Self Study Workshop Part II
Standard 5: Competencies and Student Learning

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Session Objectives:
- To have participants increase their level of understanding of how to use the Self-Study Instructions (including the use of the "Basis for Judgment" and "Illustrative Examples") as they relate to Standard 5.0.
- To provide participants with several examples of how existing programs have defined, measured, and assessed competencies
- To help participants appreciate the range of mission-specific and additional specialization competencies a program might define within the standards.
- To illustrate how mapping curricula and competencies can be a valuable (but not required) part of the self-study process.
- To provide opportunities for participants to begin applying the information from this session to their own programs and to share ideas with each other.

Session Outline
1. Comparing Old and New Standards (handout)
2. Curriculum Mapping as a Useful Tool
   a. The CSULB Example (handout)
   b. Activity developing a map of your own program with universal required competencies
3. Defining a Competency
   a. The Grand Valley Example (handout)
   b. Activity developing a operational definition for a single competency under one of the five domains
4. Assessment of Competencies
   a. The Binghamton University Example (handout)
   b. Activity developing a process for assessing the competency defined in the previous activity
5. Evaluation

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Curriculum Components and Competencies: A Comparison

1. Introduction. The terminology of the NASPAA accreditation standards with respect to student learning is changing. The following tables provide a conceptual linkage between the older Standard 4 Curriculum and the newer Standard 5 Student Learning.

Table 1 Curriculum Components and Universal Required Competencies

Standard 4.0 Curriculum	Standard 5 Matching Operations with the Mission: Student Learning
4.21 Common Curriculum Components. The common curriculum components shall enhance the student's values, knowledge, and skills to act ethically and effectively: In the Management of Public Service Organizations, the components of which include: - Human resources - Budgeting and financial processes - Information management, technology applications, and policy. In the Application of Quantitative and Qualitative Techniques of Analysis, the components of which include: - Policy and program formulation, implementation and evaluation - Decision-making and problem-solving With an Understanding of the Public Policy and Organizational Environment, the components of which include: - Political and legal institutions and processes - Economic and social institutions and processes - Organization and management concepts and behavior	Universal Required Competencies: The required competencies will include five domains: the ability • to lead and manage in public governance; • to participate in and contribute to the policy process; • to analyze, synthesize, think critically, solve problems and make decisions; • to articulate and apply a public service perspective; • to communicate and interact productively with a diverse and changing workforce and citizenry.

2. Curriculum Mapping. Under the older standards, the required curriculum components were often each addressed in only one or two courses, for example, human resources might be addressed under a course called Human Resources, policy in a course called Policy Analysis, ethics in a course called Ethics, and so forth. However, it was also possible to address the required curriculum components in several courses or, in the case of ethics for example or information management, not in one course but in parts or modules of several required courses.

Table 2-A Example of Curriculum mapping under the older standards

Required Courses	Management			Analysis		Environment			Ethics
	HR	Fin	Info	Policy	Prob	Political	Social	Org	
MGT 501	X		X	X					X
FIN 502		X	X	X	X	X			X
POLICY 503			X	X	X	X	X	X	X
QUANT 504		X	X		X				X
ENVIR 505			X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Under the newer standards, the Universal Required Competencies may be addressed in one or two courses but more likely will be addressed in parts or modules in several required courses, exemplified by assignments where students demonstrate their competencies.

Table 2-B Example of Curriculum mapping under the newer standards

Required Courses	to lead and manage in public governance	to participate in and contribute to the policy process	to analyze, synthesize, think critically, solve problems and make decisions	to articulate and apply a public service perspective	to communicate and interact productively with a diverse and changing workforce and citizenry
MGT 501	X	X	X	X	X
FIN 502			X	X	X
POLICY 503	X	X	X	X	X
QUANT 504			X		X
ENVIR 505	X	X	X	X	X

3. Examples of Competencies. The knowledge and skills that students learned under the older standards was often expressed in terms of traditional fields in the disciplines of public affairs, public policy, and public administration, such as "human resources," "policy," or "budgeting." The knowledge and skills that students learn under the newer standards are expressed as competencies that may encompass elements from more than one traditional field. In addition, student learning is expressed as an outcome, that is, in terms of what the student will be expected to know and be able to do as a result of earning the accredited degree.

