**Detailed Summary of Changes
in the 2015 NASPAA Self-Study Instructions**

November 5, 2015

What's new and improved

The Commission on Peer Review and Accreditation (COPRA) is excited to release the **2015 Self-Study Instructions for NASPAA Accreditation**, the official document that outlines the data requirements for accreditation and provides definitions, a basis of judgment, and illustrative examples for each of the standards. The 2015 revisions reflect the work of NASPAA leadership and COPRA working together to continue streamlining the Self-Study Report. To those of you that provided feedback from your own self-study process, thank you for helping NASPAA and COPRA make the Self-Study Report more valuable.

The significant substantive changes have previously been announced in COPRA's June 2015 Policy Statement, and are now being collected into the official documentation. As the below highlights, and list of amendments will detail, the 2015 changes also reflect clarifications and adjustments, which are intended to make the Self-Study process more accessible to participating programs. In consultation with the NASPAA Standards Committee, the Self-Study Instructions will be revised to align with a broader, less burdensome approach to Standard 5.3-Mission-Specific Elective Competencies.

Highlights

- **Standard 5.3: Mission-specific Elective Competency** focus on capacity, resources, and support of mission.
    - Student learning assessment of specializations and concentrations no longer required.
    - Attention to faculty qualifications, program course offerings, and how the program's approach to concentrations and/or specializations support the mission and program goals.

The complete and detailed list of changes follows below. Note that several changes were made to formatting, grammar, etc. and to ensure consistency in language that will not be highlighted here. New language will be delineated in **green**.

1. Basic Information (Deletion)

   Deleted basic information requested of program as it is captured in the Accreditation Application and NASPAA membership database.

2. Basic Information (Relocation)

   "Please verify program is a member of NASPAA: ☐" was moved to the Preconditions section.

3. Program Fact Sheet, Question 5 (Amendment)

   Clarified question to read: "Number of students in degree program (Total, **Fall of Self-Study Year**)

4. Program Fact Sheet, Question 6 (Amendment)

   Amended question to reverse order of ratio: "Ratio of Total Students to Full-Time Nucleus Faculty"

5. Preconditions for Accreditation Review (Addition)

   In line with the 2014 Member Vote to change the Standards, the Eligibility requirement was adjusted:

   The degree program's primary focus shall be that of preparing students to be leaders, managers, and analysts in the professions of public affairs, public administration, and public policy and only master's degree programs engaged in educating and training professionals for the aforementioned professions are eligible for accreditation. **Variations in nomenclature regarding degree title are typical in the field of public service education. Related degrees in policy and management are eligible to apply, provided they can meet the accreditation standards, including advancing public service values and competencies.** Specifically excluded are 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).

6. Question 3.1.2 (Deletion)

   To align with streamlining changes made to the Faculty Reports in 2014, the following was deleted: ~~Provide information about how faculty qualifications match the competencies within the curriculum.~~

7. Question 4.3.3b (Addition)

   To align with the Annual Data Report:
   4.3.3b Please define your program design length: (semesters/quarters/terms/other) (1/2/3/4/5/6/7/8/9/10)

8. Question 4.3.4b (Clarification)

   To match the Table 4.3.4b, which requests SSY-1 data:
   4.3.4c Report the job placement statistics (number) **for the year prior to** the self-study year, of students who were employed in the "profession" within six months of graduation, by employment sector, using the table below. (Note: Include in your totals those students who were employed while a student in the program, and who continued that employment after graduation.)

9. Standard 5.3 (Deletion)

   The following text was deleted:

   ~~Section 5.3 Mission-Specific Elective Competencies (if applicable)~~
   ~~Self-Study Narrative Section 5.3 asks the program to define what it hopes to accomplish~~

~~by offering optional concentrations and specializations, as well as the competencies students are expected to demonstrate in each option.~~

~~If your program offers any mission-specific elective competency (such as a track, concentration, option, or specialization), then for at least one offered please describe how it supports the program mission and state least one specific student learning outcome expected of all students in that elective competency. If none, please state "none."~~

10. Standard 5.3 (Addition)

The following text was added to replace the full assessment expectations of mission-specific elective competencies:

Programs are expected to demonstrate their capacity to offer the concentrations and specializations they advertise to students. [text box]

5.3.1   Discuss how the program's approach to concentrations/specializations (or broad elective coursework) derives from the program mission and contributes to overall program goals. [text box]

