

THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF TEACHERS OF SINGING



National Association of Teachers of Singing

FOR EVERY AGE & EVERY GENRE OF SINGING

2025 – 2026 NSA REGULATIONS

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Introduction

Former NATS President Roy Delp believed "the idea of constructive criticism along with encouragement" is at the heart of our student adjudications. "Perhaps one of the greatest ties that binds us together as NATS members is the care we have for the students of our colleagues, as demonstrated at our student auditions."

—**Journal of Singing, Vol.57, No.1, p.2.**

This document is more easily understood with the following definitions of NATS' different Auditions and their acronyms:

NSA = All Student Auditions held by a NATS entity (chapter, district, region, or nation)

NMTC = National Musical Theatre Competition for Emerging Professionals

NATSAA = NATS Artist Awards Competition for Emerging Professionals

The Coordinators of NSA, NATSAA, and NMTC report to the Board of Directors through the Vice President for Auditions.

When all participants adhere to the same rules, these NSA Regulations serve to assure as much equitability and integrity as is possible. NATS members and their students participating in NSA events are responsible for adhering to the **NSA Regulations** and [NATS Code of Ethics](#) in all levels of NSA. The NSA Regulations will be enforced at any time when a violation is discovered in an adjudicated audition or in a finalized NSA entry. When a potential violation is reported, researched, and confirmed; the student involved becomes both ineligible to advance to the next level of NSA and ineligible to win a placed award or cash prize. A violation not yet reported at any level of NSA does not constitute implicit approval of an exception to the NSA Regulations.

NATS Student Auditions Mission Statement

As an expression of the goals of the National Association of Teachers of Singing, the NATS National Student Auditions:

- Inspire and encourage students and teachers to continue their dedication to, and growth in, the art of singing
- Embrace all genres of vocal music as art worthy to be studied, respected, and appreciated
- Create a collegial, supportive, and inclusive atmosphere that encourages excellent artistic singing
- Provide constructive, written feedback from a panel of experienced and impartial adjudicators
- Recognize and honor outstanding performances
- Create the NSA as a structure that continues to evolve and improve with each audition cycle

The National Student Auditions Regulations emanate from the Mission Statement and are designed to:

- Standardize registration processes, categories, and repertoire based on research into NATS chapter, district, and 15 regions' student auditions, creating ease, uniformity, and fluidity across all NATS National Student Auditions
- Bring NSA to parity with other national organizations that have standardized requirements among their constituencies for local, regional, and national auditions
- Make audition scoring data comparisons possible across all National Student Auditions
- Create a common understanding of repertoire definitions in vocal music as they relate to the auditions
- Create common language, definitions, and scoring systems across all National Student Auditions so both students and teachers can cross chapter and region boundaries with knowledge and understanding of a NATS audition as a singer or adjudicator
- Create categories that reflect diversity, inclusion, and cultures represented in the ever-expanding NATS membership and their areas of expertise.
- Provide an opportunity for students of NATS members to develop the skills required to audition in a safe, supportive environment that is not a talent competition.

Questions

Any questions about the application of the following NSA Regulations should be addressed to the local auditions chair for chapter and district NSA events or to the region's audition's chair when involving a region's NSA event. NSA officers may contact the national NSA Team as needed to confirm the accuracy of their answers.

Roles in the Operation of Student Auditions

NATS National Student Auditions operate with the endorsement of the National Association of Teachers of Singing and, as such, participants and officers are expected to adhere to national bylaws and policies, including, but not limited to NATS Code of Ethics, NATS Policy on Copyright Laws, and NSA Regulations. These Regulations are available to the governing bodies of Chapters, Districts, and Regions on the NATS website (www.nats.org). In this document, the term “NATS entities” or “sponsoring entities” will be used when referring to any NATS chapter, district, or region holding the auditions. NATS National Student Auditions are administered and managed by the National NSA Team. Student Auditions are self-sustaining, funded through the budgets of the sponsoring NATS entities. Registration fees and NSA entry fees will contribute to NSA event budgets. NATS Discretionary Funds cannot be used to fund NSA prizes but may help fund equipment, master classes, guest artists, and other appropriate activities in conjunction with NSA events. Appropriate officers, boards, and/or memberships of NATS entities are responsible for implementing these regulations effectively.

Since the structures of NATS Regions, Districts, and Chapters vary, the officer designated for the operation of the Student Auditions may vary. For example, some chapters, districts, and regions combine duties of the Auditions Chair with another office—while others separate those duties into several designated offices or committee assignments. It is expected that each entity will assign duties as best fits the size, location, and resources of their respective Student Auditions. For the purposes of this document, the title “Auditions Chair” will be used for the NATS member preparing, coordinating, and implementing Chapter, District, or Region NSA auditions.

National Student Auditions Coordinators, NSA Regulations Committee & NSA Team

The NSA Coordinator, VP for Auditions, NSA CM Coordinator, and NATS Coordinator of Auditions and Competitions form the NSA Team. The National Student Auditions (NSA) Coordinator reports to the NATS Vice President for Auditions. In coordination with the VP for Auditions, the NSA Coordinator assembles the NSA Regulations Committee to advise and approve the NSA Regulations to fulfill the mission of the NATS Student Auditions. The NSA Coordinator and VP for Auditions also assemble panels of experts to serve an advisory role for specific NSA categories. The NSA Coordinator may choose to delegate various tasks to individual committee members, but it is the NSA Coordinator's responsibility to ensure they are completed. The NSA Team jointly holds the final authority to organize, coordinate, and manage the NSA's National YouTube Preliminaries, Semifinals, and Finals as well as to create and update all NSA materials published in the NSA Resource Center on NATS.org.

NATS Region Governor

Region Governors will employ and enforce the NSA Regulations at all levels within their regions. They will organize and execute their region's NSA event, which serves to qualify singers to enter the NSA's National Preliminary YouTube Auditions. The expectation is that a live NSA event will take place in each region before March 30th in each NSA cycle. Whenever live auditions are not possible, the region's officers should decide if a virtual or hybrid NSA event is their best alternative. Region Governors may appoint an Auditions Chair to coordinate the region's NSA events or may choose to delegate specific tasks to their NATS region's members, but it is their responsibility to ensure these duties are completed in accordance with NSA Regulations.

NATS Chapter, District, or Region's Auditions Chair

The Auditions Chair will uphold the NSA Regulations to fulfill the Mission of the National Student Auditions. The Auditions Chair may choose to delegate tasks to NATS members, but it is the Audition Chair's responsibility to ensure their duties listed on pages 5-6 are completed. The Auditions Chair should consult with the Region Governor and the national NSA Team to resolve any concerns that arise in fulfilling their responsibilities as Audition Chairs.

On-site Coordinator or NSA Host

The On-site Coordinator will assist the Auditions Chair with all details regarding the physical location at which Student Auditions are being held. The On-site Coordinator may choose to delegate tasks to NATS members, but it is the Audition Chair's responsibility to ensure that all tasks are completed at the hosting venue(s).

Adjudicators

Adjudicators are expected to review NATS Adjudicator training materials and become familiar with the NSA rubrics (See Appendix B). Adjudicators will hear/view the audition, write constructive comments in response to the rubric's standards, and score or rank each singer as instructed. Comments addressing a singer's repertoire, appearance, or gender-identity are inappropriate. During the auditions there must be no consultation, spoken or written, between adjudicators concerning the evaluation or performance of students. Adjudicators are not required to assign a high rating if, in their opinion, no student has earned it. Adjudicators will report to the audition's chair any violations of the NSA Regulations discovered while adjudicating. It is expected that all adjudicator panels consist of NATS members; however, occasions may exist where non-NATS member industry professionals serve as adjudicators. Any non-NATS members serving as adjudicators must be trained in NSA procedures by the Auditions Chair. Pre-Professional NATS Members are prohibited from adjudicating the auditions of student-singers (their peers) in NSA.

Accompaniment for Auditions

Collaborative pianists are valued and respected colleagues in ensuring successful auditions. The use of iPads and tablets as scores is approved; however, an audition may not restart due to any malfunction of an iPad or tablet device. Electronic files of scores are held to the same standards of copyright compliance as any other score. The singer and teacher bear the responsibility to provide legally obtained sheet music for the audition. Some entities may provide staff collaborative pianists for a fee. Voice Teachers may not serve as collaborative pianists in *live* NSA events in which they have entered students. Teachers may serve as the collaborating pianist in video auditions provided the teacher is not visible on the video. In video submissions only, piano-only accompaniment tracks are accepted in all categories. Only in Commercial Music categories are instrumental tracks with no backing vocals accepted in both video submissions and live auditions. Commercial Music categories have limited options for self-accompanying on one acoustic instrument or being accompanied by an instrumentalist playing one acoustic instrument as fully detailed in the Commercial Music Regulations in Appendix A.

The NATS Membership and/or Board

The NATS Membership and/or Board of a Chapter or Region will implement and support the Regulations of NATS National Student Auditions. They will serve as adjudicators and will be available to assist the Auditions Chair and On-site Coordinator/Host upon request.

NSA: Organizational Structure & Official Duties

The purpose of this section is to define a common organizational structure for all involved in the preparation, coordination, implementation, and adjudication of NATS National Student Auditions.

NATS Entity: Membership or Board of a Chapter, District, or Region

1. Implements and supports the Regulations of the National Student Auditions (NSA).
2. Determines the appropriate registration or application fees for participation in their entity's level of NSA. NATS Discretionary Fund Grants may not be utilized for National Student Auditions expenses.
3. Selects the audition site preferably at least one year in advance. The site should have adequate facilities (e.g., performance venues, audition rooms, practice rooms, pianos, and restrooms) to accommodate the auditions.
4. Serves as NSA adjudicators. All participating members need to be available to assist the Auditions Chair and On-site Coordinator upon request. Each entity may develop an absentee policy and will clearly communicate such policy. Contact the NSA Coordinator with questions.
5. Ensures that times selected for their Region's National Student Auditions align with the National Student Audition deadlines. (The NSA national application deadline is the second Friday in April. Therefore, regions should schedule their auditions to allow enough time for their qualified singers to complete and submit their application materials prior to the national deadline.)
6. Selects subcategories and non-NSA categories for auditions within the NSA Regulations.
7. Establishes the amount and type of awards given to winners of their entity's auditions.
8. Welcomes NATS members when they relocate into their NATS chapter, district, or region.
9. Standardizes the name of auditions organization-wide to assist in the branding, use of current logos, name recognition, and consistency of auditions.

Chapter and District auditions will be titled as:

"NATS National Student Auditions: _____ Chapter or District" as applicable

Region auditions will be titled as:

"NATS National Student Auditions: _____ Region"

National auditions will be titled as:

"NATS NSA National _____ Auditions" (Preliminary/YouTube, Quarterfinal, Semifinal, or Final)

The official NATS NSA logo pictured here as well as other [Promotional Materials/Branding Resources](#) are available online to download for your use.



Auditions Chair or Coordinator of Chapter, District, and/or Regional NSA events

All tasks listed chronologically below may be completed by the Auditions Chair or delegated to NATS members or officers; however, it is the Auditions Chair's responsibility to ensure that all tasks are completed.

1. Works with their fellow officers to determine whether their NSA event will offer live auditions, virtual auditions with video audition submissions, or a hybrid event with video submissions used in some but not all levels of auditions or some but not all categories of auditions as best meets the needs of the membership. If live auditions are planned, secures the date, time, and facility (at least a year in advance is strongly encouraged) and gives sufficient notice to the membership of the hosting region or chapter. Ensures live NSA venues are accessible for disabled persons.
2. Establishes an On-site Coordinator and/or NSA Host(s) to represent the secured venue for live auditions.
3. [Submits NSA Event details](#) to ensure that the audition event is included in the NATS Event Calendar on nats.org.
4. Ensures that liability insurance is secured for the site of the live event, when required by the host facility. Many universities or buildings are already covered, but coverage must be verified for protection in the event of any accidents. Whenever the audition venue is not already covered with liability insurance, allow adequate time for this task to be processed by the NATS insurer. It is highly recommended that you complete this task early in the planning process once a host site is secured. NATS offers an umbrella policy that can be activated by filling out this simple [insurance form](#) online.
5. Reviews the most current version of the NSA Regulations and notes any changes to incorporate into their NSA event registration. Updated NSA Regulations and other documents are downloadable pdfs available in the [NATS.org](https://nats.org) [NSA Resource Center](#) no later than the first day of each annual NSA Cycle (September 1st). All potential documents needed must be downloaded from the online NSA Resource Center anew each year to operate with the most current NSA information.
6. Coordinates with the editor of the region's or chapter's Auditions Handbook/Guidelines/Instructions to incorporate NSA Regulation updates into that document, ensuring all communication with members remains in alignment with the most current national NSA Regulations.
7. Communicates with the On-site Coordinator to reserve enough audition rooms and a tabulation room. Acquires room details including building name, room numbers, size of rooms, piano type, *etc.* for entry into AuditionWare. In some cases, rooms for workshops, master classes, hospitality, and luncheon may need to be coordinated simultaneously to avoid scheduling conflicts with events other than auditions.
8. Communicates expectations to the On-site Coordinator regarding building access, practice rooms, piano tuning, door monitors, registration table/location/hours open, venue signage, parking, maps, local hotel discounts, nametags for students, guests, NATS members, pianists, availability of staff pianists, details/ticket blocks for host venue events included in NSA event, *etc.* Expectations of these details may vary by region or chapter.
9. Establishes event registration in AuditionWare. Data required to establish registration include (but are not limited to) event dates and times, venue details, categories of entry, chaperone forms for minor-aged students entered in live NSA events, audition details for preliminaries, semifinals, finals, fees, and dates of registration opening, registration closing, any repertoire change deadline, and any video submission deadline.
10. Emails current NATS members of the chapter, district, or region access and all information needed to register and enter students in the NSA event.
11. Vets submissions to ensure alignment with NSA Regulations and well before auditions begin communicates directly with teachers to encourage remediation of ineligible repertoire required. Note that song titles entered in CM categories cannot be vetted excepting for number of self-composed and self-accompanied selections as limited by the NSA Regulations. If video auditions are entered, vets videos submissions.
12. Coordinates staff collaborative pianists, if staff pianists are offered in teacher registration or student online entries.
13. Utilizes AuditionWare to produce an auditions schedule, organized by category of entry. Constructs the audition schedule to provide each entrant the opportunity to perform up to the time limit for the category of entry with the collaborative pianist assigned to the performer. Avoids scheduling conflicts for entrants and collaborative pianists. Double-checks audition schedules of students entered in multiple categories and/or students auditioning and accompanying another student's audition. Allows pianists sufficient time to transit between assigned auditions.
14. Ensures at least three qualified adjudicators are assigned in AuditionWare to adjudicate each category, based on adjudicators' level of experience, stated preferences, and limitations to minimize bias. Adjudicators may not serve in categories in which their students are auditioning. Avoid adjudicators from one school or group studio serving on the same panel of adjudicators, if possible.
15. Educates adjudicators on NSA procedures including the use of rubrics in scoring and supplies adjudicators with links to the adjudication training videos specific to each genre category.
16. Prepares and distributes adjudicator packets with scoring/comment forms, extra paper for notes, rubrics, and pencils as needed for preliminary, quarterfinal, semifinal, and/or final live auditions. Communicates procedures to adjudicators of video submissions and established a deadline by which adjudications must be completed.
17. Communicates the availability of completed audition schedules to teachers, adjudicators, and collaborative pianists. Instructs teachers to communicate audition details to their students entered. Requests that schedules are reviewed for any potential conflicts, which should be immediately brought to the Audition Chair's attention.
18. Adjudicates any violations of NSA Regulations that may arise in any level of auditions and consults with the governor or president of the entity's event as needed. When a violation is researched and confirmed, the Audition Chair communicates the violation to a minor-aged student's teacher or directly with an adult student and/or their teacher. Any student's violations of the NSA Regulations make that student ineligible to advance in NSA or win a prize.

