

**NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF TEACHERS OF SINGING, INC., MID-ATLANTIC REGION
HANDBOOK
RULES AND REGULATIONS FOR THE ANNUAL NATS NATIONAL STUDENT AUDITIONS:
MID-ATLANTIC REGION**

Underlying Philosophy

The motivating spirit must be a mutual seeking of, and a cooperative effort towards, the highest standard in vocal artistry and technique. NATS Student Auditions are unique in the following ways:

1. The Auditions are planned for multiple stages of vocal study.
2. Each student performs in a clearly defined classification or category per NATS Student Auditions Regulations with other students of similar age and/or length of study.
3. The Auditions are intended for aspiring and accomplished vocalists who might benefit from the audition experience and who are willing to prepare appropriate repertoire.
4. The NATS National Student Auditions: Mid-Atlantic Region encourage and promote the performance of American vocal music.
5. At the discretion of the auditioning singer and the adjudicators, the Auditions are open, space and time permitting, giving students the opportunity to hear other singers.
6. Emphasis is on constructive criticism given to each student, rather than on selecting a ‘winner.’
7. Superlative performances may be recognized by presenting students in an Honors Recital at the conclusion of each day of the Auditions as well as by monetary and other rewards.
8. Student Auditions are held within the progressive framework of Preliminary Round Student Auditions at the District level and the NATS National Student Auditions: Mid-Atlantic Region at the Regional level. Singers must qualify at the District level to advance to the Regional level. These District and Regional level events may include the exchange of ideas, performances, master classes and other activities of interest to both students and teachers.

Section I—Purpose

- A. To offer students of active NATS members in good standing whose dues have been paid at both District and National levels the following:
 1. A specific goal which stimulates the desire for vocal and musical self-improvement and which encourages more diligent study in the preparation of appropriate repertoire.
 2. An opportunity to sing before qualified, informed, and impartial adjudicators to receive careful, constructive criticism.

3. An opportunity for public performance by superlative students and recognition of achievement by the giving of appropriate awards.
 4. An opportunity to interact with peers in a professional setting.
- B. To offer active members of NATS the following:
1. Opportunities for professional growth through the exchange of, and exposure to, ideas and new repertoire.
 2. Opportunities to serve the NATS organization by hearing other teachers' students and offering carefully considered evaluations to same.

Section II—Organization

- A. Student Auditions are sponsored by active NATS members in the Mid-Atlantic Region, which includes the Districts of Maryland/District of Columbia, Virginia, North Carolina, and South Carolina. It is recommended that Preliminary Round Student Auditions at the District level be held at locations most favorable to a wide participation by the membership. The NATS National Student Auditions: Mid-Atlantic Region event rotates between all four districts. Modalities include in-person, virtual and hybrid options as needed. Please visit: www.midatlanticnats.org and click Regional Events (scroll to bottom of page), to view current auditions information.
- B. At the Preliminary Round at the District level, Student Auditions are held under the supervision of the Chapter/District Officers and under the direct supervision of the Regional Governor at the NATS National Student Auditions: Mid-Atlantic Region at the Regional level. The Chapter/District Vice President serves as the Auditions Chair for the Preliminary Round Student Auditions at the District level; the Regional Governor serves as Auditions Chair for the NATS National Student Auditions: Mid-Atlantic Region at the Regional level.
- C. Notices of auditions and conferences in the Mid-Atlantic Region are announced in advance as appropriate for each District's calendar, provided that the Preliminary Round Student Auditions at the District level are scheduled in accordance with Regional and National Student Auditions deadlines.
- D. For the purposes of the NATS National Student Auditions: Mid-Atlantic Region, categories as set forth by the NATS national organization may be offered. In a National Conference year (even years from 2016-2036), the Hall Johnson Spiritual Category is offered. Additionally, the American Negro Spiritual Category is offered in non-Conference years (odd years from 2025-2035). Repertoire requirements are found online at each District website and at https://www.nats.org/Hall_Johnson_Spirituals_Competition.html and https://www.nats.org/American_Negro_Spiritual_Competition.html.
- E. NATS Artist Awards (NATSAA) is not a part of the Student Auditions, even though such activity may take place under the same sponsorship.

