

Introduction to the Director Certification Program

The Director Certification Program is designed for front-line directors, assistant and associate directors, section leaders, and anyone else who has an interest in musical leadership! Sweet Adelines International is dedicated to the education and growth of our members and this program is a great way to add to your skill set as a musical leader.

Consider the Sweet Adelines International Mission Statement below. Education is listed **FIRST** in the set of valued opportunities we provide to members!

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MISSION STATEMENT

Elevating women singers worldwide through education, performance, and competition in barbershop harmony and a cappella music.

VISION STATEMENT

Inspiring and empowering voices to joyfully harmonize the world.

Glossary of DCP Terms

Applicant	A category of DCP member. Applicants are those who have made their interest known and paid their entry fee, but have not yet taken any evaluations or assessments.
Article	A “chapter” within a module that provides information about one aspect of the module topic. See What is the Director Certification Program?
Assessment	<p><i>(Also called a practical assessment)</i> An evaluation made either by a DCP participant’s fellow chorus members or by an authorized evaluator (such as a Master Director or Regional Education Coordinator) of skills acquired in a module. The practical assessment may be done either in person or remotely using a live video feed, or by recording.</p> <p>Assessments cover skills that are deemed necessary for full comprehension of what it takes to direct a chorus. Assessments are graded and count toward scoring.</p> <p>Not every module has an assessment, and not every participant needs to do practical assessments. See How Do I Take Tests? for more information.</p>
Category	A way to categorize members as they apply to or participate in the DCP. Members may be categorized as <i>applicants</i> or <i>participants</i> .
DCPC	Director Certification Program Coordinator; typically someone appointed by the Regional Education Coordinator to oversee the DCP in that region.
Evaluation	<i>(Also called a written evaluation or an exam)</i> A written test of knowledge acquired in a module. Evaluations are graded and count toward scoring. Evaluations can be retaken to improve scores, if so desired. See How Do I Take Tests?
Level	A way to identify achievement within the DCP. See Levels Attainable Through the Director Certification Program.
Module	A set of materials pertaining to a subject area needed for all-around education of musical leaders. See What is the Director Certification Program?
Participant	A category of DCP member. Participants are actively engaged in reviewing modules and taking evaluations (and assessments, when warranted).
Quiz	A self-test of key ideas presented in an article. Quizzes are not graded. They refer participants back to places in an article where they can obtain more information.

What is the Director Certification Program?

The DCP is a set of modules containing valuable information for directors and musical leaders on all aspects of leading a chorus. Tests assessing competency in each module area can be taken at any time. Successful completion of the module tests earns the participant a certification, and possible future achievements at various levels of chorus accomplishment.

The modules in this program cover the following skill areas.

- **Module 1: Directing Skills** - the conducting skills you'll need to lead a chorus
- **Module 2: Analytical Listening** - listening to a chorus' sound to diagnose musical problems or challenges.
- **Module 3: Organizational Knowledge and Director Resources** - understanding the organization and how to use the resources available to you
- **Module 4: Teaching and Coaching Skills** - teaching music, vocal skills, and performing skills, and bringing a coaching viewpoint to your directing
- **Module 5: Management Skills** - delegation, problem-solving, and guiding your chorus and its musical and administrative leaders
- **Module 6: Judging Categories and Competition** - the guidelines for and elements of competition, including summaries of information in the Judging Category Description Book (JCDB)
- **Module 7: Vocal Production** - the essence of singing - critical skills for musical leaders to understand
- **Module 8: Communication Skills** - everyone is different; the director must communicate with all
- **Module 9: Music Theory** - getting to know the notes on the paper; understanding chords
- **Module 10: Rehearsal Planning** - how to make rehearsal night the best night of the week, every week
- **Module 11: Performance** - what you need to know to be successful in taking music to the public

How Do I Enroll in the Director Certification Program?

To apply to the program, follow these steps:

1. Submit the DCP application form with the nonrefundable, non-transferable application fee to the Education Department at international headquarters. The application form and current fee are on the Sweet Adelines International website and are also available from the Regional Education Coordinator (ED).
2. International headquarters staff enrolls the participant in the Applicant category and establishes a file for each person.
3. Headquarters sends information to the Applicant, with a copy to the Applicant's regional Director Certification Program Coordinator (DCPC) and Education Coordinator (ED).

4. Modules can be purchased as a complete set or individually from International Sales. Applicants may begin reading the DCP modules, and may attend educational events for DCP participants. They may participate in testing whenever they are ready to do so.

What Path Should I Follow?

The good news is that you can go at your own pace and comfort level. You'll be guided by the DCP Coordinator (DCPC) in your region, who will monitor your progress.

You do not have to complete the modules in numerical order. Some participants decide to first complete the modules they already know and feel confident about. Then they take more time to dig deeper into the modules that offer new or more complex information.

- Sometimes participants start with what they currently need the most. Perhaps you have a strong musical background and can identify chords in your sleep, but now you find yourself in front of an eager chorus every Tuesday night and they're waiting for you to lead the way! If you are new to directing a chorus, then you might want to turn first to *DCP Module 10, Rehearsal Planning*.
- Assistant or associate directors may want to firm up their conducting skills by asking their front-line director to allow them to teach and direct a song in rehearsal. This will help when going through *DCP Module 1, Directing Skills*.
- Maybe you are a section leader who wants to make more of an impact with your section by providing PVIs (personal vocal instruction). The modules on *Vocal Production* (Module 7) and *Teaching and Coaching Skills* (Module 4) might be a good place to start.

Wherever you are in your directing journey, you can tailor this program to fit your needs and begin implementing the things you learn almost immediately.

