

Accreditation Institute 2024 Facilitator's Guide

Introduction

This guide begins with an overview of the Request for Proposals (RFP) process, followed by insights into training structure, communication strategies, and preparation for the 2024 Accreditation Institute. It offers facilitator tips for success, strategies for engaging participants, guidance on achieving session outcomes, and considerations for adapting to evolving policies that may impact programs' ability to achieve substantial compliance with NASPAA standards. These insights are drawn from the experiences of the 2024 Accreditation Institute. The guide concludes with an analysis of participant feedback from the event. Notably, it reflects the structure and delivery of the 2024 Accreditation Institute, which was conducted in person by co-facilitators on October 23, 2024, in Washington DC, immediately preceding the NASPAA Annual Conference. Future Accreditation Institutes may adopt different formats, requiring facilitators to deliver training sessions through in-person, online, or hybrid approaches.

Request for Proposals

COPRA issues a Request for Proposals (RFP) annually to select a qualified facilitator (or facilitators) for delivering a successful Accreditation Institute. The most recent RFP included six sections: (1) Overview, (2) Background, (3) Goals, (4) Scope of Work, (5) Intended Audiences, and (6) Facilitator Experience. Under Scope of Work, the RFP lays out the parameters for five sessions, each about 1.5 hours in length:

Session 1: Introduction and Overview of Accreditation, the NASPAA Standards, and the Site Visit Process

This session introduces participants to the benefits of NASPAA accreditation, the accreditation process, readiness preconditions, key policies, and the site visit team's role in peer review.

Session 2: Setting the Stage for Strategic Mission-based Program Management: Standard 1

Focused on strategic program management, this session highlights the importance of a clear mission, public service values, and evaluation tools, along with guidance for writing effective self-study reports.

Session 3: Addressing the Fundamentals of Governance and Program Operations Related to Governance, Faculty, and Students: Standards 2, 3, and 4

Covering Standards 2, 3, and 4, this session examines faculty and administrative governance, diversity and inclusion plans, student recruitment, and the preparation of related self-study report sections.

Session 4: Closing the Loop on Competencies and Transparency: Standards 5, 6, and 7

This session addresses Standards 5, 6, and 7, focusing on measuring student learning, transparency in resource adequacy and communications, and tracking meaningful learning outcomes.

Session 5: NASPAA Site Visitor Orientation

This session provides an overview of the site visit process intended for academics and practitioners interested in becoming NASPAA site visitors, offering a pathway to participate in the virtual site visit training within the year.

There are two primary steps to being selected as the facilitator (or facilitators) of the Accreditation Institute. First, the written proposal response must fully align with the requirements outlined in the RFP. Applicants are therefore strongly encouraged to review each section of the RFP in detail and contact COPRA staff members with any clarifying questions. Second, potential facilitators must demonstrate their approach and philosophy to

successfully provide training sessions designed for adult learners. Each session must include clearly defined objectives, be organized to achieve those objectives, and conclude with a summary of the training outcomes.

A well-aligned written proposal demonstrates to the RFP evaluators that the potential facilitators understand and meet the requirements outlined in the RFP. It also communicates that the facilitators possess the knowledge, skills, and abilities to effectively navigate between the broader philosophical reasons for investing the time and effort into achieving first time accreditation or seeking reaccreditation, and the detailed requirements of preparing a comprehensive self-study report.

Another critical factor for success during the RFP submission and selection process is demonstrating a clear commitment to collaboration with COPRA staff members and other principals. Facilitators must show a willingness to incorporate feedback and suggestions into the development of training deliverables. A thorough understanding of the accreditation process, its value, tools, and standards must be consistently evident throughout every stage of the Accreditation Institute.

Training Structure

The RFP provided a framework for structuring and delivering the training sessions. The 2024 Accreditation Institute consisted of six in-person sessions, each session running between 60 and 90 minutes in length. The design of these sessions within the institute's training structure is critically important for the success of this institute. While each session had its own specific learning objectives, the overarching purpose of the 2024 Accreditation Institute was to provide participants with a deeper understanding of the NASPAA accreditation process and to equip them with the knowledge and tools needed to craft a successful and meaningful self-study.

As stated in the RFP, potential facilitators are asked to focus on keys to writing a successful self-study report and to provide information on the *basis of judgment* for each of the Seven Standards that COPRA uses as a starting point for reviewing self-study reports. The potential facilitators also must address the common problems when writing a self-study report and provide examples on how to overcome them, including the use of interactive pedagogical techniques for adult learners.

Training Communication

A strong communication strategy is essential to the success of the annual Accreditation Institute. Historically, NASPAA staff have led the promotion efforts, sharing details about the training agenda and working with the facilitators to distribute pre-session resources for participants to review prior to the Accreditation Institute. Facilitators should familiarize themselves with these communication channels to enhance the experience for participants. In addition, the facilitators conducted a pre-Institute needs assessment survey (please see Appendix A) for everyone who registered for the 2024 Accreditation Institute, which helped to inform and customize the Institute. In 2023, the facilitators distributed the survey to principal representatives in the 2024-25 accreditation cohort.