Section III—Eligibility and Procedures

- A. Any student currently studying with an active member in good standing whose dues have been paid at the National and District levels of the National Association of Teachers of Singing is eligible to participate.
- B. If the student has been studying with the sponsoring teacher for fewer than eight (8) months, acknowledgement must be made of the student’s former vocal study on both the application and in any public announcements. The NATS Code of Ethics provides that “it is unethical to claim as a pupil one having studied fewer than eight months with a teacher—except where there has been no previous training.” Please visit <https://www.nats.org/code-of-ethics.html>.
- C. Member teachers must complete student application forms online by the stated deadline. The appropriate student fees and member teacher fees at both District and Regional levels must accompany each application. Said fees are made electronically. Student application and member teacher fees are used for the administration of Preliminary Round Student Auditions at the District level and the NATS National Student Auditions: Mid-Atlantic Region at the Regional level, and student monetary awards at both levels. For the NATS National Student Auditions: Mid-Atlantic Region, member teachers must re-register their students online at www.nats.org at the NATS Auditions Registration link in order to confirm students’ participation, repertoire choices, pianist information and to pay any fees. This portal will also be used for members to upload links to student videos for the virtual categories of the regional event. Members must be current at both District and National levels in order to register singers for Student Auditions events.
- D. Sponsoring teachers may not play NATS Auditions for their own students. The auditioning student or sponsoring teacher is responsible for securing and compensating his/her own collaborative pianist. It is neither the Audition Chair’s nor the Regional Governor’s responsibility to make collaborative pianist arrangements. A list of local collaborative pianists from the area host institution may be made available to teachers whose students wish to use a local collaborative pianist. Pianist may set their own fees for rehearsal(s) and the audition. At the NATS National Student Auditions: Mid-Atlantic Region, scheduling makes it impractical for one collaborative pianist to play for more than thirteen (13) auditions per day. As appropriate, at the discretion of the Auditions Chair and the Regional Governor, additional limits may apply.
- E. Teachers who sponsor their students in Student Auditions are required to adjudicate for the duration of the Student Auditions event. For the National Student Auditions: Mid-Atlantic Region event, member teachers who submit students for only virtual categories must adjudicate for the virtual event. Member teachers who sponsor students for only the in-person categories must adjudicate at the in-person event for its entire duration. Member teachers who sponsor students in both modalities must adjudicate in both modalities. Preliminary Round Student Auditions at the District level and the NATS National Student Auditions: Mid-Atlantic Region at the Regional level, teachers who find it impossible to attend all days of the auditions must arrange personally for a substitute adjudicator, who is a NATS member in good standing, whose dues have been paid at the National level, and who has no students of his/her own auditioning in said Student Auditions. It is the sponsoring teacher’s responsibility to secure a substitute adjudicator at both Preliminary Round/District level and the NATS National Student Auditions: Mid-Atlantic Region/Regional level by the application deadline.

In addition, teachers who sponsor students at the NATS National Student Auditions: Mid-Atlantic Region and cannot adjudicate at said Student Auditions, are required to pay a substitute adjudicator fee of \$50.00. This fee is in addition to the sponsoring teacher's Registration Fee. Both the Substitute Adjudicator Fee and the Registration Fee are due by the application deadline. This Substitute Adjudicator Fee covers the registration of the substitute adjudicator. Non-attending sponsoring teachers are required to secure a substitute adjudicator, pay the Registration Fee and the Substitute Adjudicator Fee, or forfeit their students' participation in the NATS National Student Auditions: Mid-Atlantic Region event. When extraordinary circumstances warrant, the Auditions Chair or the Regional Governor, as appropriate, may waive regulations in order to facilitate the scheduling of auditions. This does not include any regulation that affects a student's eligibility to participate in a specific category. Teachers who sponsor students and who are absent for two consecutive years may be contacted by the District Vice President or the Regional Governor to discuss their students' participation in the next Student Auditions.