19. Ensures the smooth execution of the auditions through effective delegation of responsibilities as well as organized communication with all participants including: an adjudicators meeting before auditions begin, announcements of student-singers advancing to the next level of auditions, and emceeing any: concert finals, winners' concerts, and/or award ceremonies.
20. When paper adjudication forms are used, establishes a reliable means of ensuring adjudication forms are securely transferred from adjudicators to tabulation, that scores are entered accurately and efficiently into AuditionWare, and that adjudication forms are subsequently returned to the appropriate teachers, who will return to and discuss the forms with their students.
21. Communicates in a timely manner the date, time, adjudicators, and location of subsequent levels of auditions.
22. Announces final auditions results to event participants and to the region, district, or chapter membership in a timely manner.
23. Provides finalists with a certificate documenting their achievement in the auditions, e.g., First through Fifth Places, Honorable Mention, other special awards, etc., and any prize checks provided by the chapter, district, or region.
24. Communicates the final audition results of advancing singers in applicable NSA categories, e.g., chapter or district report qualifying students to their region's NSA, whenever progressive auditions are used to qualify students for the next level of NSA. Students placing 1st-5th in a national category and earning scores to advance (see page 9) qualify to enter NSA's National Preliminaries. Each region must promptly communicate the National Qualifying students' complete regional entries organized in national NSA categories to the Mark McQuade (mark@nats.org) on or before March 30th of each NSA Cycle.
25. Runs virtual or hybrid auditions as close to these live audition procedures as is possible.
26. Retains digital copies of Minor Chaperone Forms for one calendar year and then shreds forms for secure disposal.

On-site Coordinator or NSA Event Host

1. Reserves the site with a sufficient number of rooms for performances, tabulations, and Chapter/District/Region meetings and expediently communicates this information to the Auditions Chair.
2. Communicates to the Audition's Chair details of any specific insurance policy(s) required by the hosting venue.
3. Prepares and provides information about directions, hotels, and parking for dissemination to attendees.
4. Coordinates tuning of all pianos when necessary.
5. Engages needed door monitors and/or timers.
6. Reserves a hospitality room for NATS members and coordinates catering, if needed.
7. Coordinates On-site Registration providing Registration Staff, Event Schedules, Maps, Food Options, Nametags for participants (Students Auditioning, NATS Members, Guests, and Pianists as needed).
8. Posts signage throughout event venue(s).
9. Communicates with guest adjudicators and/or performers about logistical arrangements.

Adjudicators

1. NATS members who register students to audition are expected to serve as adjudicators as necessary.
2. Adjudicators will be expected to review NATS Adjudicator training materials and be familiar with adjudication rubrics (see Appendix B for genre-specific rubrics).
3. Adjudicators will write comments that reinforce a spirit of cooperation and mutual concern. The comments should motivate the student in the pursuit of vocal artistry and technique through hearing and being heard, and being adjudicated in a supportive climate.
4. All comments should be consistent with the NSA Regulations in addressing only the standards for the category.
5. While it is expected that all panels are made of NATS members, occasions may exist where non-NATS member industry professionals serve as trained NSA adjudicators.

Entering Students in NSA

NATS members should respect each student's prerogative to obtain instruction from any teacher(s) of their choice, including concurrent study with another teacher(s). Transparency should be maintained among all parties.

Whenever a student has multiple voice teachers, the following designations apply:

Primary Voice Teacher—the teacher who currently teaches a student the majority of their voice lessons in an independent studio or in an academic degree program.

Concurrent Voice Teacher—a teacher, who in addition to a primary teacher, also currently teaches regularly recurring voice lessons to the same student. Common examples: voice teachers addressing different genres of vocal music or having different areas of expertise desired by the student.

Supplemental Voice Teacher—a teacher, who in addition to a primary teacher, also currently teaches voice lessons to the student recurring lessons on a less than weekly basis.

Former Voice Teacher—a teacher who has taught the student regularly recurring lessons, but no longer teaches the student being entered. Common examples: teachers of students who have changed voice teachers or voice teachers of students who have earned a diploma or degree and who have begun a subsequent vocal degree program at a different institution or with a different voice teacher.

Remote Voice Teacher—the teacher currently teaching a student that resides in a different location than the teacher. Remote Voice Teachers are considered Primary Voice Teachers unless designated as a Concurrent or Supplemental Teacher.

NATS Member-Teachers Entering Students at Different Levels of NSA

NATS National Student Auditions: Chapter and District Auditions

A primary teacher may enter any of their students in any chapter(s) or district in which the teacher is a current member. Remote and Concurrent Teachers may enter their students in either the chapter/district/region where the teacher resides OR the chapter/district/region where the student resides, providing the teacher has a current membership in that chapter. Teachers entering students must follow the NSA Regulations and rules of the entity holding the NSA event. Teachers must be aware that some, but not all, chapter and/or district auditions qualify students to advance to the region's NSA auditions. **Students may be entered in multiple chapter auditions, but teachers may enter each student in only ONE region's NSA in each NSA cycle**, which may impact participation in multiple chapter auditions.

NATS National Student Auditions: Region Auditions

The region of a NATS member is determined by the physical address in their NATS membership file. NATS members belong to the region of their membership-address. When teaching voice remotely, teachers may become members of multiple regions in which they have current chapter memberships. Each NSA cycle, students may be **ENTERED** in only **ONE** region's auditions in accordance with the audition procedures of that region.

NATS National Student Auditions: National Auditions

For students of a NATS teacher to enter the National Student Audition, the NATS teacher must enter their students in a region's NSA auditions. National Student Auditions begin at the region-level. In each region, only students placing first through fifth and earning a qualifying score in a National Category will qualify to enter the National YouTube Preliminaries. When only one level of auditions is adjudicated before determining Place Awards in a National Category, **students may only qualify to enter the National Preliminary Auditions when they have earned 2 scores of 90 or above or an averaged score of 90 or above in any region's single level of auditions, even if potentially receiving a first through fifth place award in their region.** Winners of Chapter or District auditions may not be automatically advanced to the National Student Auditions.

NATS National Student Auditions: ALL AUDITIONS

NATS Member-Teachers meeting the requirements of an NSA category in terms of their age and years of study may enter student auditions through the NATS member with whom they are currently studying, but they may not enter themselves in the audition. If they enter their students in the audition, they must be available to adjudicate a category in addition to auditioning. Post-high school categories are open to students who meet the age eligibility and study with a NATS member in an independent studio **or** in a college/university program.

A Checklist of 11 Rules for Entering Students in NSA

1. Teachers with whom the student currently studies must communicate directly with one another prior to registering their shared student. Each student may **ONLY** be registered once in **ONE** NSA region, regardless of the variety or number of categories that student may enter or the number of teachers in different regions with whom the student may study.
2. When entering students in the NSA, NATS members may enter only those students currently studying with them as a primary or concurrent teacher and may not enter students of other NATS members or non-NATS members.
3. Teachers registering students for auditions must be Professional, Emerging Professional or Emeritus NATS members in good standing at the national level of NATS at the time of registration and at the time of all NSA events. In addition, chapter-level events require chapter membership in good standing at the time of registration and at the time of all NSA events. Exceptions to this requirement will be granted by the NATS National Office only to Canadian chapters that are a Registered Charitable Organization with the Canadian government.
4. September 1st is the first day of each annual NSA cycle. When entering a student in any NSA event, **the student's age on September 1st and the student's level of voice study in progress on September 1st will be used to determine the student's category(s) of entry. Students will remain in the same category(s) for an entire NSA cycle—even if later in the NSA cycle on their birthday, the student ages out of their category.**
5. If a student has been studying with a sponsoring teacher fewer than eight months, acknowledgement must be made naming any former voice teacher—both on the application and in any public announcements.
6. The voice teacher entering a student in NSA will acknowledge the student's other voice teachers that also contributed to the preparation of the student's audition.
7. Members shall complete and submit all required forms by published deadlines for each level of NSA.
8. Members shall ensure that all NSA requirements are met and support the NATS Copyright Policy.
9. Voice Teachers who enter students may not accompany any student auditions at any level of a live NSA event including Award Concerts. In video audition submissions, the teacher may accompany an audition only when the teacher, their name, and/or any identifying images are not visibly present on the video.
10. NATS Members shall serve as adjudicators and/or act in other capacities as requested at any NSA event.
11. If a NATS Member's student advances to NSA's National Auditions, the teacher will supervise the student and/or their parent or guardian in completing all required NSA forms by the published deadlines. All National Audition invitations and instructions for entry/participation are sent to both the teacher and student.

The Preliminary Audition Format

1. Each singer entered in the same category is allotted the same amount of time to perform. Singers select and announce their first song or aria to perform. The adjudication panel requests subsequent selections until the audition reaches the time limit or the singer performs all repertoire entered. Time begins when the singer begins to introduce themselves and announce their first selection.
2. Time continues to run between selections. In NSA preliminaries, each adjudication panel's chair should expedite a rotation cycle among the panel members for subsequent repertoire selections. Repertoire selections should be made without delay because time continues to run between selections.
3. During the audition, selections are to be sung in their entirety as prepared by the student and required by the NSA Regulations, WITHOUT edits from adjudicators. Examples of prohibited edits are requesting a singer start at the B section or suggesting a student skip a prepared recitative and start with the aria or stopping a student in the middle of a piece to move on to the next selection.
4. Repertoire is heard as the time limit allows. If exceeding the audition's time limit, all repertoire will not be heard. An audition reaching the time limit will end when the time limit is reached even if a selection is in progress. Teachers should inform their students of this possibility. Adjudicators may not end an audition early, if any entered repertoire remains yet to be heard—even if insufficient time remains to hear a significant portion the remaining song/aria.
5. When an adjudicator or timekeeper calls or signals "stop," the audition is completed and will end promptly.
6. Adjudicators respond without merit or penalty for meeting, exceeding, or not filling the time limit required.
7. If the Preliminary Audition is a video submission, all audition videos must adhere to the NSA Video Submission Guidelines as published in Appendix C of this document and available for download online in the NATS.org NSA Resource Center. Adjudication should unfold as if the audition were performed live.
8. Any NSA video submissions not adhering to the NSA Video Submission Guidelines (Appendix C) will be deemed invalid and cannot advance in NSA. Invalid videos will not be scored but will receive comments, if possible.

Rating and Scoring Systems

All NATS National Student Auditions must use the same scoring system, enabling scoring data uniformity across all NATS Student Auditions.

Most NSA Auditions have preliminary and final auditions. Larger enrollments may require semifinal auditions or even quarterfinal auditions. Live auditions with a larger number of singers in a category may be subdivided into two or more groups in preliminary auditions.

The following OPTIONS are possible to accommodate the structure and size of auditions:

- **Preliminary Auditions:** All singers will be scored with comments, excepting when entered for comments only, an audition will not be scored 70-100 in compliance with the Rubric for that category.
- **Semifinals or Quarterfinals (when necessary):** All singers will be either **A.** scored with comments OR **B.** ranked numerically with or without comments.
- **Finals:** All singers will be ranked numerically without comments.
- **No Semifinal Auditions:** When scoring indicates that no semifinal audition is necessary in categories with a smaller number enrolled or a small number of students advancing to the next level of auditions, audition chairs may advance students from preliminaries directly to finals without a semifinal audition.

NSA Preliminaries

1. Singers in all categories will sing one song of their choice followed by songs selected by their adjudicators until the category's time limit is reached or the student has performed all selections entered.
2. During the preliminary auditions, adjudicators will use the NATS rubrics to write constructive comments and a score between 70 and 100 on their adjudication form. If possible, these adjudication forms will be made available prior to the next level of auditions to allow singers to benefit from the adjudicators' written comments.
3. Chapters and Districts holding only a Preliminary and Final Auditions may use audition scores to advance an agreed upon number of singers to the Finals. In the event of ties, the semifinal audition procedure may be used as a run-off to determine the finalists.
4. Entities with only one level of auditions should follow the process for the Preliminary Audition with highest average scores receiving awards; however, only students with scores qualifying to advance to the next level of NSA may qualify to enter the National level of NSA. See "NSA Finals" on the following page for suggestions of potential culminating events.

Regardless of any NATS entity's structured levels of auditions, only students receiving 2 scores of 90 or above OR an average score of 90 or above in the Preliminary Auditions may advance from Preliminaries to the next level of NSA auditions and/or qualify from the Region to enter the National level of NSA.

NSA Semifinals

1. There is no limit on the number of semifinalists.
2. Each student will sing one selection of his/her choice in its entirety. This selection must be a song or aria entered in the Preliminary Auditions. Entities may opt to allow more than one selection in the Semifinals.
3. Each adjudicator will give only one score between 70 and 100 OR rank the singers numerically on a ranking sheet provided. If comments are written, those comments will be made available prior to Finals when possible. If adjudicators write no comments, the rating sheets will not be made available to teachers or students. If using scores, the highest average scores advance. If ranking numerically, the lowest total scores advance.
4. Final tabulations will be made by the Auditions Chair and assistants.
5. The adjudicators are not to confer until after their rating sheets are delivered to the Auditions Office/Tabulation Room.
6. A maximum of 5 singers will advance to finals unless there is a tie. When combining a category after subdivided preliminaries or semifinals, the top 3 singers from each subdivision may advance to finals. Some entities may choose to advance a maximum of 3 to the finals.

NSA Finals

1. Each student will sing one song of his/her choice in its entirety. This selection must be one of a song or aria from the required repertoire entered. Some auditions may place a time limit on the selection performed in finals. Selections chosen should take any required time limits into consideration.
2. The adjudicators will not confer. Each adjudicator independently ranks the finalists from 1 (highest) through to the number of finalists auditioning. Results are returned to the Auditions Office/Tabulation Room and tabulated. Lowest total scores are awarded appropriate prizes and/or recognitions.
3. All awards are presented after Finals are completed.
4. **Ties:** If two or more students tie for first place, the awards for the first and second places will be pooled and divided equally among the winners. All will be awarded as First Place Winners. This Regulation holds for ties in all the places. In the event that there are more than finalists than placed awards, a certificate of "Honorable Mention" will be awarded to additional finalists. See Recognition and Awards.
5. As a culminating event, entities may choose to organize their Finals as a plenary event with all participants in attendance or alternately, present a winners or honors recital featuring all winners or a subset of winners, *i.e.*, 1st place in each category. The construct of these events is often determined by space and time constraints.
6. Monetary prizes and other awards will be developed at the discretion of the entity holding auditions.

Scoring System

Based on the use of rubrics with standards of performance, the NSA scoring system is developed to allow objective as well as subjective measures of a singer's performance. The scoring system is structured to provide more detailed guidance to adjudicators as they seek to provide appropriate and constructive feedback to students. All auditions will use the official NATS National Student Auditions Adjudication Form available online. See sample adjudication forms.

Preliminary Adjudicators' Responsibilities

1. Report any potential violations of the NSA Regulations to the Auditions Chair for resolution.
2. Provide scoring for each singer in comparison to standards developed specifically for these auditions. See adjudication rubrics in Appendix B. Adjudicating relative to a common standard will provide a fairer overall result than comparing singers in each category to one another to determine scores merited.
3. For each standard on the adjudication form, place an **X** on the tick lines to indicate a general level of accomplishment. A specific numerical score is not listed for each standard; however, the range of developing to mastering is divided into three sections corresponding with the 70-100 range of possible scores. The Ensemble marking will not factor into an audition's score because some singers may be performing with a staff or other unfamiliar pianist with whom they have had little opportunity to rehearse.

STANDARDS	DEVELOPING	ADVANCING	MASTERING
Tone	_____	_____	_____
Breathing / Alignment	_____	_____	_____
Language / Diction	_____	_____	_____
Musicianship / Accuracy	_____	_____	_____
Artistry / Expression	_____	_____	_____
Ensemble (<i>comments only</i>)	_____	_____	_____
TICKS REFLECT SCORES	70	79 80	89 90 100

3. In NSA preliminaries, provide constructive comments on the performance that correspond with the ratings provided on the tick lines for each standard. The audition rubrics provide guidance to the adjudicator in constructing comments in agreement with their ratings. Entities may elect to also provide comments in semifinals whenever possible.
4. The rubric's standards vary in importance; and therefore, also vary in weight in a composite score. Assign a score that is **generally** reflected in your markings on the tick lines. A significant discrepancy between the ticks and the composite score may questionably indicate something more than the standards contributed to the composite score. The most ticks in the mastering third must result in a composite score in the 90s. Similarly, the most ticks in the advancing third must result in a composite score in the 80s and the most ticks in the developing third must result in a composite score in the 70s. Assign a composite score between 70 and 100. Never score below 70. A numerical score should only appear in the score box at the bottom of the adjudication form, never in the tick lines.

Adjudicating Standards of Performance

1. Detailed national performance standards are listed in the left column of each genre-specific rubric found in Appendix B.
2. Each standard of vocal performance describes the qualities an ideal singer will have.
3. In preliminary auditions, all entered students' auditions are adjudicated with comments. Some students may choose to enter for comments only and not receive a numerical score. Each student-singer's performance in their audition is adjudicated in comparison to the rubric's standards, not in comparison to the other singers in the same category.
4. Adjudicators are to use their professional expertise to adjust the rubric's performance standards to be reasonable expectations for the age and level of study required to enter the category being adjudicated.