Training Preparation

Detailed and intentional preparation serve as a foundation for developing a successful and meaningful Accreditation Institute. Following the selection of the successful RFP proposal, the facilitators and the COPRA staff members met to coordinate and finalize the content delivered in the five training sessions (as outlined in the RFP). The facilitators also reviewed the Accreditation Institute Facilitator's Guide from the previous year, as well as the current body of [COPRA Policy Statements](#). The Facilitators also met with the COPRA chair and had input from a member of the Standards Committee to ensure that their delivery aligned with the current interpretation and application of the seven standards. This was crucial to our delivery given the rapidly evolving legal landscape affecting many US-based programs and their commitment to advancing DEI initiatives.

The pre-implementation meetings for the 2024 Accreditation Institute were highly productive. One key discussion focused on helping participants clearly differentiate between the requirements of Standard 1 (managing the program strategically) and Standard 5 (student learning), a frequent source of confusion for programs. Another priority was ensuring that Standards 6 (resources) and 7 (communication) received sufficient attention, as Standard 5 (student learning) often dominates participant focus. And a significant portion of the meetings were dedicated to addressing the evolving legal restrictions around DEI initiatives and their implications for US-based program reporting as well as the impact on overall accreditation standards. The meetings also provided an opportunity for facilitators to ask questions and, more importantly, gain valuable insights from COPRA staff on trends and gaps in standard implementation.

The next step was for the facilitators to prepare the training materials and to share them with the COPRA staff members, who provided excellent feedback based on their prior experiences with the annual Accreditation Institute. The facilitators should be prepared to make a fair number of changes to the training materials based on staff and COPRA member feedback. For example, NASPAA staff members requested that the facilitators better integrate discussion of the *basis of judgment* for each standard throughout the training sessions.

Based on the lessons learned and recommendations from delivering the 2023 Accreditation Institute, the 2023 AI evaluations, and the 2024 needs assessment survey, the facilitators worked with NASPAA staff to modify the length and order of the sessions to provide additional time to cover participant concerns, and to provide some flexibility for participants to attend the sessions most pertinent to their programs. For example, Session 6 was added to provide an in-depth discussion (with invited COPRA members) to address the statutory challenges to DEI-related standards that only affect a subset of US-Based programs. Additionally, participants who were not planning to volunteer for site visits had the option to attend sessions scheduled for a later time or to arrive for breakfast and socialize elsewhere. The modified schedule looked like this:

- **Breakfast Discussion**
 - Overview of the Site Visit process
- **Session 1**
 - Overview of NASPAA Accreditation
 - Eligibility Process
 - Accreditation Review Process
- **Session 2**
 - Standard 1: Managing the program strategically
 - Standard 2: Matching governance with the program's mission
- **Session 3**
 - Standard 3: Matching operations with the mission: Faculty Performance
 - Standard 4: Matching operations with the mission: Serving Students
- **Session 4**
 - Standard 5: Matching operations with the mission: Student Learning
- **Session 5**
 - Standard 6: Resource Adequacy
 - Standard 7: Communications
- **Session 6**
 - Interactive DEI Q&A
- **Wrap up**

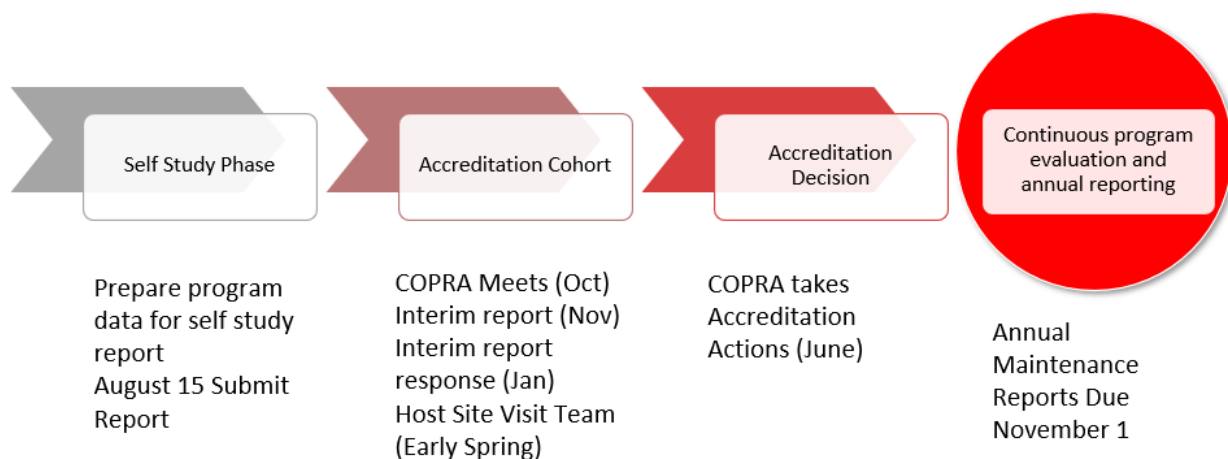
One final note on preparation. Historically, NASPAA staff have worked to secure sponsors for the Accreditation Institute's breakfast, lunch, snacks, coffee and other beverages. The facilitators should acknowledge the sponsors in their presentation. For the 2024 AI, the facilitators obtained official logos for sponsors and acknowledged each in their introductory slides.

