

D R A F T

NASPAA ACCREDITATION:

SELF-STUDY REPORT INSTRUCTIONS

To accompany the Proposed Accreditation Standards 2009

NASPAA SELF-STUDY REPORT: INTRODUCTION

[Standards appear in **bold** for reference in preparing the Self-Study Report; they do not need to be repeated in the Self-Study Report.]

Preamble:

The National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration accredits educational programs leading to masters degrees in public affairs, administration, and policy. This includes programs in public management, not-for-profit management, and community and government relations activities in private organizations, among others. It applies to programs and degrees.

The objective of the accreditation program is to foster high standards for professional education in public affairs, administration, and policy, whether students pursue careers in government, business, or not-for-profit organizations. It does so by requiring programs to achieve and maintain a level of quality that merits accreditation. Accreditation is a means of providing formal recognition that a program measures up to the profession's high educational standards and is therefore qualified to provide professional education for leadership in public affairs, administration, and policy.

The accreditation program also seeks to:

- Promote universal values in public service, broadly defined, regardless of the national origin of the program;
- Provide assurances to prospective students, employers, and the public-at-large regarding the basic quality of accredited programs;
- Provide schools with an incentive for careful and thorough self-examination, and with constructive recommendations for improvement;
- Provide schools with information on trends and innovations in public affairs, administration, and policy education, using knowledge gained through the ongoing accreditation review process;
- Assist public affairs, administration, and policy faculty and administrators in achieving institutional support for their programs;
- Provide a vehicle for engaging practitioners and academicians in joint and ongoing deliberations regarding the roles, content, and effectiveness of public affairs, administration, and policy education;

Accreditation is a means of strengthening education in public affairs, administration, and policy. To that end, NASPAA approves and publishes guidelines on topics such as internships, not-for-profit management, and health management. Guidelines are not standards to be met; they are indicators of quality and best practices. Programs should describe how they address them. In the same sense, NASPAA encourages educational experimentation and innovation, as well as institutional freedom and autonomy. A program applying for accreditation will be evaluated in light of both accreditation standards and each program's stated mission, objectives, and measured achievement on them. Finally, NASPAA accreditation is meant to be inclusive. For example, the standards are designed

to allow programs that differ with respect to their nation of origin and delivery modality (including online versus onsite), as well as mission and pedagogy, to become accredited.

The logic by which the accreditation standards are organized presumes that effective management of a professional degree program requires five elements:

1. A mission focused on public affairs, policy and administration, defined in terms of distinct, observable, and measurable objectives, including student learning outcomes, and a strategy for achieving it (Standard 1)
2. A governance system with sufficient integrity and authority to pursue the mission (Standard 2)
3. Operating policies and procedures, including supporting resources, to implement the strategy (Standards 3-6)
4. Human resources, both faculty and staff, of sufficient number and qualification to govern and operate the program (Standard 7)
5. A system for monitoring and assessing progress and sustaining continuous improvement toward the objectives associated with the mission. (All Standards)

Absent any one of these elements, a degree program cannot succeed. In their self-study reports, programs must demonstrate that they have all five.

Preconditions for Accreditation Review

Programs applying for accreditation review must demonstrate in their Self-study Reports that they meet three preconditions. Because NASPAA wants to promote innovation and experimentation in education for public affairs, administration, and policy, programs that do not meet the preconditions in a strictly literal sense but which meet the spirit of these provisions may petition for special consideration. Such petitions and Self-Study Reports must provide evidence that the program meets the spirit of the preconditions.

1. Program Eligibility

Because an accreditation review is a program evaluation, eligibility establishes that the program is qualified for and capable of being evaluated. To be eligible for NASPAA-accreditation, programs should be housed within institutions that grant degrees in public affairs, administration, and policy. When available, the institution should have appropriate governmental authorization to grant degrees, which mean the degrees will be recognized as valid in the program's community. The primary objective of the degree program should be professional education. Finally, the program should have been operating and generating sufficient information about its operations and outcomes to support an evaluation.

2. Length of Program

The normal expectation for students studying for professional degrees in public affairs, administration, and policy is equivalent to 36 to 48 credit hours of study. The intentions of this pre-condition are to ensure significant interaction with other students and with faculty, hands on collaborative work, socialization into the norms and aspirations of the profession, and observations by faculty of students' interpersonal and communication skills. Programs departing from campus-centered education by offering distance learning, international exchanges, or innovative delivery systems must demonstrate that the intentions of this guideline are being achieved and that such programs are under the supervision of fully qualified faculty. This determination may include, but is not limited to, evidence of faculty of record, and communications between faculty and students.

Special Condition: Fast-tracking. Programs that combine undergraduate education with a graduate degree in public affairs, administration, and policy in a total of less than six academic years or the equivalent are not precluded from accreditation so long as they meet the criteria of an accredited graduate degree.

Special Condition: Dual Degrees. Programs may allow a degree in public affairs, administration, and policy to be earned simultaneously with a degree in another field in less time than required to earn each degree separately. All criteria of an accredited, professional, graduate degree in public affairs, administration, and policy must be met and the electives allowed to meet requirements for the other degree must be appropriate as electives for a degree in public affairs, administration, and policy.

