

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

(Revised, summer 2016)

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 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 Semi-Final Round Student Auditions at the Mid-Atlantic Regional level 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 the Auditions as well as by monetary and other rewards.
8. Student Auditions generally are held within the framework of a Preliminary Round Student Auditions at the District level and a Semi-Final Round Student Auditions at the Regional level. These District and Regional level events may include the exchange of ideas, performances, 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 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.
- B. Student Auditions are held under the Chapter/District President at the Preliminary Round at the District level and under the direct supervision of the Regional Governor at the Semi-Final Round at the Regional level. The 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 Semi-Final Round 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 Semi-Final Round Student Auditions in the Mid-Atlantic Region, twenty-eight (28) categories are established. In a National Conference year (even years from 2016-2036), the Hall Johnson Spiritual Category is offered, additionally. Category and repertoire requirements are in chart form found online at each District website and at <http://www.nats.org/nsaresources.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 or at the same conference.

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."

- C. Student application forms must be completed online by the stated deadline. The appropriate student fees at the District Level and teacher fees at both District and Regional Levels must accompany each application. Said fees may be made electronically. Monies received from student applications are used for the administration of Preliminary Round Student Auditions at the District level, administration of Semi-Final Round Student Auditions at the Regional level and student awards at both levels. Each District shall contribute three dollars (\$3.00) per student auditioned in its District to the Regional Treasurer. For the Semi-Final Round Student Auditions at the Regional level, teachers must re-register their students online at www.midatlanticnats.org using the application log-in link in order to confirm students' participation, repertoire choices, and pianist information.
- 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. Districts and the Region may suggest appropriate compensation for collaborative pianist services. At the Semi-Final Round Student Auditions at the Regional level, 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. 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.
- E. Teachers who sponsor their students in Student Auditions are required to adjudicate for the duration of the Student Auditions event. At Preliminary Round Student Auditions at the District level and Semi-Final Round Student Auditions 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 both District and National levels, 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 and Semi-Final/Regional levels by the application deadline. In addition, teachers who sponsor students at the Semi-Final Round Student Auditions at the Regional level and cannot adjudicate at said Semi-Final Auditions Round, are required to pay a non-attendance fee of \$50.00. This fee is in addition to the sponsoring teacher's Registration Fee. Both the non-attendance fee and the Registration Fee are due by the application deadline. This non-attendance fee covers the registration of the substitute adjudicator. Students may be disqualified if a teacher fails to meet these requirements. 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 changes following Preliminary Round Student Auditions at the District level to Semi-Final Round Student Auditions at the Regional level 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 http://www.nats.org/Library/docs/copyright_policy_revision1-2012.pdf for the complete NATS policy and guidelines.
- I. All arias from opera, oratorio, mass, cantata, operetta, works titled ‘concert aria,’ and music theater selections must be sung in the original key or an alternate key based on common performance practice. Vetting alternate keys with the Audition Chair prior to the application deadline is recommended. All oratorio selections must be sung from memory.
- J. No teacher may enter more than a total of twenty-five (25) students per Semi-Final Round Regional Student Auditions 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. IA, IB, of approximately equal numbers and again into subdivided subcategories, i.e., IA-1, IB-1, of approximately equal numbers, should high numbers warrant. At the Semi-Final Round Student Auditions at the Regional level, in cases where subcategories are subdivided into IA-1, IB-1, etc., a ‘Sing-Off’ round is held wherein the top scoring singers, i.e., those with average scores of 90 or above, or with two or more scores of 90, from each subdivided subcategory/room are heard by three additional adjudicators in order to determine the top five singers from IA and IB, respectively. Each singer sings one selection and is ranked. The top five ranked singers from IA and the top five singers from IB advance to the National Student Auditions Preliminary Round. The maximum number of singers who advance from the Semi-Final Round Student Auditions at the Regional level, from 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 advance.
- However, in this scenario:
- Tie for 1st, tie for 2nd, one 3rd: in this case, these five advance, while any ranked 4th and 5th are Honorable Mentions, and do not advance.
- L. The National Student auditions Preliminary Round is conducted via YouTube. Please visit the NATS Auditions Regulations document on page 13 at http://www.nats.org/National_student_auditions.html for more information.
- M. Each District 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 and Music Theater 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 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. It is encouraged to assign teachers experienced with the age and level of advancement of a particular category. Whenever possible, teachers should not have to adjudicate students from their own schools. A teacher may indicate a preference for adjudicating a specific category, and while it may not be possible to grant that request, every effort will be made to honor said preference. Adjudicators do not confer during the actual audition; however, after three (3) students have been auditioned in a category, the adjudicators are encouraged to total 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 of scores of three (3) specific students is recommended to maintain an aligned scoring standard throughout the category.
- B. Whenever possible there will be a minimum of three (3) adjudicators per 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. *View same at http://www.nats.org/Library/NSA_Files/Adjud_Standard_with_Rep.pdf*. The 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 and Music Theater Categories point scale at http://www.nats.org/Library/NSA_Files/NSA_Rubric_-_Aug_6_.pdf. At the Preliminary Round Student Auditions at the District level, singers with a minimum average score of 90, or with two or more scores of 90 or above, are eligible to advance to the Semi-Final Round Student Auditions at the Regional level. *Please note:* Preliminary Round Student Auditions at the District level may hear auditions in categories that do not advance to the Semi-Final Round at the Regional level.
- 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 all 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 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, and Honorable Mention students at the Semi-Final Round Student Auditions at the Regional level.
- B. District and/or Regional officers may apply for funds to the NATS Discretionary Fund for assistance with programs, guest artists, and/or conferences.
- C. Honors Recitals are held at the conclusion of Student Auditions in the Mid-Atlantic Region of NATS.

Section VI—Fees and Finances

- A. The fees paid by each student and teacher support the Student Auditions. No registration fees are charged to collaborative pianists at either the Preliminary or Semi-Final Rounds, or to students advancing to the Semi-Final Round of Student Auditions at the Regional level.
- 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
http://www.nats.org/Library/NSA_Files/NSA_Categories_-_Aug_6.pdf.