Breakfast Discussion

The Breakfast Session provided an overview of the site visit process, tailored for first-time site visit team (SVT) members, those interested in becoming a site visitor, and those seeking a refresher. The session focused on the 2.5- to 3-day site visit process (noting some exceptions for members that house multiple programs or programs with satellite campuses) and that the process serves both evaluative and formative purposes. The session emphasized the role of the COPRA interim report for SVTs and hosts and provided additional considerations for Standards 1.3, 5.1, 7, and DEI efforts. The session expounded on the role of the SVT and noted that they act as the eyes and ears of COPRA, offering observations and insights, but that they do not render decisions. The session also emphasized the importance of the [Site Visit Manual](#) as a key resource for guidance throughout the process. Feedback from the 2023 AI revealed that some participants were unsure of how to best organize and host a site-visit, should COPRA recommend that they proceed to site visit. Therefore, the Breakfast Session also included practical suggestions for hosting a site visit, such as coordinating with the SVT Chair to schedule the visit, identifying key individuals to meet with (e.g., Vice Presidents, Deans, Program Faculty, Academic and Career Support Staff, Students, Alumni, and other Program Stakeholders), and developing strategies for providing access to essential records and documents (e.g., admissions, assessment, and program governance materials).

Session 1: Standards and Accreditation Preconditions, Eligibility, Self-Study, and Accreditation Cohort

Session 1 targeted programs or program directors seeking first time accreditation, program directors that are new to the process, or those who wish to have a better understanding of the process. This session provided a broad overview of the NASPAA organization, the seven standards, COPRA and its role in the accreditation process, how COPRA makes decisions, and the value of accreditation to member schools and programs. This seventy-five-minute session led participants through each distinct phase of the accreditation cycle, its requirements, and drew participants' attention to examples of best practices and available resources.



For those programs and program directors seeking first time accreditation, this session led the participants through the program requirements and COPRA-actions across the following areas: the prerequisite phase, the eligibility application, the self-study, and becoming part of an accreditation cohort. The facilitators also provided additional context and explanation to the slate of recommendations that COPRA includes in its response to the eligibility application: should proceed, should proceed with caution, and should not proceed, as well as the slate

of final actions that COPRA takes after an accreditation (or reaccreditation) cycle: accreditation with no monitoring, accreditation with monitoring, accreditation of one-year for additional information for programs seeking reaccreditation, accreditation deferral of one or two years for programs seeking initial accreditation, and denial of accreditation.

Facilitator tips for Success

- Inviting the COPRA chair to introduce themselves during the Accreditation Institute is appreciated by participants and helps programs recognize COPRA's role as peers and remove the misconception that COPRA is trying to target programs. While her presence at various points during the AI proved invaluable to address and provide insight for especially tricky questions, facilitators should be prepared to lead in responding to questions from attendees.
- Providing a grand overview of the process helps participants understand the importance of the preconditions, the seven standards, how the sessions relate to one another, how COPRA evaluates evidence and renders decisions, the range of decisions that are made, and the value of accreditation to member schools and their programs.
- Interactivity: Employ a tool like Mentimeter or other real-time response system to encourage participation, conduct icebreakers, understand participant demographics, and engage in real-time assessment.

Session 2: Standards 1 and 2 (Managing Programs Strategically and Matching Governance with the Program's Mission)

The primary audience for Sessions 2, 3, and 4 included programs or program directors who were new to NASPAA accreditation, programs that were seeking first time accreditation or reaccreditation within the next two years (through 2026).

Session 2 offered a holistic view of Standard 1 program management as it cuts across all seven standards (and four preconditions). The session provides additional discussions of how program mission, mission-related goals and objectives, and program-defined public service values (Standard 1.1) need to align (and help drive) program operations across each of the seven standards and how to develop strategies to measure progress toward the program's stated outcome goals and objectives (Standard 1.2).

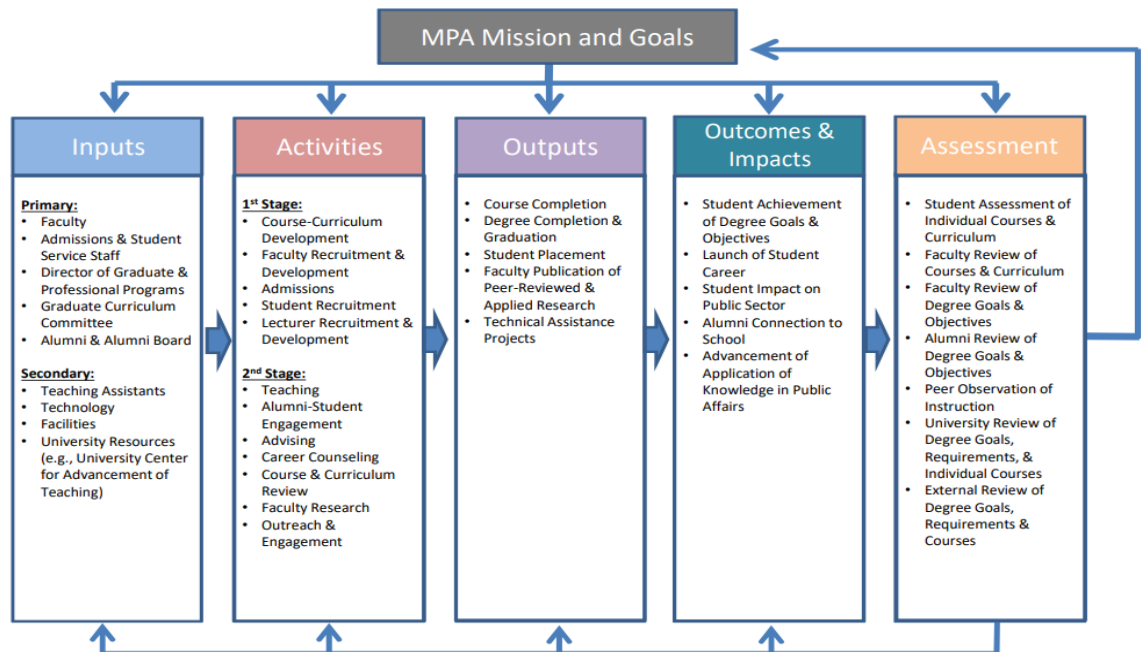
The facilitators called attention to program performance evaluation under Standard 1.3 and how performance data are best used to "close the loop," and drive program decision making. Facilitators also highlighted how the NASPAA standards are interrelated and then encouraged programs to consider how and where their programmatic management efforts crosscut with one another and how to best demonstrate program compliance across the seven standards.