3. Primary Focus

The degree program's primary focus shall be that of preparing students to become leaders in the professions of public affairs, administration, and policy. Only master's degree programs are eligible for accreditation. Specifically excluded are: (1) Ph.D. programs; (2) undergraduate programs; (3) programs that teach public affairs, administration, and policy as subjects of interest, rather than as fields of professional practice; (4) political science degree programs; (5) planning degree programs; and (6) programs with a primary mission other than that of educating professionals in public affairs, administration, and policy (for example, programs in which public affairs, administration, and policy are majors or specializations available to students pursuing a degree in a related field).

Basis for Judgment/Documentation: NASPAA anticipates that programs will have been in operation for at least four years to provide sufficient data on which to base a program evaluation.

Clarifying example:

<p>Program A in the United States is part of an institution accredited by a regional authority that, in turn, has been accredited by CHEA. The program awarded its first MPA in 2001 and focuses on in-service students from local, state, and federal agencies in its immediate geographic environment.</p>
--

Standard 1. Managing the Program Strategically

1.1 Mission Statement: The Program will have a statement of mission that guides performance expectations and their evaluation, including

- **its purpose and core values, given the program's particular emphasis on public affairs, administration, and policy**
- **the population of students, employers, and professionals the Program intends to serve, and**
- **the contributions it intends to produce to advance the knowledge, research and practice of public affairs, administration, and policy.**

1.2 Performance Expectations: The Program will establish observable program goals, objectives and outcomes, including expectations for student learning, consistent with its mission.

1.3 Program Evaluation: The Program will collect, apply and report information about its performance and its operations to guide the evolution of the Program's mission and the Program's design and continuous improvement with respect to standards two through seven.

Rationale:

Accreditation standards reflect NASPAA's commitment to support programs for professional education that 1) commit to the values of public affairs, policy and administration and model them in their operations; 2) direct their resources toward quantitative and qualitative outcomes; and 3) continuously improve, which includes responding to and impacting their communities through ongoing program evaluation. The commitment to the values of public affairs, administration, and policy distinguishes NASPAA-accredited programs from other degree programs. The expectation that the Program will direct resources toward observable and measurable outcomes models NASPAA's commitment to transparency and accountability. The expectation of evolution of mission and continuous improvement reflects NASPAA's commitment to public values and the goals of public policy. The expectation of responsiveness reflects NASPAA's commitment to participatory processes in civic affairs. In this way, NASPAA's accreditation process promotes public values as the heart of the discipline.

These standards verify that the Program focuses its resources and efforts toward a defined mission. Its mission statement should assist the Program's decision-makers, students, and other constituents to understand the Program and its operations. Decision-makers should be able to demonstrate that they use the mission statement to help them set priorities and align resources with their goals.

So long as their activities are consistent with their mission, programs have latitude to define their performance goals, measures of outcomes, and improvements. Whatever the Program's goals and measures, they must be stated in terms that are sufficiently clear and concrete for the Program to use in assessing the program and for outside parties, such as COPRA, to use in assuring that the Program manages itself strategically. The mission statement brings coherence to the Program's activities.

Self-Study: In preparing its self-study report (SSR), the Program should:

- provide its mission statement
- describe how the mission statement influences decision making and connects participants actions, such as how the Program identified its mission-based performance outcomes
- describe the processes used to develop the mission statement, including the role of stakeholders such as students, graduates, and employers.
- describe how and to whom the mission statement is disseminated
- describe its planning processes, including resources available to conduct outcome assessments
- explain how it collects information about student performance and placement
- explain how it defines and collects information about faculty impact
- describe ongoing assessment processes and how the results of the assessments are incorporated into program operations to improve student learning, faculty productivity, and graduates' careers
- describe the connections between the mission statement and the public environment within which the Program operates.

Documentation:

Standard 1 asks the Program to describe its processes for managing the program in a strategic manner, beginning with processes for generating the mission statement; through processes for specifying specific mission-related goals—whether student learning outcomes or target market penetration and support resources such as program inputs; to processes for collecting and assessing information to improve its performance. The intent is neither to generate a bureaucracy of planning nor to induce a Program to engage in strategic management for the sake of achieving accreditation. The intent is to capture and reflect good management practice.

Strategic management activities should generate documents and data that are valuable to the Program and to the profession. All processes for defining its mission and strategy, and all processes for collecting and assessing information to evaluate progress toward achieving the program's objectives, should be described in this section. Analysis of information generated by these processes that explain changes in the program's mission and strategy should be reported in this section. Analysis of information generated by these processes for the purpose of assessing and improving the program's performance with respect to serving students, student learning, and faculty performance should appear in sections pertaining to Standards 5-7. Programs are

encouraged to use logic models to summarize and interrelate these aspects of the assessment process. In sum, the processes for collecting the data relevant to all standards should be described in section 1, but the analysis and resulting actions should appear in relevant sections for standards describing operations.

Basis for Judgment: The bases for judgment include:

- The mission statement endorsed by the Program guides its activities.
- The Program’s mission fits with its degree title (i.e., MPA, MPP, etc.)
- The mission statement reflects values of public affairs, administration, and policy
- The Program’s mission and activities bear a clear and compelling relationship to well-defined community of professionals outside of the University.

