

Request for Proposal:

Planning and Facilitation of the 2026 NASPAA Accreditation Institute

Overview: The Commission on Peer Review and Accreditation (COPRA) of the Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs, and Administration (NASPAA) seeks facilitator(s) to present an in-person educational workshop consisting of sessions for academic program directors and faculty seeking to learn about accreditation for master's-level public service degree programs. Proposals are due by May 8, 2026.

Background: NASPAA's [Accreditation Institute](#) (AI) will be held in person on September 30, 2026, immediately preceding the [NASPAA 2026 Global Conference](#), in Seattle, Washington. The Commission seeks consultant(s) to design and facilitate a workshop of at least four in-person sessions lasting between 1 and 1.5 hours each. Times may be adjusted to best allocate time among the four sessions and/or to add additional session(s) that are of timely or critical interest to participants. The intended audience is program directors, faculty, and staff of programs that will seek to become (re)accredited within the next two years (through 2028). There will also be an expectation to facilitate an additional one-hour Site Visitor Orientation session intended for academics and practitioners interested in becoming NASPAA site visitor volunteers to be held on Thursday, October 1, 2026.

Goal: The goal is an in-depth examination of the NASPAA accreditation process, NASPAA Standards, challenges, and potential solutions and innovative approaches to assist programs on the cusp of the accreditation process and to educate potential NASPAA volunteers in the peer review process.

Facilitator(s) should focus on the motivation, values, and philosophy behind NASPAA Accreditation. The RFP should also clearly outline how the AI will incorporate perspectives extending beyond U.S. institutions.

Scope of Work: Proposals should be structured around the project scope of work. The facilitator(s) should utilize best practices in executive learning and work to ensure consistency in content across sessions. The pedagogical approaches employed should address the needs of learners at different levels of familiarity with accreditation, developing a self-study report, and program evaluation, but primarily be focused on those with an intermediate to advanced knowledge of the NASPAA accreditation process and NASPAA [Accreditation Standards](#). Attention to and understanding of the needs of NASPAA's global accreditation audience is imperative.

The 2026 [Accreditation Institute](#) will consist of at least four in-person sessions (listed below). Each session is intended to be independent of but strongly related to the others. Potential facilitator(s) are asked to focus on keys to writing a successful self-study report and providing information on the basis of judgment that COPRA may use as a starting point in reviewing self-study reports. The selected facilitator(s) will be expected to identify common challenges and best practices that lead to successful program accreditation or reaccreditation. Moreover, the selected proposal should include an approach to integrating experiential learning into the NASPAA Accreditation Institute. NASPAA seeks proposals that incorporate interactive and engaging methods that would allow participants to gain a better understanding of how to apply NASPAA Standards in a practical setting.

No session should be fewer than 60 minutes, and typically no more than 90 minutes. Proposals should include a justification for any proposed changes from the session content specified below and should

specifically address how the proposed approach will result in enhanced ability of programs to write successful self-study reports.

1. Session 1, Introduction and Overview of Accreditation, the NASPAA Standards, and the Site Visit Process: The objectives of Session 1 are for participants to understand:
 - a. the benefits of NASPAA accreditation
 - b. the process and requirements for accreditation
 - c. preconditions to readiness for accreditation
 - d. current NASPAA policies, best practices, and resources
 - e. the role of the site visit team in the peer review process

The facilitator(s) will develop and lead an overview of the accreditation process and stages. The session should include a focus on accreditation value, the NASPAA accreditation process, accreditation tools, and an introduction to the NASPAA Accreditation Standards that will be covered in more detail in Sessions 2 through 4.

2. Session 2, Setting the Stage for Strategic Mission-based Program Management: Standard 1: The objectives of Session 2 are to:
 - a. discuss the role of the program's mission, public service values, and outcomes
 - b. present example logic models, including how they are used for program evaluation
 - c. learn the keys to writing a successful self-study report focused on sections relating to the program's mission, objectives, and program evaluation
 - d. participate in an exercise on evaluating the efficacy of a program's mission
 - e. emphasize tying the program's activities back to the mission

Session 2 should include a discussion of the preconditions for accreditation and the critical role of program mission, objectives, and program evaluation in setting the basis for the strategic program management that is the basis of the NASPAA accreditation process.

3. Session 3, Addressing the Fundamentals of Governance and Program Operations Related to Governance, Faculty, and Students: Standards 2, 3, and 4: The objectives of Session 3 are to:
 - a. discuss the role of program governance and operations, highlighting areas that often challenge programs during the accreditation process and provide guidance for success
 - b. understand NASPAA Standards related to faculty qualifications, faculty diversity, and research, scholarship, and service
 - c. understand NASPAA Standards related to student recruitment, admissions, support for students, and student diversity
 - d. learn the keys to writing a successful self-study report focused on sections relating to Standards 2, 3, and 4
 - e. participate in an exercise on applying the four required tenets of diversity, equity, and inclusion plans

Session 3 should include a discussion of the critical role of faculty governance in exercising substantial determining influence over public service master's degree

programs, administrative program governance, and discussion of preparing parts of the self-study report related to program management, faculty, and students.