Facilitators also drew attention to areas that programs often find challenging, including transparency in resource allocation (Standard 2.1), maintaining faculty governance during times of transition, unclear program leadership, and fewer than five nucleus faculty members (Standard 2.2). The facilitators, drawing on prior experience, observed that combining Standards 1 and 2 in Session 2 allowed additional time to discuss and expand on the DEI aspects that are central to Standards 3 and 4. Standard 2 had traditionally been addressed during Session 3, as was the case during the 2023 Accreditation Institute.

Session 2 approached the discussion of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Justice, and Accessibility (DEIJA) principles in a more holistic fashion, emphasizing their interconnectedness to the program's mission and values across each of

the seven standards. Participants were encouraged to explore strategies for integrating or emphasizing DEIJA within their missions, values, strategic plans, and strategic program management.

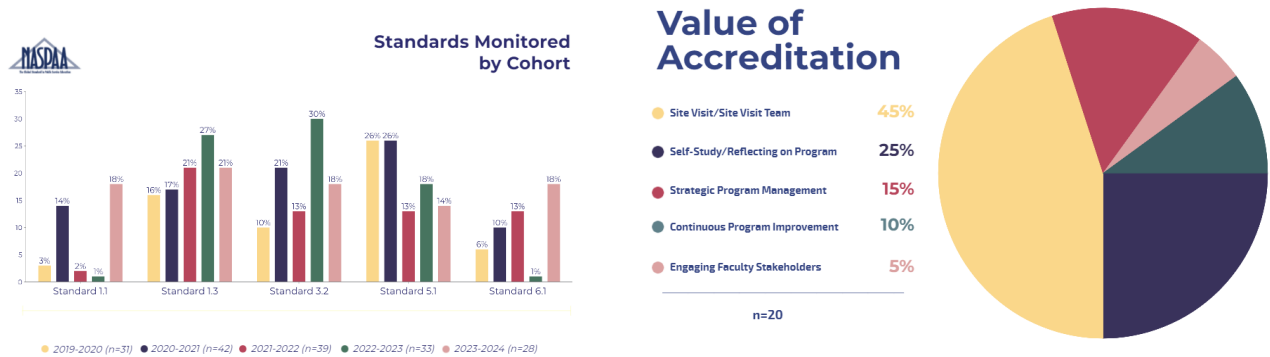
Finally, the facilitators reviewed examples of logic models (including the example from the John Glenn College of Public Affairs, below) and a strategic management plan that are considered best practices by NASPAA.



Facilitator tips for Success

- Facilitators should continue to draw attention to the 2023 language change made to Standard 1.2 and to emphasize the differences between the performance expectations embedded in Standard 1.2 and the student learning outcomes embedded in Standard 5.1.
- Facilitators should continue a holistic approach when discussing each of the Standards and emphasize how each Standard interrelates with each other. Facilitators should maintain a holistic approach when discussing each Standard, emphasizing the interconnectedness and interdependence of the Standards.
- Participants should also be cautioned against viewing the Standards as “stand-alone silos,” encouraging them to consider how each Standard contributes to a cohesive and integrated framework.
- Participants indicated that the logic model, management plan, and other examples of best practices were valuable. The 2024 AI delivery was enhanced by a recent and comprehensive update of COPRA’s [peer examples page](#).
- Future facilitators should lean into the peer examples when appropriate, but also offer participants the caveat that while these examples are insightful, they should not be taken as a “one-size-fits-all” approach to program development and implementation, since each program’s mission, outcome goals, and internal challenges require tailored strategies and solutions.
- Participants noted that discussion centered on identifying, avoiding, and overcoming potential pitfalls was particularly valuable. To enhance these discussions, facilitators should consider incorporating specific data from the Annual Review of Accreditation Report. However, timing may present a challenge, as the draft report will not be approved by the Standards Committee until they meet later during the conference. This will have to be coordinated with NASPAA staff. Key sections of the report that would add value to the AI include data on programs' perceived value of accreditation, results for "standards

monitored by cohort," and insights on "perceptions of the most challenging standards by stage and monitored" (see examples below).