Programs may vary in the values they emphasize and their means of addressing them but each should document how it supports and strengthens the commitment of its students, faculty, and alumni to public affairs, administration, and policy.

Programs may have different approaches to achieving excellence in education for the public sector. Deviations from the standards can result from innovations or cultural differences that the standards do not anticipate. They must be justified in light of a program's mission and success in fulfilling it. In arriving at an overall evaluation, COPRA expects substantial but not rigid conformance with the standards.

Programs that follow guidelines issued by NASPAA to help them design their curricula, such as the guidelines on internships and not-for-profit curricula, are likely to be in compliance with related standards. However, the accreditation standards are determinative. The guidelines represent “best practices” as of the date of their issuance. Programs should evaluate their curricula in terms of their missions and objectives.

Clarifying Examples:

Program A has established as a program goal to become a primary provider of public policy analysts for state and federal agencies operating in its region. It defines its region in geographic terms. It assesses its success by tracking the placements of its graduates and compares this to the placements of competing programs. It creates an advisory board of training and development managers at its target government agencies to help identify agency needs. It describes its efforts to recruit in-service students who are policy analysts looking to secure graduate level education.

Program B has established as a program goal that student learning outcomes will include a set of competencies associated with its mission and describes its process for measuring their performance, as well as its efforts to continuously improve student success. Its assessment methods and processes:

- *Facilitate longitudinal comparisons of learning outcomes.*
- *Use state of the art learning outcomes assessment practices.*
- *Provide program-level as well as course-specific outcomes assessment of required competencies.*
- *Provide opportunities for students to demonstrate mastery of relevant competencies in applied, experiential settings that, at a minimum, parallel the challenges of working in the public sector.*

The program describes an annual survey of agency supervisors who have employed the prior year's graduates to determine the extent to which the recent graduates have demonstrated knowledge of its required competencies; pre- and post-program analyses to document the value the Program adds, and to measure trends in outcomes; and evaluations of student work in capstone courses, theses, and in integrative comprehensive written and oral exams. Reports of survey results, pre-and post-test analyses, comparisons, and resulting program improvements appear in its SSR under Standard 6.

Standard 2. Matching Governance with the Mission

- 2.1 Administrative Capacity: The Program will have an administrative infrastructure appropriate for its mission, goals and objectives in all delivery modalities employed.**
- 2.2 Faculty Governance: An adequate faculty nucleus—five (5) full-time faculty members or their equivalent—will exercise substantial determining influence for the governance and implementation of the Program.**

Rationale:

To pursue its mission an accredited program should have a transparent, identifiable, and effective governance system. Governance includes, but is not limited to: making and implementing recommendations regarding admission of students; advising students; specifying public service-competencies, broadly defined, and curriculum; evaluating student performance and awarding degrees; and participating in defining and assuring faculty performance, collectively and individually, both full- and part-time. The governance arrangement, including administrative leadership, should ensure the integrity of the Program. Because program faculty members have deep knowledge of their program and a commitment to participatory processes, they should play a significant role in the governance and execution of the program.

Self-Study: In preparing its SSR, the program should

- provide an organizational chart of the institution showing the relationship of the program and its administrator to the department, school, college, and central administration of the institution
- supply information administrative officials of the institution and the program administrator regarding the organization of the institution; and policies and procedures governing budgetary practices, faculty matters (searches, appointment, promotion, tenure, and salary adjustments), curriculum changes, and student admissions
- specify administrative responsibilities of program staff
- specify responsibilities of faculty committees
- describe the program's previous success in meeting accreditation criteria previously
- provide internal reports on administrative evaluations, student organizations, and general matters of governance
- provide minutes of faculty meetings, and minutes and reports of the program's committees (and/or those of the college and institution)
- supply written reports and documents such as faculty and student manuals, publications of the student organization, and reports to alumni
- summarize the record of tenure and promotion of faculty.

Basis for Judgment:

- The Program's infrastructure fits its activities, from onsite to online learning, through research, to executive education
- The normal expectation is for the program to have an identifiable director who provides an appropriate focus of attention, direction and accountability.
- The faculty nucleus, which is identifiable to parties outside of the program, includes a minimum of five (5) full-time faculty who conduct the teaching, research and service responsibilities entailed in the Program's mission. Fewer than five might be justified if a program can clearly demonstrate the capacity of the nucleus to teach; advise; engage in public affairs, administration, and policy scholarship and service; expose students to a variety of perspectives; and to govern student admissions, plan curriculum and otherwise administer the program to promote student and faculty success. The sufficiency of the faculty nucleus beyond five depends upon the requirements of the program's mission, its size, curriculum design and delivery formats, and student success.
- The normal expectation is for program faculty to participate in recruiting, promoting, and awarding tenure to their colleagues, as well as to participate in making other policies related to the design and delivery of the program. Participation is broadly defined. For example, it could mean participation on faculty search, promotion, or tenure committees. Deviations from the normal expectation may be justified on the basis of the Program's mission.