5.3.2   Discuss how any advertised specializations/concentrations contribute to the student learning goals of the program. [text box]

5.3.3   Describe the program's policies for ensuring the capacity and the qualifications of faculty to offer or oversee concentrations/specializations (or broad elective coursework). [text box]

5.3.4   Optional: If the program would like to add any add any additional information about specializations to support the self-study report or provide a better understanding of the program's strategies (such as success of graduates, outcomes indicators, innovative practices, etc.) please do so here or upload an attachment. [text box or upload]

11. Standard 5, Part B (deletion)

To align with the above changes, the assessment requirement outlined in Part B was deleted for mission-specific elective competencies:

The program is expected to engage in ongoing assessment of student learning for all universal required competencies , and all mission-specific required competencies~~, and all elective (option, track, specialization, or concentration) competencies~~. The program does not need to assess student learning for every student, on every competency, every semester. However, the program should have a written plan for assessing each competency on a periodic basis.

12. Standard 5, Part C (deletion)

The following chart was deleted, as it no longer aligned with current NASPAA Data Center Strategy:

~~Mission-specific Elective Competencies: One Assessment Cycle~~

~~For the self-study narrative, the program should describe, for one of the mission-specific elective competencies, one complete cycle of assessment of student learning. That is, briefly describe 1) how the competency was defined in terms of student learning; 2) the type of evidence of student learning that was collected by the program for that competency, 3) how the evidence was analyzed, and 4) how the results were used for program improvement. The program should provide the site visit team with samples of the student work that was used as the basis for assessment.~~
~~1. Definition of student learning outcome for the competency being assessed:~~
~~2. Evidence of learning that was gathered:~~
~~3. How evidence of learning was analyzed:~~
~~4. How the evidence was used for program change(s) or the basis for determining that no change was needed~~

13. Question 6.2b (Deletion)

    "Number of Courses Offered in SSY-2" was deleted from the table.

14. Question 6.2b (addition)

    The Column **Number of students graduating with each concentration/specialization in SSY** was added to the table.

15. Standard 7.1 (addition)

    To help clarify the adjustments made to Standard 7.1 (removing the table and separating the requirements of information made publicly available by programs and NASPAA), the instructions were amended:

    The information listed in the ~~table~~ below is expected to be publicly available through electronic or printed media. Exceptions to this rule should be explained and a clear rationale provided as to why such information is not publicly available and/or accessible. **Programs are expected to ensure ongoing accuracy in all external media.**

    7.1.1   Please provide an URL to the following information, which is to be made public, and kept current, by the program:

16. Standard 7.1 (reorganization)

    The matrix presenting the data expected to be made publicly available by both the program and by NASPAA was reorganized to mirror the online template of the self-study report. Those data to be made public by programs were added under the heading 7.1.1, and those data to be made public by NASPAA were moved to the Basis of Judgment.

17. Standard 7.1 (edit)

    Under Faculty (Standard 3), the information to be made available was changed:

Faculty identified within the unit including rank.

Program Faculty identified including credentials.

18. Standard 7.1 (edit)

    Under Graduates (Standard 4), the information to be made available was changed to match Table 4.3.3a:

    Completion Rate (Percentage of class entering five years prior to self-study year that graduated within **100% of degree program length and within 200% degree program length**)

19. Standard 7.1 (Deletion)

    Mission-Linked Public Data Reporting

    Some programs may have missions that trigger additional public data reporting. If any of the following conditions is indicated in the Self-Study Report, the program has additional public accountability responsibilities, and should either participate in the data survey indicated below or provide an equivalent source of public information about your program to stakeholders.

If your MISSION includes:	Your program should participate in these data survey:	Where your data will appear:
Seeking a national or international applicant pool and a national/international scope of policy/management influence	NASPAA Alumni survey (when it becomes available, est.'d 2013-14.) Until then or alternatively, the program may present its own alumni survey results, at its option.	Gopublicservice.org and NASPAA and APPAM website locations for prospective students; or on the program's website or equivalent
Significant selectivity in admissions	NASPAA/APPAM Foundation Data Survey (every Fall, starting 2012).	NASPAA website and potential media partners; or on the program's website or equivalent
International public affairs education	The program should present its own data related to its international mission.	Globalmpa.net; or on the program's website or equivalent

    Programs with these missions should anticipate the need to participate in these data modules in advance of completing their self-study, and should contact the NASPAA office for further details and timetables.