- F. NATS members may sponsor only their current students in the Auditions. Sponsoring another teacher's students, for whatever reason, is unethical and results in disqualification of all concerned.
- G. A list of the student's repertoire must be included on the application form. If any questions arise concerning any of the repertoire listed, the Auditions Chair communicates directly with the teacher of the applicant, or with his/her student applicant. All repertoire categories listed must be represented, unless optional. It is not necessary for the student to have music available for the adjudicators at the time of audition. At the Regional level and above, repertoire changes are not permitted after the posted application deadline. Repertoire and pianist changes following NATS Student Auditions at the District level to NATS National Student Auditions: Mid-Atlantic Region are permitted and must be entered during the online re-registration process.
- H. **Strict observance of copyright laws has always been NATS policy.** Illegally reproduced music is not permitted at Student Auditions. Please visit https://www.nats.org/copyright_info.html pdf for the complete NATS policy and guidelines.
- I. All selections with the exception of Oratorio, Mass, Requiem and Cantata arias must be performed from memory. All arias from opera, oratorio, mass, cantata, operetta, works titled 'concert aria,' and music theater selections must be sung in the original key or standard published key. Any published transposition must retain the composer's intention and style of music, and preserve the character being portrayed in the story and lyrics.
- J. Member teachers may sponsor students for up to a total of twenty-five (25) auditions per modality at the NATS National Student Auditions: Mid-Atlantic Region event. Students may participate in more than one category as determined by audition guidelines.
- K. At the discretion of the Auditions Chair, categories containing more than twenty (20) students or 200 minutes of listening time may be split into two subcategories, i.e. CL 1-1, CL 1-2, of approximately equal numbers and again into subdivided subcategories, i.e., CL 1A-1, 1B-1, of approximately equal numbers, should high numbers warrant. If a category at the Mid-Atlantic Region is subdivided due to high numbers, a Sing-Off round will be required to determine which singers will advance to the National Student Auditions Preliminary Round. Sing-Off rounds are held as follows: when there are

two subdivided -1, -2 categories, the 1st, 2nd and 3rd place singers, including ties, sing a Sing-Off round; when there are three or more subdivided -3, -4 categories, the 1st and 2nd place singers, only, including ties, sing a Sing-Off round. Sing-Off rounds are heard by three adjudicators in order to determine the top five singers from those particular categories. The maximum number of singers who advance from the NATS National Student Auditions: Mid-Atlantic Region in each NSA category, is five *except* in the following scenario:

One for 1st, one 2nd, one 3rd, one 4th, tie for 5th: in this case, all six singers advance.

However, in this scenario:

Tie for 1st, tie for 2nd, one 3rd: these five singers advance, while any ranked 4th and 5th do not advance.

For current information on NSA advancing and non-advancing categories, please see the National Student Auditions - Categories of Entry document located on the NATS website.

https://www.nats.org/_Library/2023_24_NSA_Docs/9-19-23_NSA_Categories_of_Entry.pdf

- L. The National Student Auditions Preliminary Round is conducted via YouTube. Please visit the NATS Auditions Regulations document at https://www.nats.org/national_student_auditions.html for more information.
- M. Each District and the Region shall consider requests for refunds on a case-by-case basis.

Section IV—Adjudication

The principal purpose of the Auditions is to give each student a full hearing before qualified and impartial adjudicators, as well as the opportunity to receive careful and constructive criticism. Evaluative comments based on the NATS Audition Rubric for Classical, Commercial Music, and Music Theatre Categories are of great importance to both students and teachers. Each adjudicator should make as comprehensive a critique as time allows, acknowledging achievement and encouraging improvement. Comments that would be embarrassing to the teacher or discouraging to the student must be avoided; no one should be criticized to the point of humiliation or defeat. Since the Auditions are important to the participating students who have made a significant investment of time, energy, and money, the experience should be positive and rewarding.

It is altogether appropriate within the spirit of the Auditions to recognize excellence by selecting superlative singers for awards and for performance on an Honors Recital at the conclusion of each day of the Auditions. The word “audition” rather than “competition” or “contest” is recommended so that all students, whether they expect to be chosen as Honors Recital performers or not, benefit from the experience and will want to participate in future events.