Clarifying Example for Standard 2.1:

Program A lists a full-time department chair with reduced teaching load in exchange for administrative responsibilities, two full-time faculty with teaching loads primarily in undergraduate courses, and eight adjunct faculty, all practitioners with appropriate terminal degrees. Because it lacks five full-time faculty, the burden is on the program to demonstrate that it has adequate faculty resources.

Program B is not in compliance with Standard 2.1 because no administrator is assigned responsibility for the performance of the MPA program; admissions, counseling, graduation and personnel decisions are made without input from the nucleus faculty.

Clarifying example for Standard 2.2:

In Program A, a designated administrator is accountable for the performance program; nucleus faculty exerts substantial determining influence on the content of the curriculum and has input into admissions, counseling, graduation, and personnel decisions.

Standard 3 Matching Resources with the Mission

3.1 Resource Adequacy: The Program will have sufficient funds, physical facilities, and other resources to pursue its mission, objectives, and continuous improvement.

Rationale: An accredited program should have the resources required to pursue its mission and to continue to improve.

Self-Study: In preparing its SSR, the Program should:

- document its budget and budget trends
- outline library and/or access to information resources;
- explain how its information technology is appropriate for professional-level education and research
- explain how its classroom and other learning spaces, as well a physical facilities for students faculty and staff, are appropriate to the method of program delivery.
- explain the teaching load policies and demonstrate how they are consistent with the research and community service missions of the Program.

Basis for Judgment:

- Program analysis of the costs and resources required for initiatives associated with its mission

Standard 4. Matching Communications with the Mission

4.1 Communications: The Program will provide appropriate and current information about its mission, policies, practices, and accomplishments—including student learning outcomes--sufficient to inform decisions by its stakeholders such as prospective and current students; faculty; employers of current students and graduates; university administrators; alumni; and accrediting agencies.

Rationale:

When communicating with its stakeholders, the Program should be transparent, accountable, and truthful. NASPAA holds accredited programs accountable for meeting the expectations the profession holds for accountability in public affairs, administration, and policy. The Program should understand and provide the information required to inform its stakeholders about decisions they are making with respect to the Program, for example:

- Students: decisions about whether to apply and enroll
- Staff and Faculty: decisions about whether to accept and continue employment
- Employers: decisions about whether to sponsor internships or hire a graduate
- Administrators: decisions about whether to approve faculty lines and provide funding for the Program
- Alumni: decisions about whether and how to interact with the Program following graduation

Information about the Program's capacity and performance should not be kept confidential absent a compelling reason, such as student and faculty privacy laws and regulations.

Self-Study: In preparing its SSR, the Program should:

- describe the information disseminated to the public about its mission and operations and the processes used to disseminate it
- provide its admissions policies and demonstrate adherence to them
- provide information regarding its career services policies, demonstrate adherence to them, and report on their outcomes

Basis for Judgment:

The Program should provide evidence that communications with its stakeholders demonstrates accountability, transparency, and ethical practice in the following ways:

- The courses, specializations, and services the Program offers are consistent with the claims it makes, such as in its literature, emails, and webpage, and with its mission.
- The Program publicizes its admissions policies. Goals, policy, and standards, including academic prerequisites, are clearly and publicly stated. Admissions policies should specify differences for pre-service, in-service, and other categories of students and reflect specific concern for diversity.
- The Program describes how it assesses competencies and how well students perform on those measures.
- The Program reports on the placement and career progress of its graduates and the qualifications and accomplishments of its faculty.
- The Program explains to prospective students the cost of attendance (tuition and fees) and ethically communicates information regarding opportunities for financial assistance.

Clarifying Examples:

Program A maintains accessible electronic/print materials with current information; faculty meeting minutes taken; administrative files are complete; record of student internships, graduate placements, and alumni career progress not older than two years and summarized in electronic/ print distribution

Program B is not in compliance because electronic/print materials do not reflect information prior to appointment of new faculty and revision of the curriculum; faculty meeting minutes not taken; record of administrative decisions are incomplete; no record or record older than five years of student internships, graduate placements or alumni career progress.

Standard 5 Matching Operations with the Mission: Serving Students

- 5.1 Student Recruitment: The Program will have student recruitment practices appropriate for its mission.**
- 5.2 Student Admissions: The Program will have and apply well-defined admission criteria appropriate for its mission.**
- 5.3 Support for Students: The Program will ensure the availability of support services, such as curriculum advising, career counseling, and placement assistance to enable students to progress in careers in public affairs, administration, and policy.**
- 5.4 Student Diversity: The Program will demonstrate that it promotes diversity and a climate of inclusiveness through its recruitment and admissions practices and student support services.**

Rationale:

The outcomes of student recruiting, admissions, and student services should be consistent with the Program's mission. Admitted students should show good potential for success in professional graduate study in public affairs, administration, and policy. The recruitment and service processes should be transparent, accountable, ethical, equitable, diverse, and participatory. A program should encourage diversity in its student body to help prepare students for the workplace of the 21st Century.