    If the program has checked one of the mission boxes but has elected not to participate in the corresponding data survey, in the space below, explain how the program meets the public accountability aim of this standard

20. Standard 7.1 (Deletion)

    The following was deleted from NASPAA-provided publicly available information:

- ~~Faculty Publication Titles (1 per faculty member) that best exemplify program mission.~~
- ~~Faculty contributions (1 per faculty member) to public policy and administration~~
- ~~Evidence of Student Learning Outcomes (such as Graduate Portfolios, Research Papers, etc.)~~

21. Glossary (Deletion)

Deleted duplicate definition of Student Services.

22. Standard 5.3, Basis of Judgment (addition)

While not all programs will have ~~them~~ **concentrations or specializations**, mission-specific elective competencies can reflect the unique and/or specialized knowledge and expertise available to students in the program.

23. Standard 5.3, Basis of Judgment (addition)

5.3 Basis of Judgment:

The program articulates how elective offerings contribute to the achievement of program mission and goals. The program demonstrates that it has the capacity and properly qualified faculty to deliver all specializations or concentrations it offers to its students.

5.3 Clarifying Examples:

Program G has a mission focused on regional issues within its state and offers an international development concentration. The program does not indicate faculty with expertise in development, nor does it clearly articulate how this concentration relates to the program's mission. Most of the program's graduates work in local and regional government positions within the program's state. This program has not yet demonstrated conformance with 5.3.

Program H offers students five concentrations related to its local government management mission. In addition to the main campus, the program is also offered at an off-campus downtown location to a cohort of fire and police professionals. The only specialization offered to this cohort is emergency management. The program provides clear information to the unique cohort as to the options available at that location and has policies in place to ensure that the students can graduate with their concentration in a timely manner. The program is in conformance with 5.3.

Program I has a wide array of faculty resources and lists multiple areas of student focus on its website. The program states in its Self Study Report that it does not have official specializations for purposes of accreditation. On the site visit, students complain that they do not have access to enough elective courses to complete their specializations and have worries about graduating on time. The program has not yet demonstrated conformance with 5.3.

Program J offers students the opportunity to design their own concentrations or take one offered in the university's urban planning department. The program provides clear information to students regarding how concentrations can be formed, including a limit on non-programmatic credit hours and syllabi oversight for any courses outside of the public administration department. In addition, the program maintains oversight over the approved courses for the urban planning concentration through a professor holding a dual appointment in both public administration and urban planning. The program is in conformance with 5.3.

24. Standard 5.3, Basis of Judgment (deletion)

5.3 Clarifying Examples:

The mission of Program G is to prepare students for management and administrative positions in government and not-for-profit organizations. Program G offers a concentration in non-profit management. Students are required to demonstrate a working knowledge of government regulations regarding non-profits. Program G is in conformance with Standard 5.3 for this competency.

Program H requires students to select one of three "specializations" offered by the program: non-profit; finance; or generalist. The program defines student learning outcomes for the non-profit and finance specializations but the not generalist. The program will need to state the competency expected of students in the generalist specialization.

25. Standard 5.3, Basis of Judgment (deletion)

5.3 Basis of Judgment:

The program states how each mission-specific option, track, concentration, or specialization is linked to program mission and provides at least one example of a student competency for each option. The options or specializations offered are consistent with the program's mission.

26. Standard 5, Part B (Deletion)

Basis of Judgment

At a minimum, the program has defined each mission-specific elective competency in terms of student learning outcomes. Over one accreditation cycle, the program will have completed all four stages of the assessment process for each mission-specific elective competency. An accredited program need not assess all competencies every year or cohort, but rather at a frequency appropriate for its mission and goals. However, assessing each competency only once during a seven year accreditation cycle would not likely be sufficient for conformance in most programs.

27. Standard 5, Part C (Deletion)

Basis of Judgment

The program demonstrates evidence of student attainment of the expected learning outcomes for the mission-specific elective competencies described in the self-study. (The SVT has auditing authority at NASPAA and may review any mission-specific elective competencies). The program shows that it collects direct evidence of student learning and analyzes the evidence in terms of faculty expectations. If the results of assessment do not meet faculty expectations, the program shows how it has used the results of assessment for program change to improve student learning.