



## Handbook for Orff Schulwerk Teacher Education Courses

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*The American Orff-Schulwerk Association strongly encourages members to be positive and discreet when discussing our organization, specific courses and/or teachers and the Orff movement. The very nature of the Orff Schulwerk philosophy embodies a broad spectrum of expressions exploring different paths to arrive at artistic and educational goals. Members are encouraged to recognize and remain open to varied approaches and to celebrate both our differences and our similarities.*

The purpose of this handbook is to provide a concise compendium of the best practices of AOSA Teacher Education Courses for participants, Course Directors, and AOSA Approved Course Instructors. The practices and requirements ensure high quality AOSA Teacher Education Courses.

The AOSA Teacher Education Course program was established to prepare participants to use the materials and procedures that are a part of the Orff Schulwerk instructional model in public and private school classrooms and other educational settings. Teacher Education Courses familiarize students within the active, experience-based learning model.

There are three levels to the AOSA Teacher Education Curriculum. Each AOSA approved level course must follow the outline established in the AOSA Teacher Education Curriculum. To receive the AOSA Certificate of Completion, participants must complete all three levels.

Introduction to Orff Schulwerk, Post Level III, and other supplemental courses are outside the approved AOSA Teacher Education Curriculum and do not count toward the Certificate of Completion. A majority of the supplemental courses are designed for Post-Level III Orff Schulwerk educators. Supplemental courses will be advertised with AOSA Teacher Education Curriculum levels courses for approved course sites.

## **Section 1: Participants-Teacher Education Course Best Practices**

### Attend Teacher Education Courses in Sequential Order

It is important for the continuity of learning that participants take Teacher Education Courses in sequential order; Level I, II, III, Master Classes. The skills and curricula from each level build upon each other. Each participant needs to experience the Orff Schulwerk Teacher Education Curriculum sequentially in order for learning and mastery to occur. Teacher Education Courses may be repeated at any time, even after completing the AOSA certification process.

### Attend Only One Teacher Education Level Course per Summer

The amount of learning and assimilation of knowledge that is expected during an individual level within teacher education courses is extensive. Participants need time to process each of the new skills and concepts that have been taught. Additionally, time is needed for participants to work with their own students to gain a full understanding of how to implement these skills and concepts. Students should attend only one level per summer.

### Attend Level I as an Undergraduate only During the Senior Year of Study

A Level I course taken before the Senior year will be considered an Introductory Course and not an approved Level I. Participants need career perspective when taking Teacher Education Courses. It is important that students have an opportunity to practice what they have learned with children and in the environment of an actual classroom. Student teaching is an excellent opportunity for this to happen for pre-service teachers.

### Complete All Three Levels Within 3 - 7 Years

It is strongly recommended that participants attempt to complete teacher education courses within a 7-year span to experience continuity within the AOSA Teacher Education Curriculum. If an extended time has passed since attending an approved course, participants are encouraged to repeat a levels course.

### AOSA Digital Mentorship Program

Participants who desire additional guidance to prepare for the next level of teacher education courses or those who are ready for additional enrichment should consider applying to the AOSA Digital Mentorship Program. This program pairs experienced Orff Schulwerk teachers with teachers who have recently completed any level of teacher education courses. Mentors and mentees agree on a focus area for practice and insights. Full details and requirements can be found on [Digital Mentorship](#) page.

### AOSA Certificate of Completion

This certificate is available to all who have successfully completed an AOSA approved Level III teacher education course. The [application](#) for the certificate is located on the AOSA website. Participants in Level I and II will receive a letter or certificate from the host institution documenting attendance and participation, but should not consider themselves Orff Schulwerk certified until after the successful completion of Level III.

### Enroll in Master Classes Only After Completion of Level III

AOSA approved Master Classes are for participants who have completed Level III. Master Classes are specialized, intense, and focused high-level experiences. Participants who do not have the background knowledge from the three levels of the AOSA Teacher Education Curriculum will not benefit from the advanced ideas being presented in Master Class situations. A few supplemental courses are offered each year as well. Check the [AOSA Website](#) for information and prerequisites.

## **Section 2: Course Directors, Institutions, or Chapter Sponsors-Course Best Practices**

### AOSA Teacher Education Curriculum

Institutions, AOSA Chapters, or other entities applying for Orff Schulwerk Teacher Education Course approval must design their course(s) according to the [AOSA Teacher Education Curriculum](#). Teacher Educator daily plans should be established based on outcomes and objectives identified for each level of the Teacher Education Curriculum.

### Course Instructors

Course instructors must be on the current AOSA Approved Teacher Educator list. **All AOSA Approved Teacher Educators must be contracted when teaching in an AOSA Approved Course.** This contract should be issued by the entity - chapter, school district, non-profit, or chapter - who is fiduciarily responsible for the course. Information included in the contract should include agreement of responsibilities, pay, additional benefits, indemnification, and liability disclosures. Additionally, course instructors will complete an agreement with AOSA regarding general expectations associated with being an approved teacher educator. A sample contract is available upon request from the AOSA Professional Development Director, [education@aosa.org](mailto:education@aosa.org).