Self-Study: In preparing its SSR, the Program should:

- demonstrate adherence to its admissions policies
- explain how the characteristics of the current student body result from applying the admissions policies and serve the Program's mission
- describe support systems for student advising and career counseling
- document academic standards and retention practices
- describe the categories of admissions, e.g., provisional or conditional admissions, and means of monitoring and supporting student success
- describe the means by which the program provides a supportive educational climate for a diverse student population

Basis for Judgment:

- The program follows its admissions policies, which should be based on a combination of indicators appropriate to its mission.
- Admissions policies produce a student body that supports achievement of the program's mission.
- The program implements minimum thresholds for graduate admission and clearly defines requirements for program prerequisites. A baccalaureate degree from an accredited institution is required of all students entering an accredited Masters Program; where a program has a combined Bachelors/Masters degree, it specifies requirements appropriate for the success of Bachelors students engaging in graduate work.
- The Program provides services that help students achieve their educational and career objectives.
- The Program's retention policies produce the quality of graduates consistent with its mission

Clarifying Examples:

The admissions criteria established by Program A include performance on standardized examinations, such as GRE and TOEFL, above a minimum threshold. This is consistent with its mission, which aspires to excel in public affairs, administration, and policy education by attracting students with high academic qualifications through a competitive admissions process. The program documents performance on the examinations and explains deviations from the criteria in its admission decisions.

Program B's mission emphasizes urban affairs. It recruits a significant percentage of its students from Asia. It documents that these students have the preparation for and career interests in urban affairs.

Program C's mission is to serve international public affairs organizations, including NGO's. Its typical student, however, is mid-career, in-service, and in local government. The burden falls on the program to explain how its recruitment activities support its mission.

Advising and counseling in Program D is provided only by faculty members who are not members of the nucleus faculty and who have neither recent experience in the profession nor relationships with employers served by the program. The burden falls on the Program to demonstrate how its student support services are in compliance with the standard.

Standard 6 Matching Operations with the Mission: Student Learning

6.1 Universal Required Competencies: As the basis for its curriculum, the Program will adopt a set of required competencies related to its mission and public service values. The required competencies will include five domains: the ability

- **to lead and manage in public governance;**
- **to participate in and contribute to the policy process**
- **to analyze, synthesize, think critically, solve problems and make decisions;**
- **to incorporate into decisions considerations of ethics, fiscal and environmental sustainability, and social equity;**
- **to communicate and interact productively with a diverse and changing workforce and citizenry.**

- 6.2 Mission-specific Required Competencies: The Program will identify core competencies in other domains that are necessary and appropriate to implement its mission.**
- 6.3 Mission-specific Elective Competencies: The program will define its objectives and competencies for optional concentrations and specializations.**
- 6.4 Professional Competency: The Program will ensure that students gain an understanding of and interact with practitioners across the broad range of public affairs, administration, and policy professions and sectors.**

Rationale:

An accredited program should implement and be accountable for delivering its distinctive, public mission through the course of study and learning outcomes it expects its graduates to attain. The curriculum should demonstrate consistency and coherence in meeting the program’s mission. While an accredited degree program must meet basic minimal performance criteria, NASPAA recognizes that programs may have different profiles with varying emphases. The program being reviewed should demonstrate how its curricular content matches the profile emphasized in its overall mission. Whatever competencies the program designs, the learning outcomes should reflect ethical behavior, social equity, and a long-term perspective on fiscal and environmental impacts.

Graduate competencies equip the student to demonstrate knowledge and understanding that is founded upon, extends and enhances that typically associated with Bachelor's level, and provides a basis or opportunity for originality in developing and applying ideas. Students should be able to apply their knowledge, understanding and problem solving abilities in new or unfamiliar environments within broader or multidisciplinary contexts related to public affairs, administration, and policy. They have the ability to integrate knowledge and handle complexity. For example, they can formulate judgments with incomplete information, including reflection upon social and ethical responsibilities linked to the application of their knowledge and judgments.

The following are illustrative examples, not necessarily required elements of each domain. A Program can include other competencies within each of the domains to meet NASPAA’s requirement of universal competencies. The emphasis that a particular program places on each of the domains of universal competencies should be consistent with its mission. A public affairs program might put greater emphasis on the domain, “managing public organization” than on “participating in and influencing the policy process;” the latter might be more the emphasis of a public policy program.

Examples of competencies in the required domain of managing public governance:

- Account for the organizational environment both internal and external, including culture, politics and institutional setting
- Manage projects
- Understand the relationships between public policy, whether proposed or enacted, and leadership and management in implementation
- Lead, manage, and serve a diverse workplace and citizenry
- Lead and manage people effectively, whether volunteers or compensated, fostering team building, commitment, creativity, and performance
- Apply public management models and organization theory
- Resolve conflict and negotiate
- Manage information and networks
- Manage contracts and public-private partnerships

Examples of competencies in the required domain of participating in and contributing to the policy process:

- Describe and work within the institutional, structural, and political contexts of policy making;
- Describe and execute the policymaking process, including defining the problem, setting the agenda, formulate policy, implement policy, and evaluate policy
- Recognize the social construction of problems
- Incorporate interest groups, executive-legislative relationships, judicial decision-making, and the media in the policy process

Examples of competencies in the required domain of analyzing, synthesizing, thinking critically, solving problems and making decisions:

- Employ analytical tools for collecting, analyzing, presenting, and interpreting data, including appropriate statistical concepts and techniques
- Understand and apply theories of decision-making and models
- Be able to prepare a budget reflecting policy priorities
- Identify and employ alternative sources of funding, including grants, taxes, and fees
- Articulate and apply methods for measuring and improving human performance
- Integrate the values of public service, broadly defined, in decision making
- Plan strategy and apply techniques for program evaluation and forecasting.
- Demonstrate through integrative experiences the ability to synthesize and apply knowledge, skills and abilities covered throughout the program of study
- Understand and apply the legal context of public affairs, administration, and policy

Examples of competencies in the required domain of incorporating into decisions considerations of ethics, fiscal and environmental sustainability, and social equity:

- Be ethically responsible when conducting research and making decisions
- Understand and apply ethics appropriate to public affairs, administration, and policy

- Be able to distinguish short- from long-term fiscal consequences of program and policy decisions
- Be able to identify the short- and long-term impacts of program and policy decisions on the physical environment
- Understand and apply concepts of social equity to public affairs, administration, and policy
- Behave ethically and with integrity: Tells the truth, keeps confidences, admits mistakes, and does not misrepresent themselves, their goals or the facts for personal advantage. Behaves in a fair and ethical manner toward others.

Examples of competencies in the required domain of communicating and interacting productively—face-to-face and electronically—with a diverse and changing workforce and citizenry (these are cross cutting skills as they are relevant for all the above mentioned competencies):

- Demonstrate self-knowledge: awareness of one’s own stylistic preferences for relating to others, communicating with others, making decisions, managing yourself in groups, and the impact that this has on relationships and your ability to influence others.
- Evidence sensitivity and responsiveness to beliefs and behaviors associated with differences among people because of their ethnicity, nationality, race, gender, physical characteristics, religion, age, etc.
- Demonstrate flexibility: adapts behavior and work methods to differences (whether they are differences in thought, communication style, perspective, age, interests, fairness or some other variable); to new information, to changing conditions and to unexpected obstacles.
- Negotiate: Discerns the interests and values of others; surfaces assumptions; secures agreement on ground rules and tolerable outcomes; gains cooperation of others to accomplish goals.
- Facilitate: Actively and effectively elicits information, views, input, suggestions, and involvement of others in pursuit of common goals; builds actionable consensus.
- Relate to all kinds of people and develop appropriate rapport that leads to constructive and effective relationships; finds common ground with a wide range of stakeholders.
- Work productively in teams: Interacts effectively in a team, demonstrating composure, professionalism and effective working relationships, including understanding others’ priorities, needs and concerns and sharing information, expertise and resources.
- Communicate effectively in writing: Prepares clear, concise and well-organized written materials tailored to the audience’s level of expertise and needs.
- Communicate effectively in speech: Presents oral information accurately, clearly, concisely and persuasively tailored to audience’s level of expertise and needs.

Self-Study:

Since programs should be able to serve student and public sector stakeholders with different perspectives, the program should describe how it prepares students to work in ideologically

diverse political environments.

For elective competencies, concentrations, and specializations, the Program should provide the rationale for the objectives in terms of the Program's mission, explaining how the curriculum is designed to accomplish these objectives. The statement of objectives should include the main categories of students to be served (e.g., pre-service, in-service, full-time, part-time). If a program advertises its ability to provide preparation for a specialization or concentration in its catalog, bulletin, brochure, and/or posters, the Program should provide evidence that key courses in the specialization or concentration are offered on a regular basis by qualified faculty. If specialization or concentration courses substitute for core curriculum components, the Program should explain and justify. Programs should describe how they address any area guidelines approved and published by NASPAA for optional competencies, concentrations, and specializations.

In preparing its SSR, a Program should:

- explain how the educational elements of the degree program address the program's mission and achieve expected competencies
- provide general measures of achievement such as cumulative grade point averages of graduating students, the number of graduates, and the percent of entry class graduating
- provide specific indicators of competencies achieved through student papers and reports; problem solving exercises and project documentation; independent study reports, final studio or workshop reports; internship placement documentation, comprehensive exam scores, and theses
- summarize information received through graduate exit interviews, alumni and other survey reports, and student and faculty (peer) evaluations of learning activity, content, and pedagogy
- summarize faculty or student awards from the university, outside professional organizations such as NASPAA and ASPA; individual alumni accomplishments; employer feedback on employment of recent graduates; student success in competitive internship programs.
- provide copies of its degree program course descriptions, syllabi and other descriptions of educational content and activity.

Assessment mechanisms should require students to draw upon, apply and synthesize knowledge and skills covered throughout the program of study. To document that students have mastered relevant competencies in applied, experiential settings, the Program can measure the extent to which graduates of the program are employed or in an internship, in public sector work or are actively contributing to public sector research or mission accomplishment. Where students are

not mastering designated competencies, the program should describe how it is improving its processes to assure that they will.¹

Practitioners make unique contributions to the educational program as role models and as individuals who convey lessons from experience in public affairs, administration, and policy. Opportunities for students to gain an understanding of and interact with practitioners across the broad range of professions and sectors associated with public affairs, administration, and policy may include client-based, field projects within regular courses; internships; instructors from the profession; and guest speakers. Therefore, the Program should document effective working relationships with public-service-related employers and its efforts to integrate the field of practice into the curriculum and career guidance.