Perceptions of Most Challenging Standards by Stage and Monitored (2023-2024)



Session 3: Standard 3 Matching Program Operations with the Mission: Faculty Performance, and Standard 4 Matching Program Operations with the Mission: Serving Students

This session highlighted distinct features of Standards 3 and 4, how they interrelate with one another, and how they relate to the overall mission and the stakeholders that the program serves. The Session also touched upon some of the legal restrictions faced by some US-based programs but asked participants to reserve much of that discussion for Session 6 (Interactive DEI Question and Answer)

The discussion of Standard 3 offered participants an overview of how faculty performance both aligns with and supports a program's mission. Participants learned the importance of ensuring that program faculty possess the appropriate credentials and expertise to achieve curricular outcomes that reflect the program's mission (Standard 3.1.2). The session also highlighted the significance of fostering Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) within their programs. Facilitators explored ways for programs to demonstrate their commitment to promoting faculty diversity and creating an inclusive climate (to the extent that they are able under their respective governing jurisdictions) through practices such as recruiting, retaining, and supporting faculty from diverse backgrounds (Standard 3.2) and ensuring that students are exposed to a wide range of perspectives. Additionally,

the session emphasized the importance of clearly defining Academically Qualified and Professionally Qualified faculty roles and ensuring that faculty remain current in their teaching areas through ongoing engagement in scholarship and service (Standard 3.1.2).

The four parts of Standard 4 were then addressed. They included Standard 4.1 (student recruitment), Standard 4.2 (student admissions), Standard 4.3 (support for students), and Standard 4.4 (student diversity). One approach to connecting these four standards is that programs must promote equity, diversity, and a climate of inclusiveness through recruitment and admissions practices, retention efforts, and student support services.

Participants were reminded that, similar to the emphasis on faculty diversity, DEI plans (which are a required component of their strategic management operations) must actively promote student diversity and outline strategies for fostering an inclusive environment. Moreover, programs are responsible for developing observable metrics to effectively gauge progress toward achieving the goals outlined in their DEI plans. Given recent spates of anti-DEI legislation in the United States, the facilitators reiterated the August 2023 Standards Committee Statement and discussed possibilities for some US-based programs to work within the limits imposed upon them. For example, in admissions students may relate in their personal statements accounts of overcoming adversity or develop admissions policies to focus on those who come from low socio-economic circumstances. In terms of retention and graduation, programs might focus on engagement and belonging initiatives for students. Regardless of the format of future AI sessions, facilitators must commit adequate time to address these issues and provide programs with ideas to address their distinctive situations.

Facilitator tips for Success

- Participants found that showing exemplars and cautioning them on “what not to do” (or how to avoid mistakes) to be useful.
- Facilitators should consider seeking out context-specific responses from programs. Given the range of legal and institutional DEI restrictions for some US-based programs, facilitators should highlight examples and resources of program compliance and innovation specific to their distinctive barriers or legal frameworks that will be developed and compiled by the NASPAA Diversity and Social Equity Committee (DSEC). Facilitators of the 2025 Accreditation Institute should therefore incorporate the DSEC’s resources and reference it in the AI materials.
- The addition of Session 6 (Interactive DEI Q & A) allowed the facilitators to effectively address key aspects of Standards 3 and 4 (including DEI components) while providing the flexibility to defer more challenging topics and questions to a session dedicated exclusively to DEI concerns. Future facilitators are encouraged to replicate this format.

Session 4: Standard 5 Matching Operations with the Mission: Student Learning

This session focused on Standard 5 (assessment of learning outcomes and universal required competencies), which requires that programs adopt a set of required competencies related to its mission and public service values as the basis of its curriculum. The session then turned to identifying and measuring competencies, which included understanding the context for identifying curriculum-based competencies through the program’s mission and public service values and identifying student learning outcomes to measure each respective competency using a crosswalk approach. Program participants asked and seemed satisfied with this approach. Based on feedback from last years’ AI, the crosswalk example was expanded to include a more gradual approach to the development of a comprehensive crosswalk (see an example of the first slide below).

PROGRAM GOALS (HORIZONTAL AXIS)	1. Lead and manage in the public interest - <u>Required Competency #1</u>	2. Participate in, and contribute to, the policy process- <u>Required Competency #2</u>	3. to analyze, synthesize, think critically, solve problems and make evidence-informed decisions in a complex and dynamic environment <u>Req. Competency #3</u>	4. articulate, apply, and advance a public service perspective - <u>Required Competency #4</u>	5. Communicate and interact productively and in culturally responsive ways with a diverse and changing workforce and society at large - <u>Required Competency #5</u>	6. Integrate and synthesize knowledge across the curriculum - <u>Mission Specific Competency #1</u>	7. To deepen knowledge and develop expertise to better analyze, implement, and evaluate programs and policy - <u>Mission Specific Competency #2</u>
PROGRAM LEARNING OBJECTIVES FOR FOUR CONTENT STREAMS (VERTICAL AXIS)							
POLICY STREAM							
Policy 1 - Understand the context of the public policy process		PA6000		PA6000	PA6000	PA6000	
Policy 2 - Identify the basic elements of public policy process		PA6000		PA6000	PA6000	PA6000	
Policy 3- Understand the legal foundations of policy and management in the public sector	PA6010				PA6010		
Policy 4- Impact the policy process to advance the public interest	PA6000	PA6000		PA6000; PA6010	PA6000; PA6010		PA6010
Policy 5 - Draw the connections between public problems, goals, public programs, outputs, and outcomes			PA6000; PA6010			PA6010	

