

Council of Arts Accrediting Associations

**Constitution
Bylaws
Protocols and Procedures
2025**

January 2025

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CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE I NAME

The name of the organization shall be the “**Council of Arts Accrediting Associations.**”

ARTICLE II MEMBERSHIP

The Council’s members are the National Association of Schools of Art and Design, the National Association of Schools of Dance, the National Association of Schools of Music, and the National Association of Schools of Theatre. Official delegates to the Council shall be the President and Vice President of each member association during their term in office as President or Vice President, and the Executive Director of the four associations in common.

ARTICLE III PURPOSES

The Council is established to:

1. Facilitate communication, counsel, and appropriate coordination among the four member associations;
2. Oversee development and operation of a statistics program for institutions and programs that teach the disciplines that are the responsibilities of the four member associations;
3. Engage in analytical and policy-oriented projects that would benefit education in the arts at various levels;
4. Develop and operate an accreditation program for community and pre-collegiate education in the various arts disciplines on behalf of the four member associations;
5. Oversee the management of real property and other assets held on a partnership basis by the four member associations;
6. Propose action as appropriate to the executive committees and boards of the four member associations; and
7. Communicate as appropriate with public and private organizations and groups whose interests and actions are related to the work of the Council or its four member associations in common.

ARTICLE IV FINANCES

To meet the expenses of the Council, an annual fee shall be paid by each member, the amount to be determined by the Council.

**ARTICLE V
GOVERNMENT**

The government of the Council shall be vested in a Board of Trustees composed of the nine official delegates from the four member associations. The Officers shall be the Chair, Vice-Chair/Treasurer, and the Executive Director, ex officio and non-voting, who shall serve as Secretary of the Council, and its Board of Trustees.

**ARTICLE VI
COMMISSIONS AND COMMITTEES**

Section 1. There shall be a joint Accrediting Commission for Community and Precollegiate Arts Schools (ACCPAS).

Section 2. Other Committees and Commissions may be established to carry on the programs of the Council.

**ARTICLE VII
MEETINGS**

There shall be an annual meeting of the Board of Trustees and such special meetings of the Trustees and the Council's commissions and committees as may be deemed appropriate.

**ARTICLE VIII
LEGAL STATUS OF THE COUNCIL**

The Council of Arts Accrediting Associations (CAAA) is incorporated as a not-for-profit corporation in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

The Council was granted corporate status by the Commonwealth of Virginia, which Certificate of Incorporation is on file in the CAAA National Office in Reston, Virginia.

Tax-exempt status under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code was awarded to the Council by the Department of the Treasury, Internal Revenue Service, in correspondence dated June 11, 2002.

**ARTICLE IX
DISPOSITION OF ASSETS**

In the event that this Council should ever be dissolved and cease to exist, the official delegates from the four member associations shall have the power and are hereby authorized to dispose for cash of all property and securities belonging to the Council. The amount of such cash less necessary expenses shall be added to any existing bank balance on hand. The total sum, at the discretion of the Trustees holding office at the time of dissolution, shall be returned in appropriate shares to each member association, or if this is not possible, be spent for an education project in the arts. This action is to be taken within approximately one year from the date of dissolution.

**ARTICLE X
AMENDMENTS**

The Constitution of the Council may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the Trustees 1) present and voting at an annual meeting 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 a written notice of the proposed amendment be sent to all Trustees at least four weeks before the said meeting, and provided that the change is ratified by the Board of Directors of each member association of the Council.

BYLAWS

ARTICLE I MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. Organizational Members. The organizational members of the Council shall be the following nationally recognized accrediting associations:

- National Association of Schools of Art and Design,
- National Association of Schools of Dance,
- National Association of Schools of Music, and
- National Association of Schools of Theatre.

Section 2. Official Delegates. The President and Vice President of the organizational members, ex-officio, shall be the official delegates and shall be the voting members of the Board of Trustees of the Council. Each President and Vice President shall have one vote. Each President and Vice President shall be an official delegate only while holding office as President or Vice President of an organizational member of the Council. The Executive Director of the associations in common shall also be an officer and a member of the Board of Trustees. The Executive Director shall have no vote.

ARTICLE II AUTHORITY

Section 1. The Council and its Board of Trustees. The Council and its Board of Trustees shall have the authority to carry out the various purposes and operations of the Council as defined in its Constitution and Bylaws. The Council shall have no authority to compel the internal decisions of any of its organizational members or the accrediting commissions or other entities thereof. Each organizational member retains its own authority as an autonomous organization.

ARTICLE III FINANCES

Section 1. Organizational Member. Each organizational member shall be responsible for its share of the fees necessary to support the work of the Council.