### Provide Adequate Teaching Facilities and Equipment

Each Course Director should discuss minimum teaching space requirements for ensemble, recorder and movement teaching spaces with their staff members and then convey these minimum requirements to institution contact personnel well in advance of the course's first meeting. Local equipment and instruments should be inspected before the course begins and provisions made for repair or replacement as necessary. If instruments are needed, contact the AOSA Professional Development Director for assistance in partnering with instrument manufacturers and retailers.

### Observe Appropriate Scheduling and Staffing During the Course

The Basic Orff Pedagogy, Recorder, and Movement curriculum shall be taught separately at each level. Each level must have at least two instructors. Basic Orff Pedagogy instructors may only teach one level per course. Courses offering two levels must have a minimum staff of 3 instructors. Courses running all three levels must have a minimum staff of 5 teachers.

### Class Schedule

The class schedule has a direct effect on the sense of success students feel at the end of a course. Giving students enough time to process, practice, and internalize information is critical in providing the exceptional experiences AOSA encourages in all teacher education courses.

- Levels will be a minimum of 60 contact hours not including lunch periods or break times of more than 5 minutes.
- All AOSA Approved Courses must meet for 10 days at minimum. The days do not need to be consecutive.
- Movement classes and Recorder classes will each be uninterrupted 75 minutes daily
  - Any variations from these standard procedures must be pre-approved by the Professional Development Director.
- Extra time may be added to these areas at other points in the scheduled day if desired.

\*Please note that Master Classes and Supplemental courses will vary in length and do not count toward the AOSA Certificate of Completion

### Observe Minimum Enrollment Requirements

The minimum numbers of participants required for approved Orff Schulwerk Teacher Education courses are:

Level I – 12

Level II – 8

Level III – 8

These numbers provide participants an experience more closely resembling typical classroom numbers, allow participants to hear and perform balanced choral and instrumental ensemble work, and create movement in small and large group settings.

Course directors considering canceling a course due to low enrollment should contact the AOSA Professional Development Director for assistance with possible marketing opportunities or mergers with nearby courses. The Course Director should cancel courses that will apparently not meet enrollment requirements within a reasonable amount of time before the start date. AOSA recommends this should occur a minimum of 2 weeks before the course start date. Please notify the AOSA Professional Development Director before canceling.

A course that runs any level with less than the required minimum number of participants will be considered 'Under Review' if that level is offered again the following year. If any level in the course runs for a second consecutive year under minimum enrollments, no teacher education course at the sponsoring institution will be eligible for approval for at least one year.

### AOSA Digital Mentorship Program

Course Directors may identify students who could use extra guidance to prepare them for the next level or high achieving students ready for additional enrichment. Course Directors should encourage students to apply for the AOSA Digital Mentorship Program. This program pairs experienced Orff Schulwerk teachers with teachers who have recently completed an Orff

Schulwerk levels course. Mentors and mentees agree on a focus area for practice and insights. Full details and requirements can be found on [Digital Mentorship](#) page.

#### AOSA Certificate of Completion

This certificate is available to all who have successfully completed an AOSA approved Level III teacher education course. Participants should be made aware of the official AOSA certificate available to graduates of approved Level III programs. Participants in Level I and II will receive a letter or certificate from the host institution documenting attendance and participation but should not consider themselves Orff Schulwerk certified until after the successful completion of Level III. [Sample letters of completion and participation certificates](#) are available.

#### Supply Accurate Participant Information To AOSA at Completion of Course

Course Directors must supply AOSA an accurate participant roster of each teacher education course no later than two weeks from the last class day. This roster should include participants names, email addresses, phone numbers, and physical addresses. Course Directors should inform students by the first class day that enrollment in the course serves as permission to have name and contact information submitted as course participants. AOSA does not distribute or sell this participant information. It is used solely for statistical purposes. Please notify the AOSA Professional Development Director if site policies conflict with AOSA policies.

#### Return One Evaluation Form to AOSA for Each Participant

AOSA evaluation forms for Teacher Education Courses must be submitted electronically preferably on the last day of the course but no more than two weeks after course completion. The actual number of evaluations returned to Headquarters is the sole determination of the number of students are enrolled in each Level. It is critical that each participant fill out an evaluation form. The sooner AOSA receives the electronic evaluations, the sooner feedback can be sent to Course Directors. Participants not wishing to complete an evaluation form should provide their name, course location, and check the option out box near the top of the electronic form. For ideas and assistance with how to motivate students to complete the evaluation, please contact the AOSA Professional Development Director.