Facilitators noted that there were many insightful questions during this session, emphasizing the need for future facilitators to be well-prepared to discuss how to assess student learning outcomes. Moreover, according to the Annual Review of Accreditation Survey, Standard 5 is consistently perceived as the most challenging standard during a program's self-study preparation. Thus, this session presents an excellent opportunity to incorporate participant response technologies, such as Mentimeter, to engage the audience and gather real-time feedback. Here, facilitators should emphasize the use of various artifacts—such as research papers, quizzes, test questions, and case studies—for direct assessment of learning outcomes, explaining why final grades alone are insufficiently granular for meaningful evaluation.

Session 4 also provided participants with a practical overview and component parts of one full assessment cycle. The overview focused on planning, assessing, analyzing and improving and reflecting (and focused on using these data to close the loop in subsequent assessment cycles (see figure below).

Facilitators should also focus on the importance of creating detailed grading rubrics and ensuring interrater reliability to maintain consistency and fairness in student learning outcomes assessment. They should also discuss the importance of collecting multiple data points, including the use of indirect assessment measures as needed (such as student exit surveys) as a valuable tool to complement direct assessment efforts.

Finally, facilitators must stress the value of completing assessment cycles that lead to actionable improvements based on student outcome data. Additionally, COPRA's expectations for ongoing assessment cycles and accurate reporting should be clearly explained. Allow ample time for participants to ask questions and explore practical approaches to implementing regular, sustainable, and effective assessment practices.



Facilitator Tips for Success

- Moving through the standards in a linear and in-depth format was appreciated by adult learners.
- Referring to the basis of judgment assisted participants in their learning.
- Providing in-depth attention to the differences between Standards 1 & 5 was well received.
- Having clear graphics displaying the assessment cycle helped to make the important point that student learning outcomes assessment is an ongoing, ever-evolving task.
- Discussing how student learning outcomes are assessed outside of the final grade / grading process, was critical for understanding.
- Facilitators should address common challenges since Standard 5 is consistently identified as one of the most challenging during self-study preparation and be prepared to further address strategies to overcome them. This should include examples from successful programs (the peer examples, crosswalk exercise, and assessment cycle discussion were all well-received by participants in the 2024 AI).
- Provide ample time to answer questions regarding Standard 5.

Session 5: Standard 6 Resource Adequacy & Standard 7 Communication

Session 5 focused on Standards 6 & 7 and highlighted the critical role of program resources and communication as it pertains to the (re)accreditation process.

Therefore, this session provided detailed information on Standard 6.1 (resource adequacy), where programs must have sufficient funds, physical facilities, and resources in addition to their faculty members to pursue their mission, goals, and objectives. The facilitators emphasized the importance of providing contextual information in this section and throughout the self-study in the form of appendices when necessary, such as explaining how this standard connects to Standard 2.1 (administrative capacity) and Standard 4.3 (student support).

For Standard 7, the facilitators emphasized the importance of adhering to public service values in program communications, highlighting key principles such as transparency, accountability, and truthfulness. They explained that transparency involves making information publicly accessible (7.1), while accountability requires programs to acknowledge their strengths and limitations in relation to their mission. Truthfulness was defined as ensuring that all data shared is current, complete, and accurate (7.1.1). Additionally, facilitators stressed the importance of linking its information and data to the program's mission. This includes reporting universal

information to stakeholders about the program's mission, faculty, policies, practices, accomplishments, and programmatic outcomes. The session underscored the responsibility of programs to provide comprehensive and mission-driven communication to foster trust and alignment with public service values. A common question concerns the level of editorial control that some programs have over their college or university's webpage. Facilitators should be prepared to explain that Standard 7 is strictly enforced by NASPAA's accrediting body (Council for Higher Education Accreditation, or CHEA), so there is very little latitude for this standard by NASPAA and its programs. However, an upcoming (re)accreditation cycle may provide programs with leverage to work with their web editors to ensure that Standard 7 information is easily accessible, and located no more than "one click away" from the program's main webpage.

Facilitator Tips for Success

- Encouraging programs to conduct a resource inventory can be a productive way for them to begin addressing Standard 6 in their self-study reports.
- Providing information on program communications within the context of transparency was a productive way for emphasizing Standard 7.

Session 6: Interactive DEI Question and Answer

After the first five sessions and based on data from the needs assessment survey, the facilitators organized "Session 6" for any program that wanted to learn more about navigating the evolving US legal landscape surrounding DEI initiatives related to higher education. For this session, The AI Facilitators, the COPRA Chair, COPRA members, NASPAA Staff, and two members of the Standards Committee were present to answer questions, when possible, and to listen to program member's concerns. This session also likely served as a valuable input for COPRA's November [policy statement](#) regarding diversity reporting.

