

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS OF ART AND DESIGN

Statement on Credentials in Creative Fields of Art and Design

A primary mission of NASAD is the development and application of standards that articulate the competencies required of professionals in the various fields of art and design. Degrees and programs are efficient means of completing certain aspects of knowledge and skill development within specific time frames and academic structures. NASAD standards delineate expectations of knowledge and skills development for a variety of degree and program types and levels.

While NASAD recognizes traditional educational approaches to gaining the knowledge and skills to practice in the many fields of art and design, it also recognizes that nontraditional approaches work, and that traditional approaches are always evolving. Each of the various professional specializations in art and design, including its professorate, develops and evolves both the common body of knowledge and skills indigenous to its work, and the various means for evaluating the competence of practitioners entering the field. Overall, these judgments are made primarily on evaluations of work rather than on specific credentials.

The body of knowledge and skills necessary for the practice of a particular art or design profession exists independently. This means that there are many ways to develop individual capability and capacity. The existence and productivity of multiple paths to competence is consistent with the manifold natures of the creative and dynamic fields of art and design.

NASAD supports and protects an open system for the development of creative talent because these multiple paths enable mixtures of creative and technical perceptions and capabilities that continually enrich the work in each field of art and design. Many highly successful artists and designers have started their studies or practice in one specialization and evolved over time to become expert practitioners in another. It is also common for formal studies in art or design to be the basis for continuing education and development that leads to practice in more than one specialization.

NASAD supports the highest rigor in the creation and application of educational and professional standards; it supports the formulation and publication of competencies necessary to enter various specialized professions; it supports public designation of the names of institutions and individuals that meet published standards or competency requirements.

NASAD supports use of degrees and other credentials to indicate educational or career achievement or to provide public designation of specific attainments.

NASAD supports and participates in efforts to make potential students and the public aware of both the meanings of and the distinctions among various degrees and credentials, and whether educational institutions and programs are accredited.

NASAD supports policies and procedures that provide educational and professional credentials based on such criteria as education, achievement, success on qualifying examinations, and peer review as long as the policies and procedures respect the multiple paths taken by artists and designers in reaching their career destinations.

NASAD supports legislation, regulation, and other measures that reinforce the need for competency and ethics in professional fields and that protect the public; it opposes the view that there is only one way for individuals to attain such competencies and meet educational and professional standards in the various fields of art and design.

NASAD opposes the use of legislation, regulation, or other measures that restrict access to career entry or professional credentials in art and design by mandating directly or indirectly a restricted single curricular pattern, a specific degree or institutional choice, or a requirement that links a single accreditation to licensure. These approaches restrict academic freedom. They damage conditions essential for the educational mobility and the creative, artistic, and intellectual vitality necessary for optimum results in the various creative fields of art and design.

**Approved by the NASAD Membership
March 24, 2003**