#### Completing the Course Approval Application

**It is the Course Director's responsibility to complete all components of the application.** A nonrefundable \$75 application fee must be paid with each [application form](#). No course will be approved until all fees and application materials have been received at AOSA Headquarters. Course Directors will be notified regarding the status of course approval on a rolling basis as applications are submitted. Approvals are granted to courses that meet the AOSA criteria.

### **Special Considerations for Courses Run Through AOSA Local Chapters**

#### **Finances**

There should be no commingling of funds between chapter, professional development activities, and course activities. The best option to facilitate this would be to have two separate checking accounts. If annual gross income exceeds \$50,000, contact AOSA for assistance in filing annual 990 paperwork with the IRS. If a chapter consistently runs a course with more than \$50,000 in income, alternate financial recommendations will be made by AOSA Headquarters.

The Chapter Treasurer cannot be compensated for managing the finances of the course as this is in direct conflict with chapter bylaws and IRS tax code.

#### **Personnel**

Instructors must be on the current AOSA Approved Teacher Educator list for each level and content area for which they are contracted. Teacher educators cannot serve in a leadership capacity of the chapter associated with the course. AOSA will not approve a course with obvious conflicts of interest.

#### **Structure**

There needs to be an independent committee formed which is responsible for management of the course and all activities associated with the course. This committee should include one chapter board representative who has no other role within the course structure along with course personnel and 1-2 chapter members (ideally who have attended the course in the past.) Committee makes all decisions including date, location, personnel, fees, registration, etc. The chapter serves as the fiduciary agent but has no control over the operating decisions having to do with the course. AOSA will not approve a course without an acceptable management structure as outlined above.

#### **Application Checklist**

Course Applications must contain the following to ensure the course will be approved:

- Site location and address for where the course will be held
- Name of institution, chapter, or entity hosting the course
- Name and contact information for the Institution Contact Person
- Name and contact information of Financial Manager for the course
- Name and contact information for the Orff Course Director
- List of Courses being offered and the AOSA Approved Instructors for each
- The daily schedule reflecting required minimum hours for Basic Orff Pedagogy, Movement, Recorder and use of remaining contact hours
- Non-refundable application fee of \$75 has been submitted to AOSA Headquarters
- Library subscription to the Orff Echo for the institution sponsoring the course

The Application for Course Approval form is available on the AOSA Web site.

### Section 3: AOSA Teacher Educators-Course Best Practices

#### AOSA Approved Teacher Educators

Course instructors must be on the current AOSA Approved Teacher Educator list. **All AOSA Approved Teacher Educators must be contracted when teaching in an AOSA Approved Course.** This contract should be issued by the entity - chapter, school district, non-profit, or chapter - who is fiduciarily responsible for the course. Information included in the contract should include agreement of responsibilities, pay, additional benefits, indemnification, and liability disclosures. A sample contract is available upon request from the [AOSA Professional Development Director](#).

Additionally, course instructors will complete an agreement with AOSA regarding general expectations associated with being an approved teacher educator. In addition to the course-issued contract, all approved teacher educators must have appropriate documents on file with AOSA. These documents include:

- Scope and sequence and/or checklist
- Vita
- AOSA Teacher Educator Policy Agreement

Instructors must be on the current AOSA Approved Teacher Educator list for each level and content area for which they are contracted. A Teacher Educator already approved in a content area who wants to add an additional level in the same content area may submit the required vita and [Scope and Sequence documents](#). Instructors who wish to be approved in an additional content area must apply for the [AOSA Apprenticeship Program](#) for that content area.

Instructors of Level II must have taught Level I for a minimum of two years. Instructors of Level III must have taught Level II for a minimum of two years.

#### Avoid teaching in programs that do not meet AOSA requirements.

Approved Teacher Educators should not agree to teach in courses that do not meet AOSA requirements. These include enrollment minimums, participant prerequisites, minimum course hours, and quality of facilities. Teacher Educator credentialing can be revoked for working in courses that are not in compliance with AOSA policies and procedures.

#### AOSA Digital Mentorship Program

AOSA Teacher Educators who have students who could use extra guidance to prepare them for the next level or high achieving students ready for additional enrichment should be encouraged to apply for the AOSA Digital Mentorship Program. This program pairs experienced Orff Schulwerk teachers with teachers who have recently completed an Orff Schulwerk levels course. Mentors and mentees agree on a focus area for practice and insights. Full details and requirements can be found on [Digital Mentorship](#) page.

#### Teacher Educators Should Participate in Ongoing Professional Development.

Continued professional development in Orff Schulwerk and related areas is strongly encouraged. It is important for teachers to be well-versed in Orff Schulwerk by taking advantage of post Level III professional development. Opportunities for professional development are

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offered at the AOSA Professional Development Conference each year. These opportunities target specific content areas and rotate annually. Attending conference and these sessions is strongly encouraged.

### Update Vita and Other Approval Documentation Every Four Years

Teacher Educators must submit updated vita and documentation to the Professional Development Director. Forms may be located on the Professional Development page of the [AOSA website](#).