If you are not a front-line director, be sure to alert your director that you are participating in this program. Their support will be important, and they'll be excited to encourage you as you continue learning!

What Do I Need to Know First?

Use the following questions to determine where your strengths and weaknesses are in terms of readiness as a director, and what modules warrant your attention first. You can also consult with your DCPC or ED.

Using a numerical rating from 1-5 (1 = low and 5 = high), please rate your level of proficiency in each of the following skill areas:

- _____ 1. Conducting - Includes ictus, hand motions, beat pattern, tempo, body posture, ad lib style, attacks and releases, eye contact, facial expressions
- _____ 2. Analytical Listening - Ability to diagnose and develop a plan to correct problems in what you hear, especially in areas of balance, word flow, vibrato, section accuracy, synchronization, resonance, and vocal production

- _____ 3. Organizational Knowledge & Director Resources - International and regional structure; committees and their duties; organizational policies and terminology
- _____ 4. Teaching & Coaching - Style of presentation; methods of teaching music; teaching and coaching vocal skills, section unity, and barbershop style
- _____ 5. Management - Selecting, training, and utilizing musical leaders; working with chapter administration; leading with vision
- _____ 6. Judging Categories & Competition - Knowledge and application of the four categories as outlined in the Judging Category Description Book; choosing competition music
- _____ 7. Vocal Production - Understanding and practical application of elements of good vocal skills, including alignment, breathing, phonation, resonance, articulation, and dynamics; knowledge about basic vocal health
- _____ 8. Communication - Application of effective communication skills with administrative leaders, musical leaders, chorus members and others
- _____ 9. Music Theory - Understanding of music notation, key signatures, time signatures, intervals, chord structures
- _____ 10. Rehearsal Planning & Implementation - Understanding of time scheduling, rehearsal pacing and variety; setting and planning for short-range and long-range goals
- _____ 11. Performance - Planning and orchestrating performances from community gigs to large theater shows; helping singers deal with stage fright and mental blocks

How Do I Take Tests?

Each *module* consists of several *articles*. Recently updated articles (2022 or later) end with an online quiz for you to test your understanding. These quizzes are not graded; they are for your self-assessment.

Older modules (before 2022) include a sample test at the end of each *module*.

A series of final *written evaluations* measure achievement in each of the skill areas covered by the DCP. All modules conclude with a written evaluation.

Some modules also require a *practical assessment*, or demonstration of the skills learned in the module. These practical assessments are available only to front-line directors, assistant directors, and associate directors.

For consistency of terminology, the final written examinations will be called “evaluations” and the real-world demonstration of skills will be called “assessments.” See the [Glossary of DCP Terms](#) earlier in this document.

- Modules 1, 4, 5, 8, and 10 include both a written evaluation and a practical assessment.
- Modules 2, 3, 6, 7, 9, and 11 include only written evaluations. There is no additional practical assessment for these modules.

Only participants classified as director/co-director or associate/assistant director may receive practical assessments. Successful outcomes in these assessments make them eligible to advance to the level of Certified Director.

Musical leaders who are not classified as assistant or associate directors do not receive practical assessments. They are therefore eligible to advance only to the level of Approved Director in the DCP.

The results of all evaluations and assessments are confidential and known only to the participant, the regional DCPC, the regional ED, and the Education Department at HQ.

Levels Attainable Through the Director Certification Program

The Director Certification Program provides the foundational skills for working toward the various levels of certification available.

DCP Level Attainable	Minimum Score Required	Additional Criteria
Approved Director	510 (60%)	Achievable for section leaders and other musical leaders who do not hold the title of assistant/associate/front-line director. Includes only written module evaluations.
Certified Director	665 (60%)	Achievable for assistant, associate, and front-line directors. Includes both written module evaluations and practical assessments.
Harmony 500 Director	Must be a Certified Director	Have directed the chorus at least 1 year; chorus scores at least 500 points in regional competition (1000 at international).
Master Director	Must be a Certified Director	Have directed the chorus at least 1 year; chorus scores at least 600 points in regional competition (1200 points at international).
Master Director 700	Must be a Certified Director	Have directed the chorus at least 1 year; chorus scores at least 700 points in regional competition (1400 points at international).

Volunteer Leader Code of Conduct

Sweet Adelines International (SA) is a worldwide women's singing organization committed to advancing the musical art form of barbershop harmony through opportunities in education, performance and competition.

As volunteer leaders of Sweet Adelines International, your conduct should exemplify conduct which accords respect and dignity to fellow members and everyone with whom you come into contact.

As an extension of Sweet Adelines International, volunteer leaders of Sweet Adelines International commit to:

1. Act with integrity and conduct themselves in a professional manner while representing Sweet Adelines International.
2. Communicate in a manner that reflects the respect and harmony promoted in our organizational Guiding Principles.
3. Treat fellow singers, guests, and those in the community with care, dignity and respect, being considerate and courteous of the opinions of other members, representatives, and staff.
4. Positively affect those around them, to share the love of harmony throughout our communities, countries, and the world.
5. Resolve issues with fairness through listening and healthy communication in an atmosphere of respect, positivity, and possibility.
6. Act in a respectful manner and avoid disparaging talk in person or participation in derogatory posts on social media that might damage the reputation of Sweet Adelines International and SA members.
7. Maintain confidentiality of all proprietary and confidential information to which you are exposed while serving as a volunteer leader.
8. Adhere to the rules and guidelines of Sweet Adelines International, including those defined in the organization's policies, bylaws, handbooks, regional handbooks, and chapter guides, as well as the Mission Statement, Vision Statement, and Guiding Principles.

Thank you for the gifts of your time and talents as a leader of this organization. Your efforts as an ambassador of Sweet Adelines International are priceless as we strive to Harmonize the World.