

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

**NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS OF MUSIC**

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December 16, 2022

Tim Fitzpatrick  
Interim Chair, Department of Music  
Western Washington University  
Bellingham, WA 98225

Dear Professor Fitzpatrick:

Thank you for submitting your application for review by the NASM Commission on Accreditation. The Commission, at its November 2022 meetings, took action on the institution's application.

Please find enclosed a Commission Action Report describing this action in detail. This Report contains information of note and, if applicable, any requests for further information from the Commission. Please note the Association's policy regarding *Disclosure and Confidentiality*, a copy of which has been enclosed.

This action is taken based upon a review of Western Washington University according to the NASM accreditation standards in effect in November 2022.

As an accredited institutional member of NASM, the institution is reminded of its responsibility to participate in reviews and revisions to the NASM *Handbook*, and to maintain its operations and programs current with NASM standards as these are developed and approved.

The Commission on Accreditation and the Association appreciate the institution's efforts with regard to its application, and its careful consideration of and attention to NASM accreditation standards and guidelines. Further, the Commission and Association appreciate the work accomplished by the institution on behalf of music and higher education.

Please contact the NASM National Office staff if you have questions or need assistance with regard to this action or any other aspect of the work of the Association.

We offer congratulations on your achievements and best wishes for the continuing success of the institution.

Thank you.


Sincerely yours,



Karen P. Moynahan  
Executive Director

KPM:jrk  
Enclosure

cc: Sabah Randhawa, President  
Western Washington University



**National Association of Schools of Music**  
11250 Roger Bacon Drive, Suite 21  
Reston, Virginia 20190-5248

**COMMISSION ACTION REPORT**

This document provides the official action of the Commission as indicated in the cover letter of the same date.

**December 16, 2022**

**WESTERN WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY**  
**Department of Music**

**Actions:**

**Action 1 of 2:** Application for renewal of Membership – Original

The Commission voted to continue the current Membership status of the institution and to seek further information before completing its work with the application for renewal of Membership. This deferral by the Commission is not a negative action. Rather, it enables consideration of issues by the institution and the Commission within the framework of the present Self-Study and on-site visit.

The institution is asked to respond to the issues below.

**Items for Response:**

1. The Commission notes that the institution's Optional Response (p. 18) indicates that "there has not been a concerted department-wide effort to evaluate, plan, and make projections" and suggests that the unit has begun to organize itself to address long-term strategic planning for the department. The Commission requests a reply that documents progress made toward developing long-range planning practices so as to provide evidence that the institution meets the standard that the music unit evaluates, plans, and makes projections consistent with and supportive of its purposes and its size and scope (see NASM *Handbook 2021-22*, Standards for Accreditation II.L.1.a.1.-5.).
2. The Commission notes that ten music courses appropriate to the university's undergraduate General Education requirement are delivered by asynchronous, online means (see Visitors' Report, p. 19). The institution is asked to provide a reply as to how the standards for delivery of distance education are met for these courses and any others in the department delivered by these means (see NASM *Handbook 2021-22*, Standards for Accreditation III.H.3.a. and III.H.4.).
3. Based on information presented in the Self-Study (pp. 33-39), the institution does not presently appear to meet all provisions of the standard with regard to health and safety indicating that students enrolled in music unit programs and faculty and staff with employment status in the music unit must be provided basic information about the maintenance of health and safety within the contexts of practice, performance, teaching, and listening (see NASM *Handbook 2021-22*, Standards for Accreditation II.F.1.i.).

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For music majors and music faculty and staff, general topics include, but are not limited to basic information regarding the maintenance of hearing, vocal, and musculoskeletal health and injury prevention. They also include instruction on the use, proper handling, and operation of potentially dangerous materials, equipment, and technology as applicable to specific program offerings or experiences. Beyond the provision of basic general information, and the identification of available resources, decisions regarding topic areas and breadth and depth are made by the institution, and normally are correlated with the nature, content, and requirements of specific areas of specialization or specific courses of study.

For non-majors enrolled in courses offered by the music unit, including performing ensembles, or other curricular offerings of the music unit, topics chosen in addition to the maintenance of hearing health are directly related to health and safety issues associated with their specific area of study or activity in music.

Music program policies, protocols, and operations must reflect attention to the maintenance of health and injury prevention and to the relationships among the health and safety of musicians; suitable choices of equipment and technology for various specific purposes; appropriate and safe operation of equipment and technology; and the acoustic and other conditions associated with health and safety in practice, rehearsal, performance, and facilities.

The Commission requests a reply from the institution addressing planning and implementation of measures that will bring the institution into compliance with all provisions of this standard.

4. The Commission notes the intention of the department and Music History and Literature Area faculty to revise the content of curricular offerings in this area to allow for enhanced topical exploration beyond Western European art music in its array of music history seminars and to better integrate both historical and sociocultural investigations into each. Additionally, the Music History and Literature Area proposes to revise the three-part undergraduate music history series to integrate Western European art music, popular music styles, and global genres of music into one curriculum. The proposed new series will be required for all undergraduate majors, including those majoring in musicology/music history and literature. Inasmuch as these developing changes in curriculum will enable the Bachelor of Music degree in Music History and Literature to align with present standards for this degree (see NASM *Handbook 2021-22*, Standards for Accreditation IX.D.3.a.), the Commission requests a reply that documents the changes envisioned for the described seminars and courses, as well as the approval of the faculty and other authorizing university bodies to implement these revisions.
5. The Commission notes that the Composition area has proposed requirements in the Bachelor of Music in Composition that would change the undergraduate Orchestration class from an elective to a requirement in this degree. Inasmuch as implementation of this change will enable the Bachelor of Music degree in Music Composition to better align with present standards for this degree (see NASM *Handbook 2021-22*, Standards for Accreditation IX.C.3.a.), the Commission requests a reply from the

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institution that documents this change, as well as the approvals of the faculty and other authorizing university bodies.

