Standard 7 Matching Communications with the Mission

7.1 **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. In establishing transparency, programs must provide data that are publicly available and clearly linked to the mission of the program. NASPAA expects an accredited program to meet the expectations of the profession in terms of accountability in public service. Transparency is a *public service value* exemplified in programmatic action and results. In order to demonstrate that the program results follow from the mission, the burden lies with the program to produce data acknowledging the strengths and limitations of the program mission.

Underlying assumption

Each accredited program, regardless of its mission, is expected to communicate accurately about its accreditation status and supply certain data to demonstrate conformance to each standard. This "universal" data and information should be publicly available via appropriate communication medium (electronic or printed) and privately available to stakeholders (faculty, NASPAA, etc.). Such mandatory requirements are a minimum basis by which programs can claim a linkage between the mission and the outcome. A program that provides additional data by participating in national surveys (optional) sponsored by NASPAA, ASPA, or other organizations can demonstrate, by example, its leadership in public service education and defining the public service values with respect to its mission. This essentially divides the component of data requirements in two categories: (1) conforming to the standard by reporting universal information to all stakeholders, and (2) conforming to the standard by providing mission-specific information beyond mandatory requirement to help understand and refine program mission to all stakeholders. Universal or mandatory information should include program decision-making processes by which it informs its stakeholders about outcomes as it relates to:

1. **Students**: decisions about whether to apply and enroll;
2. **Staff and Faculty**: decisions about whether to accept and continue employment;
3. **Employers**: decisions about whether to sponsor internships or hire a graduate;
4. **Administrators**: decisions about whether to approve faculty lines and provide funding for the program;
5. **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.

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Self-Study Instructions:

This standard governs the release of public service education data and information by the program and NASPAA for public accountability purposes. Virtually all of the data addressed in this standard have been requested in previous sections of the self-study; this standard addresses *how* and *where the* key elements of the data are made publicly accessible.

In preparing its Self-Study Report for Standards 1-6, the program will provide information and data to COPRA. *Some* of these data will be made public *by NASPAA* to provide public accountability about public service education. NASPAA will make key information about mission, admissions policies, faculty, career services, and costs available to stakeholder groups that include prospective students, alumni, employers, and policymakers.

These and all other data will be posted *by the program* on its website (or be made public in some other way). These data are listed below. A program that does not provide a URL needs to explain in a text box how it makes this information public (through a publication or brochure, for example).

Data and Information Requirements

The information listed 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. The program is expected to ensure ongoing accuracy in all external media on an annual basis.

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

General Information about the degree (Program Fact Sheet)
   a) Degree Title
   b) Organizational Relationship between program and university
   c) Modes of Program Delivery
   d) Number of Credit Hours
   e) Length of Degree
   f) List of Dual Degrees (if applicable)
   g) List of Specializations (if applicable)
   h) Fast-track Info (if applicable)
   i) Number of Students

Mission of the Program (Standard 1)
   j) Mission Statement

Faculty (Standard 3)
- k) Number of Faculty Teaching in Program
- l) Program Faculty Identified Including Credentials

Cost of Degree (Standard 4)
- m) Tuition Cost (in-state and out-of-state)
- n) Description of Financial Aid Availability, including assistantships

Admissions (Standard 4.2)
- o) Admission Criteria

Career Services (Standard 4.3)
- p) Distribution of Placement of Graduates Graduating from the Year Prior to the Data Year (number)

Current Students (Standard 4.3)
- q) Internship Placement List (use list in Standard 4)

Graduates (Standard 4.3)
- r) Completion Rate (percentage of class entering five years prior to data year that graduated within 2 years and 4 years)

If the program does not provide a URL to one or more of the required data elements above, in the space below, explain how the program meets the public accountability aim of this standard

<u>7.1 Basis of Judgment</u>

The program should provide evidence that communications with its stakeholders demonstrate 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 admission policies. Goals, policy, and standards, including academic prerequisites, are clearly and publicly stated. Admission 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 reports on the completion rates of its graduates.
- The program explains to prospective students the cost of attendance (tuition and fees) and ethically communicates information regarding opportunities for financial assistance.
- The program is expected to ensure ongoing accuracy in all external media on an annual basis.

7.1 Self Study Guide

If the program has not made the below information available to the public, it must state why it has not done so, and the rationale for demonstrating conformance with this standard.