Recognitions and Awards

Recognitions and awards are important to students and collaborative pianists. Often monetary awards are important to students, both as an incentive and as a means of defraying expenses. Each NATS entity establishes the best means by which to recognize and award students. Examples:

Public Announcements

After finals are adjudicated, an announcement of 1st through 5th place and/or honorable mentions in each category allows individual recognition of outstanding singers. Teachers of finalists may be announced during an award ceremony or posted on a website with the list of winners and their collaborative pianists. A moment to recognize semifinalists and/or finalists as a group with applause may be an effective way to recognize the efforts and contributions of a larger group of people. A round of applause to recognize the efforts and artistry of collaborative pianists is also appropriate.

Finalist Certificates

Certificates may be given for first, second, and third place winners, or more as deemed appropriate.

Monetary Awards

While monetary awards are most often given to students in first, second, and third places, several NATS entities have been known to acknowledge 4 or 5 places per category. In recognition of the greater preparation and expense involved to enter the Upper Post-High School and Advanced Categories and as incentive for these students to participate, some NATS entities employ a graduated scale of monetary awards based on length of study. Typically, awards are paid from the total pool of entry fees.

Honors Concert

Performance on an honors concert at the conclusion of the auditions or at a later NATS event allows many members and students to hear and acknowledge the exceptional work of outstanding students of singing.

Special Awards and Prizes

Special Awards may include Best Performance of a Selection included in the NATS Advocacy Initiative, Most Promising Professional Voice, Singer of the Year, Collaborative Pianist of the Year, Honorable Mention, *etc.* Certificates and/or monetary prizes may be awarded as deemed appropriate and financially feasible. Please also see details of [Named & Sponsored NSA Awards](#) presented to NSA's National Finalists, which may influence repertoire selection to become eligible for one of these generously sponsored-National prizes.

Awards for National NSA Finalists

Children & Youth Musical Theatre/Commercial Music/Classical Categories*

Categories 1 & 2

TOTAL per category \$1,500

\$800 – 1st place in each category

\$400 – 2nd place in each category

\$300 – 3rd place in each category

6 annual C&Y categories = \$9,000

High School & Lower Musical Theatre/Commercial Music/Classical Categories*

Categories 3A – 6

TOTAL per category \$2,350

\$1,200 - 1st place in each category

\$700 – 2nd place in each category

\$450 – 3rd place in each category

18 annual HS & Lower categories = \$42,300

Upper & Advanced Musical Theatre[†]/Commercial Music/Classical Categories*

Categories 7 – 10

TOTAL per category \$3,000

\$1,600 - 1st place in each category

\$900 – 2nd place in each category

\$500 – 3rd place in each category

10 annual Upper & Advanced categories = \$30,000

American Negro Spiritual Categories* offered in odd-numbered years

AS 9

\$1,600 – 1st place

\$900 – 2nd place

\$500 – 3rd place

AS 7

\$1,200 – 1st place

\$700 – 2nd place

\$450 – 3rd place

AS 3

\$1,200 - 1st place

\$700 – 2nd place

\$450 – 3rd place

Biennial Total = \$7,700

Hall Johnson Spiritual Competition* offered in even-numbered years

HJ 7

\$2,000 – 1st place

\$900 – 2nd place

\$500 – 3rd place

Biennial Total = \$3,400

NSA NATIONAL AWARD TOTAL in odd-numbered years = \$89,000

NSA NATIONAL AWARD TOTAL in even-numbered years = \$84,700

If in any National level of NSA, a student's audition is reported, researched, and confirmed to be in violation of an NSA Regulation, that student becomes ineligible to win a placed award and cash prize.

* Should adjudication result in a tie, the corresponding awards will be pooled and divided evenly between the singers. In a tie, both winners will be awarded the same place. Not all prizes must be awarded in all categories, depending on enrollment and/or scoring.

[†] Advanced categories in Musical Theatre do not advance to national levels of NSA. These advanced students are encouraged to enter [NATS National Musical Theatre Competition](#).

NATS Copyright Policy

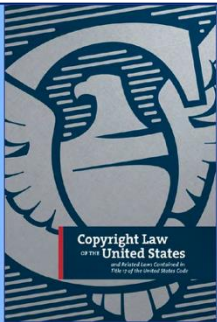
NATS encourages its members, their students, collaborative pianists, and general populations to become educated about and to comply with all applicable copyright laws.

Read more details by clicking below

NATS Policy on Copyright Laws

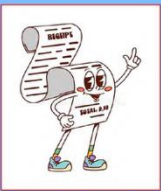
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- a license to reproduce such work has been obtained
 - the use is considered “fair use” (*a bit complicated, read copyright resources*)
 - the work is in the public domain in the country
- OR**
- a valid exception to copyright infringement exists




Copyright Infringement *[kă-pē-rīt in-'frin-jənt]*

The use or production of copyright-protected material without the permission of the copyright holder.



Copyright Compliant



Letter of Permission Signed by Copyright holder **Receipt of Purchase** **Copyright in the Public Domain**

NATS requires students, teachers, and other participants in NATS affiliated events, auditions, and competitions to affirm their compliance with the NATS Copyright Policy on United States Copyright Laws, and to use ONLY published sheet music/scores or authorized reproductions of copyrighted works. NSA personnel may not investigate copyright compliance without assuming legal liability for adherence to the U.S. Copyright Laws.



Copyright-Compliance

CHECK BOX on NSA ENTRIES

☒ I acknowledge that I have read and understand NATS Copyright Policy on U.S. Copyright Laws and verify that all of my students' NSA auditions, whether video or live, will adhere to current U.S. Copyright Laws.

NSA: Levels of Auditions

The Categories of Entry referenced below are found in Appendix A of this document.

NATS National Student Auditions: Qualifying in Region-Auditions

The NATS National Student Auditions begin at the regional level and progress to the national preliminaries, semifinals, and finals. Some, not all, regions hold progressive auditions in which chapter or district auditions serve as qualifying auditions to advance a limited number of students to their region's auditions. All regions' NSA events should include **all categories eligible to advance to the national level of auditions**. Categories advancing to national preliminary auditions are **highlighted in yellow in the "NSA Categories of Entry."** To ensure fairness and appropriate rigor in the National Student Auditions, regions may only advance singers placing 1st through 5th in the region's eligible categories and/or subcategories, but only if the placing students received qualifying scores to advance (see top of page 9). Students tied for 1st through 5th will all advance. Student-singers placing in Chapter or District auditions will not automatically advance to Nationals.

Each Region advances to the National Preliminary/YouTube Auditions, all qualifying students placing 1st through 5th in each eligible category or subcategory of an eligible category. Please note that some subcategories advance to nationals as independent categories as highlighted in green in "The Categories of Entry." When a category's number of entries becomes too large, a region may choose to subdivide the category. When subdividing a nationally eligible category, the 1st – 5th placing singers in each subcategory will advance to national preliminaries, *i.e.*, the region's MT 5 qualifiers may include the 5 singers placing in MT 5A (*1st year Post HS*) **plus** the 5 singers placing in MT 5B (*2nd year Post HS*) to total 10 singers from the region qualifying for nationals in MT 5.

As soon as possible after the region's auditions are completed and no later than March 30th, the Region's Governor or Region's Auditions Chair should send Mark McQuade (mark@nats.org) an email containing each national qualifying student's entry information by exporting the appropriate spreadsheet from AuditionWare and certify that the repertoire on the spreadsheet is the same repertoire that the singer submitted/performed in the region's NSA. **The region's submission of National Qualifiers must be organized by National Category names only and include all the region's complete registration information.**

Musical theatre students who exceed the age limits for the Upper Musical Theatre categories are encouraged to enter the NATS National Musical Theatre Competition.

Exceptions to this or any NSA Regulation must be approved by the NSA Team.

National Preliminary/YouTube Auditions

The national level of the NSA will begin when the National Coordinator of Competitions and Auditions sends each student advancing from their region auditions an emailed invitation to enter/register for the national preliminary auditions. Eligible singers from each region complete an online registration/entry for the national preliminary auditions including submitting YouTube video links for adjudication and comments. **Students must enter the same repertoire entered in their region's auditions.** If regions use the subdivided categories, all the repertoire selections for the applicable audition category/subcategory in the "Categories of Entry" must be included in the YouTube videos (*one video per required selection, each uploaded to separate unlisted YouTube links, one link per selection*). Please see Appendix C for NSA Video Submission Guidelines. **Approximately 15 singers from each national preliminary audition category will be invited to the live National Semifinals.**

National Semifinal Auditions

The National Semifinal Auditions will take place alternately in conjunction with a National Conference (even-numbered years) or Summer Workshop (odd-numbered years). Semifinalists must audition with the same selections entered in their region's auditions. Each singer participating in the national semifinal audition will begin with a selection of his or her choice and continue with selections chosen by the panel of adjudicators according to the national repertoire requirements and within the prescribed time limits for each audition category. **3 singers from each semifinal category will advance to National Finals.**

National Final Auditions

The National Final Auditions will also take place during a National Conference or Summer Workshop. Each participating singer will sing one selection of his or her choice. This selection must be one of the pieces submitted in the preliminaries of the competition. **Award certificates will be presented to all three finalists with monetary awards** for the First, Second, and Third Place Winners in each audition category.

Schedule of National Levels of NSA

Immediately following Region-Auditions - Deadline for Region-Governor to submit a list of eligible singers and the repertoire for each to the National Coordinator of Competitions & Auditions

Second Friday of April - Deadline for YouTube submissions, paying entry fee, and completing online entry for National Preliminaries

Beginning of May - Deadline for adjudication and scoring results from YouTube submissions

Middle of May - Date to notify semifinalists (Approximately 6 weeks prior to semifinals)

Late June/Early July - National Student Audition Semifinals and Finals at the NATS National Conference and in alternating years at the NATS Summer Workshop or NATS AuditionCon

Audition Fees

National NSA Nonrefundable Entry Fee: \$75 per category entered

This is a fee for entry in the national levels of NSA, which include National Preliminaries/ YouTube Auditions, Semifinals, and Finals. This entry fee also includes admission to all the national conference or summer workshop sessions, which are not individually ticketed events. This entry fee is in addition to any Chapter, District, and/or Region audition fees. **A \$75 entry fee is required for each category entered** in NSA National Auditions.

Collaborative Pianists

Collaborative pianists are valued partners in auditions. The use of tablets and iPads are allowed. Electronic scores must be copyright compliant. No NSA audition will restart due to a malfunction of an electronic device. Each singer may choose to collaborate with their personal pianist at all levels of the competition or elect to use a Staff Collaborative Pianist. Staff pianists will be provided at National Semifinals for an additional fee, which will include playing for National Finals at no additional cost to the singer. Brief rehearsals with an assigned staff pianists will be provided prior to the National Semifinal Auditions. Singers advancing to the National Finals with a staff pianist, will be allotted a ten-minute rehearsal with the pianist or a soundcheck before their national final audition.

Adjudication

Adjudication panels for the National Preliminary YouTube Auditions, the National Semifinals, and the National Finals will be selected by the National NSA Coordinators in consultation with the National Vice President for Auditions.

Sources for eligible adjudicators may include:

- NATS members may be invited to adjudicate any category in which their students are not auditioning.
- NATS members attending the conference or workshop may indicate their willingness to serve as an adjudicator on their registration form.
- NATS members residing near the conference or workshop may be contacted to serve as adjudicators.
- Non-NATS members, who are experts in an NSA genre, may be invited and trained to adjudicate as guests.

Panels of adjudicators will be instructed to either independently score or rank auditions in a category, subcategory, or portion of a category. **Adjudicators write comment in response to both National Preliminary and National Semifinal Auditions.**

Resources to train adjudicators are available on the [NSA Resource Center](#) on NATS.org. Available resources include brief genre-specific Adjudicator Training Videos, Sample Comments as applicable to different category genres, Tips for Adjudicating Musical Theatre Categories, Audio Examples of Commercial Music & Musical Theatre Vocal Stylisms, The Art of Being a Great Adjudicator, and so much more.

Adjudication Forms

Examples of NATS NSA Adjudication Forms with options to include repertoire titles or not, follow on pages 16-19. When not using an electronic version of these adjudication forms, the [Adjudication Forms](#) to be duplicated for hard copy use **must be downloaded from the online NSA Resource Center**. Adjudicators should have immediate access to both adjudication forms and rubrics found in Appendix B and available as a pdf download in the NATS.org NSA Resource Center.

Each genre-specific group of NSA Categories has unique content defining standards of performance. The CL, MT, and all Spiritual Categories use one adjudication form, while the **CM Categories use a different Adjudication Form**. The CM rubrics performance standards listed on the adjudication form are not the same as in the other NSA categories.

Any exceptions to NSA Regulations must be approved by the National NSA Team: National NSA Coordinators, NATS Vice President of Auditions, and NATS Coordinator of Competitions and Auditions.



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF TEACHERS OF SINGING NSA CL-MT-AS-HJ Adjudication Form



SINGER'S NAME or # _____

CATEGORY _____

☐ ← Check, if singing for comments only

ADJUDICATION

Using the NATS rubric as appropriate to the level of study and age of the singer, place an X along the tick line following each of the rubric's standards listed below. The standards are not of equal importance in a composite score. Align ticks with an composite score of 70–100. A numerical score should only appear in the score box at the bottom of the adjudication form. Support your ticks below with constructive criticism and encouraging responses in your comments.

STANDARD	DEVELOPING	ADVANCING	MASTERING
Tone	-----	-----	-----
Breathing/Alignment	-----	-----	-----
Language / Diction	-----	-----	-----
Musicianship / Accuracy	-----	-----	-----
Artistry / Expression	-----	-----	-----
REFLECTING SCORES	70-----79	80-----89	90-----100
Ensemble (<i>comments only</i>)	-----	-----	-----

COMMENTS

SCORE

ADJUDICATOR'S SIGNATURE _____

PRINT NAME _____ DATE _____

If singing for
comments only,
mark an X in the
score box.



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF TEACHERS OF SINGING NSA CL-MT-AS-HJ Adjudication Form



SINGER'S NAME or # _____ CATEGORY _____

☐ ← Check, if singing for comments only

REPERTOIRE

Title	Larger Work	Composer
1. _____	_____	_____
2. _____	_____	_____
3. _____	_____	_____
4. _____	_____	_____
5. _____	_____	_____

ADJUDICATION

Using the NATS rubric as appropriate to the level of study and age of the singer, place an X along the tick line following each of the rubric's standards listed below. The standards are not of equal importance in a composite score. Align ticks with an composite score of 70–100. A numerical score should only appear in the score box at the bottom of the adjudication form. Support your ticks below with constructive criticism and encouraging responses in your comments.

STANDARD	DEVELOPING	ADVANCING	MASTERING
Tone	----- ----- -----	----- ----- -----	----- ----- -----
Breathing/Alignment	----- ----- -----	----- ----- -----	----- ----- -----
Language / Diction	----- ----- -----	----- ----- -----	----- ----- -----
Musicianship / Accuracy	----- ----- -----	----- ----- -----	----- ----- -----
Artistry / Expression	----- ----- -----	----- ----- -----	----- ----- -----
REFLECTING SCORES	70-----79	80-----89	90-----100
Ensemble (comments only)	----- ----- -----	----- ----- -----	----- ----- -----

COMMENTS

ADJUDICATOR'S SIGNATURE _____

PRINT NAME _____ DATE _____

SCORE

If singing for
comments only,
mark an X in the
score box.



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF TEACHERS OF SINGING

NSA CM only Adjudication Form



SINGER'S NAME or # _____ CATEGORY _____

☐ ← Check, if singing for comments only

ADJUDICATION

Using the NATS rubric as appropriate to the level of study and age of the singer, place an X along the tick line following each of the rubric's standards listed below. The standards are not of equal importance in a composite score. Align ticks with an composite score of 70–100. A numerical score should only appear in the score box at the bottom of the adjudication form. Support your ticks below with constructive criticism and encouraging responses in your comments.

STANDARD	DEVELOPING	ADVANCING	MASTERING
Artistic Interpretation	-----	-----	-----
Lyrics	-----	-----	-----
Vocal Stylisms	-----	-----	-----
Musicianship	-----	-----	-----
Tone	-----	-----	-----
Breathing	-----	-----	-----
REFLECTING SCORES	70-----79	80-----89	90-----100
Ensemble (comments only)	-----	-----	-----

COMMENTS

SCORE

ADJUDICATOR'S SIGNATURE _____

PRINT NAME _____ DATE _____

If singing for
comments only,
mark an X in the
score box.