Table 3 Examples of Competencies for Leading and Managing in Public Governance

Standard 4.0 Curriculum 4.21 Common Curriculum Components. The common curriculum components shall enhance the student's values, knowledge, and skills to act ethically and effectively:	**Standard 5 Student Learning** **The Universal Required Competencies will include the ability to lead and manage in public governance (examples):**
In the Management of Public Service Organizations, - Information management, technology applications, and policy.	• Manage projects • Manage information and networks
In the Management of Public Service Organizations - Human resources	• Lead and manage people effectively, whether volunteers or compensated, fostering team building, commitment, creativity, and performance

With an Understanding of the Public Policy and Organizational Environment,
    - Political and legal institutions and processes
    - Economic and social institutions and processes
	• Appraise the organizational environment, both internal and external, as well as the culture, politics and institutional setting

With an Understanding of the Public Policy and Organizational Environment, -Organization and management concepts and behavior	• Apply public management models and organization theory
In the Management of Public Service Organizations, - Human resources In the Application of Quantitative and Qualitative Techniques of Analysis - Policy and program formulation, implementation and evaluation With an Understanding of the Public Policy and Organizational Environment, - Political and legal institutions and processes - Economic and social institutions and processes - Organization and management concepts and behavior	• Understand the relationships between public policy, whether proposed or enacted, and leadership and management in implementation

4. Examples of Student Learning for Competencies

In the following examples, the Universal Required Competency of "Leading and Managing in Public Governance" has been defined (or operationalized) differently by different programs. These examples show how student learning on that competency might be assessed in order to answer such questions as: What do we expect students to know and be able to do? Are students meeting program expectations? How do we know? Is evidence used for program change? Three of the four examples appear to meet the intent of the standard.

Program A: Leading and Managing in Public Governance

Learning Outcome defined as:	Evidence collected	Analysis & Findings	Program Change
Ability to manage projects	Project management report	Six-dimension rubric applied by faculty; poor performance on some dimensions	Project report broken into six sections written over the course of the semester

Program B: Leading and Managing in Public Governance

Learning Outcome defined as:	Evidence collected	Analysis & Findings	Program Change
Ability to resolve conflict and negotiate	Teams perform in negotiation simulation	Evaluation by panel of practitioners; all teams met expectations	Faculty discuss whether expectations could be raised; no change needed for now

Program C: Leading and Managing in Public Governance

Learning Outcome defined as:	Evidence collected	Analysis & Findings	Program Change
Manage public and non-profit partnerships	Students analyze non-profits for partnership	Evaluated by faculty and the non-profit; students weak on best practices	Partnership best practices added to required courses

Program D: Leading and Managing in Public Governance

Learning Outcome defined as:	Evidence	Analysis & Findings	Program Change
Manage public and non-profit partnerships	Student grades in course on generic management	All students get either an A or a B grade	Program concludes that no change is needed

Note: Program D would have to explain how its assessment meets the intent of the Standard, as course grades do not provide sufficient evidence of student learning on this competency.

Standard 5   Matching Operations with the Mission: Student Learning

5.1   Universal Required Competencies: As the basis for its curriculum, the Program will adopt a set of required competencies related to its mission and [to] public service values. The required competencies will include five domains: the ability:
        •to lead and manage in public governance;
        •to participate in and contribute to the public policy process;
        •to analyze, synthesize, think critically, solve problems and make decisions;
        •to articulate and apply a public service perspective;
        •to communicate and interact productively with a diverse and changing workforce and citizenry.

EXAMPLE: **California State University, Long Beach (CSULB)**

Mission Statement
The mission of the Masters in Public Administration Program at the Graduate Center for Public Policy and Administration is to recruit and educate a diverse student population with the professional competencies necessary for leadership and management roles in the public service and in community based and non-profit organizations. The curriculum emphasizes the skills necessary for ethical and efficient public management - including planning, **policy analysis**, and **decision-making** - that best represent the **public interest**.

Description of Competencies
The core curriculum is guided by competencies that have been identified through communication with public sector practitioners, analysis of alumni and student surveys, and faculty input. Of the top ten areas of importance to the careers of MPA graduates, five are essential skills, including **problem-solving**, **oral/written communication**, **decision-making**, **oral communication**, and **leadership**. The next five are **ethics**, organizational theory/behavior, **working in teams**, **policy analysis**, and information/data management. The final competencies are budgeting and finance, human resource management, and research methods/statistics.