Section 2. Contributions. The contributions of each member association shall be approved by the appropriate body of that association so designated by its Bylaws.

Section 3. Fiscal Year. The fiscal year of the Council shall be from July 1 of one year through June 30 of the following year.

ARTICLE IV GOVERNANCE

Section 1. Officers. The Officers shall be a Chair, Vice-Chair/Treasurer, and the Executive Director of the Council, ex officio, who shall serve as Secretary.

Section 2. Duties of Officers

- A. *Chair.* The Chair shall act as the presiding officer of the Council, and shall preside at all general meetings of the Board of Trustees.

- B. *Vice-Chair/Treasurer.* The Vice-Chair/Treasurer shall, in the event of death or resignation of the Chair, immediately become the Chair and shall serve as such and shall exercise all of the authority of the Chair until the next rotation in the office of Chair occurs. The Vice-Chair/Treasurer shall assume the office and duties of the Chair for any period during which the Chair is temporarily unable to fulfill the functions of office.

The Vice-Chair/Treasurer shall be responsible for proper stewardship of the funds of the Council. In conjunction with the Executive Director, the Vice-Chair/Treasurer shall prepare the proposed annual budget, arrange for a yearly audit of books by a certified public account, and be responsible for an itemized account of all receipts, expenditures, and investments. The Vice-Chair/Treasurer shall perform all other duties pertaining to the office.

- C. *Secretary.* The Executive Director shall take the minutes of the annual and other meetings of the Council and Board of Trustees. Other duties of the Executive Director are stipulated in Article VIII of these Bylaws.

Section 3. The Board of Trustees

- A. The Board of Trustees shall consist of the officers and six other Presidential or Vice-Presidential delegates from the four member associations.
- B. A majority of the members of the Board shall constitute a quorum thereof. Unless otherwise stipulated, action of the Board shall be by the majority vote of those present at all meetings at which a quorum exists.
- C. The Board of Trustees shall:
1. Exercise all executive functions of the Council;
 2. Have control in the management of the affairs, funds, and properties of the Council not otherwise provided for;
 3. Establish dues and fees;
 4. Establish and operate a joint Accrediting Commission for Community and Precollegiate Arts Schools (ACCPAS), and establish and amend as necessary accreditation standards, a code of ethics, rules of practice and procedure, fees, accreditation procedures and other documents for ACCPAS and the institutions it serves;
 5. Ratify the appointments to ACCPAS made by the Presidents of the member associations, and appoint a Chair and the public member of ACCPAS;
 6. Monitor the effectiveness of all legal organizational and accreditation documents of the Council, and approve procedures for their revision as appropriate from time to time;
 7. Act upon reports, actions, and suggestions concerned with Council policies, procedures, and accreditation standards developed through means established by the Board or through other means;
 8. Establish written procedures for hearing an appeal of a decision by ACCPAS if that decision denies or revokes accredited status;
 9. Fix the time and place of meetings not otherwise provided for;
 10. Maintain a close consultative relationship among the member associations of the Council; and
 11. Consult with organizations and individuals concerned with education in the arts.

ARTICLE V
THE ACCREDITING COMMISSION FOR COMMUNITY
AND PRECOLLEGIATE ARTS SCHOOLS

Section 1. Membership. ACCPAS shall have six voting members including a Chair. With the exception of the public member, ACCPAS members shall be individuals who are the official representatives of member institutions of Council member associations, or who are the officials of institutions accredited by ACCPAS. Commission members shall have had significant experience as visiting evaluators, and preferably Commission experience.

- A. *Chair.* The Chair shall have served one or more terms on an accrediting commission of a Council member association, or on ACCPAS. The Chair shall be appointed for a three-year term. The term as Chair is in addition to time already served as an ACCPAS member.
- B. *Public Member.* There shall be one public member to represent the public interest.

The public member shall have full privileges of the floor and full voting powers. The public member shall be appointed annually by the Board of Trustees.

The public member shall serve no more than six consecutive years. Once appointed, the public member has no reporting responsibility to the Trustees regarding the work of ACCPAS. The public member must keep the confidentiality required of all ACCPAS members.

- C. *Representatives.* In addition to the Chair, there shall be four members of ACCPAS; one representing the visual arts appointed by the President of NASAD; one representing dance, appointed by the President of NASD; one representing music, appointed by the President of NASM; and one representing theatre, appointed by the President of NAST.
- D. *Recorder.* The Executive Director or his agent shall serve as the Recorder of ACCPAS. The Recorder of ACCPAS shall have no vote.
- E. *Consultants.* The Executive Director shall have the authority to appoint consultants to ACCPAS under guidelines approved by the Board of Trustees. Consultants do not have a vote.

