Standards for Accreditation III.H.). Please note that if any portion of a curricular program is delivered via distance learning means, the institution must demonstrate compliance with the standards in III.H. Also, please note that NASAD will list distance learning programs only when 40 percent of a program’s requirements are fulfilled through distance learning means. Such programs should be listed on the cover page of the Visitors’ Report marked “distance learning” and discussed separately within Section N. of the report.
- Please review and include a discussion of **community education programs** (if any) including apparent compliance with standards (NASAD *Handbook 2014-15*, Standards for Accreditation III.K.). Specifically, if a program 1) serves individuals in the community in a pre-professional or avocational context, 2) has a specific published identity, 3) has at least one specifically designated administrator, and 4) operates on an academic year or year round basis, the

institution must submit the program for review and the evaluators must include a discussion of the program in the Visitors' Report. Options for review include Basic and Full Listing.

- Please include a discussion of apparent compliance with standards for **every area of emphasis within each major of every degree program**, regardless of the category of submission in Section N.
- Please review and discuss the **level of student work** by year and major area.
- Please ascertain whether undergraduate degree programs utilizing titles such as Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Science are intended to be **liberal arts or professional degree programs**. Until the nature of such degrees is known, it is not possible to apply appropriate standards. Once intent is confirmed, please describe these degrees in Section N. of the Visitors' Report and adjudge their apparent compliance as appropriate with either liberal arts (*NASAD Handbook 2014-15*, Standards for Accreditation VII.) or professional (*NASAD Handbook 2014-15*, Standards for Accreditation VIII., IX., X., XI., XII., and XIII.) degree standards.
- All degrees/programs that fall under the **purview of NASAD** by indication of title, content, and/or intent must be submitted for review, regardless of where the degree/program is administratively housed (see *NASAD Handbook 2014-15*, Rules of Practice and Procedures, Part II., Article I., Section 3.).

INDEPENDENT/FREE-STANDING INSTITUTIONS FOR WHICH NASAD IS THE DESIGNATED INSTITUTIONAL ACCREDITOR

- When visiting an **independent/free-standing institution for which NASAD is/is planned to be the designated institutional accreditor**, please review the institution's compliance with standards located in the Standards for Accreditation XXI. in the *Handbook 2014-15*. Both the Self-Study and the Visitors' Report (Sections M. in both cases) must speak to the institution's attention to and apparent compliance with these standards.

INSTITUTIONS WITH INDUSTRIAL DESIGN DEGREES OR PROGRAMS

- Institutions offering majors in industrial design are required to host a team at least one member of which holds **expertise in industrial design**.
- Should you be designated as the **industrial design team member**, your duties may include special, but not exclusive responsibility for the industrial design program. Specific instructions will be provided by the team chair.

EXPENSES

- Following the visit, please submit visitation **expenses**, using the [NASAD Expense Form](#), and all receipts as soon as possible. NASAD will reimburse each evaluator promptly and invoice the institution directly.
- Please ensure that all expenses are **customary and reasonable**. Careful

stewardship of the funds of institutions being visited is greatly appreciated. Should questions regarding an expense arise, please contact Tracy Maraney (tmaraney@arts-accredit.org) in the NASAD National Office.

REQUEST FOR UPDATED CURRICULUM VITAE

- NASAD would like to ask each visiting evaluator to provide via email to nhamme@arts-accredit.org in the NASAD National Office a current **curriculum vitae**. These documents are held in confidence, not released to the public, and used by the Executive Director to create slates of evaluators for institutions preparing for accreditation reviews. Submission is helpful and recommended, but optional.
- We ask please that evaluators hold in **confidence** all information regarding any institution visited, and avoid publishing the names of these institutions in curriculum vitae or other publications.

PREVIOUS EDITIONS OF THE PROCEDURES FOR VISITING EVALUATORS AND VISITORS' REPORT TEMPLATE

- Should you have on hand a **previous version** of the *NASAD Procedures for Visiting Evaluators*, we ask please that you seek and use only the current version. Although previous versions may be familiar, they often contain outdated information and therefore result in insufficient or the inclusion of incorrect information in a Visitors' Report. Visitors are asked to ensure that they are using the current iteration for each visit. A quick check of the cover will offer information regarding the edition date.
- The **Visitors' Report Template** has been revised. Prior to using the template to prepare a Visitors' Report and before each visit, evaluators are asked to review carefully and comprehensively the information and instructions found in Section V. of the NASAD *Procedures for Visiting Evaluators*. Section V. will guide evaluators through the preparation of each section of a Visitors' Report. A link to the Visitors' Report Template may be found at the end of Section V. in the *NASAD Procedures for Visiting Evaluators*. Please ensure that you are using the current edition before writing each report.

VISITORS' REPORT SUBMISSION PROCEDURES

- During the spring of 2015, NASAD **formalized its procedures** for the review and processing of Visitors' Reports. The NASAD National Office staff is deeply appreciative for the work and patience of visiting evaluators during this period.
- The *NASAD Procedures for Visiting Evaluators* document has been **amended** recently to include helpful annotations which address issues faced and questions posed commonly by visiting teams.
- As noted above, upon receipt of a Visitors' Report in the NASAD National Office, **staff will read** each report carefully checking spelling, punctuation, grammar, and format, and ensuring that findings, observations, and

recommendations included in the report are clearly and concisely communicated, and that the report follows required protocols and procedures. There is no intention, desire, or plan for staff to assume writing, re-writing, or substantial editing responsibilities.

- Should issues exist which require **further consideration** by the team, staff will return the report to the team chair. Feedback in the form of suggested edits, comments, and ideas will be offered respectfully which may assist the team to strengthen and finalize the report for the benefit of the institution, and in support of the work of the Commission.
- Team chairs are asked to complete any further editing and to return reports to bthompson@arts-accredit.org in the NASAD National Office as quickly as possible and no later than two weeks after receipt. Once a Visitors' Report has been completed, a **final copy** will be forwarded to the institution and to the team.
- Visitors will receive written **confirmation of the status** of each report including a reminder(s) should the six week submission deadline pass.

No system can be finely tuned without the thoughtful feedback from those who apply its requirements and benefit from its application. Therefore, we ask for and welcome your comments regarding the work of evaluators and the NASAD *Procedures for Visiting Evaluators* and the *Procedures* documents in general. Please send comments directly to the Executive Director at the following address: kmoynehan@arts-accredit.org.

NASAD is grateful for the hours you devote to this process. Your participation and volunteer spirit are valued, deeply appreciated, and vital to the ongoing work of institutions.

If questions or concerns regarding visits, Visitors' Report preparation, and/or the report review process arise at any time, please contact Ben Thompson (bthompson@arts-accredit.org) in the NASAD National Office.

We offer best wishes and kindest regards.

Thank you.

KPM:jh