Facilitator Tips for Success

- Organizing sessions similar to this should prove to be an effective way to address exceptional problems or concerns when they arise.
- Inviting additional participants can better inform the AI conversation, and possibly the conversation within NASPAA's governance bodies.
- Be respectful of the guest's time, do not let any one participant dominate the discussion, and firmly redirect the question once it has run its course or if the environment becomes heated.

Evaluation

Upon conclusion of the Accreditation Institute, NASPAA Staff sent out a survey that provided the participants with an opportunity to offer qualitative and quantitative feedback. The questions were grouped into six categories: accreditation website, accreditation standards, self-study report, accreditation value and process, session feedback, and facilitation, engagement, and diversity. These results (n=28) are reported (by percent) in the Table found in Appendix B.

Accreditation Website (Questions 1A and 1B)

For question 1A, 71.43 percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the Accreditation website was up-to-date, while 67.85 percent of respondents indicated that it helped them prepare for the AI (1B).

Information on Accreditation Standards (Questions 2A, 2B, and 2C)

Question 2A indicated that 96.43 percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the AI provided clear information about Accreditation Standards. Similarly, 96.43 percent of respondents felt the AI provided tools to

reduce monitoring risks (2B), and 92.86 percent of respondents indicated that the AI provided solutions to address common problems with the Standards (2C).

Self-Study Report (SSR) Development (Questions 3A, 3B, and 3C)

The AI provided effective tools for developing SSRs, with 92.86 percent of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing with question 3A. Question 3B showed that 82.14 percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the AI addressed historical challenges with SSR development. Similarly, 82.14 percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the AI provided practical solutions for SSR development (3C).

Accreditation Value and Process (Questions 4A, 4B, 4C, and 4D)

Participants expressed high agreement for the clarity provided on the value of Accreditation (96.43 percent for question 4A) and the usefulness of information about the Accreditation timetable (92.85 percent for question 4B). Additionally, 89.29 percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the AI offered solutions to process issues (4C), while 96.43 percent appreciated the clarity provided on the role of the site visit team (4D).

Feedback on Sessions (Questions 5A through 5E)

Participants provided positive feedback on all sessions, with over 85 percent agreement for the usefulness of the information provided. Specific results include 96.43 percent agreement for question 5A (Session 1), 96.43 percent for question 5B (Session 2), 96.43 percent for question 5C (Session 3), 85.72 percent for question 5D (Session 4) and 85.72 percent for question 5E (Session 5).

Facilitation, Engagement, and Diversity (Questions 6A through 6H)

A majority of respondents (96.43 percent) agreed or strongly agreed that information was provided effectively (6A), and 96.29 percent highlighted facilitators' expertise (6B). Opportunities to ask questions were valued, with 96.43 percent agreement for question 6C. Participants also noted active engagement (82.14 percent for question 6D) and the inclusion of diverse voices (96.43 percent for question 6E). Follow-up activities were rated at 71.43 percent in agreement for question 6F, 96.15 percent of respondents appreciated the agenda design (6G), and 92.85 percent indicated they would recommend the AI to colleagues (6H).

Conclusions

The purpose of this guide, as stated in the introduction, is to provide future facilitators of the Accreditation Institute with guidance on delivering effective training sessions to ensure that participants obtain the information needed to successfully guide their programs through the accreditation process by writing meaningful self-study reports. With that said, the information contained within this document should be approached as recommendations rather than a strict roadmap.

While future facilitators may adopt selected approaches for the training sessions as described herein, they also will need to adapt selected approaches based on their own strengths of training adult learners and their own understanding of the seven standards, including the challenges often faced by programs in responding to them. The writer(s) of the proposal response to the annual RFP also must articulate the overarching thread that ties the respective training sessions together, which is to write a successful self-study report. This approach sets the stage for the larger context of becoming NASPAA accredited, which provides a reliable and trustworthy indication of value and quality to all stakeholders of the respective master-level programs of public policy, affairs, and administration.

Appendix A: Pre AI Needs Assessment Survey Instrument

The purpose of this survey is to gauge the comfort levels around each of the seven standards. This will help identify areas of focus during the 2023 Accreditation institute in October. For the questions below, please use the slider to indicate your comfort level with each of the Standards

Q1. Please rate your comfort level (1 = low comfort and 5 = high comfort) with [Standard 1](#): Managing the Program Strategically

Q1A. Please indicate any of the Standard 1 areas that you would like to see the accreditation institute focus on

- Standard 1.1 Mission Statement
- Standard 1.2 Performance Expectations
- Standard 1.3 Program Evaluation

Q2. Please rate your comfort level (1 = low comfort and 5 = high comfort) with [Standard 2](#): Matching Governance with Mission

Q2A. Please select any of the Standard 2 areas that you would like to see the accreditation institute focus on

- Standard 2.1: Administrative Capacity
- Standard 2.2: Faculty Governance

Q3. Please rate your comfort level (1 = low comfort and 5 = high comfort) with [Standard 3](#): Matching Operations: Faculty Performance

Q3A. Please select any of the Standard 3 areas that you would like to see the accreditation institute focus on