Although the above procedure ensures a broad range of individual and institutional perspectives, once appointed, members of ACCPAS, or consultants to ACCPAS, shall act as individuals in accordance with the standards, policies, procedures, and autonomy of the Council and its member organizations. In conducting the business of ACCPAS, they serve the interests of ACCPAS. They shall not serve as representatives of types of institutions or other organizations, however defined. They shall hold in confidence the actions of ACCPAS and the discussions leading to them.

Section 2. Vacancies. A vacancy in the office of Chair of ACCPAS shall be filled by majority vote of the Board of Trustees. A vacancy occurring elsewhere in ACCPAS shall be filled by a member accrediting association President consistent with Article V., Section 1.C. of these Bylaws. Any incumbent so appointed shall serve until the next rotation of the position occupied.

Section 3. Authority. The Accrediting Commission for Community and Precollegiate Arts Schools shall apply the accreditation standards established for it by the Board of Trustees of the Council of Arts Accrediting Associations. ACCPAS shall determine the qualifications of institutions and programs desiring accreditation or re-accreditation, and after thorough examination, in accordance with ACCPAS and CAAA procedures, take action on behalf of the Council. ACCPAS shall also have the power to investigate the maintenance of standards and the observance of published commitments in any institution it accredits. ACCPAS shall cooperate with the arts accrediting associations that are members of the Council and with other agencies and accreditors as determined by the Council's Board of Trustees.

ARTICLE VI TERMS AND APPOINTMENTS

Section 1. Officers and Members. The Chair and Vice-Chair/Treasurer of the Council shall serve six-month terms. One term shall begin on July 1, another term shall begin January 1.

The position of Chair shall rotate among the presidents of the member associations, beginning with Art and Design, and continuing with Dance, Music, and Theatre. The position of Vice-Chair/Treasurer shall rotate among the Presidents of the member associations beginning with Dance, and continuing with Music, Theatre, and Art and Design.

Members of ACCPAS shall be appointed for three-year terms. The Chair of ACCPAS may serve one term. A member other than the Chair may serve a maximum of two consecutive terms. The two-term limitation applies only to consecutive terms. A rotation of three-year terms shall be established to provide continuity in the personnel of ACCPAS.

By majority vote, the Board shall have the power to declare vacant any office in which the incumbent is unable for any reason to act effectively, or is disqualified under the Bylaws of the Council.

Section 2. Committees. Committee members and any officers thereof shall be appointed by the Board of Trustees and terms of office shall be stipulated at the time of appointment. Normally, committee appointments are given for one-year periods or less.

ARTICLE VII MEETINGS

Section 1. Council Meetings

- A. *Annual Meeting.* The Annual Meeting of the Council of Arts Accrediting Associations shall be held in January of each year.
- B. *Regular Meetings.* Other regular meetings shall be held as fixed by the Board of Trustees. Regular meetings may be conducted by electronic means.
- C. *Special Meetings.* Special meetings of the Board of Trustees may be called at any time and place by the Chair, or any two of the Trustees, or the Executive Director. At least four days of notice of special meetings shall be given to each official delegate. At special meetings only such business may be transacted as has been stated in a call for the meeting. Special meetings may be conducted through electronic means.
- D. *Notice of Meetings.* Notice of regular or special meetings of the Board of Trustees may be given by and shall be effective if sent by mail, facsimile, email, or given by telephone or in-person to any official delegate, which notice shall be deemed to have been given if sent by mail and deposited in the post office or post box in a sealed, postage-paid wrapper addressed to such official delegate or sent by fax or emailed to the official delegate, in each case at the official delegate's address then appearing in the records of the Council.
- E. *Quorum.* At all meetings of the Board of Trustees, unless otherwise required by the laws of the Commonwealth of Virginia, or the Certificate of Incorporation, a majority of the Council's official delegates then in office, but in any event, not less than one delegate of each member association, shall constitute an act of the Trustees on behalf of the Council.

- F. *Adjournments.* A majority of Trustees present, whether or not a quorum is present, may adjourn any meeting to another time and place. Notice of any adjournment of a meeting of the Board of Trustees to another time and place shall be given to the delegates who were not present at the time of the adjournment, and unless such time and place are announced at the meeting, to all delegates.

Section 2. ACCPAS Meetings. ACCPAS may meet regularly at stated times or specially on notice given at least forty-eight (48) hours in advance by the Executive Director or the Chair of the Council. Notice may be given in person at a meeting of ACCPAS, or by mail, facsimile, email, telephone, or in person. A two-thirds majority of the voting members of ACCPAS constitute a quorum. ACCPAS may take action in person or by electronic means.

