Policies and Procedures
Jazz Education Section
North Carolina Music Educators Association

Revised January 2026

Policies and Procedures

JAZZ ENSEMBLE MUSIC PERFORMANCE ADJUDICATION (MPA)

Purpose: To assess student comprehension and performance ability as it relates to jazz through the evaluation of scholastic ensemble performance. To provide students and teachers a means of receiving constructive criticism regarding jazz pedagogy through written and recorded commentary from qualified and respected jazz educators.

1. Eligibility
   A. All ensemble directors must be current members of the North Carolina Music Educators Association.
   B. Ensemble members must be regularly enrolled in a music class according to the school administrative unit (individual school).
   C. The Ensemble director that appears on the class roster at a school as the teacher must be a member of NCMEA and register all students to participate in all NCMEA sanctioned events.
   D. Student teachers that are current members of CMENC may conduct one piece during a performance at Jazz Ensemble MPA.
   E. In the rare event that a director cannot conduct an ensemble (due to illness, family emergency, death in the family, etc.) approval must be obtained from both the Region Jazz Chairperson and the Jazz Section Chairperson before a substitute conductor (e.g. a student teacher) may conduct the group.

2. Administrative Structure
   A. Each region will have a Jazz Ensemble MPA Chairperson appointed by the region chairperson.
   B. The Jazz Ensemble MPA in each region must be held before May 15 each year. In the event of extreme weather conditions which require a cancellation of MPA, the MPA region chair may apply to the Jazz Section Chairperson for an extension of this date.
   C. The region Jazz Ensemble MPA Chairperson will contact the Executive Director of NCMEA to obtain Jazz Ensemble MPA financial and administrative materials and submit the required student event report to the NCMEA Executive Director by the required deadline.

3. Regulations
   A. Ensembles may enter for comments only.
   B. Where a school has more than one big band, duplication of personnel will be permitted so long as the literature and instrument are not the same. Students are permitted to play the same instrument in both a big band and a combo.
   C. Where a school has multiple combos, students performing in the rhythm section (drum set, bass, comping instruments) may perform as the backline for more than one combo permitting that the horn players are not the same.
   D. No ensemble may enter more than one region Jazz Ensemble MPA.
   E. Ensembles are required to refrain from preparing any composition for Jazz Ensemble MPA more than once within a four-year period.
   F. Any school district finding it necessary to combine students to create an ensemble for Jazz Ensemble MPA must receive permission from the Board of Directors of the North Carolina Jazz Section.

4. Registration
   A. All Jazz Ensembles will register in their designated regions.
   B. Exception to Rule 4-A: Ensembles may register for MPA out of region with written permission from both the MPA chairman of their assigned region and the MPA chairman of the region for which they wish to participate. If problems occur, the director should contact the Jazz Section chairperson, who shall intervene and make a final decision.

C. Registration blanks must be completed and mailed with fees enclosed, to the Region Jazz Ensemble MPA chairperson. The envelope must have a postmark showing that the materials were mailed on or before the stated deadline of thirty days (30) days prior to the first day of Jazz Ensemble MPA.
D. Jazz ensemble directors will be prompted to present their valid NAfME membership card upon arrival at the MPA event.

5. Fees
A. All Jazz Ensemble MPA registration fees will be $175.00 per ensemble. (up from $150 on 4/18/26 meeting)
B. Fees will not be refunded.

6. Performance
A. Each ensemble will be required to perform three selections and is encouraged to prepare three selections of contrasting styles (i.e. Swing, Ballad, Rock/Latin /Funk).
B. All ensembles are required to furnish three conductor's scores of each composition being performed at the Jazz Ensemble MPA. Scores will be presented to the Jazz Ensemble MPA chairperson upon arrival at the MPA location. Photocopied conductor's scores may only be used for the MPA adjudicators with permission from the music publisher or music retailer from whom the scores have been purchased. Proof of permission to photocopy must be submitted to the MPA chairperson at the time of performance.
C. Timing: Ensembles will receive thirty minutes of stage time which includes staging and performance. Ensembles may be required to perform at an adjusted time but the entire warm-up time of thirty minutes must be given to each band.
D. Each ensemble director must submit to the Jazz Ensemble MPA chairperson a playlist history listing the MPA selections that will be performed the current year and the repertoire that has been performed during the previous three years and an ensemble instrumentation chart.