- Standard 3.1: Faculty Qualifications
- Standard 3.2: Faculty Diversity
- Standard 3.3: Research, Scholarship and Service

Q4. Please rate your comfort level (1 = low comfort and 5 = high comfort) with [Standard 4](#): Matching Operations: Serving Students

Q4A. Please select any of the Standard 4 areas that you would like to see the accreditation institute focus on

- Standard 4.1: Student Recruitment
- Standard 4.2: Student Admissions
- Standard 4.3 Support for Students
- Standard 4.4 Student Diversity

Q4B. Are your program's DEI efforts restricted in any way by your university, legislature, or any other governing authority (especially in relation to Standard 3.2 (faculty diversity) or Standard 4? (Yes/No)

If Yes, proceed to Q4C

If No, skip to Q5

Q4C. If you feel comfortable answering, please share some of the restrictions that you face. Additionally, if you feel comfortable answering, please share any guidance that you have been given by your university, or other

ways that you might have been permitted to engage in the work of DEI while still maintaining compliance with the constraints you are under [Open Ended]

Q5. Please rate your comfort level (1 = low comfort and 5 = high comfort) with [Standard 5](#): Matching Operations: Student Learning

Q5A. Please select any of the Standard 5 areas that you would like to see the accreditation institute focus on

- Standard 5.1: Universal Required Competencies
- Standard 5.2: Mission-specific Required Competencies
- Standard 5.3: Mission-specific Elective Competencies
- Standard 5.4 Professional Competencies

Q6. Please rate your comfort level (1 = low comfort and 5 = high comfort) with [Standard 6](#): Matching Resources with Mission

Q6A. Please select any of the Standard 6 areas that you would like to see the accreditation institute focus on

- Standard 6.1 Resource Adequacy

Q7. Please rate your comfort level (1 = low comfort and 5 = high comfort) with [Standard 7](#): Matching Communications with Mission

Q7A. Please select any of the Standard 7 areas that you would like to see the accreditation institute focus on

- Standard 7.1 Communications

Q8. Please rate your comfort level (1 = low comfort and 5 = high comfort or NA) with the [eligibility process](#) for first-time applicants

Q9. Please rate your comfort level (1 = low comfort and 5 = high comfort) with the [four preconditions](#) for accreditation (see pages 2 - 4 of linked pdf)

Q10. Please share any other questions or concerns that you have about the NASPAA standards that you would like the Accreditation Institute to address [Open Ended]

**Appendix B: Survey Data
(n=28)**

Question	Strongly Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly Agree (%)	N/A (%)	Weighted Average
1A. Accreditation website up-to-date information	0	3.57	28.57	42.86	25	3.52
1B. Accreditation website helped preparation	0	3.57	35.71	32.14	28.57	3.4
2A. AI provided clear information about Standards	3.57	0	32.14	64.29	0	3.57
2B. AI provided tools to avoid monitoring on Standards	3.57	0	50	46.43	0	3.39
2C. AI provided solutions to problems with Standards	3.57	3.57	39.29	53.57	0	3.43
3A. AI provided tools for developing SSR	3.57	0	39.29	53.57	3.57	3.48
3B. AI addressed historical problems with SSR development	0	10.71	25	57.14	7.14	3.5
3C. AI provided practical solutions for SSR development	0	10.71	32.14	50	7.14	3.42
4A. Clear description of Accreditation value	3.57	0	46.43	50	0	3.43
4B. Useful information about Accreditation timetable	3.57	3.57	32.14	60.71	0	3.5
4C. Solutions to Accreditation process issues	0	10.71	42.86	46.43	0	3.36
4D. Information on site visit team role	3.57	0	42.86	53.57	0	3.46
5A. Session 1, Value Accreditation, Accreditation Eligibility Process, Accreditation Review Process, provided useful information.	3.57	0	50	46.43	0	3.39
5B. Session 2: Session 2, Standard 1: Managing the program strategically, provided useful information.	3.57	0	46.43	50	0	3.43
5C. Standard 2: Matching governance with the mission; Standard 3: Matching operations with the mission: Faculty Performance; Standard 4: Matching operations with the mission: Serving Students, provided useful information.	0	3.57	46.43	50	0	3.46
5D. Session 4: Standard 5: Matching operations with the mission: Student Learning; Standard 6: Matching resources with the mission: Resource Adequacy; Standard 7: Matching communications with the mission, provided useful information	3.57	7.14	46.43	39.29	3.57	3.26
5E. Session 5: Site visit process, provided useful information.	3.57	7.14	42.86	39.29	7.14	3.27
6A. Information provided in effective ways	3.57	0	53.57	42.86	0	3.36
6B. Facilitators' knowledge on accreditation issues	3.7	0	33.33	62.96	0	3.56
6C. Opportunities for participant questions	3.57	0	39.29	57.14	0	3.5
6D. Active participant engagement	3.57	14.29	50	32.14	0	3.11
6E. Diversity of voices in discussions	3.57	0	50	46.43	0	3.39
6F. Follow-up activities for applying learning	0	25	39.29	32.14	3.57	3.07
6G. Agenda design effectiveness	3.85	0	46.15	50	0	3.42
6H. Recommendation of AI to colleagues	3.57	0	35.71	57.14	3.57	3.52