Course titles need not correspond one-to one to the four domains or to the competencies. However, the Program should document how curricular (e.g., courses) and co-curricular activities align with the domains and competencies, including current developments in the profession (see illustrative table below). The presentation should explain the relationships among the courses in terms of the overall achievement of the Program's mission. The Program should document improvements in the curriculum that follow from assessments of learning and responses to changes in the Program's environment.

¹ Examples of how to measure student competencies can be found in the NASPAA publication, *A Guide to Assessing MPA Students*.

Illustrative Table:

	Competencies											
Activity	Management		Policy Process		Decision-making		Ethics, sustainability equity		Communication		Mission-specific	
	M 1	M 2	PP 1	PP 2	CT 1	CT 2	EES 1	EES 2	C1	C2	MS 1	MS 2
Curricular												
Course 1												
Course 2												
Course 3												
Course 4												
Internship												
Co-curricular												
Site visits												
ASPA												

Basis for Judgment:

- The program requires the universal competencies of public affairs, policy and administration and demonstrates that students have learned them.
- The program identifies competencies unique to its mission and demonstrates that students have learned them in required and elective coursework
- In areas of specialization and concentration where professional associations have defined guidelines for curriculum for masters programs and where the NASPAA Executive Council has approved the guidelines, programs claiming to offer the areas publicly indicate the extent and means by which they address the guidelines

- The program engages practitioners delivering its curriculum

Clarifying example:

Program A’s mission is to educate managers for state and local government. Its learning outcomes include required, mission-specific competencies such as 1) being able to integrate state administrative rules into designing and delivering a local government program; and 2) being able to prepare memoranda describing the translation of state legislation into administrative rules. In contrast, Program B’s mission is to educate managers for international governmental and nongovernmental organizations. Its learning outcomes include required, mission-specific competencies such as 1) being able to translate international treaty obligations into proposed programs for individual nations; and 2) accommodating program operations to local customs and mores. Program C has specified competencies in fewer than four domains; competencies do not reflect Program mission or public sector values; ethical behavior and environmental sustainability are not integrated into required competencies.

Standard 7 Matching Operations with the Mission: Faculty Performance

- 7.1 Faculty Qualifications: The Program's faculty will be academically or professionally qualified to pursue the Program’s mission.**
- 7.2 Faculty Diversity: The Program will foster a climate supporting diversity in the recruitment and retention of faculty.**
- 7.3 Research, Scholarship and Service: Program faculty members will produce scholarship and engage in professional and community service activities outside of the university appropriate to the program's mission, stage of their careers, and the expectations of their university.**

Rationale:

Students should have the opportunity to receive instruction from properly qualified faculty. Faculty members should form a self-sustaining community of scholars who pursue intellectual and professional and community service agendas consistent with the Program’s mission. Program faculty should engage in the scholarship of public affairs, administration, and policy because it leads to teaching and mentoring of students in cutting-edge methods and applications, it advances the profession, and it impacts the community. They should engage in community and professional service related to public affairs, administration, and policy because it promotes their personal accountability and commitment to the values they are expected to model and provides opportunities for them to connect theory and practice, to recruit students and to place graduates.

Self-Study: In preparing its SSR, the Program should:

- provide personnel information for full- and part-time faculty, explaining how they advance the program's mission, including disciplinary diversity, professional experience, and awards and distinctions that relate to coverage of required competencies.
- chart major curriculum areas with an indication of the faculty members responsible for teaching and research in each of the areas
- summarize faculty workload reports, to ascertain student/faculty ratio and class size, courses taught in the last two years, and student advising, research, and administrative assignments of the faculty
- describe the role of part-time instructors and guest lecturers in fulfilling the commitment to diversity with respect to gender, age, ethnicity, physical limitations, etc.
- provide a diversity plan, including evidence of good practice in recruitment, that describes practices designed to help the program achieve inclusiveness with its legal and institutional environment.
- document the methods used to assess the quality of instruction and the alignment between instruction and the Program's mission and defined competencies.
- explain how program and institutional policies governing the research and creative activities of the faculty support the Program's mission
- summarize annual reports and related documents listing the faculty's research and scholarly contributions—including the external grants generated, student involvement, and sources of funding for the past three years—related to each faculty member's area of teaching
- demonstrate how the faculty's research, scholarly activities, and community services have impacted public affairs, administration, and policy
- list faculty awards and prizes for outstanding research and publications
- list faculty publications, reports, and conference presentations
- identify the faculty serving on chapter and national committees of relevant national professional organizations
- provide copies of program and institutional policies governing public and professional service, as well as continuing education activities, of the faculty
- supply annual reports and related documents listing the faculty's public and professional service contributions for the past three years
- provide reports indicating faculty awards and prizes for outstanding public and professional service contributions

Basis for Judgment:

- Faculty who teach in accredited programs must be academically or professionally qualified.
- NASPAA accepts as prima facie evidence that a Program's faculty meet this standard if at least 75% are academically qualified to pursue the Program's mission by virtue of 1) their holding earned doctorates or equivalent terminal professional degrees in their areas of teaching and 2) their remaining current in their teaching areas. The primary evidence for demonstrating faculty currency includes syllabi with the current literature, knowledge, and techniques appropriate for the class. Supplemental evidence includes publications in peer-reviewed journals, presentations at academic, professional, or teaching conferences, and/or engaging in professional and community service in the areas of the instructor's

teaching responsibilities. The burden is on the Program to document the academic qualifications of its faculty members. If a program believes it can provide a quality educational experience for students and pursue its mission without meeting the 75% threshold, it may make its case in terms of demonstrable results.