General Information: NASPAA will publicly release data supplied on the following information: degree title, organizational relationship of the program to the school, modes of delivery, number of credit hours, length of degree, list of dual degrees, list of specializations, fast-track Info, and number of students.

Mission Statement: The program will make available to the public its mission statement. The program must provide to COPRA the URL of where on the website the information is available. If the program has not made this information available to the public, it must state why it has not done so, and the rationale for demonstrating conformance with this standard.

Admission: The program will make publicly available the admission criteria for entry into their program. This includes any exceptions or alternate routes to admission that a student may use. The program will provide to COPRA the URL of where on the website the information is available.

Enrollment: NASPAA may make publicly available program enrollment and gender/ethnic composition where available. If the program has not made this information available to the public via NASPAA it must state why it has not done so, and the rationale for demonstrating conformance with this standard. NASPAA is aware that in some US states providing information on the ethnic make-up of enrolled students may not be legally permissible; or that in some instances a program's size would make the information individually identifiable. Programs facing these legal issues should note in their rationale to COPRA why they are in conformance with the standard.

Faculty: The program will make available to the public the following information: the number of Faculty teaching the program, Faculty identified within the unit, and Faculty diversity. NASPAA will also make this information publicly available.

Cost of Degree: The program will make available to the public the following information: Tuition cost (for all student populations), Financial Aid Information, and Assistantships available. The program will provide to COPRA the URL of where on the website the information is available.
(Note this is the one of the few aspects of Standard 7 where the information we are asking you to provide has not been collected elsewhere in the SSR).

Career Service: Both NASPAA and the program will make available to the public the program's distribution of placement of graduates (using the prescribed categories).

Internship Placement: The program will make publicly available the number of internships (distributed by sector) for the self-study year (or data year), including an explanation of waivers granted.

Student Completion: NASPAA and the program will make available to the public the program's completion rate (as defined in Standard 4, to be the number of the SSY-5 cohort that complete the program within 2, 3, and 4 years).

Evidence of Student Learning Outcomes: NASPAA may make publicly available information on evidence of student learning outcomes.

7.1 Clarifying Examples

> Program A's electronic/print materials reflect information prior to the recent appointment of new faculty and revision of the curriculum; faculty meeting minutes are not taken; records of administrative decisions are incomplete; no record or record older than five years of student internships, graduate placements or alumni career progress. Program A is not in conformance with Standard 7.

> Program B maintains accessible electronic/print materials with current information; faculty meeting minutes are taken; administrative files are complete; records of student internships, graduate placements, and student and alumni career progress not older than two years are summarized in electronic/ print distribution. Program B is in conformance with Standard 7.

> Program C's prospective student admission decisions are maintained and recorded via ApplyYourSelf Online. Student records are managed through the Banner System and are accessible to core faculty. Alumni records are maintained in a searchable electronic database. Faculty communication is maintained in SharePoint or archived in Blogs. Students and employers have access to Career Service Portal for matching placements for interns and graduates. The program explains how each electronic database is accessible to stakeholders and can be used by them to understand program operations and to inform their decisions. The Program also explains how it tracks the data to improve its internal governance and pursue its mission. Program C is in conformance with Standard 4.

> Program D offers the MPA degree through traditional in-class instruction as well as online modules. As per program website program's literature on its on-line program and campus based program appears the same. However, admission, course offerings and other elements are different for the two delivery approaches. The program is not in conformance with Standard 7 because the program does not clearly provide information on its website to potential students about the differences between the online and campus based programs.

7.1 NASPAA Publicly Accessible Data
May be made public by NASPAA[1]

General Information about the degree (Program Fact Sheet)
1. Degree Title
2. Organizational Relationship between program and university
3. Modes of program delivery
4. Number of Credit Hours
5. Length of degree
6. List of dual degrees
7. List of specializations
8. Fast-track Info
9. Number of students (varies)

Mission of the Program (Standard 1)
1. Please link your program performance outcomes to the contributions your program intends to produce to advance the knowledge, research, and practice of public service.

Enrollment (Standard 4)
1. Number Enrolled
2. Enrollment – Diversity
   a. Gender
   b. Race/ethnicity
   c. International

Cost of Degree (Standard 4)
1. Tuition cost (in-state and out-of-state)
2. Description of Financial Aid availability, including assistantships

Career Services (Standard 4.3)
1. Distribution of placement of graduates (number)

Faculty (Standard 3)
1. Faculty diversity (percent of teaching faculty, by ethnicity)

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[1] Subject to NASPAA Data Policy guidelines.