--



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF TEACHERS OF SINGING

NSA CM only Adjudication Form



SINGER'S NAME or # _____ CATEGORY _____

☐ ← Check, if singing for comments only

REPERTOIRE

Title	Larger Work	Composer & Lyricist Team
1. _____	_____	_____
2. _____	_____	_____
3. _____	_____	_____
4. _____	_____	_____
5. _____	_____	_____

ADJUDICATION

Using the NATS rubric as appropriate to the level of study and age of the singer, place an X along the tick line following each of the rubric's standards listed below. The standards are not of equal importance in a composite score. Align ticks with an composite score of 70–100. A numerical score should only appear in the score box at the bottom of the adjudication form. Support your ticks below with constructive criticism and encouraging responses in your comments.

STANDARD	DEVELOPING	ADVANCING	MASTERING
Artistic Interpretation	-----	-----	-----
Lyrics	-----	-----	-----
Vocal Stylisms	-----	-----	-----
Musicianship	-----	-----	-----
Tone	-----	-----	-----
Breathing	-----	-----	-----
REFLECTING SCORES	70-----79	80-----89	90-----100

Ensemble (comments only) -----

COMMENTS

ADJUDICATOR'S SIGNATURE _____

PRINT NAME _____ DATE _____

SCORE

If singing for
comments only,
mark an X in the
score box.

--

A History of NATS Student Auditions

Inclusive national guidelines for Student Auditions (SA) were first conceived in 1977. In 1992-93, a national survey of chapters and regions was undertaken to research the changes that had occurred in Student Auditions across NATS. In 1993, a revision committee comprised of Richard Berry, Myra Brand, Jerry Daniels, Edward Deckard and Judith Nicosia Civitano (Chair) drafted the excellent 1993 revision of the Guidelines for Student Auditions, which served the Association well for 16 years.

In 2007, another survey of the policies of chapters, districts, and regions was conducted to assess trends in Student Auditions. The 2008 and 2009 Student Audition Guidelines committee included Kathleen Arcchi, Elaine Case, Roma Prindle, Connie Roberts and Anne Christopherson. This committee provided a mission statement for Student Auditions, outlined the responsibilities of NATS Members who coordinate and facilitate Student Auditions, and provided examples of best practices to fulfill the mission and responsibilities of the Student Auditions.

In 2010-2011, a committee chaired by Norman Spivey was charged with investigating the possibility of NATS student auditions that would progress from the regional level to culminate at a national level by gathering information from NATS' then 14 regions regarding their audition practices. A discussion of a national model for auditions began.

In 2011-2012, a committee chaired by Deborah Williamson drafted a National Student Auditions (NSA) Guidelines proposal. Deborah represented the NSA committee and presented the proposal at the NATS Board of Directors meeting in Orlando, Florida in July 2012. The inaugural NSA proposal was passed by NATS National Board of Directors.

In 2012-2014, a committee chaired by Deborah Williamson implemented the audition categories, repertoire requirements, and audition fees based upon recommendations from the Board of Directors and redesigned the National Student Auditions Guidelines document into a format that was posted on the NATS website. In 2013, the NATS Board of Directors approved the launch of National Student Auditions (NSA). The first national semifinal and final student auditions were held in Boston in July 2014 as part of the NATS 53rd National Conference. More than 150 singers from across all NATS Regions participated in the inaugural national live semifinal auditions in the first annual National Student Auditions at the Boston Conservatory. 37 student-singers advanced to the national finals and 24 student-singers won a combined \$30,000 in awards.

In July 2014, a committee chaired by Dan Johnson-Wilmot (NSA Coordinator), with Karen Brunssen, Mark McQuade, Robert Wells, and Melanie Williams developed a national model for Student Auditions (SA) based on the National Student Audition (NSA) Audition Guidelines. The national model's goal was to be workable for region, district, and chapter auditions across all regions of NATS. This revised structure of NATS Student Auditions was necessitated by many factors that have a far-reaching impact on the work of NATS members. To have a system that facilitates the flow of auditions to a national level, a wider level of consistency in several areas is required. The result is a structure that will ultimately allow singers and their teachers to consider their performance in the context of other student performances in their immediate locale, while also being able to consider their performance in the context of other singers their age at their level of voice study throughout the nation. With over 10,000 NSA auditions being heard every year, the ability to consider this valuable context gives both teachers and students additional feedback on their progress in the study of vocal performance.

In July 2022, in the spirit of embracing all genres of vocal music as art worthy to be studied, respected, and appreciated, the NATS Executive Board announced their decision to add 16 new NSA Categories of Entry. The new categories included Commercial Music Categories to include all genres of pop and commercial musics with categories for all ages. The new categories also included categories in Classical, Musical Theatre, and Commercial Music for children and youth in middle school or younger. These new categories opened in the 2023-2024 audition cycle bringing NATS' total number of annual NSA categories to 34, plus the biennial three American Negro Spiritual Categories and, in alternating years, the Hall Johnson Spirituals Competition.

At regular intervals, NATS National Student Audition Regulations continue to be reviewed and revised by the NSA Regulations Committee with input gathered from NSA Auditions Chairs in addition to feedback from NATS members.



— ★ ★ ★ —
National Association of Teachers of Singing

2025 – 2026

CATEGORIES OF ENTRY

a category for every age and every genre

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NATS National Student Audition Categories of Entry

The National Student Auditions begin at the region-level and progress to national preliminary, semifinal, and final auditions. If meeting the level of study and age requirements, student-singers may enter multiple genre categories. Region auditions should offer all yellow-highlighted categories as found on pages 9-14 in this appendix. Student-singers may only advance to the National Student Auditions by placing 1st-5th with eligible scores to advance (see NSA Regulations, page 9) in a NATS region's NSA. Students placing in Chapter or District auditions will not automatically advance to the National levels of NSA.

NSA Regulations applying to ALL Categories

CATEGORY	Categories are defined by voice type. Children 1, Youth 2, and Spiritual Categories include All Voices Treble Voices: Soprano, Mezzo-Soprano, Contralto, Countertenor Voices in Categories: 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13 TBB Voices: Tenor, Baritone, Bass Voices in Categories: 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14
CATEGORY NUMBERS	Children & Youth: 1 & 2, High School (HS): 3 & 4, Lower: one–two years post-HS 5 & 6, Upper: three–five years post-HS 7 & 8, Advanced: post-undergraduate 9 & 10, Avocational Adults 11 & 12, Nontraditional Adults 13 & 14
LENGTH OF STUDY	Excepting for Children, Youth, and High School categories, which are determined by the grade in school, length of voice study and age determine an appropriate NSA Category of Entry. Length of voice study is counted in years, not in semesters. Total years of voice study with a voice teacher or multiple teachers (NATS Members or Non-NATS Members) either in an independent studio, voice class, group lessons, college, university, or conservatory is a determining factor in NSA's post-high school categories only. POST- HIGH SCHOOL STUDY Lower: students 22 or younger, in their 1 st or 2 nd year of post-high school voice study Upper: students 25 or younger, in their 3 rd , 4 th , or 5 th year of post-high school voice study and not enrolled in a graduate voice program Advanced: post-baccalaureate students aged 30 years or younger in their 4 th or higher year of post-High School voice study Counting years of study begins with the first day of post-high school study—meaning the first year of voice study is in progress. Any reasonable portion of a year will be counted as one year—even if the singer stops taking weekly lessons during a portion of that year, excepting if the singer is ill and unable or forbidden to sing during that time for medical reasons.
AGE LIMIT	Age limits are determined by the age of the entered student on September 1 st , the first day of each NSA annual cycle. A student will not change their category(s) of entry during an audition cycle—even if a birthday during the audition cycle causes a singer to age out of their category entered earlier in the NSA cycle. Singers above the maximum age of a category may not compete in that category. When a singer has completed or is enrolled in a music degree program and is above the age limits for their level of study, that student may enter their level of study category for comments only OR enter any available Non-Traditional student category, which will not advance to national levels of NSA. When a student's age fits a category that exceeds their level of study, the student may elect to enter that category. NSA Categories have no lower age limits, excepting the Avocational Adults Category and Hall Johnson Spirituals Competition, which both do have lower age limits.
REPERTOIRE	High school-aged categories and younger in Chapter and District auditions may require two or three selections as best serves the needs and tradition of the Chapter or District. Regional and National Auditions will require three selections in all High School Categories.
ARRANGEMENT	An arrangement is an adaptation of an original composition/song. Arrangements typically involve a new accompaniment, but changes may be made in a song's melody, rhythms, harmonies, and/or structural form. Some arrangements reinterpret songs in a completely different genre/style of music. All settings of spirituals in HJ and AS categories should credit an arranger for their settings of anonymous melodies.
AUDITIONING MEMBER-TEACHERS	NATS members-teachers who meet the requirements of a student audition category in terms of their age and years of study—may enter student auditions through the NATS member with whom they are currently studying, but they may not enter themselves in NSA. If they enter their students in the audition, they must be available to adjudicate a minimum of one category in addition to auditioning in the event.
OFFENSIVE LANGUAGE IN AUDITIONS	The National Association of Teachers of Singing requests that NATS members guide their students in selecting NSA audition repertoire that embraces our mission to be a welcoming and supportive community of members and students who celebrate the unique identities, varied backgrounds, and experiences of all individuals. NATS asks teachers to remain mindful of lyric/text content that respects the wide range of ages and identities of those participating in our NSA as well as those present in our audiences at NATS events. To honor the music's copyright owners, no lyric substitutions of offensive lyrics are allowed unless a clean version is published or legal permission for a change is obtained.
COMMENTS ONLY	Any student-singer may elect to enter auditioning for comments only and participate exclusively in a preliminary audition. Adjudicators will not score auditions entered for comments only.

NSA Classical — CL Regulations

Aria	An aria is a solo from an opera, oratorio, mass, cantata, zarzuela, operetta, or works titled “concert aria.” Oxford Online definitions will be used for the purposes of NATS student auditions. For example, Purcell’s selections from the semi-operas and masques are considered songs.
24/26/28 Italian Art Songs and Arias	The repertoire found in the 24/26/28 Italian Art Songs and Arias collections may be counted as an aria or an art song in the high school and lower classical categories. For the singers in the upper and advanced categories, these pieces may ONLY count as an art song, regardless of origin. Any repertoire found outside of these collections will be considered only as the composer intended as an art song OR aria.
Memorization	All repertoire must be performed from memory with the exception of Oratorio, Mass, Requiem, and Cantata Arias. Singers may hold music scores for these types of arias as is traditional performance practice.
Original Languages	All selections should be sung in original language or in translation, if warranted by common professional performance practice.
Transposition	Published transpositions are permitted. Singers are expected to retain the composer’s intended style of music and to convey the essence of the character portrayed in the larger work. Performances not fulfilling these requirements may result in lower scores from adjudicators. Octave displacement is a transposition.
Art Song in English	English must be the original language set by the composer to meet the Art Song in English requirement.
Classical Repertoire	In CL categories, the word “classical” refers to art songs and arias from the classical genre, not limited to the Classical period of Mozart and Haydn. No musical theatre, pop, gospel, soul, jazz, rhythm and blues, etc. may be entered in the Classical Category. Published classical arrangements of folk songs, spirituals, and traditional hymn tunes in English are widely accepted as a part of the classical genre; students in classical categories may present one selection of this type to fulfill the Art Song in English requirement.
Judicious Cuts	Full, complete selections are required; however, judicious cuts in piano introductions, piano interludes, piano music after the vocal solo is completed as well as internal cuts within arias are allowed as is common professional performance practice. Cuts of verse or verses of selections are not allowed. In the case of strophic pieces, all verses should remain that are traditionally included.
Double-Dipping	Singers entering more than one NSA category (Classical, Commercial Music, Musical Theatre, and/or Spirituals) are allowed to enter only ONE selection in more than one category provided the repertoire requirements of each category are met. Teachers and students are reminded that the standards of performance in NSA’s genre categories are different. A successful audition in one category will not necessarily produce success in a second category—unless the interpretation is altered to address the different standards of performance. Standards of Performance are defined in each NSA adjudication rubric. In exception, the Spiritual Categories and CL Categories are adjudicated by the same rubric of classical performance standards. If a singer advances in NATS Auditions (chapter, district, regional, or national auditions) in more than one category, they may not sing the same selection in multiple final auditions. Please see the NSA FAQ for additional information.
Additional Awards	Named and Sponsored NSA Awards are available to NSA’s National Finalists, who in their region’s NSA event, enter the prescribed repertoire to be eligible for the significant sponsored award, prize, or scholarship.

NSA Musical Theatre — MT Regulations

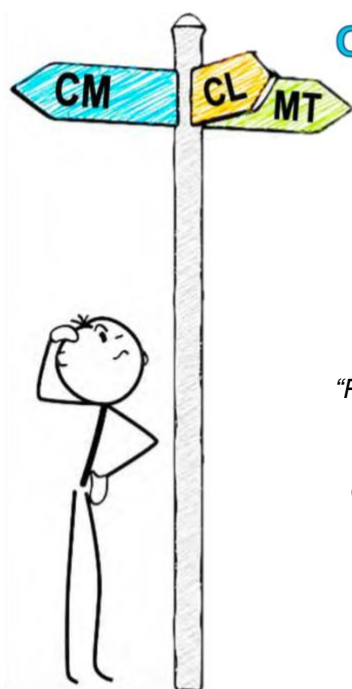
Musical Theatre Selections	Repertoire is selected from musicals including filmed, animated, televised, or internet musicals, revues, operettas, theatrical song cycles, televised or streamed musical series, and musical theatre song literature. Only <i>one</i> of the required selections may be an operetta aria <i>or</i> from musical theatre song literature.
Musical Theatre Song Literature	MT Song Literature is defined as songs by a composer of musicals. MT Song Literature includes songs cut from musicals, songs from unfinished musicals, songs from unproduced musical, songs written specifically for musical theatre celebrities, or cabaret-styled musical theatre songs not from a musical.
Musical Theatre Styles	The singer is expected to select musical theatre songs from varied styles of music including bluegrass, blues, calypso, country, electro-pop, folk, gospel, jazz, legit, operetta, pop, pop-opera, rap, rhythm and blues (R&B), rock, soul, <i>etc.</i> The selected repertoire will engage the singer's ability to access a variety of vocal colors to communicate character and story (<i>see musical theatre rubric</i>). The audition will showcase the full spectrum of each singer's vocal and dramatic abilities.
Acting	In an MT audition, a student is portraying a character telling a story. A story requires a distinct beginning, middle, and ending. When integral to the character and storytelling, physical movement is essential. Movement that does not serve to facilitate the character's communication should be avoided. Fully danced choreography should be avoided.
Selecting Musical Theatre Songs	Know a song's context in the musical's story including which character in the musical sings the song and which part of the musical's story the song tells. Is the student believable telling the song's story? An honest and believable performance is a rubric standard of performance adjudicated in MT categories.
Contrasting Selections	Contrasting musical theatre selections will vary in tempo, dramatic content, composer, era of musical's premier, character portrayed, vocal colors, and style of music. Excepting allowed CM self-composed songs, two or more songs by the same composer are a violation of this regulation. A lack of variety among selections may result in a lower preliminary audition score.
Transpositions	Published transpositions are permitted, but singers are expected to retain the composer's intended style of music and to convey the essence of the character portrayed in the larger work. Octave displacement is a transposition.
Judicious Cuts	Full, complete musical theatre solos are required; however, as commonly found in professional performance practice: judicious cuts in piano introductions, piano interludes, piano music after the vocal solo is completed, and dance breaks in musical theatre selections are allowed. Brief lines from a second character may be cut. In the case of more than three verses, some verses may be cut.
Original Languages	Selections must be sung in the original language or in translation as warranted by common professional performance practice.
Memorization	All selections must be performed from memory.
Double-Dipping	Singers entering an MT category plus a CL and/or CM category(s) are allowed to enter only ONE selection in more than one category provided the repertoire requirements of each category are met. Crossover repertoire may be judiciously entered in MT and additional categories. For example, "Lonely House" from <i>Street Scene</i> may be entered as a selection in an MT category and as an aria in a CL category. Similarly, "If I loved you" from <i>Carousel</i> may be entered in both MT and CM categories, but in the CM category, the song must be performed in a specific CM genre of music different from the musical. Selections from Jukebox and bio-musicals should be performed in the style heard on the musical's cast recording. The same song entered in CM should be performed in the style of the original performing artist or in any other style/genre of CM. Teachers and students are reminded that the standards of performance in NSA's varied genre categories are different. A successful audition in one category will not necessarily produce success in a second category—unless the performance is altered to address the different standards of performance. Standards are defined in each NSA adjudication rubric. If a singer advances in NATS Student Auditions (chapter, regional, national rounds) in more than one category, they may not sing the same selection in multiple finals. Please see the NSA FAQ for additional information.
CM Arrangements in MT	Commercial Music arrangements (jazz, swing, gospel, <i>etc.</i>) of songs originally conceived for any type of musical, may only be entered in NSA's Commercial Music Categories.

