NASPAA’S UNIVERSAL COMPETENCIES

NASPAA requires each accredited MPA program to deliver five Universal Competencies to its students. The programs are allowed to define each competency and determine the courses in which they will be delivered.

Universal Competencies and SPA Definitions:

To lead and manage in public governance

- The student understands the roles and realities of public administration in society
- The student understands the context of public and nonprofit management and how that context differs from private sector management
- The student understands organizational theory and behavior and can apply it to organizational improvement
- The student is able to set mission-driven goals and use data, performance indicators, economic concepts and continuous improvement approaches to manage and lead in service of the mission
- The student understands and is able to apply theories of leadership to motivate people, build teams, and manage change
- The student is able to effectively allocate and manage financial and programmatic resources
- The student is self-aware and is able to manage and lead with emotional intelligence

To participate in and contribute to the public policy process

- The student understands the process and context of policy making at all levels of democratic government
- The student understands and is able to apply tools for engaging citizens in the policy process
- The student understands and is able to apply techniques for generating and selecting among policy alternatives
- The student is able to identify common barriers to effective implementation and how to overcome them
- The student understands how policy and administrative process connect

To analyze, synthesize, think critically, solve problems and make decisions

- The student is able to select and use appropriate research methods and analytical tools for collecting and analyzing data
- The student is able to find and synthesize existing data to inform decisions
- The student is able to critically assess, review, and understand research
- The student understands and is able to apply different perspectives and assumptions to generate policy and management decision alternatives
- The student understands the factors affecting the decision-making process and is able to select and use appropriate criteria and processes for making decisions
- The student is aware of and can apply different “ethical maps” to resolving ethical conflicts
To articulate and apply a public service perspective

- The student is able to understand and apply professional codes of ethics to situations and decisions
- The student understands and adheres to policies and practices advancing government and nonprofit transparency and accountability
- Introduce student to public service values and public integrity
- Have tools for identifying and dealing with conflicts between ethical values.

To communicate and interact productively with a diverse and changing workforce and citizenry

- The student understands and appreciates the value of diverse backgrounds and viewpoints in a democracy
- The student is able to partner effectively and work in teams to accomplish goals
- The student is able to communicate effectively in writing to a variety of audiences
- The student is able to communicate effectively in a spoken format to a variety of audiences
- The student understands the value of and can effectively incorporate citizen participation
- The student understands the diverse workforce and knows how to engage and manage it.
- The student can recognize and manage the ethics of competing values