4. Session 4, Closing the Loop on Competencies and Transparency: Standards 5, 6, and 7: The objectives of Session 4 are:
 - a. present an approach to measure student learning on the universal required competencies
 - b. discuss the transparency requirements of resource adequacy and communications
 - c. learn the keys to writing a successful self-study report focused on sections relating to Standards 5, 6, and 7
 - d. participate in an exercise on measuring one of the five universal competencies

Session 4 is intended to present an approach to measure curriculum-based competencies, to discuss the transparency requirements of resource adequacy and communications, and to participate in an exercise on measuring student learning on one of the five universal competencies. After the preconditions for accreditation review are presented, this should focus on the process of identifying and tracking meaningful student learning outcomes and the accreditation requirements for adequate program resources and program communication and transparency with stakeholders.

5. Additional Required Session - NASPAA Site Visitor Orientation: The objective of the Site Visit Orientation is to provide participants with an overview of the site visit process. The facilitator(s) will use a NASPAA- provided presentation intended to educate potential site visitors about NASPAA Accreditation, the accreditation process, role of the site visit, and the site visit team. Participants will be eligible to participate in a fast-track virtual site visit training within the following year. Note: This session is an addition to the base Accreditation Institute intended to help meet COPRA's needs for trained site visitors. **This session will be held on Thursday, October 1, 2026.**

Accreditation Institute Intended Audience

- **Session 1:** Programs new to accreditation, seeking a review for the first time, seeking a review of the accreditation process and requirements in preparation for accreditation review.
- **Sessions 2-4:** Programs new to NASPAA accreditation and programs that will be entering initial or reaccreditation review in 2027 or 2028.
- **NASPAA Site Visitor Orientation:** Individuals interested in becoming a site visitor, individuals seeking more information on the NASPAA site visit process, or the site visitor training that is needed to participate as academics or practitioners on future site visit teams.

Sessions developed by the facilitator(s) should reference and be consistent with but not assume extensive or recent participant knowledge of existing NASPAA information, videos, or training materials on the NASPAA website. The facilitator(s) should reference and emphasize the usefulness of these existing NASPAA resources so participants are informed that they are available. Development of new, original, and useful materials (PowerPoints, videos, etc.) that reference existing NASPAA training and resources is strongly encouraged. Facilitator(s) should review the 2025 Accreditation Institute PowerPoint available [here](#) as well as the [2025 Accreditation Institute Facilitator's Guide](#).

Facilitator Experience

The facilitator(s) must have specific, hands-on experience with the NASPAA Accreditation Standards, quality assurance in higher education, program assessment or strategic planning, executive education, and curriculum design. Facilitator(s) should document prior experience as a program director or leading faculty member of an accredited program and have prior experience writing and submitting a self-study report. Prior service on COPRA or the NASPAA Standards Committee would be considered an asset but is not required. Overall qualifications of all proposed facilitator(s) will be taken into consideration in the evaluation of proposals.

Submissions and Deadline: Interested facilitator(s) should submit a maximum 6-page proposal no later than May 8, 2026. CVs are not included in the page limits. Proposals must include:

1. **Understanding of the Requirements:** An overview indicating understanding of the requirements.
2. **Technical Approach:** An overview of the technical approach for planning and carrying out the required sessions and producing deliverables, which should include at a minimum:
 - a. Proposals must demonstrate that the [2025 Accreditation Institute PowerPoint slides](#) were reviewed.
 - Proposals must demonstrate that the contractor reviewed the [2025 Accreditation Institute Facilitator's Guide](#) with specific attention to sections labeled "Facilitator Tips for Success." NASPAA is expecting proposals to incorporate the Facilitator Tips for Success in a manner that goes beyond quoting the Tips by identifying specific strategies to be used by the facilitator(s).
 - Proposals should not merely reproduce these requirements as written but rather provide elaboration and detail to demonstrate how the facilitator(s) will approach planning and conduct of the 2026 Accreditation Institute and related requirements.
 - Proposals should address how the 2026 Accreditation Institute [Facilitator's Guide](#) will be developed to provide formative feedback for future Accreditation Institutes.
 - b. **Budget:** The proposed budget must be consistent with the proposed technical approach for planning, training material collection and creation; planning collaboration with NASPAA staff; and observations and feedback in a 2026 Accreditation Institute Facilitators Guide. Budget proposals should be formatted consistent with the activities proposed in the technical approach and include a supporting narrative to allow assessment of the level of effort required for AI preparation, conduct, and feedback. The facilitator(s) is expected to register for the NASPAA conference and pay for registration, travel, and lodging. Proposed budgets should take this into account. Proposals with budgets exceeding \$12,000 will not be considered.
 - c. **Timeline:** Planning timeline with milestones that provide detail beyond the milestones included in Appendix 1 are preferred.
 - d. **Facilitator Qualifications:** A brief description of the qualifications of all facilitators included in the proposal consistent with the Facilitator Experience section above.