Mapping Competencies to the Curriculum

Required Course	to lead and manage in public governance	to participate in and contribute to the public policy process	to analyze, synthesize, think critically, solve problems and make decisions	to articulate and apply a public service perspective	to communicate and interact productively with a diverse and changing workforce and citizenry
Intro to PPA	I	I	I	I	I
Budget/ Finance	P	P	P/M	P/M	P
Org Theory/ Behavior	P/M	P	P	P	P
Human Resources	P/M	P	P/M	P/M	P/M
Policy Analysis	P	P/M	P	P/M	P/M
Research Methods		P	P/M	P/M	P
Capstone Seminar	M	M	M	M	M

(I=introduced; P=practiced; M=demonstration of mastery)

Assessment Methods

The curriculum includes seven required courses that provide opportunities for students to be introduced to the expected competencies, to reinforce and practice them, and finally to demonstrate mastery. The students collect their work throughout the MPA program in a Learning Portfolio, which is a requirement for graduation. Each course has a signature assignment on which students demonstrate mastery of one or more of the competencies. Each course has a grading rubric for the signature assignment. Student performance on the signature assignment must be certified as acceptable by the instructor of record as well as by the final portfolio review committee.

The following are some examples of how the Universal Required Competencies have been defined and how student performance has been directly assessed in the MPA program at CSULB.

An example of competency to lead and manage in public governance:
- *Competency defined as*: Appraise the organizational environment, both internal and external, as well as the culture, politics and institutional setting
- *Competency assessed by*: Student performance in a semester-long simulation of an office of human resources in a public agency in the required Human Resources course, including role-playing, working in teams, and writing policy documents.

An example of competency to participate in and contribute to the public policy process:
- *Competency defined as*: Ability to describe and execute the policymaking process, including defining the problem, setting the agenda, formulate policy, implement policy and evaluate policy
- *Competency assessed by*: Student performance in a semester-long analysis of policy proposals in the required Policy Analysis course, including teamwork, oral and written presentations, quantitative as well as political analysis, a policy implementation plan, and a policy evaluation plan.

An example of competency to analyze, synthesize, think critically, solve problems and make decisions:
- *Competency defined as*: Identify and employ alternative sources of funding, including grants, taxes, and fees
- *Competency assessed by*: Student performance on a case study to balance the budget for child care for city employees in a required Budgeting and Finance course, using spreadsheets.

An example of competency to articulate and apply a public service perspective:
- *Competency defined as*: Understand and apply criteria appropriate to public affairs, administration, and policy
- *Competency assessed by*: Student performance in a semester-long analysis of policy proposals in the required Policy Analysis course, distinguishing among social, technical, and environmental impacts, as well as costs, benefits, effectiveness, efficiency and equity criteria.

An example of competency to communicating and interacting productively—face-to-face and/or electronically—with a diverse and changing workforce and citizenry:

- *Competency defined as*: Work productively in teams, interact effectively in a team, demonstrate composure, professionalism and effective working relationships, including understanding others' priorities, needs and concerns and sharing information, expertise and resources.
- *Competency assessed by*: Student contributions to a Wiki in the required introductory course to define important terms, concepts, and issues in public policy and administration and to make constructive comments on the work of others.

Indirect Assessment. In addition to the assessment of samples of student work contained in the Portfolio, students also demonstrate their progress by completing an initial skills self-assessment as they enter the MPA program and a final skills self-assessment as they prepare to graduate. The comparison of the two self-assessments shows the amount gained by the student in each area of competency using a value-added approach. The initial skills self-assessment is shown below; the final assessment form is essentially the same.

MPA INITIAL SKILLS SELF ASSESSMENT—PART I

Please respond to the following questions. Indicate your current knowledge (1 = no knowledge, 5 = a great deal of knowledge) or ability (1=no ability, 5=a great deal of ability) in each of these areas by circling the most appropriate number. In addition, please indicate how important you believe these areas/skills will be in your career by circling the most appropriate number (1 = not at all, 5 = a great deal). After completing this, please provide a written description of any skills and/or experience that you have in the core content areas (listed on page two). Your discussion should include an honest assessment of your strengths and weaknesses in each content area.