Section 3. Committee Meetings. Committees may meet either regularly at stated times or specially on notice given at least twenty-four (24) hours in advance by the Executive Director of the Council, or by any member thereof, by mail, facsimile, email, telephone, or in person to all the other members thereof.

No written notice of any regular meeting need be given, and no written notice of any special meeting need be given at which all members shall be present or notice of which shall be waived by all absent members before or after such meeting.

A majority of the members of a committee shall constitute a quorum thereof.

Each committee may make rules for the holding and conduct of its meetings as long as these are not in conflict with the Bylaws or Protocols and Procedures of the Council, or mandates established by the Board of Trustees.

Subcommittees and assistants may be appointed by committees as may be necessary from time to time subject to the management of the Board of Trustees.

Section 4. Attendance Restrictions. Attendance at all business meetings of the Board of Trustees may be restricted by the presiding officer to official delegates.

ARTICLE VIII EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Section 1. The Executive Director of the Council shall be the Executive Director of the associations that are members of the Council. The Executive Director shall be the Chief Staff Officer of the Council and its Board of Trustees, and of ACCPAS.

Section 2. It shall be the primary duty of the Executive Director to carry out the policies established by the Board of Trustees and to operate the National Office of the Council. The Executive Director shall serve as archivist for all minutes and records of the Council, its Board of Trustees, and of ACCPAS.

Section 3. The Executive Director shall:

- A. Conduct the official correspondence of the Council and ACCPAS and send out official notices;
- B. Notify all official delegates thirty days in advance of the date and place of Annual Meetings, and also notify all members of committees and ACCPAS of the date and place of meetings, whenever called; and
- C. Notify all officers and members of the Board of Trustees, members of ACCPAS, and committees of their terms or of their appointment.

Section 4. The Executive Director shall prepare the agenda of the Board of Trustees and ACCPAS, and the dossiers of institutions being reviewed by ACCPAS, shall make other arrangements for meetings of ACCPAS and committees, and shall be responsible for the records of ACCPAS.

Section 5. The Executive Director shall prepare for the Annual Meeting and all other meetings of the Board of Trustees.

Section 6. The Executive Director shall maintain the bank account(s) and financial records of the Council and, and with the oversight of the Vice-Chair/Treasurer, prepare an annual budget proposal and arrange for an annual audit.

The Executive Director shall receive applications for accreditation from community and precollegiate arts schools and present them to ACCPAS for action, and shall bill and process dues and examination fees.

The Executive Director shall be bonded in an amount determined by the Board of Trustees and shall serve as an authorized signer of Council checks. The Executive Director shall constitute, with the Chair and Vice-Chair/Treasurer, a Finance Committee to act for the Board of Trustees in any financial emergency requiring prompt settlement.

Section 7. The Executive Director shall represent the Council of Arts Accrediting Associations and ACCPAS at meetings of other educational associations and shall establish liaison with other educational associations and related governmental agencies.

The Executive Director shall answer inquiries about the Council and ACCPAS and shall gather and disseminate information, statistical or otherwise, associated with the purposes of the Council and ACCPAS.

Section 8. The Executive Director shall be an officer of the corporation and shall be an ex-officio, non-voting member of the Board of Trustees. The Executive Director shall receive instructions from the Board.

ARTICLE IX AUDITS

A professional audit of the Council's financial records shall be conducted by a certified public accountant prior to each Annual Meeting. The accountant's statement regarding the audit shall be incorporated in the Vice-Chair/Treasurer's Report to the Board of Trustees and shall become part of the permanent record of the Council. The Board of Trustees has the right to appoint an audit committee to examine the books at any time.

ARTICLE X ACCREDITATION STANDARDS

Section 1. The accreditation standards to be used by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Precollegiate Art Schools shall be established and amended by majority vote of the Board of Trustees 1) present and voting at any annual, regular, or special meeting 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 that written notice of the proposed changes with opportunity to comment be sent to all Board of Trustees and all institutions accredited by ACCPAS at least four weeks prior to said meeting.

Section 2. The procedures for developing proposals to establish and amend ACCPAS accreditation standards shall be approved by the Board of Trustees from time to time in a manner appropriate to the nature and scope of the projected changes. Such procedures shall include the establishment of appropriate comment periods for members of the Board of Trustees, for institutions accredited by ACCPAS, and for others as authorized by the Board of Trustees, in addition to the legal notice required in Article X., Section 1. of these Bylaws.

Section 3. The Executive Director shall be authorized to accept comment on a continual basis for review by the Board of Trustees.