- A. Teachers may not adjudicate their own students. Teachers are encouraged to indicate in their profiles in AuditionNow their adjudicating preferences, i.e., styles, and the age and level of advancement of particular categories. While it may not be possible to grant said preferences, every effort will be made to honor said preferences. Whenever possible, teachers should not have to adjudicate students from their own schools. Adjudicators do not confer during the actual audition; however, after three

(3) students have been auditioned in a category **at an in-person event**, the adjudicators are encouraged to total and average the scores given and compare with their colleagues to help establish a standard for scoring in that category. At a midpoint during the auditions, a second totaling and averaging of scores of three (3) specific students is recommended to maintain an aligned scoring standard throughout the category.

- B. Ideally, there will be a *minimum* of three (3) adjudicators per category. When circumstances arise where this is not possible at an in-person event, two (2) adjudicators may suffice. Efforts will be made to assign the smaller number of adjudicators to categories that will not advance beyond the regional event at present. Any sub-divided categories will have the same number of adjudicators across the larger category.
- C. Since adjudication at Student Auditions is regarded as a professional duty for NATS members, no fees are paid for adjudicating.
- D. Standard NATS adjudication forms are provided and can be viewed at:
https://www.nats.org/_Library/NSA_Files/NATS_Adjudication_Form_with_rep_July_11_8_5_by_1_1.pdf.

Adjudicators' written comments and constructive criticisms are presented to each student's teacher at the conclusion of the Student Auditions event. Scoring should be in compliance with the NATS Audition Rubric- Classical, Commercial Music, and Music Theatre Categories point scale at https://www.nats.org/_Library/2023_24_NSA_Docs/9-19-23_Full_NSA_Regulations.pdf pages 33-35.

At the Preliminary Round Student Auditions at the District level, singers with a minimum average score of 90 or above, or with two scores of 90 or above, are eligible to advance to the NATS National Student Auditions: Mid-Atlantic Region. Please note: Preliminary Round Student Auditions at the District level may hear auditions in categories that do not advance to the NATS National Student Auditions: Mid-Atlantic Region.

- E. If, in the opinion of the adjudicators, no one in a given category merits an award, no superlative students need be declared. Ties are permissible at any level; no restrictions are placed on the number of superlative students or certificates awarded.

Section V—Awards

Certificates may be presented to students designated for special recognition. So that teachers and students may hear the students selected as superlative, the singers who receive the highest score in each category, subcategory, and subdivided subcategory may be invited to perform in an Honors Recital at the close of each day of the Auditions. First, 2nd, and 3rd-place students may receive monetary awards at the discretion of each District and the Region.

- A. At the Preliminary Round Student Auditions at the District level, certificates of merit, signed by the Auditions Chair and at least one other NATS official, may be awarded to 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and Honorable

Mention students at the discretion of each District. Certificates of merit, signed by the Regional Governor, may be awarded to 1st, 2nd, 3rd students at the NATS National Student Auditions: MidAtlantic Region.

- B. District and/or Regional officers may apply to the NATS Discretionary Fund for financial assistance with programs, guest artists, and/or conferences.
- C. Honors Recitals are held at the conclusion of each day of the NATS National Student Auditions: Mid-Atlantic Region event.

Section VI—Fees and Finances

- A. The fees paid by each student and teacher support the Student Auditions. A student application fee of \$20.00 per category shall accompany each student registration to the NATS National Student Auditions: Mid-Atlantic Region event. No registration fees are charged to collaborative pianists at either the Preliminary or Regional Rounds.
- B. Separate conference expenses may be raised by: (1) charging conference registration fees for teachers, visitors, and non-auditioning students, (2) District dues, in the case of District conferences; and (3) applying for a grant from the NATS Discretionary Fund. Income from Student Auditions fees is not included in any application for program assistance from the Discretionary Fund.

Repertoire Requirements

Repertoire requirements can be viewed at
https://www.nats.org/_Library/2023_24_NSA_Docs/9-19-23_Full_NSA_Regulations.pdf pages 27-32.

Approved November 21, 2023