NSA COMMERCIAL MUSIC — CM Regulations

Accompaniment Options	Singers may perform each audition song with any of the following accompaniment options: a pre-recorded instrumental track with no backing vocals human or synthesized, one live collaborative acoustic instrumentalist, or for a limited number of songs (<i>see CM Categories' Repertoire Requirements</i>), the singer may accompany themselves on an acoustic instrument. Only one acoustic accompanying instrument is allowed in CM auditions. When set to a piano sample, electronic keyboards are a singular, accepted exception to the acoustic instrument requirements. Accompaniment tracks including a synthesized instrumental melodic line in addition to the piano accompaniment are two accompanying instruments; and therefore, cannot be not allowed.
Commercial Music	Each CM audition may include one or more commercial music style(s). Commercial music includes all genres of vocal music performed by recording artists, not performed to meet the performance standards in NSA's classical and musical theatre rubrics. Commercial music includes bluegrass, blues, contemporary Christian, country, folk, gospel, jazz, pop, rap, rock, rhythm and blues (R&B), soul, and all ethnic music, <i>etc.</i>
Musical Theatre Selections REINTERPRETED as Commercial Music Songs	Published or original reinterpretations/arrangements of musical theatre selections are accepted in CM categories—but ONLY when performed in a distinct commercial music genre/style different from the genre/style of the musical for which the song was conceived. Songs from jukebox musicals, bio-musicals, or musicals containing pre-existing songs may be performed either as a cover in the style/genre of the original CM recording artist or reinterpreted in any CM genre/style of music different from that heard in the musical. This CM regulation allows MT selections often reinterpreted as pop, easy listening, or jazz standards. Many of these songs are now considered part of the Great American Songbook. Musical Theatre selections performed as Musical Theatre are not allowed in CM. The CM and MT rubrics outline different standards of performance.
Vocal Stylisms*	In Commercial Music's genre-specific elements of vocal interpretation, vocal stylisms are often not notated in the music. As appropriate to the selected CM style, vocal stylisms may include vocal: ONSETS varying among fry, slide, yodel, growl, breathy, cry, creak, flip, scream, <i>etc.</i> RELEASES varying among abrupt glottal stops, breathy, fall-off, fall-up, shadow vowels, fry, creaky, gaspy, <i>etc.</i> NUANCES & FLOURISHES varying among riffs/runs, licks, flips, pitch slides, pop-appoggiatura, yodel/register shifts, pitch bends/scoops, <i>etc.</i> Visit the NSA Resource Center on NATS.org for CM resources.
Cover or Original Song	A cover is a song performed by a singer other than the composer or original recording artist. Performing a cover does <u>not</u> imply an imitation or impersonation of the original recording artist. Both covers and a limited number of original songs are accepted in the CM Categories. Please see repertoire requirements for each CM category to learn how many original songs are allowed.
Microphone Technique	All CM auditions must use only ONE microphone to amplify the vocals. In live auditions, all singers are required to use the amplification equipment provided. In video auditions, the singer's microphone must be on-camera placed on a stationary stand, handheld, or any combination of both. No headset or diva microphones are allowed. In video auditions, the microphone must audibly amplify the vocals—whether via a direct feed into the camera or through an external speaker. The use of a microphone requires artistic choices, which influence vocal interpretation. Intentionally varying the distance of the microphone from the singer's mouth creates stylized vocal effects. Microphone technique is one of the standards adjudicated in NSA's CM categories.
Rhythmic Groove	The rhythmic groove of a CM song is reflected in the singer's body in an organic response to the rhythm of the music. An organic embodiment of the beat goes beyond specific notation or time signature; this distinct rhythmic feel/groove of a song is an essential element in CM performances.
Memorization	All selections must be performed from memory, including any self-accompaniments played.
Copyright Compliant Scores	CM audition accompaniments may be played from memory, by ear, or from copyright-compliant lead sheets or scores, which may legally be altered with notations to create a personalized arrangement or transposition. Copyright-compliant transpositions into the key that best fits the student's voice are encouraged. All CM scores or lead sheets present in NSA auditions must be copyright-compliant.
Full Song	An entire song. No internal cuts of lead vocals; intros and outros may be abbreviated to accommodate audition's time limits; instrumental breaks as well as repeat and fade tags may be cut, abbreviated, or kept to accommodate the audition's time limits.
Authentic Performance	A CM singer performs as themselves, not a character. A genuine tone unique to each singer for the purpose of sincere communication with no elements of vocal impersonation is expected in CM.

*Edrie Means Weekly coined the term *Vocal Stylisms* in her teaching of *Commercial Music* and *Musical Theatre*.

Disambiguation of CM selections and MT selections in NSA



COMMERCIAL MUSIC —OR— MUSICAL THEATRE

CM & MT have **DIFFERENT** Repertoire Requirements
CM & MT have **DIFFERENT** Vocal Standards in Rubrics
CM & MT have **DIFFERENT** Adjudicator Training Videos
CM & MT have **DIFFERENT** Adjudication Forms
CM & MT have **DIFFERENT** Issues to Vet

NSA CM REGULATION

“Published or original reinterpretations/arrangements of musical theatre selections are accepted in CM categories—but ONLY when performed in a distinct commercial music genre/style different from the genre/style of the musical for which the song was conceived.”

Where did the song originate?

Song originally composed/written for any type of musical = **MT**
Song not originally composed/written for a musical = **CM**
Song curated into the score of a jukebox or biomusical = **MT or CM**

COMMERCIAL MUSIC —OR— MUSICAL THEATRE

1. Google the song's title, and read the Wikipedia entry

“Love Me Tender” is a 1956 ballad song recorded by Elvis Presley and published by Elvis Presley Music from the 20th Century Fox film of the same name.

DO YOU SEE from, originated by (performer's name) in larger work, for, trunk song... ?

IF YES, CONTINUE TO STEP 2. —IF NOT, YOU'VE FOUND A CM SONG

2. Google the larger work, and read the Wikipedia entry

Love Me Tender is a 1956 American musical Western film directed by, Robert D. Webb and released by 20th Century Fox on November 15, 1956.

DO YOU SEE musical, musical film, movie musical, revue, theatrical song cycle, concept musical, abandoned/unfinished musical, musical television series, televised musical, animated musical, animated musical series, internet musical, cruise ship musical... ?

IF YES, YOU'VE FOUND AN MT SONG

3. Watch the original.

IN CM? —BE SURE THE CM GENRE/STYLE IS DIFFERENT FROM THE MUSICAL

IN MT? —BE SURE OF THE ROLE & SONG'S CONTEXT IN THE MUSICAL

4. Still unsure? —Ask the NSA Team!

Keep in mind that many composers and/or producers release songs in advance of the musical's premiere as promotion to increase ticket sales or viewership. The release date of any song is not a reliable indicator of whether or not a song pre-exists a musical.

Biennial NSA Auditions

American Negro Spiritual NSA Categories

National levels of the American Negro Spiritual Category are held in odd-numbered years. National levels of the Hall Johnson Spirituals Competition are held in conjunction with the biennial NATS Conference in even-numbered years. The three American Negro Spiritual Categories are offered in each region's NSA event with singers who place 1st – 5th with an eligible score (see page 9 in body of the Regulations) then advancing to the national preliminaries. Chapters and districts are also encouraged to add these categories to chapter auditions. Where applicable, chapter auditions may serve as qualify students to advance to their region's auditions. These spirituals may appropriately be performed by all races of singers sincerely performing in a classical style.

American Negro Spiritual — AS Regulations

Spirituals	Arrangements in classical style of the North American Negro Spirituals by composers similar in style to the spirituals of Hall Johnson, R. Nathaniel Dett, Florence Price, Moses Hogan, Edward Boatner, Undine Smith Moore, James Weldon and J. Rosamond Johnson, Margaret Bonds and others. The classical style excludes Gospel, Blues and Jazz music. See below for a link to more information available online.
Memorization	All audition selections must be performed from memory.
Diction	Because of the idiomatic nature of the spiritual, diction restrictions will be relaxed. Standard English pronunciations may be observed, e.g., “de” or “duh” may be replaced with “the.” For more advanced students, the scholarly study of diction in spirituals is equivalent to studying the lyric diction of other languages.
Transposition	Copyright-compliant, purchased transpositions are allowed.
Spirituals in English	English must be the original language of the selection.
Classical Style	The word “classical” in this context refers to singing spirituals in the classical style with only mild deviations and interpolation to what is written in the music and without musical theatre, pop, gospel, contemporary Christian, soul, jazz, rhythm and blues expressions or vocal technique. See the NSA Spiritual Adjudicator Training Video for the differences between Spirituals and Gospel Songs and more details on performing Spirituals in NSA.
Judicious Cuts	Piano introductions, piano interludes, piano music after the vocal solo is completed, and internal cuts of spiritual selections are allowed as in common performance practice. Cuts of a verse or verses of selections are not allowed. In the case of strophic pieces, all verses should remain that are traditionally included.

[Additional information](#) about the Biennial American Negro Spiritual NSA Categories

Spirituals not found in the [Approved Spirituals Repertoire](#) online

may be vetted and approved by contacting one of the following NATS members:

Alexis Davis-Hazell adavishazell@ua.edu
Barbara Hill-Moore bhmoore@mail.smu.edu
Everett McCorvey everett.mccorvey@uky.edu
Marcia Porter MPorter@admin.fsu.edu

See the [NSA Spiritual Adjudicator Training Video](#) for more information on performing spirituals in NSA.

Hall Johnson Spirituals Competition

Due to the generosity of the Hall Johnson Estate, a \$2000 award will be given in each NATS National Conference year (national finals in even-numbered years) to the best performance of a Hall Johnson Spiritual at NATS biennial conferences from 2016–2036. Additional national 2nd and 3rd places prizes are awarded by NATS in this competition. All interested students will apply for this category as part of their region's NSA. Singers placing 1st–5th with an eligible score (see page 9 in the body of the Regulations) in the region's NSA event will advance to national preliminaries, as with all other NSA categories. NATS Chapters and Districts are encouraged to add this competition to their auditions. Whenever applicable, Chapter Auditions may serve to qualify student-singers to advance to their region's NSA.

Biennial Hall Johnson Spirituals Competition — HJ Regulations

(National rounds in this category will be held in even-numbered years)

[Additional information](#) about the Biennial Hall Johnson Spirituals Competition

All approved Hall Johnson Spirituals eligible to be entered in this competition are listed below and available in the following publications

- The Carl Fischer "Hall Johnson Collection" (CF)
- The Hal Leonard Digital Series, "Hall Johnson Concert Spirituals" (HL)
- The G. Schirmer "30 Spirituals" arranged by Hall Johnson (GS)

ONLY REPERTOIRE SELECTED FROM THE FOLLOWING LIST MAY BE ENTERED IN THIS COMPETITION

Other selections in the collections listed above are not eligible repertoire in this category.

Ain't Got Time to Die - HL
City Called Heaven - HL
Crucifixion - CF
Ev'ry Time I Feel de Spirit - HL, GS
Fix Me, Jesus - HL
Give Me Jesus - CF
His Name So Sweet - CF
Honor! Honor! - CF
I Been in de Storm So Long - HL
I Got to Lie Down - CF
I'm Gon'ter Tell God All o' my Troubles - CF
Le's Have a Union - HL
My God is So High - HL
My Good Lord Done Been Here - CF
Oh, Glory! - CF
Po' Mo'ner Got a Home at Las' - HL, GS
Ride On, King Jesus! - CF, GS
Roll Jerd'n, Roll - HL
Take My Mother Home - CF
Wade in de Water - HL
Witness - CF

All selections listed above are annotated and analyzed in *The Concert Spirituals of Hall Johnson: An Annotated Guide to Interpretation and Performance* by Eugene Thamon Simpson.

Hall Johnson scholar Eugene Simpson's respected and researched opinion states that the current repertoire listed above constitutes the spiritual arrangements that are verified as composed by Hall Johnson. These spirituals may appropriately be performed by all races of singers sincerely performing in a classical style. See the [NSA Spiritual Adjudicator Training Video](#) for more information on performing spirituals in NSA.

NATS National Student Auditions Categories of Entry updated 9-1-25



TERMINOLOGY & ABBREVIATIONS

Treble—Soprano, Mezzo-Soprano, Contralto, & Countertenor Voices
TBB—Tenor, Baritone & Bass Voices
MT—Musical Theatre
CL—Classical Art Songs & Arias
CM—Commercial Music
AS—American Negro Spirituals
HJ—Hall Johnson Spirituals Competition
HS—High School

- **Categories ADVANCING to National NSA Rounds in the 2023/24 Audition Cycle**

- **Subdivided categories ADVANCING to nationals by combining into a single category in the NSA National Rounds**

FOR EXAMPLE: CL 1A and CL 1B combine into one category, CL 1, in the national levels of NSA. If a region subdivides these categories, then up to 10 students (up to 5 from each subdivision) may advance to each combined category in the national YouTube round.

AN EXCEPTION: Some highly populated and/or disparate subdivisions do advance as individual national categories without combining—these national level subdivisions are independent categories. For example: CL 3A and CL3B are independent national categories and do not combine to become CL 3 at the national levels of NSA. See page 2.

- **Categories that MUST be subdivided in NSA regions to advance independently to the NSA National Preliminary Round.**
- **Categories that alternate biennially and also ADVANCE to National NSA Rounds in alternate years**
- **Categories NOT advancing to the NSA National Rounds**

CHILDREN & YOUTH CATEGORIES (any length of study)

Number	Category	Age Limit / Grade Limit		Time Limit	Repertoire Requirements
CATEGORIES 1 & 2 — CHILDREN & YOUTH					
MT 1	Children Musical Theatre—All Voices	11	5 th grade	6 minutes	TWO age-appropriate musical theatre selections contrasting by composer, tempo, and text. Only one selection may be chosen from operetta or musical theatre song literature.
MT 2	Youth Musical Theatre—All Voices	14	8 th grade	6 minutes	
CL 1	Children Classical—All Voices	11	5 th grade	6 minutes	TWO age-appropriate selections from classical repertoire contrasting by composer, tempo, and text.
CL 2	Youth Classical—All Voices	14	8 th grade	6 minutes	
CM 1	Children Commercial Music—All Voices	11	5 th grade	6 minutes	TWO age-appropriate selections contrasting by composer, tempo, and text performed in a CM style(s).
CM 2	Youth Commercial Music—All Voices	14	8 th grade	6 minutes	
Subdivided Categories 1 & 2 — Children & Youth					
MT 1A	Children Musical Theatre Lower—All Voices	9 in MT 1	5 th grade	6 minutes	Same as above
CL 1A	Children Classical Lower—All Voices	9 in CL 1	5 th grade	6 minutes	Same as above
CM 1A	Children Commercial Music Lower—All Voices	9 in CM 1	5 th grade	6 minutes	Same as above
MT 1B	Children Musical Theatre Upper—All Voices	11 in MT 1	5 th grade	6 minutes	Same as above
CL 1B	Children Classical Upper—All Voices	11 in CL 1	5 th grade	6 minutes	Same as above
CM 1B	Children Commercial Music Upper—All Voices	11 in CM 1	5 th grade	6 minutes	Same as above
MT 2A	Youth Musical Theatre Lower—All Voices	12 in MT 2	8 th grade	6 minutes	Same as above
CL 2A	Youth Classical Lower—All Voices	12 in CL 2	8 th grade	6 minutes	Same as above
CM 2A	Youth Commercial Music Lower—All Voices	12 in CM 2	8 th grade	6 minutes	Same as above
MT 2B	Youth Musical Theatre Upper—All Voices	14 in MT 2	8 th grade	6 minutes	Same as above
CL 2B	Youth Classical Upper—All Voices	14 in CL 2	8 th grade	6 minutes	Same as above
CM 2B	Youth Commercial Music Upper—All Voices	14 in CL 2	8 th grade	6 minutes	Same as above