7. Disqualification
A. Violation of any of the above rules constitutes an automatic disqualification.

8. Judging
A. There will be three adjudicators for each region's Jazz Ensemble MPA. The judges will be chosen and contracted by the region Jazz Ensemble MPA chairperson. It is recommended that these adjudicators supply experience from various levels of jazz education (i.e. Middle School, High School & Collegiate).

RATING CHART FOR JAZZ ENSEMBLE MPA GRADES

The following chart will be used as a guide in arriving at a final rating when using four judges (Three judges from the concert portion and one judge from the sight reading portion). All possible combinations are included. The Roman numerals at the top refer to the final ratings; the numbers below refer to ratings given by each judge.

RATING I	RATING II	RATING III	RATING IV	RATING V
111	113	134	155	455
112	114	135	245	555
	115	144	255	
	122	145	344	
	123	233	345	
	133	234	355	
	222	235	444	
	223	244	445	
		333		
		334		

Although for purposes of reckoning the I, II, III, IV, V system is a convenience, please be sure that the numbers are not inscribed on the certificates of award or given to the media. According to our rules, the correct designations are given in the right-hand column below:

I Superior
II Excellent
III Average
IV Below Average
V Poor

ALL-STATE JAZZ BAND

1. Administrative Structure
   A. The NCMEA All-State Jazz Band shall use a two tier structure. Bands will be classified as: Middle School (grades eight and under) and High School (grades nine through twelve).
   B. No active North Carolina Band Director shall conduct an All-State Jazz Band.

2. Eligibility
   A. The band director of each student auditioning for either the Middle School or High School All-State Jazz Band must be a current member in good standing of both the North Carolina Music Educators and their own region.
   B. To audition and participate in the All-State Jazz Band, the band member must be regularly enrolled in a scheduled music class which receives one unit of credit.
   C. The band member must have participated in their respective region band clinic as a member of either the High School "A" Band, High School "B" band or Middle School "A" band and performed on one of the following instruments: Alto Saxophone, Tenor Saxophone, Baritone Saxophone, Trumpet, Trombone, Guitar, Piano, Bass, Drum Set, or vibraphone. In the event a region band clinic is canceled, the students who would have been eligible, had the clinic been held, will be allowed to audition.
      1. Valve trombones are not permissible.
   D. Any student that cannot document a family or personal emergency preventing their attendance at All-State Jazz Band Clinic, if selected, and fails to participate in that clinic, will be banned from auditioning for All-State Jazz Band for one year.
   E. Students may audition for membership in the All-State Jazz Band only on the instrument they were selected for and played at the region level.

3. Registration for Auditions
   A. Each region Clinic Chairperson shall notify the All-State Jazz Band Auditions Chairpersons of the names and school of those students of that region who may audition for All-State Jazz Band at the conclusion of their region clinic. Each Jazz Band Audition chairperson should receive a database of membership from each region so that if they need to contact someone they have the information.
   B. Each Band Director of an eligible student must complete the online auditions registration by the stated deadline in order for the student to audition.
   C. The band director shall be responsible for the proper registration and payment of fees to the Auditions Chairperson for his/her student(s) to audition for All-State Jazz Band. Only cash, school or band booster checks will be accepted (personal checks will not be accepted). Directors of participating students will be expected to judge.
   D. The band director whose name appears on the class list as the teacher is required to participate in the judging of all state videos as assigned by the auditions chairperson
   E. In the event that a child is unable to participate in the All-State Jazz Band Auditions, directors should notify the appropriate auditions chairperson.