- e. **Resume/CV:** A resume or C.V. for each facilitator(s) (not included in the page count).

Proposals should be in Microsoft Word or Adobe PDF and sent to copra@naspaa.org no later than May 8, 2026. Proposals will be reviewed until a facilitator(s) is chosen or NASPAA elects not to contract with any facilitator(s).

Appendix 1

Additional Considerations and Timeline

Additional Areas of Consideration: Preference will be given to:

Comprehensive Proposals: Facilitator(s) are expected to include proposals to review, modify, and develop at least four sessions and Site Visitor Orientation to meet the objectives described above, including consultation with NASPAA staff and plans for facilitation of each session by the contractor. Partial proposals will not be accepted. Involvement of multiple qualified facilitators is encouraged to ensure diversity of background, experience, and representation of stakeholder groups. Proposals should identify a Lead Facilitator who will directly work with NASPAA staff. Facilitator(s) will be expected to present a seamless approach to minimize transitions and enhance use of technology as an adult-education resource.

Timeline of work: The facilitator(s) will develop an overall approach that incorporates a detailed plan, address milestones identified in Table 1 below, and reach other agreed-upon milestones for the September 2026 Accreditation Institute. Milestones included in Table 1 are minimum requirements. Proposals should include additional milestones for planning and conducting at least four high-quality Accreditation Institute sessions. The contractor is also responsible for evaluating the Accreditation Institute using survey data of Accreditation Institute participants collected by NASPAA staff, NASPAA staff observations, and facilitator(s)' observations to provide recommendations for the improvement of future Accreditation Institutes via a 2026 Accreditation Institute [Facilitator's Guide](#).

Table 1

Minimum Expected Deliverables and Timeline

Deliverable	Due Date
Detailed plan for development, conduct, and evaluation of the AI.	June 30, 2026
Detailed "run of show" based on a modified version of the 2024 Accreditation Institute Facilitator's Guide . Proposals may include suggestions for NASPAA staff support needed to enhance the planning and conduct of the AI. NOTE: NASPAA staff will not present content during the AI but will be present to provide logistical support.	July 30, 2026
Draft PowerPoint Slides, videos, or other materials	August 28, 2026
Final PowerPoint Slides, videos, or other materials	September 15, 2026
Conduct 4 sessions for the in-person AI	September 30, 2026
Conduct NASPAA Site Visitor Orientation	October 1, 2026
2026 Accreditation Institute Facilitators Guide with analysis of post-AI survey data, facilitator(s) observations, and recommendations for improving future AIs.	November 30, 2026

Description of Deliverables:

- A detailed plan for the 2026 Accreditation Institute, including specific plans for each of the sessions (due by June 30, 2026).
- A detailed “run of show” for each session (due July 30, 2026). The technical approach should demonstrate the value of each session as part of the [Accreditation Institute](#) and the potential capacity of recorded sessions (if available and materials to supplement NASPAA’s ongoing training needs for accredited programs and site visitors).
- PowerPoint Slides, videos, or other materials to be used in the Accreditation Institute (draft due by August 28, 2026; final by September 15, 2026).
- A Post-Accreditation Institute Facilitators Guide (due November 30, 2026) briefing paper to include analysis of feedback from an Accreditation staff-conducted post-AI survey of participants, facilitator(s) observations, and recommendations for improvement of future AIs. Facilitator(s) will be provided with raw data from the survey and will have the opportunity to provide input on survey content. The briefing paper should also include specific recommendations for addressing concerns identified by participants, NASPAA staff, and the contractor.

Compensation: Compensation will be based on the following criteria: the number of facilitators, previous experience conducting the Accreditation Institute, the duration of the contract, and take into consideration the detailed proposed budgets. Proposals with budgets exceeding \$12,000 will not be reviewed or considered. Payments will be made upon completion of all agreed-upon milestones. The reasonableness of the proposed budget relative to the proposed technical approach to meet NASPAA’s requirements will be considered in awarding this contract.

Materials and Products: All materials and products will be the property of NASPAA for use as approved by COPRA, including but not limited to PowerPoints, videos, web-based resources, and recordings of the sessions (if available).