6. The institution is reminded that NASM accreditation is granted to the institution, not the unit(s) in which its music program resides. It is not clear that the institution presently meets the requirements to publish in one or more official documents concerning its music program the name, address, and telephone number of NASM. The Commission notes that the citation of NASM membership on the university's main accreditation page is presently incomplete. Additionally, statements of institutional membership appearing in catalogs or other publications should be factual and brief as, for example, "Western Washington University is accredited by NASM" (see *NASM Handbook 2021-22*, Rules of Practice and Procedure, Part II, Article XII., Section 1.C.D.).
7. Further information is necessary to determine how the institution meets the standard for time and credit stating that the institution must publish clear policies concerning program length and credit granting policies (see *NASM Handbook 2021-22*, Standards for Accreditation III.A.2.-4.). The Self-Study notes that while the definition of a credit hour at Western Washington University may be in full accordance with the credit hour definition provided in the Washington Administrative Code and policies of the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities, the institution was unable to confirm the publication status of the definition of a credit hour and any related published policies. The Commission requests that the institution investigate this matter further and provide confirmation as to the publication status and location of this policy.

**Action 2 of 2: Application for Final Approval for Listing – Original**

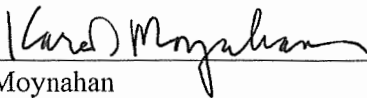
The Commission voted to grant Final Approval for Listing for the following degree:

Master of Music Education.

**Due Date:**

October 1 for consideration at the Commission meetings of November 2023.

The procedures for submitting Responses and Progress Reports may be downloaded from the NASM website at <https://nasm.arts-accredit.org> (see "Accreditation," beneath that "Accreditation Materials," and beneath that "Procedures").

  
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Karen P. Moynahan  
Executive Director

KPM:jrk

## NASM Handbook 2021-22

### RULES OF PRACTICE AND PROCEDURE, PART II

#### ARTICLE XIII DISCLOSURE AND CONFIDENTIALITY

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

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

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

**Section 4.** NASM will not make publicly available any information provided in third-party comment or an institution's response to third-party comment or any correspondence related to third-party comment (see Rules of Practice and Procedure, Part II, Article IV., Section 1.).

**Section 5.** If an institution releases information that misrepresents or distorts any action by NASM with respect to any aspect of the accreditation process, or the status of affiliation with NASM, the chief executive officer of the institution and the program director, where applicable, will be notified by the NASM Executive Director and informed that corrective action must be taken. If the misrepresentation or distortion is not promptly corrected, NASM, at its discretion, may release a public statement in such a form and content as it deems necessary to provide the correct information.

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

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

**Section 6.** Certain relationships yield information which legally cannot be disclosed without the consent of the person who provides it—for example, the relationship between physician and patient, between attorney and client, between clergy and penitent, etc. Should such information, or other information that is protected under law by a comparable privilege or safeguard, come into the hands of NASM or an NASM evaluation team, its disclosure to persons other than the immediate recipients is forbidden.

# NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS OF MUSIC

## Explanation of Deferral

In the accreditation process, an accrediting Commission may find a situation in which an institution cannot be granted initial accreditation, renewal of accreditation, Plan Approval, and/or Final Approval for Listing on the basis of evidence presented. This may be because sufficient or complete information has not been provided or, because after the review of all relevant information made available by the institution, it is not clear or apparent that an institution meets applicable standards as outlined in the *NASM Handbook*.

As a result, a Commission defers any action on an institution's application until certain conditions are addressed that clarify the situation or confirm an institution's compliance. Deferral is not a negative action or an indication of lack of support, but rather a mechanism intended to open an intellectual and probing dialogue between a Commission and an institution—a dialogue intended to promote and support further study on the part of an institution—for the benefit of the students served. Such studies typically result in more focused observations, renewed commitments, and new options for an institution to consider.

Member institutions whose applications are deferred continue their current accreditation status and maintain all rights and responsibilities of accreditation. Deferral does not mean that an institution has lost its accreditation, its right to vote during an Annual Meeting, or its listing in the NASM Directory List. Deferral does not mean that an institution's accreditation status is in jeopardy. Deferral simply indicates that an institution has one or more issues that need to be reviewed, explained in further detail, or addressed before the institution's application can be approved.

Should an institution fail to demonstrate compliance with issues articulated in a Commission Action Report and therefore cause a pattern of continuous deferrals, it is possible that action to place an institution on probation, revoke an institution's membership, or deny accreditation could result. This scenario is highly unlikely in cases where institutions are making substantial and timely progress to comply with applicable standards. Institutions are guided to review the Association's *Policy Concerning Commission Action and Timelines* (see *NASM Handbook*, Rules of Practice and Procedure, Part II, Article IV., Section 3.).

There is no public notice of deferral. Letters reporting accreditation actions are sent only to the institutionally-designated primary institutional representative to NASM and the chief executive officer of the institution. The NASM National Office staff does not discuss an institution's status or application with any individual other than the music executive or appropriate designated administrative officials of the institution.

Should questions pertaining to a Commission Action Report, actions to defer, the application of standards, and/or Association policies arise, institutional representatives are urged to contact the NASM National Office staff. Staff members can provide invaluable assistance to administrators preparing materials for, and in response to, Commission review.

Thank you.