I already know about this area: 1 = nothing/5 = a great deal	Area	Important to my career? 1=not at all/5 = a great deal
1 2 3 4 5	Budgeting/financial mgt	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	Computers/technology	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	Contracting/grants	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	Decision-making	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	Diversity	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	Ethics	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	Economics	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	Globalization	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	Information/Data Mgt.	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	Leadership	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	Law/Legal system	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	Non-profits	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	Oral communications	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	Organization behavior	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	Personnel/human resources	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	Policy analysis	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	Political system/Politics	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	Problem-solving	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	Research/statistics	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	Working in teams	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	Written communications	1 2 3 4 5

MPA INITIAL SKILLS SELF ASSESSMENT--Part II

Please discuss your experience and/or skills in each of the following competency areas:

<u>Budgeting and Finance</u>

<u>Decision-making</u>

<u>Human Resource Management</u>

<u>Information/data management</u>

<u>Leadership</u>

<u>Organization Theory</u>

<u>Policy Analysis</u>

<u>Problem-solving</u>

<u>Public sector ethics</u>

<u>Research Methods</u>

<u>Teamwork/Interpersonal skills</u>

<u>Written/Oral communication</u>

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Self Study Workshop Part II

Exercise I
Mapping Competencies to the Curriculum

Instructions:
In the first column, list the courses that all students in your program are required to take as part of your degree program.

In the remaining cells, identify whether students are introduced to (I), have an opportunity to practice (P), and/or must demonstrate mastery (M) one or more competencies in each of the five domains.

Required Course	Standard 5.0 Universal Competency Domains				
	to lead and manage in public governance	to participate in and contribute to the public policy process	to analyze, synthesize, think critically, solve problems and make decisions	to articulate and apply a public service perspective	to communicate and interact productively with a diverse and changing workforce and citizenry

STANDARD 5 UNIVERSAL REQUIRED COMPETENCIES

Competency:
•to analyze, synthesize, think critically, solve problems and make decisions;

EXAMPLE: **Grand Valley State University, School of Public and Nonprofit Administration (SPNA)**

Mission Statement:

 The mission of the School of Public and Nonprofit Administration is to educate students for lives of active citizenship as contributing members of their local, regional, national, and global communities, and for professional careers in public and nonprofit organizations. We are committed to developing in undergraduate and graduate students the capacities for ethical judgment, **critical thinking**, and the core competencies necessary to fulfill multiple roles as effective managers and public servants. The mission of the MPA program is to develop both the general knowledge and specific abilities needed for leadership in a fast changing world. The curriculum is designed to prepare students to act ethically and effectively in public management, urban and regional policy and planning, nonprofit management, criminal justice, and health care administration, and to transcend traditional boundaries in the pursuit of prosperous, safe, and healthy communities.

Definitions of Competencies

Two of the most fundamental and important skills for any public or nonprofit administrator are to master the art of **thinking critically** and communicating effectively. As such, the curriculum must provide the necessary skills for the work place and students must demonstrate competencies in these skills. The assessment of these skills is accomplished through the use of **rubrics** (to assess the skills) and questionnaires (to understand the efficacy of these skills in the workplace). *To think critically, our students must support their arguments with quality evidence and model building. In addition, they must recognize alternative explanations.* Finally, these skills must be useful in the workplace. Therefore, the critical thinking objectives include:
- Objective 1a. Students demonstrate competencies in analytical skills
- Objective 1b. SPNA provides useful skills for workplace

To properly communicate ideas, problems, and solutions, our students should include insightful analysis through the use of evidence, present their arguments in a logical and organized manner that maintains a professional tone. Finally they should use proper mechanics and follow a recognized format. Therefore, our objectives include:
- Objective 2a. Students demonstrate competencies in communication skills
- Objective 2b. SPNA provides useful skills for workplace

Assessment Method:
To assess **critical thinking** and communication skills, we use papers written by our students in the capstone course, PA 619, Management Seminar. This course is designed to provide students with a comprehensive overview and assessment of their advanced study of public and nonprofit administration. The course approaches the study of public management from the perspectives of a competing values framework, administrative ethics, and from multiple levels of analysis (individual, organizational, and societal). Students combine theory and practice through case analyses and personal assessment of management competencies. Each student completes a journal article length research

paper or analytical essay, with the best papers published in the SPNA REVIEW. From this course we randomly selected 14 papers and randomly assigned them to the public administration faculty for review. The faculty used the **rubrics** (below) to evaluate each paper. For each paper, the faculty member assigned a score, ranging from 0 to 3, to each of the four critical thinking categories and the six categories for communication skills. In their aggregate form, these scores allow us to assess the each skill category. Moreover, the total score (the summation of the scores for all four categories) provides us with the overall Self-Study Report 19 quality of our students' critical thinking and communication abilities. The following **targets** have been established to provide us with continuous monitoring of these skills:

- Papers rated satisfactory or better in each assessment category: 75 percent
- Papers rated overall as satisfactory or better: 75 percent

Assessment Rubric for Critical Thinking Skills

Criteria	3=Good	2=Satisfactory	1=Needs Improvement	0=Absent
1. Quality of evidence	Completely evaluates the evidence and sources of evidence. Can distinguish between fact, inference, opinion, and value judgment.	Adequately evaluates the evidence and sources of evidence. Can usually distinguish between fact, inference, opinion, and value judgment.	Superficially evaluates evidence and sources. Often substitutes opinion and value judgment for fact and inference.	Merely repeats information provided or denies evidence with no justification. Confuses facts with inferences, opinions, and value judgments.
2. Supports arguments	Able to support a position with a substantial amount of information, little or no bias, and valid arguments.	Able to support a position with adequate information and few, if any, logical fallacies.	Able to support a position with some evidence.	Cannot articulate a position or offers no supporting evidence.
3. Used models	Accurately and completely analyzes purpose using appropriate models; finds connections between the material and the models.	Satisfactorily analyzes purpose using appropriate models; misses minor connections.	Attempts to use appropriate models, but gives attention to only the most significant or obvious connections.	Models are misapplied or not used.
4. Recognizes alternatives	Recognizes all plausible alternative viewpoints or solutions; completely considers each one before choosing.	Recognizes alternative solutions or viewpoints; gives them some consideration.	Recognizes a few alternative solutions or viewpoints; but dismisses them without justification.	Unable to recognize alternative solutions or viewpoints

We met our targets of 75 percent of all papers being rated as satisfactory or better in all critical thinking areas except the ability to recognize alternatives. With exception to content and mechanics, more than 80 of all communication skill targets are achieved. While content missed the target by less than two percentage points, writing mechanics are … lower than the established target.

<u>Assessment Rubric for [Written] Communication Skills</u>

Criteria	3 = Good	2 = Satisfactory	Criteria 1 = Needs Improvement	0 = Absent
1. Content	Thoughtful and insightful analysis of a clearly present thesis or purpose. Reader gains good insight	Basic analysis of a thesis or purpose. Reader gains sufficient insight.	Some analysis of a thesis or purpose. Reader gains few insights.	Paper does not identify thesis or purpose. Analysis vague or missing. Reader is confused or misinformed.
2. Organization	Ideas arranged logically. Flow smoothly and are topics links. Reader can follow reasoning.	Ideas are, for the most part, arranged logically and linked. Reader can follow most of the reasoning.	Writing is not logical and ideas sometime fail to make sense. Reader needs to work to figure out meaning.	Little semblance of logical organization. Reader cannot identify reasoning.
3. Tone	Tone is consistently professional and appropriate of audience.	Tone is generally professional and mostly appropriate for audience.	Tone is occasionally professional or occasional appropriate for audience.	Tone is not professional. It is inappropriate for audience and purpose.
4. Mechanics	Writing is free or almost free of errors.	Occasional errors in writing, but they do not represent a major distraction.	Writing has numerous errors and distracts the reader.	Errors are so numerous that they obscure meaning.
5. References	Sources of presented evidence are clearly and fairly represented	Complete references are generally present.	Occasional and/or incomplete references are provided.	References are not or mostly not presented.
6. Format	A recognized format is correctly followed	CA recognized format is generally followed; a few mistakes, however.	Format of document reflects incomplete knowledge of standard.	No standardized format followed.

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Self Study Workshop Part II

Exercise 2
Defining Competencies

Instructions:

Step 1: Working in small groups, consider two very different professional public service programs, a Master of Public Administration (MPA) program with a focus on preparing students for management positions in international NGOs, and a Master of Public Policy with a heavily focus on quantitative and economic analysis and an emphasis on environmental policy.

 Select **one** of the five domains listed below and define different competencies for those two programs under the same competency.