4. Audition Procedures
   A. Audition Requirements for Middle School and High School Winds/Guitar/Piano/Vibraphone:
      1. Students will play the head from the corresponding yearly rotation, listed on the NCMEA website.
      2. Students will play appropriate etude for the appropriate instrument on the NCMEA jazz website
      3. Students will improvise for the given number of choruses, which will be determined based on the form of that year's selection.
      4. The Playback track will be stopped, and the student will sight-read a selection supplied at auditions
   B. Audition Requirements for Middle School and High School Drums:
      1. Students will play the drum set part from the corresponding yearly rotation, listed on the NCMEA website.
      2. Students will perform the drum styles and improvisation as listed on the file on the NCMEA website.
   C. Auditions will take place asynchronously. Band directors will be responsible for uploading audition videos that follow the deadline and format communicated by the auditions chair.
   D. Videos will be anonymized by the auditions chair. A random formula will be used to assign student audition numbers. Directors shall not judge their own students whenever possible.
   E. Ties will be broken in the following order: 1) Etude score 2) Improvisation score 3) Head score.
      1. In case of ties for the last chair we will take both or all.
   F. The NCMEA-provided backing track, at the region audition tempo, is required for all auditions and must be audible to the judges in all student submissions. If a student submits an audition and the judges cannot hear the backing track, or the wrong backing track is used, the audition will be disqualified.

G. Metronomes and other external tempo devices are not permitted in any way during the audition. Any submissions featuring the use of a metronome will be disqualified.
H. The student's face and instrument must be visible throughout the recording. Audition submissions that do not show an auditionee's face or instrument will be disqualified.
I. Video submissions must be recorded as one complete take (with the exception of middle school drums). Any submissions that feature a video which is cut or edited in any way except for the trimming of extra time before and/or after the audition performance will be disqualified.
J. The required backing track for all auditions must be audible to the judges in all student submissions. If a student submits an audition utilizing headphones and a judge cannot hear the backing track, that audition will be disqualified.
K. Metronomes and other external tempo devices are not permitted in any way during the audition.
L. Students may not receive assistance during their recorded audition including, but not limited to: a countoff, help with tempo, visual or audible feedback. Submissions containing evidence of assistance during an audition will be disqualified.
M. The auditions chair will communicate the expectations for submissions and judging no fewer than two weeks before the audition submission deadline.
N. Any audition disqualifications must be agreed upon by a majority of the assigned judges and the auditions chair. Judges should provide a score that reflects the quality of the audition whenever possible, including for disqualified submissions.
O. Jazz regions may decide to strengthen or weaken the audition requirements for their own region as their membership deems necessary.

North Carolina All-State Jazz Band Instrumentation for All Bands
Middle, High School Bands

2 Alto Saxophones	5 Trumpets	5 Trombones	1 Guitar
2 Tenor Saxophones			1 Piano
1 Baritone Saxophone			1 Bass
			1 Drum Set

5. Registration for All-State Jazz Band Clinic
A. At the conclusion of the Auditions, the All-State Jazz Band Audition Chairperson for each level will notify each jazz educator of his/her student(s) who were selected for All-State Jazz Band by posting the results on the Jazz Section website. The director will be responsible for the proper registration of her/her student(s) participating in the clinic. A copy of the All-State Jazz Band Auditions Registration file will also be sent to the appropriate All-State Jazz Band Clinic Chairperson.
B. Each participating organization will be responsible for its own housing and meal arrangements.
C. Clinic registration at the time of the All-State Jazz Band Clinic must be done in person by the band director. If the band director is unable to be present, the director must notify the All-State Jazz Band Clinic Chairperson in advance and in writing giving the reasons for his/her absence and the name of the jazz educator who is to personally register his/her student(s) and will be responsible for the student(s) during the clinic. Each school principal will verify this appointment with the clinic chairperson in writing before the clinic registration date.

6. Fees
A. The audition fee for All-State Jazz Band will be $15.00 per student if registered on or before the registration deadline and $30.00 per student if registered after the deadline. Only cash, school or band booster checks will be accepted.
B. The All-State Jazz Band clinic fee will be $45.00 per student. Only cash, school or band booster checks will be accepted.

7. Regulations
A. Students who cannot attend the All-State Jazz Band Clinic shall not audition.
B. Students shall attend all of the All-State Jazz Band rehearsals during the Clinic. Any student who misses any portion of any rehearsal will not perform with the All-State Jazz Band.
C. It is the duty of the jazz educator to ensure that students meet all stipulations and requirements for All-State Jazz Band. Failure to comply with any stipulation or requirement or the failure to meet given deadlines may result in the ineligibility of a student to either audition for or attend the All-State Jazz Band Clinic.
D. The All-State Jazz Band Clinic will be held during the first two weekends in April. This date may be changed if a

conflict with the Easter Holiday arises.