HIGH SCHOOL CATEGORIES *(any length of study)*

Number	Category	Length of Study	Age Limit	Time	Repertoire Requirements
CATEGORIES 3 & 4 — HIGH SCHOOL					
MT 3	HS Musical Theatre—Treble Voices	No limit – all HS	19	8 minutes	THREE musical theatre selections contrasting by composer, tempo, and text. Only one selection may be chosen from an operetta or musical theatre song literature.
MT 4	HS Musical Theatre—TBB Voices	No limit – all HS	19	8 minutes	
CL 3	HS Classical—Treble Voices	No limit – all HS	19	8 minutes	THREE selections from classical repertoire contrasting by composer, tempo, and text: One art song in English.* One art song in a language other than English. One additional art song or aria.
CL 4	HS Classical—TBB Voices	No limit – all HS	19	8 minutes	
CM 3	HS Commercial Music—Treble Voices	No limit – all HS	19	8 minutes	THREE full songs contrasting by composer, tempo, and text performed in a CM style(s): Only one song may be an original song, instead of a cover. Only one song may be self-accompanied on an acoustic instrument.
CM 4	HS Commercial Music—TBB Voices	No limit – all HS	19	8 minutes	
AS 3[†]	HS American Negro Spiritual—All Voices <i>Not Active in 2025/26 Audition Cycle</i>	No limit – all HS	19	8 minutes	THREE American Negro Spirituals contrasting by composer, tempo, and text. See approved spirituals repertoire on page 7.
Subdivided Categories 3 & 4 — High School					
MT 3A	Lower HS Musical Theatre—Treble Voices	No limit – all HS	16 9 th & 10 th grades	8 minutes	Same as above
MT 4A	Lower HS Musical Theatre—TBB Voices	No limit – all HS	16 9 th & 10 th grades	8 minutes	
MT 3B	Upper HS Musical Theatre—Treble Voices	No limit – all HS	19 11 th & 12 th grades	8 minutes	Same as above
MT 4B	Upper HS Musical Theatre—TBB Voices	No limit – all HS	19 11 th & 12 th grades	8 minutes	
CL 3A	Lower HS Classical—Treble Voices	No limit – all HS	16 9 th & 10 th grades	8 minutes	Same as above
CL 4A	Lower HS Classical—TBB Voices	No limit – all HS	16 9 th & 10 th grades	8 minutes	
CL 3B	Upper HS Classical—Treble Voices	No limit – all HS	19 11 th & 12 th grades	8 minutes	Same as above
CL 4B	Upper HS Classical—TBB Voices	No limit – all HS	19 11 th & 12 th grades	8 minutes	
CM 3A	Lower HS Commercial Music—Treble Voices	No limit – all HS	16 9 th & 10 th grades	8 minutes	Same as above
CM 4A	Lower HS Commercial Music—TBB Voices	No limit – all HS	16 9 th & 10 th grades	8 minutes	
CM 3B	Upper HS Commercial Music—Treble Voices	No limit – all HS	19 11 th & 12 th grades	8 minutes	Same as above
CM 4B	Upper HS Commercial Music—TBB Voices	No limit – all HS	19 11 th & 12 th grades	8 minutes	
When the number of entries becomes large American Negro Spiritual may be split into Upper & Lower Ages. The same system would be used: AS 3A & AS 3B and/or AS 4A & AS 4B.					

LOWER POST HIGH SCHOOL CATEGORIES

Number	Category	Length of Study	Age Limit	Time	Repertoire Requirements
CATEGORIES 5 & 6 — LOWER POST HIGH SCHOOL					
MT 5	Lower Musical Theatre—Treble Voices	1–2 yrs. post HS	22	10 minutes	THREE musical theatre selections contrasting by composer, tempo, and text. Only <u>one</u> selection may be chosen from an operetta <u>or</u> musical theatre song literature.
MT 6	Lower Musical Theatre—TBB Voices	1–2 yrs. post HS	22	10 minutes	
CL 5	Lower Classical—Treble Voices	1–2 yrs. post HS	22	10 minutes	THREE selections from classical repertoire contrasting by composer, tempo, and text. One art song in English.* One art song in a language other than English. One aria or art song.
CL 6	Lower Classical—TBB Voices	1–2 yrs. post HS	22	10 minutes	
CM 5	Lower Commercial Music—Treble Voices	1–2 yrs. post HS	22	10 minutes	THREE full songs contrasting by composer, tempo, and text performed in a CM style(s). Only one song may be an original song, instead of a cover. Only one song may be self-accompanied on an acoustic instrument.
CM 6	Lower Commercial Music—TBB Voices	1–2 yrs. post HS	22	10 minutes	
AS 7†	1 st – 3 rd yr. Post HS American Negro Spiritual—All Voices <i>Not Active in the 2025/26 Audition Cycle</i>	1–3 yrs. post HS	23	10 minutes	THREE American Negro Spirituals contrasting by composer, tempo, and text. See approved spirituals repertoire on page 7.
Subdivided Categories 5 & 6 — Lower Post High School					
MT 5A	1 st yr. Musical Theatre—Treble Voices	1 yr. post HS	20	10 minutes	Same as above
MT 6A	1 st yr. Musical Theatre—TBB Voices	1 yr. post HS	20	10 minutes	
CL 5A	1 st yr. Classical—Treble Voices	1 yr. post HS	20	10 minutes	Same as above
CL 6A	1 st yr. Classical—TBB Voices	1 yr. post HS	20	10 minutes	
CM 5A	1 st yr. Commercial Music—Treble Voices	1 yr. post HS	20	10 minutes	Same as above
CM 6A	1 st yr. Commercial Music—TBB Voices	1 yr. post HS	20	10 minutes	
MT 5B	2 nd yr. Musical Theatre—Treble Voices	2 yrs. post HS	22	10 minutes	Same as above
MT 6B	2 nd yr. Musical Theatre—TBB Voices	2 yrs. post HS	22	10 minutes	
CL 5B	2 nd yr. Classical—Treble Voices	2 yrs. post HS	22	10 minutes	Same as above
CL 6B	2 nd yr. Classical—TBB Voices	2 yrs. post HS	22	10 minutes	
CM 5B	2 nd yr. Commercial Music—Treble Voices	2 yrs. post HS	22	10 minutes	Same as above
CM 6B	2 nd yr. Commercial Music—TBB Voices	2 yrs. post HS	22	10 minutes	

†PLEASE NOTE: The Hall Johnson Spirituals Competition is held only in NSA audition cycles culminating at the NATS national conference.

The American Negro Spiritual Category is offered in NSA audition cycles culminating at the NATS national summer workshop.

* English must be the original language of the required one art song in English.

†† Singers may hold the music score for oratorio/cantata aria, in exception to the memorization requirement.

UPPER POST HIGH SCHOOL CATEGORIES

Number	Category	Length of Study	Age Limit	Time	Repertoire Requirements
CATEGORIES 7 & 8 — UPPER POST HIGH SCHOOL					
MT 7	Upper Musical Theatre—Treble Voices	3–5 yrs. post HS not in a grad prog	25	12 minutes	FOUR musical theatre selections contrasting by composer, tempo, and text. Only <u>one</u> selection may be chosen from an operetta <u>or</u> musical theatre song literature.
MT 8	Upper Musical Theatre—TBB Voices	3–5 yrs. post HS not in a grad prog	25	12 minutes	
CL 7	Upper Classical—Treble Voices	3–5 yrs. post HS not in a grad prog	25	12 minutes	FOUR selections from classical repertoire contrasting by composer, tempo, and text. One art song in English.* One art song in a language other than English. One aria. One additional selection from the classical repertoire. At least three languages must be represented.
CL 8	Upper Classical—TBB Voices	3–5 yrs. post HS not in a grad prog	25	12 minutes	
CM 7	Upper Commercial Music—Treble Voices	3–5 yrs. post HS not in a grad prog	25	12 minutes	FOUR full songs contrasting by composer, tempo, and text performed in a CM style(s). Up to 2 songs may be self-accompanied on an acoustic instrument. In exception, up to 2 songs may be contrasting original songs.
CM 8	Upper Commercial Music—TBB Voices	3–5 yrs. post HS not in a grad prog	25	12 minutes	
AS 7 [†]	1 st –3 rd yr. Post HS American Negro Spiritual—All Voices (4 th yr. or more post HS students enter the AS 9 advanced category) <i>Not Active in the 2025/26 Audition Cycle</i>	1–3 yrs. post HS	23	10 minutes	THREE American Negro Spirituals contrasting by composer, tempo, and text. See approved spirituals repertoire on page 7.
Subdivided Categories 7 & 8 — Upper Post High School					
MT 7A	3 rd yr. Musical Theatre—Treble Voices	3 yrs. post HS	23	12 minutes	Same as above
MT 8A	3 rd yr. Musical Theatre—TBB Voices	3 yrs. post HS	23	12 minutes	
CL 7A	3 rd yr. Classical—Treble Voices	3 yrs. post HS	23	12 minutes	Same as above
CL 8A	3 rd yr. Classical—TBB Voices	3 yrs. post HS	23	12 minutes	
CM 7A	3 rd yr. Commercial Music—Treble Voices	3 yrs. post HS	23	12 minutes	Same as above
CM 8A	3 rd yr. Commercial Music—TBB Voices	3 yrs. post HS	23	12 minutes	
MT 7B	4 th & 5 th yr. Musical Theatre—Treble Voices	4–5 yrs. post HS not in a grad prog	25	12 minutes	Same as above
MT 8B	4 th & 5 th yr. Musical Theatre—TBB Voices	4–5 yrs. post HS not in a grad prog	25	12 minutes	
CL 7B	4 th & 5 th yr. Classical—Treble Voices	4–5 yrs. post HS not in a grad prog	25	12 minutes	Same as above
CL 8B	4 th & 5 th yr. Classical—TBB Voices	4–5 yrs. post HS not in a grad prog	25	12 minutes	
CM 7B	4 th & 5 th yr. Commercial Music—Treble Voices	4–5 yrs. post HS not in a grad prog	25	12 minutes	Same as above
CM 8B	4 th & 5 th yr. Commercial Music—TBB Voices	4–5 yrs. post HS not in a grad prog	25	12 minutes	

Biennial HALL JOHNSON SPIRITUALS COMPETITION

Number	Category	Length of Study	Age Limit	Time	Repertoire Requirements
HALL JOHNSON SPIRITUALS COMPETITION					
HJ 7 [†]	Hall Johnson—All Voices <i>Active in the 2025/26 cycle</i>	post HS undergraduate students only	17–23	10 minutes	THREE contrasting selections from approved Hall Johnson spirituals repertoire. See approved spirituals repertoire on page 8.

[†]PLEASE NOTE: The Hall Johnson Spirituals Competition is held only in NSA audition cycles culminating at the NATS national conference.

The American Negro Spiritual Category is offered in NSA audition cycles culminating at the NATS national summer workshop.

* English must be the original language of the required one art song in English.

^{††} Singers may hold the music score for oratorio/cantata aria, in exception to the memorization requirement.

ADVANCED CATEGORIES

Post-Baccalaureate Students

Number	Category	Length of Study	Age Limit	Time	Repertoire Requirements
CATEGORIES 9 & 10 — ADVANCED					
MT 9	Advanced Musical Theatre—Treble Voices <i>Consider NATS National Musical Theatre Competition</i>	4+ yrs. post HS	30	15 minutes	FIVE musical theatre selections contrasting by composer, tempo, and text. Only <u>one</u> selection may be chosen from an operetta <u>or</u> musical theatre song literature.
MT 10	Advanced Musical Theatre—TBB Voices <i>Consider NATS National Musical Theatre Competition</i>	4+ yrs. post HS	30	15 minutes	
CL 9	Advanced Classical—Treble Voices	4+ yrs. post HS	30	15 minutes	FIVE selections from classical repertoire contrasting by composer, tempo, and text. One art song in English.* One art song in a language other than English. One opera aria. One oratorio/cantata aria.†† One additional selection from the classical repertoire. At least three languages must be represented.
CL10	Advanced Classical—TBB Voices	4+ yrs. post HS	30	15 minutes	
CM 9	Advanced Commercial Music—Treble Voices	4+ yrs. post HS	30	15 minutes	FIVE full songs contrasting by composer, tempo, and text performed in a CM style(s). Up to 2 songs may be self-accompanied on an acoustic instrument. In exception, up to 3 songs may be contrasting original songs.
CM 10	Advanced Commercial Music—TBB Voices	4+ yrs. post HS	30	15 minutes	
AS 9†	4 th & 5 th yrs. Post HS & Advanced American Negro Spiritual—All Voices <i>Not Active in the 2025/26 Audition Cycle</i>	4+ yrs. post HS	30	12 minutes	FOUR American Negro Spirituals contrasting by composer, tempo, and text. See approved spirituals repertoire on page 7.
Subdivided Categories 9 & 10 — Advanced					
MT 9A	Lower Advanced Musical Theatre—Treble Voices	4–7 yrs. post HS	26	15 minutes	Same as above
MT10A	Lower Advanced Musical Theatre—TBB Voices	4–7 yrs. post HS	26	15 minutes	
MT 9B	Upper Advanced Musical Theatre—Treble Voices	7+ yrs. post HS	30	15 minutes	
MT 10B	Upper Advanced Musical Theatre—TBB Voices	7+ yrs. post HS	30	15 minutes	
CL 9A	Lower Advanced Classical—Treble Voices	4–7 yrs. post HS	26	15 minutes	Same as above
CL 10A	Lower Advanced Classical—TBB Voices	4–7 yrs. post HS	26	15 minutes	
CL 9B	Upper Advanced Classical—Treble Voices	7+ yrs. post HS	30	15 minutes	
CL 10B	Upper Advanced Classical—TBB Voices	7+ yrs. post HS	30	15 minutes	
CM 9A	Lower Advanced Commercial Music—Treble Voices	4–7 yrs. post HS	26	15 minutes	Same as above
CM 10A	Lower Advanced Commercial Music—TBB Voices	4–7 yrs. post HS	26	15 minutes	
CM 9B	Upper Advanced Commercial Music—Treble Voices	7+ yrs. post HS	30	15 minutes	
CM 10B	Upper Advanced Commercial Music—TBB Voices	7+ yrs. post HS	30	15 minutes	

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The American Negro Spiritual Category is offered in NSA audition cycles culminating at the NATS national summer workshop.

* English must be the original language of the required one art song in English.

†† Singers may hold the music score for oratorio/cantata aria, in exception to the memorization requirement.

ADULT AVOCATIONAL CATEGORIES

Students neither pursuing nor holding a degree in music and not working as professional musicians

Number	Category	Length of Study	Ages	Time	Repertoire Requirements
CATEGORIES 11 & 12 — ADULT AVOCATIONAL					
MT 11	Adult Musical Theatre—Treble Voices	No Limit	18 +	10 minutes	THREE musical theatre selections contrasting by composer, tempo, and text. Only one selection may be chosen from operetta or musical theatre song literature.
MT 12	Adult Musical Theatre—TBB Voices	No Limit	18 +	10 minutes	
CL 11	Adult Classical—Treble Voices	No Limit	18 +	10 minutes	THREE selections from classical repertoire contrasting by composer, tempo, and text. One art song in English.* One art song in language other than English. One additional art song or aria.
CL 12	Adult Classical—TBB Voices	No Limit	18 +	10 minutes	
CM 11	Adult Commercial Music—Treble Voices	No Limit	18 +	10 minutes	THREE full songs contrasting by composer, tempo, and text performed in a CM style(s). Only one song may be an original song, instead of a cover. Only one song may be self-accompanied on an acoustic instrument.
CM 12	Adult Commercial Music—TBB Voices	No Limit	18 +	10 minutes	

* English must be the original language of the required one art song in English.

NON-TRADITIONAL STUDENT CATEGORIES

Students pursuing or holding degrees in music and whose age or level of study falls outside the limits of other categories

Number	Category	Length of Study	Ages	Time	Repertoire Requirements
CATEGORIES 13 & 14 — NON-TRADITIONAL STUDENTS					
MT 13	Adult Musical Theatre—Treble Voices	No Limit	Any	10 minutes	THREE musical theatre selections contrasting by composer, tempo, and text. Only one selection may be chosen from operetta or musical theatre song literature.
MT 14	Adult Musical Theatre—TBB Voices	No Limit	Any	10 minutes	
CL 13	Adult Classical—Treble Voices	No Limit	Any	10 minutes	THREE selections from classical repertoire contrasting by composer, tempo, and text. One art song in English.* One art song in language other than English. One additional art song or aria.
CL 14	Adult Classical—TBB Voices	No Limit	Any	10 minutes	
CM 13	Adult Commercial Music—Treble Voices	No Limit	Any	10 minutes	THREE full songs contrasting by composer, tempo, and text performed in a CM style(s). Only one song may be an original song, instead of a cover. Only one song may be self-accompanied on an acoustic instrument.
CM 14	Adult Commercial Music—TBB Voices	No Limit	Any	10 minutes	

* English must be the original language of the required one art song in English.