Domains:

Domain	Program A (MPA with international NGO focus)	Program B (MPP with environmental policy focus)
1. to lead and manage in public governance		
2. to participate in and contribute to the public policy process		
3. to analyze, synthesize, think critically, solve problems and make decisions		
4. to articulate and apply a public service perspective		
5. to communicate and interact productively with a diverse and changing workforce and citizenry		

Step 2: Working individually, list your program's mission in the space below (or the key elements of the mission):

For the same domain area you addressed above for the hypothetical programs, identify a competency you expect your students to have upon completion of your degree:

Domain	Competency

Master of Public Administration (MPA)
Binghamton University

PROGRAM MISSION:
The mission of the Department of Public Administration is to develop individual and institutional capacity for community-based public practice. The MPA program mission is to advance the capacity of local government and nonprofit administrators to address organizational and community problems through enhanced knowledge, skills and professionalism.

MPA COMPETENCIES ARE LINKED TO NASPAA's FIVE DOMAINS OF UNIVERSAL COMPETENCIES:

- To lead and manage in public governance
- To participate in and contribute to the public policy process
- To analyze, synthesize, think critically, solve problems and make decisions
- To articulate and apply a public service perspective
- To communicate and interact productively with a diverse and changing workforce and citizenry

As it relates to the mission of our MPA program, it is essential that students demonstrate these competencies in the context of collaboration with local and nonprofit organizations in the community. For those students pursuing a specialization, they must demonstrate a higher level of understanding of the unique challenges (structural, contextual, etc) of that type of organization or that issue area.

The curriculum is organized so that within the common core courses, some serve the purpose of introducing students to competencies and providing an initial opportunity for practice, others are primarily a place for practice with preliminary assessments, and the final culminating courses primarily serve an assessment function in which students demonstrate their competencies.

CURRICULUM OVERVIEW:

CORE COURSES REQUIRED OF ALL MPA STUDENTS (33 of 42 credits)	
COURSES IN WHICH STUDENTS ARE INTRODUCED TO UNIVERSAL AND MISSION SPECIFIC COMPETENCIES AND PROVIDED AN OPPORTUNITY FOR INITIAL PRACTICE	
Research Design & Methods (4)	
Foundations of Public Service (4)	
21st Century Governance (4)	
Budgeting & Financial Management (4)	
Evidence-Based Decision Making (Choose 1) (4)	
	Policy Analysis
	Program Evaluation
	Survey Research
	Performance Analysis
Managing People in Organization (Choose 1) (3)	
	Human Resource Management
	Org. Theory
	Org. Behavior
	Managing Networks

	Managing Information and Technology (2)
COURSES IN WHICH STUDENTS APPLY THEIR COMPETENCIES AND WE CONDUCT PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENTS	
	Internship (2) – Waiver is possible with significant (5+ years) of administrative and supervisory experience in a public or nonprofit organization
	Problem Definition (1)
CULMINATING EXPERIENCE COURSES IN WHICH STUDENT COMPETENCIES ARE ASSESSED	
	Capstone Project (3)
	Praxis through Cases (2)

SPECIALIZATION or ELECTIVES (9)

Two specializations are offered within the MPA program
    1. Nonprofit Management & Leadership, and
    2. Local Government Management & Leadership).
The basic structure of each specialization is a required (3 credit) course to introduce students to the specialization competencies, and 2 additional courses selected from a list of 4-5 options in which students practice competencies. Students who declare a specialization must use their internship, problem definition, and capstone courses to apply and demonstrate their specialization competencies in addition to the universal and mission-specific competencies.
 	
Students may also purse specializations in the following areas as part of formal dual-degree programs:
    1. Social Work (MPA-MSW)
    2. Student Affairs Administration (MPA-MSA)
    3. Health Care Administration (MPA-MS Nursing)
 	
Finally, students may opt to take electives that do not form a recognized specialization. In these cases, the only competencies they are expected to demonstrate are those universal and mission-specific competencies of the program.

EXAMPLE OF ONE ASSESSMENT TOOL:

Based on our mission, we view community practitioners as our partners and we strive to instill that value in students. As such we place a considerable emphasis on feedback and assessment from practitioners. The Final Internship Evaluation (see attached) illustrates how the competencies are operationalized and one way in which they are measured using input from internship site supervisors. The results of this assessment are used to determine if the student has demonstrated sufficient competencies to proceed to the capstone course (with or without remedial work), and to inform the program regarding our preparation of students for the internship experience.