- A faculty member can be professionally qualified by virtue of having a record of outstanding professional experience directly relevant to the faculty member's Program responsibilities. In general, a professionally qualified faculty member will have a terminal degree in his or her area of responsibility. The burden is on the Program to document the professional qualifications of its faculty members.
- NASPAA accepts as prima facie evidence that students are being taught by qualified faculty who are engaged in the Program if at least 50 percent of the student credit hours offered in the curriculum and at least 50 percent of the student credit hours in courses delivering required competencies are taught by academically qualified faculty members at the institution. If a program believes it can provide a quality educational experience for students and pursue its mission without meeting the 50% threshold, it may make its case in terms of demonstrable results.
- The Program will have a systematic plan for and investment in individual faculty career development to ensure that faculty members sustain and improve their academic and professional qualifications.
- Program faculty should represent diverse substantive areas in public affairs, administration, and policy.
- The program appreciates diversity, broadly defined in the context of the program and its mission, as critical in today's workplaces and professional environments.
- Program faculty members collectively take responsibility for the success of faculty members individually in achieving student learning outcomes.
- The Program evaluates course instruction and the curriculum in light of its mission and uses the results to develop specific plans for maintaining or improving the quality of the teaching and learning environment.
- The form, quality, and quantity of public affairs, administration, and policy scholarship produced by the faculty are consistent with the program's mission and organizational expectations.
- Program faculty members engage with the community and in their professions in ways that contribute to student learning and advancing the Program's mission.

Glossary of Terms

Accountability: Having identifiable responsibility for making a decision or taking an action with the capacity to supply a justifying analysis or explanation.

Competencies: Expected skills, knowledge, aptitudes, and capacities. Student competencies must be defined by each program consistent with its mission. Goals to be considered when developing competencies can include, but are not limited to:

1. the extent to which the competencies contribute to a collective identity in education for public service, broadly defined;
2. the extent to which the competencies acknowledge and encourage diversity;
3. competencies should ensure that students will be capable of acting ethically and effectively in pursuit of the public interest.¹

COPRA Liaison: The liaison is a member of the Commission on Peer Review and Accreditation and plays an important role in the peer review and accreditation and site visit process. The liaison is assigned to a program or group of programs by the chair of the Commission. The role and responsibilities of the liaison are to:

1. Analyze Self-Study Reports and draft preliminary response to program
2. Serve as an intermediary between the Site Visit Team, the Commission, and the program under review.
3. Answer any questions about the site visit process that may be raised by the program under review but not satisfactorily answered by the Site Visit Team.

Diversity: Differences relating to social identity categories such as race, ethnicity, gender, class, nationality, religion, sexual orientation, disability, age, and veterans status.

Ethical Practice: Acting in a manner that conforms to moral duties and obligations, as well as legitimate codes of conduct, by being able to identify moral duties and obligations, reason about their application in particular circumstances, and have the courage and ability to follow through.

Governance: The legitimate institutions and processes, including the creation and implementation of policy, for authoritatively directing resources and activities in the public domain, broadly defined to include political jurisdictions and not-for-profit entities.

Nucleus faculty member: a faculty member who participates in the program's 1) governance by participating in faculty meetings, area of specialization committees, student admissions, curriculum planning and overall program administration; 2) instruction by teaching an average of at least one course per year in the program; advising students and supervising them on analytical papers, theses, or applied research and public service projects, and 3) research and/or professional and community service activities significantly related to public affairs. This designation refers to full-time tenured or tenure-track faculty and full-time clinical or professors

of practice. The members of the nucleus faculty need not all be in the same department or unit at the University.

Public organization: an operating unit within an international, federal, state, or local government; a supplier of services or products operated on a not-for-profit basis

Public service: of or relating to all members of a community, in contrast to individual decisions and interactions within smaller groups with no consequences for the community at-large. (cf. the traditional, two-party, market exchange). The term applies broadly to any activity contributing to public affairs, administration, and policy rather than narrowly to specific activities such as police, fire, and health care.

Public Service Values: (includes but not limited to) accountability, transparency, social equity, civic virtue, legal governance and participatory processes.

Scholarship: the development of new knowledge, the re-synthesis or re-conceptualization of existing knowledge, and/or the creative application of theory to practice.

Student Services: includes but not limited to advising students about their decisions regarding financial aid, completing their program of academic study, and pursuing their careers.

Transparency: Processes, procedures, identify of decision-makers, information, rationales and justification for decisions can be easily understood by parties who participate in the decision and those who do not.