E. A list of behavior guidelines for clinic rehearsals will be given to all eligible students. Students and their parents must both sign this form to participate. The form will state that any conduct violation will result in the student being sent home.

8. Guidelines for Auditions Adjudicators

A. Judges need to maintain a professional attitude and are expected to judge each student fairly.
B. When judging a performance, refer to the adjudication rubric located on the student score sheet. This will help you to be consistent and to consider all aspects of a performance. This should help prevent a personal bias towards the performance. For example: you should not deduct points from an etude score for an interpretation of the music that is within the parameters of what is indicated on the page. You may have a well-formed and valid opinion as to how the piece should be executed, however points should not be deducted for an interpretive performance that is equally valid, but not the same as yours. Wind players should play the solo as close to the recording as possible, demonstrating that they can follow a lead player.
C. If you are using the adjudication rubric, you will be judging the performance solely on the basis of how the performance sounds. Although choice of fingerings/slide positions, quality of instrument, embouchure formation, etc. can affect sound, you are judging the sound.
D. Be sure you and your partner judge communicate during your judging by making sure the point spread is consistent. Talk to each other after each student, especially at the beginning.
E. When judging a large number of individuals, refer to your individual judge's tally sheet, in order to monitor for consistency in scoring.
F. Judges should not be judging their students. If by chance you are scheduled to judge your student please let the Audition Chairperson know ahead of time.
G. Middle School students may find their first pitch. Do not indicate whether or not it is the correct pitch.
H. Each Judge should initial any changes on the judge's sheets and make sure that the judge's tally sheet reflects the correction.
I. Adjudicators will evaluate the student's performance only on the required material. Playing extra octaves will not be credited or penalized.

Jazz Education Section Financial Guidelines

All-Region Band Auditions:

- Fees: On-time registration fees are $15.00 per student. Late registration is $30.00 per student.
- In order to host one band on the high school level, there must be at least 35 students registered to audition or a minimum of $525.00 in fees. This includes students who register but choose not to audition.
- In order to host two bands on the high school level, there must be a total of 70 students registered or a minimum of $1,050.00 in fees. This includes students who register but choose not to audition.
- In order to host one band on the middle school level, there must be at least 35 students registered to audition or a minimum of $525.00 in fees. This includes students who register but choose not to audition.
- In order to host two bands on the middle school level, there must be a total of 70 students registered or a minimum of $1,050.00 in fees. This includes students who register but choose not to audition.
- There is flexibility. For example, if you have 60 high school students registered and 30 middle school students registered, the high school registrations can only support one band and the middle school registrations do not support a band. However, you can borrow money from the high school registrations (the equivalent to 5 student registrations) to allow the middle school registrations to qualify. This would allow one high school band and one middle school band to be chosen for the clinic, if instrumentation permits.

All-Region Jazz Band Clinics

- Clinic registration is $45.00 per student.
- Clinic chairs are encouraged to solicit donations, such as from a local music company.
- Clinic chairs are encouraged to find clinicians who are sponsored by a manufacturer (Jupiter, Selmer, etc.) and whose fees may be paid in part by his/her sponsor.
- If need be to remain in the "black," Clinic chairs may negotiate with clinicians to accept reduced payment.
- If need be to remain in the "black," Clinic chairs may choose local directors to be clinicians for bands, especially the middle school band.
- Music may need to be borrowed from local schools or universities' libraries or the clinician may be asked to bring music from his/her library.

Jazz Music Performance Adjudication (MPA)

- A one day jazz festival must have at least 12 bands/combos in order to be held. A two day jazz festival must have at least 18 bands/combos in order to be held.
- Registration fee is $150.00 for any size group (big band or combo).
- MPA Chairpersons are encouraged to solicit donations, such as from a local music company.
- A region jazz MPA must not lose money. If it appears in advance that moneys collected will not pay the bills for the festival, then the festival will be canceled.
- To keep a festival from being canceled, the registered bands may elect to cover the balance (deficit) equally.
- If a festival is canceled, groups can transfer and play at festival in another region. The monies submitted must be transferred also.
- If need be to remain in the "black," festival chairs may negotiate with clinicians to accept reduced payment.