PLEASE NOTE: NATS encourages chapters and regions to create additional categories to address the inclusivity and diversity of all students and repertoire. Additional categories must not overlap with nor alter categories listed on pages 9-14 of this document but may be otherwise created to meet the needs of that entity's membership. Currently, any additional chapter, district, or region categories of entry cannot advance to the national levels of our NSA.

NATS Audition Rubric

CLASSICAL CATEGORIES

Each singer's performance is adjudicated in comparison to the following standards as applied to the category of entry.

STANDARD	DEVELOPING 70 – 79	ADVANCING 80 – 89	MASTERING 90 – 100
TONE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resonance and timbre are appropriate to the style with balanced chiaroscuro and ring throughout range. Transitions through passaggi are smooth and efficient. Onsets and offsets are clean, clear, and balanced allowing for uniform vibrancy and clarity. Dynamic flexibility is present. The singer engages the ability to make subtle changes in timbre appropriate to the style and character of the selection. 	<p>The singer is beginning to develop vocal resonance and balanced chiaroscuro timbre. Onsets and offsets delay or press the tone and cause extra noise or air. Transitions through passaggi are difficult or uneven. Dynamic flexibility is missing in much of the performance. Vocal colors do not enhance the style and character of the selection.</p>	<p>The singer is advancing in resonance and balanced chiaroscuro through some of the range. Onsets and offsets are mostly immediate, but some pressing or breathiness is present. Passaggi transitions are inconsistent. Dynamic flexibility is evident much of the time. Vocal colors mostly enhance the style and character of the selection.</p>	<p>The singer is mastering resonance. A balanced chiaroscuro tone rings throughout range. Onsets and offsets are immediate and promote clarity. Passaggi transitions are smooth and efficient. Dynamic flexibility is consistently evident in the performance. Vocal colors consistently enhance the style and character of the selection.</p>
BREATH & ALIGNMENT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inhalation is easy, full, silent, and efficient. Exhalation provides stability, support, vibrancy, buoyancy, loft, and vocal energy. The alignment, coordination, and release of the head, neck, larynx, jaw, ribs, back, abdomen, legs, and feet assist a dynamic engagement of the vocal instrument. 	<p>The singer is developing appropriate respiration. Inhalation is often noisy or insufficient. During exhalation, the singer tenses or collapses requiring extra breaths to complete phrases. Buoyancy and loft are inconsistent. The lack of coordination and alignment of the body hinders a dynamic engagement of the vocal instrument.</p>	<p>The singer is advancing toward appropriate respiration. Inhalation is mostly easy and sufficient. Exhalation often provides stability, support, and vocal energy with some collapsing and tension. Buoyancy and loft are often present. The coordination and alignment of the body are mostly assisting a dynamic engagement of the vocal instrument.</p>	<p>The singer is mastering respiration. Inhalation is easy and sufficient. Exhalation provides support, balanced stability, and energy. Buoyancy and loft are consistently present. The coordination and alignment of the body consistently assists a dynamic engagement of the vocal instrument.</p>
TEXT & DICTION <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Languages are sung with accurate pronunciation and effective articulation with idiomatic inflection beyond basic phonetics. The singer displays a thorough understanding in communicating the text. Phrasing and flow respect the nuance of each language. 	<p>The singer is developing some language proficiency but is often inaccurate in pronunciation and articulation. Idiomatic characteristics of the language are not present. The meaning of the text is ambiguous and poorly communicated. Phrasing and flow do not respect the nuance of each language.</p>	<p>The singer is advancing in language proficiency with accurate pronunciation and articulation. Idiomatic characteristics of the language are inconsistently present. The singer often communicates the meaning of the text. Phrasing and flow respect the nuance of each language inconsistently.</p>	<p>The singer is mastering languages with accurate pronunciation and effective articulation. Idiomatic inflection beyond basic phonetics is consistently present. The singer understands and communicates the meaning of the text. Phrasing and flow consistently respect the nuance of each language.</p>
MUSICIANSHIP <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pitches and rhythms are accurate. Tuning is accurate throughout range. The markings of the composer, editor, or arranger are observed and present in the performance. Selections are accurately performed from memory. 	<p>The singer's musicianship is beginning to develop with many accurate pitches and rhythms. Some errors are present. Tuning is often problematic. The markings in the score are rarely observed or present in the performance. Memorization is incomplete.</p>	<p>The singer's musicianship is advancing with pitch and rhythmic accuracy most of the time. Tuning is mostly accurate and complete with some errors. Many of the markings in the score are observed and present in the performance. Memorization is mostly complete.</p>	<p>The singer's musicianship is refined. All pitches and rhythms are accurate. Tuning is consistently accurate. The markings in the score are observed and present in the performance. Memorization is accurate.</p>
ARTISTRY <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The performance synthesizes vocal and physical communication to embody and express the character and story/poetry. The performance embodies clear musical intent and embraces the uniqueness of the singer. The listeners are engaged in a believable and fulfilling aesthetic performance. 	<p>The singer's performance does not embody a thorough understanding of the text and music. Physical, musical, and vocal choices are not contributing to effective communication. The performance is self-conscious and insecure.</p>	<p>Physical, musical, and vocal choices coordinate to create believable moments. An authenticity that embraces the uniqueness of the singer is emerging. The singer is inconsistent in engaging the listeners in a fulfilling aesthetic performance.</p>	<p>Physical, musical, and vocal choices allow the singer to communicate effectively. An authentic performance embraces the uniqueness of the singer. The singer consistently engages the listeners in a believable and fulfilling aesthetic performance.</p>
ENSEMBLE (comments only) The singer and pianist coordinate their efforts toward the same artistic goals in the performance.	<p>The singer and pianist seem unsynchronized. The artistic goals of the performance were unclear.</p>	<p>The singer and pianist are often coordinated in their efforts toward the same artistic goals in the performance.</p>	<p>The singer and pianist are consistently coordinated in their efforts toward the same artistic goals in the entire performance.</p>



National Association of Teachers of Singing

NATS Audition Rubric

COMMERCIAL MUSIC CATEGORIES

- Students may choose to sing all their selections in one CM style or vary their selections in multiple CM styles.
- Each singer's performance is adjudicated in comparison to the following standards as applied to the category of entry.

STANDARDS	DEVELOPING 70 – 79	ADVANCING 80 – 89	MASTERING 90 – 100
ARTISTIC INTERPRETATION <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The performance is authentic. • The performance offers a unique, stylized interpretation of the music. • The performance is specific to the selected style of commercial music. 	The singer needs an increased understanding of the stylistic elements of each selection. The interpretation lacks authenticity and is not unique to the singer.	The singer is advancing in the ability to communicate the stylistic elements of each selection. The interpretation has moments of authenticity unique to the singer.	The singer is mastering the ability to communicate the stylistic elements of each selection. The interpretation is authentic and unique to the singer.
LYRICS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The lyrics are articulated in the style appropriate to the selected style of commercial music. • Vocal tract shaping and diction enhance the individuality of the performance. 	Articulation is incompatible with the style of the song. The singer is beginning to engage the lyrics to embody the essence of each style.	Articulation is often compatible with the style of each song. The singer is often engaging the lyrics to embody the essence of each style.	Articulation is compatible with the style of each song. The singer is consistently engaging the lyrics to embody the essence of each style.
VOCAL STYLISTICS* <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The song's artistic interpretation includes expressive vocal stylisms characteristic of the selected style. • Interpretive vocal stylisms may include varied vocal onsets, releases, nuances, and embellishments, which stylistically color the vocal tone with fry, cry, growl, breathiness, etc. (See CM Terminology) 	Vocal interpretations lack the vocal stylisms characteristic of each genre. The singer is beginning to develop a facility with vocal stylisms.	Vocal interpretations include some vocal stylisms characteristic of each selection's style. The singer is developing a facility with artistic vocal stylisms.	Vocal interpretations include vocal stylisms characteristic of each genre. The singer has proficient facility with artistically effective vocal stylisms.
MUSICIANSHIP <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance is in tune. • Rhythmic groove enhances the performance. • Memorization is secure and accurate. 	Pitches need to be more accurate. The style and rhythmic groove require further study. Memorization is incomplete.	Most pitches are accurate. The style and rhythmic groove are developing. Memorization is organic and mostly accurate.	All pitches are accurate. The style and rhythmic groove enhance the performance. Memorization is organic and accurate.
TONE <p>Singer shows mastery of the vocal demands of songs selected and makes subtle or dramatic adjustments appropriate to the style and emotional expression of each selection.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each commercial style requires a variety of authentic vocal colors and sounds culturally viable for the chosen style of music performed. • Vocal tone may include some form of a mix of Mode I (Chest/TA) and Mode II (Head/CT) as well as varied organic, primal sounds born of raw emotion. • All CM styles are reliant on amplification. The microphone is used dynamically to facilitate vocal stylisms as well as projection. 	The singer is beginning to show ability in meeting the demands of each song and is able to make some appropriate choices in keeping with the specific style of each song.	The singer shows advancing ability in meeting the demands of each song and is often able to make appropriate choices in keeping with the specific style of each song.	The singer is mastering the ability to meet the demands of each song and makes appropriate choices in keeping with the specific style of each song.
BREATHING <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inhalation is efficient to the style and may be noisy or silent in response to raw emotion. • Exhalation provides stability and vocal energy. The appearance of effort may be intrinsic to style. 	The singer is beginning to inhale efficiently to meet the demands of each style. Exhalation needs to provide more stability and vocal energy.	The singer inconsistently inhales efficiently to meet the demands of each style. Exhalation inconsistently provides stability and vocal energy.	The singer is mastering efficient inhalation to meet the demands of each style. Exhalation provides stability and vocal energy.
ENSEMBLE (comments only) <p>The singer coordinates with the accompaniment effectively to accomplish artistic goals.</p>	The singer needs to coordinate more effectively with the accompaniment to accomplish artistic goals.	The singer is advancing in the ability to coordinate with the accompaniment to accomplish artistic goals.	The singer is mastering effective coordination with the accompaniment to accomplish artistic goals.

*Edrie Means Weekly coined this term in her teaching of Commercial Music and Musical Theatre.



NATS Audition Rubric

MUSICAL THEATRE CATEGORIES

Each singer's performance is adjudicated in comparison to the following standards as applied to the category of entry.

REMINDER: All vowels in MUSICAL THEATRE are some form of a MIX of Mode I (Chest/TA) and Mode II (Head/CT).

Speech Mix: Based on the closed vowels of vernacular speech. A Mode I (Chest/TA) dominant quality.

Belt Mix: An acoustic strategy. A Mode I (Chest/TA) dominant call between G4 and D5. Resonance is achieved on American open vowels as in "hat," "met," and "shot." Above D5 in Mode I (Chest/TA) dominant resonance, high belt is achieved on American closed vowels as in "hoot" and "feet." A belt is used to express moments of soaring emotion. Belt is dynamically balanced with energized airflow. It may be vibrant or retain a straight tone.

Legit Mix: An acoustic strategy. Mode II (Head/CT) dominant. Legit refers to a more spacious resonance *similar* to classical singing but retains speech-like articulation.

Hear [audio examples](#) of varied Musical Theatre mixes

STANDARDS	DEVELOPING 70 – 79	ADVANCING 80 – 89	MASTERING 90 – 100
TONE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The singer shows mastery of the vocal techniques required for the repertoire selected. (<i>See above</i>) The singer makes subtle or dramatic vocal adjustments appropriate to the style and character. The singer produces a wide variety of vocal colors throughout the song in the service of character, story, and style. Resonance is speech-like; intelligibility is a priority. 	<p>The singer is beginning to show ability in vocal techniques and is able to make some appropriate choices in keeping with the character, story, and style. Singer needs to explore more control of registration/resonance shifts and adjustments to serve character, story, and style.</p>	<p>The singer shows advancing skill in vocal techniques and is making some appropriate choices in keeping with the character, story, and style. The singer shows some control of registration/resonance shifts and makes some adjustments to serve character, story, and style.</p>	<p>The singer is mastering vocal techniques and makes appropriate choices in keeping with the character, story, and style. Singer shows intentional control of registration/resonance shifts and makes adjustments to serve character, story, and style.</p>
BREATH & ALIGNMENT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inhalation is easy, full, and efficient. Exhalation provides stability, support, and vocal energy. Alignment is dynamic and free to express the physical life of the character. 	<p>The singer is beginning to show easy, full, and efficient inhalation. Exhalation needs to provide more stability, support, and vocal energy. Breath needs to flow more evenly without being pressed. Alignment needs to become more dynamic and free to express the physical life of the character.</p>	<p>The singer shows easy, full, and efficient inhalation with increasing consistency. Exhalation often provides stability, support, and vocal energy. Breath often flows evenly without being pressed. Alignment is often dynamic and free to express the physical life of the character.</p>	<p>The singer is mastering easy, full, and efficient inhalation. Exhalation provides stability, support, and vocal energy. Breath flows evenly without being pressed. Alignment is consistently dynamic and free to express the physical life of the character.</p>
LANGUAGE & DICTION <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The lyrics are sung with accurate pronunciation and effective articulation in the style <i>and</i> vernacular appropriate to the character. The singer embodies a thorough understanding and communication of the lyrics. 	<p>The singer needs more accurate pronunciation and more effective articulation in the style <i>and</i> vernacular appropriate to the character. The singer needs to understand and communicate the lyrics more effectively.</p>	<p>The singer is often using accurate pronunciation and effective articulation in the style <i>and</i> vernacular appropriate to the character. The singer often embodies an understanding and communication of the lyrics.</p>	<p>The singer is mastering accurate pronunciation and effective articulation in the style <i>and</i> vernacular appropriate to the character. The singer embodies a thorough understanding and communication of the lyrics.</p>
MUSICIANSHIP <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pitches and rhythms are accurate. The markings of the composer are observed and performed in idiomatic style. Memorization is organic and accurate. 	<p>Pitches and rhythms need to be more accurate. More markings of the composer need to be observed. The style requires further study. Memorization is incomplete.</p>	<p>Most pitches and rhythms are accurate. Most of the markings of the composer are observed and performed in idiomatic style. Memorization is organic and mostly accurate.</p>	<p>All pitches and rhythms are accurate. The markings of the composer are observed and performed in idiomatic style. Memorization is organic and accurate.</p>
ARTISTRY <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The performance synthesizes vocal and physical communication to embody a specific character and story. The listeners are engaged in an honest and believable performance. 	<p>The synthesis of vocal and physical communication needs to embody the character and story more clearly. Performance skills and artistry are emerging. The performance is superficial or artificial.</p>	<p>The singer is advancing in the ability to synthesize vocal and physical communication to embody the character and story. The performance is mostly honest and believable.</p>	<p>The singer is mastering the ability to synthesize vocal and physical communication to embody the character and story. The performance is honest and believable.</p>
ENSEMBLE (comments only) The singer and pianist coordinate their efforts toward the same artistic goals in performance.	<p>The singer and pianist need to coordinate toward the same artistic goals in performance.</p>	<p>The singer and pianist are often coordinated in their efforts toward the same artistic goals in performance.</p>	<p>The singer and pianist are fully coordinated in their efforts toward the same artistic goals in performance.</p>

VIDEO SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

for Chapter, District, Region, & National Student Auditions



National Association of Teachers of Singing

RECORDING LOCATION

- You should record your video in the spirit of a live audition or recital performance. You may record in a home, school, church, synagogue, recital hall, rehearsal room, or voice studio with good natural acoustics with or without an audience. You should dress professionally, as you would for a recital or live audition.
- Alternately, you may excerpt an unedited video clip of your solo performance with a pianist of a song/aria from a recital performance performed on or after September 1st in the NSA cycle/academic year in which you are entering. Video excerpts from concerts, operas, revues, musicals, or operettas cannot be accepted.

RECORDING

- All NSA video auditions must be performed on or after September 1st in the current NSA Cycle/academic year
- Record a separate, unedited video of each song/aria entered.
- Your camera must record your audition in **LANDSCAPE** (a horizontal camera-frame), from a fixed, audience-center position, as if adjudicators were seated in front of you.
- Face the camera as you would face adjudicators in a live audition.
- Your video must **clearly show your face** and from your waist upward or more of your body in the camera's frame as needed to keep your physical performance within the camera's frame. Avoid empty space above the head.
- View a short [4:37] video of [best practices](#) for recording video submissions.
- The student's slate (see script at bottom of this page) may be recorded as part of the performance **or** recorded separately from the singing, then edited to the beginning of the unedited video of the song/aria performed.