Department of Public Administration   College of Community and Public Affairs   Binghamton University

MPA Internship
Final Intern Evaluation

Intern Name_____   Date_____

Site Supervisor_____   Agency_____

Total # of hours Completed_____

Instructions: Please use this form to evaluate the performance of the student intern you supervised over the last semester. The questions ask you to assess the student in the competency areas that are core to the MPA program: professional conduct, communication, integration of public administration theory into practice, and application of analytical skills to solve problems. This evaluation is used to conduct the student's overall course assessment and must be submitted in order for the student to receive a grade. Please share your assessment with the student during the final performance evaluation session.

Professional Conduct: Using the rating scale below, please indicate the degree of competence the student has demonstrated in each skill area during the internship experience.

1 = No apparent competence
2 = A small degree of competence
3 = A moderate degree of competence
4 = A significant degree of competence
5 = Full competence
NA = I have no basis on which to judge

Intern's Professional Conduct	1	2	3	4	5	NA
Demonstrated strong work ethic						
Was punctual and reliable						
Showed initiative and enthusiasm						
Was willing to learn						
Completed tasks on time						
Worked well with other staff in office						
Worked effectively on teams						
Demonstrated cultural competence						
Worked well independently						
Followed through with all tasks						
Took responsibility for problems and worked effectively toward solutions						
Demonstrated effective time management						
Worked effectively within the organizational structure						
Completed all assignments identified in the MOU						
Came well-prepared with skills/knowledge from course work						

MPA Core Competencies: Using the rating scale below, please indicate the degree of competence the student has demonstrated for each of the skills.

1 = No apparent competence
2 = A small degree of competence
3 = A moderate degree of competence
4 = A significant degree of competence
5 = Full competence
NA = I have no basis on which to judge

MPA Core Competencies	1	2	3	4	5	NA
Writes clear and concise communications						
Organizes thought and evidence in a logical sequence						
Articulates ideas well						
Communicates at a level appropriate for the intended audience						
Communicates well through formal presentations						
Conducts a thorough literature review						
Effectively applies research/theory to public problems						
Understands and interprets trends and debates in administration						
Develops clear problem statements						
Gathers information from a variety of sources						
Distinguishes between sources of information on the basis of quality						
Identifies and applies appropriate analytical techniques						
Interprets results effectively						
Prepares appropriate graphical representations of data						

Were you adequately informed of your responsibilities regarding this internship?   ____yes ____no
Were you satisfied with the communications with and responsiveness of the department staff/faculty?
        ____yes ____no

Additional Comments:

_____ _____   _____ _____
(Site Supervisor Signature)   (Date)   (Internship Coord. Signature)   (Date)

Submit this completed evaluation form by FAX to (607) 777-2414 OR by mail to:
MPA Internship Coordinator
Dept. of Public Administration
CCPA, PO Box 6000
Binghamton University
Binghamton, NY 13902-6000

Exercise 3
Assessing Competencies

Instructions:

Step 1: Re-state the competency you defined for your program at the end of Exercise 2.

Domain	Competency

Step 2: Brainstorm ways in which you could assess whether students have mastered that competency.

Consider such factors as:

1. Who should do the assessment (keeping in mind that you may wish to triangulate assessments from multiple stakeholders)?

2. When should the assessment be completed? (keeping in mind that you may want to provide some preliminary assessments to inform the student and the program)

3. What level of performance should you expect and what are the consequences (for the student and/or program) of not attaining those levels?

4. How should this information be fed back into the program for continuous improvement?

NASPAA Accreditation Institute
Saturday, October 17, 2009 (11:15-12:45)

Self Study Workshop Part II
Standard 5: Competencies and Student Learning

Session Evaluation

Please rate your own knowledge or ability in each of the following areas, both before coming to this session and now that you have attended the session, using a scale of:

1=none … 3 = somewhat …5= a great deal

Before attending this session					Area	After attending this session				
1	2	3	4	5	How to use the Basis for Judgment and Illustrative Examples in the Self Study Instructions	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	Options for defining competencies	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	Options for measuring competencies	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	Options for assessing competencies	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	How to map the curriculum with competencies	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	How to start or advance this process in my own program	1	2	3	4	5