Section 4. Institutions accredited by ACCPAS are responsible for reviewing and commenting on proposed revisions and additions to the standards as well as maintaining compliance with all standards as they are approved.

**ARTICLE XI
CODE OF ETHICS**

A Code of Ethics shall be established for the Council by its Board of Trustees to define standards of professional conduct for institutions accredited by ACCPAS, their employees, and representatives.

**ARTICLE XII
PROTOCOLS AND PROCEDURES**

Protocols and Procedures shall be established by the Board of Trustees to define operational policies of the Council and its Board.

**ARTICLE XIII
RULES OF PRACTICE AND PROCEDURE**

Rules of Practice and Procedure shall be established by the Board of Trustees to define policies applicable to the Council's joint Accrediting Commission for Community and Precollegiate Arts Schools and the schools and programs it accredits.

**ARTICLE XIV
PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY**

The meetings of this Council and its joint Commission and committees shall be governed by Robert's Rules of Order (revised) in all cases where said rules do not conflict with the Constitution, Bylaws, and published procedures of the Council.

**ARTICLE XV
CORPORATE SEAL**

The seal of the corporation shall be circular in form, shall bear the name of the corporation, words and figures showing that it was incorporated in the Commonwealth of Virginia, and the year of such incorporation.

**ARTICLE XVI
AMENDMENTS**

These Bylaws may be amended by a majority vote of the official delegates 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 a written notice of proposed amendment be sent to all delegates at least four weeks prior to said meeting.

PROTOCOLS AND PROCEDURES

ARTICLE I PRINCIPLES

Section 1. Orientation. The Council of Arts Accrediting Associations and its Board of Trustees, the Accrediting Commission for Community and Precollegiate Arts Schools (ACCPAS), and all committees shall promote dignity, respect, courtesy, and cooperation in all aspects of the Council’s work.

Section 2. Consensus. In principle, all affairs of the Council, ACCPAS and various Committees shall be decided after efforts to reach consensus.

Section 3. Consultation. Consultation shall be a hallmark of the Council and its operations. In general, time shall be provided for thorough review of all proposals before action is taken. Council member organizations, the Board of Trustees, ACCPAS, institutions accredited by ACCPAS, and others as determined under guidelines established by the Board of Trustees, shall be solicited for their views at the beginning and during the course of major policy reviews. Care shall be taken to consult with the association members of the Council and, as determined by the Board of Trustees, all other appropriate communities of interest in projects undertaken by the Council.

Section 4. Reporting. The actions, projects, and proposals of the Council shall be reported to the association members of the Council by their official delegates to the Council and by the Executive Director of the Council.

Section 5. Nondiscrimination Policy. No person having any relationship with the Council shall be subject to discrimination because of gender, race, color, creed, religion, or national origin.

ARTICLE II AUTONOMY

Section 1. The Council and ACCPAS. The Council has established a joint Accrediting Commission for Community and Precollegiate Arts Schools to act autonomously under standards and rules established by the Council to accredit institutions and programs eligible for its reviews. The Board of Trustees of the Council does not make accreditation decisions. Although it has a consultative role, ACCPAS does not establish standards and procedures.

Section 2. Standards, Codes, and Rules. On behalf of the Council, the Board of Trustees has established accreditation standards, a code of ethics, and associated rules of practice and procedure that are applied by its joint Accrediting Commission for Community and Precollegiate Arts Schools only at the invitation of the educational institutions.

These standards, code, and rules are developed and approved by delegate members of the Board of Trustees of the Council acting autonomously. The standards, code, and rules provide benchmarks for reviewing the extent to which operational, evaluative, and public interest functions associated with accreditation are being fulfilled. The Council’s standards must always allow considerable variation appropriate to the work of each specific institution.

ARTICLE III CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The Council works to avoid conflict of interest or the appearance of conflict of interest in any aspect of its activities. The Council expects all individuals involved in any relationship to declare potential conflicts of interest as they appear.

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 the Council and with consideration of standard practice within the accreditation community. Should the Executive Director be unable to achieve resolution, the Executive Director shall bring the matter to the Board of Trustees as appropriate. The Board of Trustees shall seek resolution through procedures developed to address the specifics of each case. These procedures shall avoid conflict of interest or the appearance of conflict of interest.

ARTICLE IV AMENDMENTS

Amendments to these Protocols and Procedures may be proposed by an association member of the Council or by any official delegate to the Council's Board of Trustees. Amendments shall be submitted to the voting members of the Council at least thirty (30) days prior to consideration thereof by the Board and shall become effective on the date stipulated when adopted.