COLLABORATIVE PIANISTS

In CLASSICAL, SPIRITUAL, and/or MUSICAL THEATRE Category Video Auditions

- Perform with a live pianist whenever possible. If a live pianist is not available, you may perform your **video audition** with a piano-only accompaniment track.
- If your voice teacher is your accompanist, their face or identity should not be visible in the video.
- Pianists must play piano or a keyboard either from memory or from **copyright-compliant** scores.
- A page-turner other than a voice teacher may be visible on camera as needed.
- At **live** national-level NSA auditions, live collaborative pianists are **required** in these categories. Staff collaborative pianists are available to request when completing your online national NSA entry forms.

In COMMERCIAL MUSIC Category Video Auditions

- **Mandatory:** Perform with only one microphone on camera amplifying vocals—using no additional effects/filters. The microphone used on camera may feed directly into the camera or an external amp/speaker.
- In either live auditions or video submissions, for each song entered you may choose to: **1.** self-accompany from memory on an acoustic instrument, **2.** perform with only one live acoustic instrumentalist (*a keyboard is accepted as the only acoustic exception*), **or 3.** perform with an instrumental pre-recorded track with **no backing vocals human or synthesized**.
Remember: an acoustic guitar is accepted, but an electric guitar is not—due to time and tech limitations.
- You may make the same or different accompaniment choices for each selection taking care to follow the NSA Commercial Music requirements for the category entered.
- If your voice teacher is your accompanist, their face must not be visible in the video.
- Accompanying instrumentalists may play by ear, from memory, from a score the singer composed, or from **copyright-compliant:** lyric sheets, lead sheets, sheet music, music in a published book, purchased transpositions, original music for original songs, or published music with markings to personalize your interpretation. Any photocopies must be accompanied by written permission of the copyright holder.
- A page-turner other than your voice teacher may be visible on camera as needed.

AUDITION-PERFORMANCE

- **MANDATORY:** Slate/Introduce yourself and your selection at the beginning of each video. Introduce by stating **only:**

I am (*Your Name*)

I will perform (*Title of Selection*) **or** I have (*Title of Selection*)

from (*Title of Larger Work*) **OMIT THE TITLE OF THE LARGER WORK WHENEVER NOT APPLICABLE**

by (*Composer's Name*) **IF A MUSICAL THEATRE SELECTION has an additional lyricist, ADD THE FOLLOWING LINE**
and (*Lyricist's Name*)

WHEN A MUSICAL IS BY A KNOWN WRITING TEAM, THE LAST TWO LINES ABOVE MAY BE SAID IN ANY ORDER

Lerner & Loewe, Maltby & Shire, Ahrens & Flaherty, Lieber & Stoller, Barlow & Bear, and more are best known as lyricist & composer

- Perform each of your selections from memory in your video, unless otherwise stipulated in the NSA regulations. *(A singer may hold a score while performing Oratorio or Cantata arias as is standard performance practice.)*
- Participants in ALL NSA Categories (Classical, Musical Theatre, Spirituals, and/or Commercial Music) must perform full songs or arias. 16-bar, 32-bar, *etc.* audition cuts are not accepted.
- The identity, logo, or image of your teacher, school, location, or NATS chapter/district/region must not be spoken or revealed in your video in any way including posters, photographs, reflections in mirrors/glass/shiny surfaces, diplomas, flags, banners, video's titling and description, *etc.*

YouTube Video Settings

- Select **"Unlisted"** in the privacy settings found under the Broadcasting and Sharing Options, when uploading your video files to YouTube. No other settings are accepted in NSA.
- Each video's title should be in the following format: **NATS NSA – Singer's Full Name**
All video titles must be the same at all levels of NSA. Video titles must not contain any reference to chapter, district, or region, school, teacher, *etc.*
- Type in the YouTube **"Description"** for each video:

I DO NOT OWN THE COPYRIGHT TO THE MUSIC PERFORMED IN THIS VIDEO.
THIS IS A STUDENT AUDITION NOT FOR PROFIT OR MONETIZATION.
 "Title of Selection"
 Title of LARGER WORK *whenever applicable*
 Composer's Name
if a Musical Theatre selection, ADD: & Lyricist's Name
- Turn off the **video comments option** on each video uploaded to YouTube.
- YouTube Channel Background, Banner, Titles, Logos, and Images must NOT reveal Teacher, School, Location, NATS Chapter/District/Region, Studio Names, or Affiliations of the Teacher or the Student auditioning.
- YouTube is the only video uploading platform accepted. *(No video auditions uploaded to Vimeo, Flickr, Vevo, or personal websites, etc. will be accepted.)*

SUBMISSION

- In your online registration/entry, copy the complete web link/URL for each video matching the selection's title. No extra blank space either before or after the web address, please.
- Check your video submission's link to be sure the video and music are in sync, the volume of the singing is adequate to be adjudicated, and the performance is of a complete selection. The silences before and after your performance may be trimmed.
- **Double-check to be certain** the video performance matches the selection's title on YouTube and on your entry's registration. Copy and paste errors duplicating links make an audition ineligible to advance due to missing rep.
- Upload 2, 3, 4, or 5 separate videos matching the number of selections required in your NSA Category of Entry.

INVALID VIDEOS — The following issues make a video submission unacceptable

- Videos uploaded as **"private"** or **"removed by user"** obviously cannot be adjudicated
- Videos **revealing** teacher's identity, image, school, location, voice/music studio; student's school, location; or NATS: chapter, district, or region—in the video submitted OR on the YouTube channel used for uploading videos submitted
- Videos that pan and/or zoom during performances
- Videos **without a spoken slate** for adjudicators to hear the student's speaking voice
- Videos using recording equipment that alters the acoustics of the venue or the sound quality of the singer by adding distractingly unrealistic reverb, altering the pitches sung, digitally altering or filtering the vocals either during or after the video is filmed
- Videos of repertoire not entered in your region's category in which you placed to qualify for national preliminaries
- CM Video Auditions, on which the singer is not performing with **only one microphone** visible on camera amplifying the vocals
- CM Video Auditions with backing vocals human or synthesized on the accompaniment track
- CM Video Auditions with electric instruments other than one keyboard, or with more than one acoustic instrument providing the live accompaniment, *i.e.* any handheld percussion instruments like shakers count as one accompanying instrument
- CL, HJ, or MT Video Submissions with more than a piano or electric keyboard playing on the accompaniment track
- Videos that are incomplete—full songs are required
- Videos in which the singer appears to be looking at anything written to aid memorization
- Videos recorded/filmed before September 1st in the academic year of the video's submission
- Any video audition conducted or side-coached by another person (positioned on or off camera) during the video's recording
- YouTube submissions monetized on YouTube

PLEASE FOLLOW THESE GUIDELINES!

In past years, the NSA Team has contacted students to correct invalid video auditions submitted.

Correcting invalid videos after the submission deadline cannot continue.

Whenever possible, invalid video submissions will be adjudicated for comments only.

Invalid video submissions are ineligible to advance to the next level of auditions.

NSA National Preliminary YouTube Video Submissions are always due on the 2nd Friday in April.



National Association of Teachers of Singing (NATS)
National Student Auditions (NSA)

Permission for Participation of a Minor in NATS Live Events

STUDENT'S FULL LEGAL NAME

ADULT CHAPERONE NAME

the chaperone chosen here may be a parent/guardian, but may not be a NATS teacher

CHAPERONE'S CELL PHONE

As the parent and/or legal guardian of the above named student, I give my permission for the adult chaperone stated above to bear all legal, health, and safety responsibilities for the welfare of this student during their participation in NATS events, including, but not limited to, all NATS Student Auditions at the Chapter, Region, and National level occurring in the 2025-2026 student audition cycle at locations specified by each entity of NATS. I hereby release, acquit and forever discharge NATS, its officers, members, employees, and event venues from any and all claims, demands, rights, promises, damages and liabilities arising out of or in connection with this student's participation in and/or attendance at NATS events in the calendar years 2025-2026.

The chaperone will take responsibility for this student's and their chaperone's appropriate and respectful behavior, including:

- attend scheduled events on time, in the correct location, and with all required materials
- cause no disruption of NATS events, including no extraneous noise immediately outside or inside audition, announcement, and/or event spaces
- refrain from the use of profanity and/or derogatory/hurtful remarks toward other students, adjudicators, instrumentalists, or other event personnel
- respect the authority of all individuals helping to make each event run smoothly
- abstain from all use of tobacco, drugs, and/or alcohol, which are strictly prohibited
- follow NATS rules for cell phone use at NSA events: 1. Silence cell phones during auditions, announcements, and other events in progress. 2. Cell phones will be permitted OUTSIDE event venues and before and/or after scheduled events. 3. Cell phones must be out of sight during events (screens dark on silent mode, with the exceptions of when silenced phones video or audio record any audition or announcement not being professionally filmed by a NATS-contracted videographer and of course, medical emergencies. These rules will be strictly enforced. Anyone who does not abide by these rules will have their phones confiscated.

Printed Name of Parent/Guardian

Parent/Guardian cell phone

Signature of Parent/Guardian

Date

INSTRUCTIONS

ALL FIELDS MUST BE FILLED.

- 1. Download to complete this form on a computer, not online.**
- 2. Save this pdf re-named with student's name: LAST-First.pdf,**
- 3. Then email this completed pdf file to your student's voice teacher.**



National Association of Teachers of Singing

NATS Administrative Procedures For NSA Revisions

Coordination of a national audition that brings together unique regions requires a careful balance of uniformity and individuality. NATS continues to pursue a balance that respects chapters, districts, and regions while maintaining the uniformity needed to ensure fairness to all participants. In many, but not all aspects, uniformity from the bottom to the top of the auditions process is essential for the integrity and viability of our auditions as well as the efficient, cost-effective administration of our auditions process.

NSA regularly makes improvements through this established PROCEDURE:

- 1. The NSA Team:** National Vice President for Auditions, National NSA Coordinators and National Coordinator for Competitions and Auditions. Needed improvements and suggestions/requests for changes to any aspect of the NSA received from any NATS members are discussed for practical and financial feasibility as well as equity and fairness to all participants.
- 2. Surveys** are sent to the NSA audition personnel at regular intervals and to the general membership for more data, before bringing certain issues forward as needed.
- 3. The NSA Team** then brings any significant changes in the NSA to the larger **NSA Regulations Committee** for further discussion and a subsequent vote. The current NSA Regulations Committee members are Dan Johnson-Wilmot, NATS Executive Director, Karen Brunssen, Mark McQuade, Frank Ragsdale, Alisa Belflower, Robert Wells, Everett McCorvey, Carole Blankenship, Amy Pfrimmer, Ellie Seligmann, Alexis Davis-Hazell, Michael Preacely, and Noel Smith.

AN NSA UPDATE: The expansion of NSA categories has proven to meet existing needs as revealed in the fact that the Children and Youth categories are some of the most highly populated categories in all of NSA's national preliminaries. C&Y entries are 20+% of the current national preliminary NSA entries.

The National NSA is organized to respect the needs of disparate chapters, districts, and/or regions by:

1. encouraging chapters and regions to create additional categories to address the inclusivity and diversity of all students and repertoire. Additional categories should be created to meet the needs of that entity's membership. Currently, any additional chapter or region categories cannot advance to the national levels of our NSA;
2. encouraging chapters, districts, and/or regions to hold live, hybrid, progressive, and/or video submission NSA events as best meets the needs of their membership;
3. allowing chapters, districts, and/or regions the flexibility to score or rank semifinals using one of multiple scoring or ranking methods that have been historically preferred by chapters, districts and regions, as well as allowing chapters, districts, and/or regions the flexibility to advance varying numbers of singers to finals, or to omit semifinals and/or finals, at the discretion of their audition leadership;
4. making discretionary fund grants available to support guest artists and their potential travel/lodging/honorariums, equipment, piano tunings, printing, or almost anything else needed for an NSA event—excepting NSA prizes/cash awards, which cannot be funded with discretionary funds;
5. not setting, standardizing, or suggesting chapter, district, or region NSA student entry fees, teacher registration fees, substitute adjudicator fees, staff pianist fees, or monetary prizes;
6. loosening the NSA's repertoire requirements to respect the teacher's discretion in choosing repertoire for their students;
7. loosening NSA's requirements by allowing all students to perform with pre-recorded tracks on video submissions and in all CM category auditions—to make auditioning more accessible for those who cannot afford or find collaborative pianists in their area;

8. receiving region's national qualifying 1st–5th place winners as late in the annual NSA cycle as March 30th;
9. encouraging each region/district/chapter to make their own choices as appropriate to their membership regarding: sub-dividing any national categories and advancing all qualifying students from those sub-divisions, coordinating the participation of collaborating pianists/staff pianists, setting or not setting limits to number of entries per member/teacher, and coordinating teachers' responsibilities to adjudicate or not.
10. finally, by considering the NSA regulations a living document that is continually altered in response to feedback from NATS members. The NSA Team can clarify, but we cannot alter the content of the NSA regulations mid-cycle because those changes would impact some participants and not others, which is unfair. There is currently a list of improvements to make for our next NSA cycle. **One of those improvements is to review and consider the financial and practical feasibility and fairness to all in potentially implementing the requests that come forward from REGIONAL GOVERNORS meetings.**

A point of clarification, to help Region Governors and audition personnel in the future.

The national preliminary/YouTube NSA entry deadline has been, and will be in the foreseeable future, set on the **second Friday in April**, which is necessary to adjudicate and advance national semifinalists with sufficient time to prepare for their travel. We email and encourage students to prepare their videos in advance so that submitting their entry would be as quick as copy-and-pasting their YouTube links into their submission and double-checking those links.

CRUCIAL CONSIDERATIONS RELYING on UNIFORMITY in NSA

1. If NATS continues to have a national level of NSA in which participants qualify in the regions' NSA events, the regions cannot vary in how students qualify to advance to national competition. Uniformity in this area is the only means to ensure fairness to all students.
2. Likewise, if some chapter or district NSA events serve as qualifying events for their region's NSA event, the chapter or district involved in "progressive" national qualifying events must also follow the same guidelines in the national categories to maintain fairness.
3. NSA's nationally defined categories are the foundation of our auditions, we can only hold national auditions when all regions offer these categories as named in the NSA Regulations, and with the same requirements as in the NSA Regulations.
4. Ethically, we need to operate NSA with the highest possible integrity to honor our teachers' work with their students and to offer students the opportunity to learn to audition before a job offer, graduate school admission, or gig offer, etc.—hinges on their audition's success. **Uniformity is the core structure of integrity in audition environments.** Without it, any action can be duly called into question.

Examples of NSA CHANGES INITIATED by NATS members including members of the current Board of REGION GOVERNORS:

1. The NSA team heard Melinda Brou then Texoma's Region Governor. A statement was added in the NSA regulations requiring handicapped access at NSA event venues.
2. The NSA Team will seriously consider implementing any REGION GOVERNORS proposals for an AT-LARGE region for students too geographically distanced to participate in their region's NSA event.
3. Sarah Holman's request that singers in the International Regions be allowed in NSA to sing in their native tongues was heard. A pilot program for the International Region to address the issue of English language requirements for student-singers for whom English is not their native tongue was implemented in the 2024-25 NSA cycle.
4. A contingency of members in an NSA forum at the last national conference unanimously requested shorter, genre-specific adjudicator training videos. We listened and responded. Shorter, genre-specific adjudicator training videos were each drafted, approved by a panel of contributing experts in each genre, and published for use in the following NSA audition cycles.

5. Many members complained that the NSA Regulations were difficult to negotiate. In 2023, these Regulations were reorganized, edited for clarity and brevity, a clickable table of contents was added, and members' suggested edits were made. The Categories of Entry information was condensed into a separate document located in the NSA Regulations' appendix. The NSA webpages on NATS.org were also updated and the online [NSA Resource Center](#) was reorganized with pdfs available for download for immediate use.
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2 REQUESTS of the REGION GOVERNORS

The NSA Team relies on NATS officers to provide a reliable way to learn:

1. Who the current Audition Coordinators/Audition Chairs/Audition Personnel are in each region, district, and chapter. The correct contact information for these essential and important NATS members is crucial. Here is our process to keep this information current.

The NSA Team has a shared google spreadsheet on which NSA Region Governors submit, and update as needed, the contact information for all NSA Personnel at the Region, District, and Chapter levels—as linked [here](#). Additionally, please answer the questions about any NSA events on this shared google spreadsheet. As in any venture, accurate communication is highly prized.

2. To learn the date of all Chapter, District, and Region NSA events as far in advance as is possible.

The NSA Team requires any NATS or NSA officer to submit details about their chapter, district, and region NSA events to the NATS.org calendar of events: [here](#). NATS members need a functional calendar to know which and when NSA events are happening where!

3. All NSA personnel are welcomed to contact the vpauditions@nats.org with any concerns or questions they encounter including recommendations for changes.