

Comparison of Canadian Masters Programs in Public Administration, Public Management and Public Policy

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The research reported in this paper compares graduate programs of public administration, public policy and public management in Canada, to the extent that these varied programs can be compared. The study had its origins in a discussion at the Canadian Association of Programs in Public Administration (CAPPA) meeting at the Canadian Centre for Management Development (CCMD) in the fall of 2003. The context was a presentation on the benchmarking that occurs in the United States, and particularly the accreditation process of the American National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration (NASPAA). While there was not much enthusiasm for full-blown accreditation, there was enthusiasm among those present for an informal comparison of curricula at professional master's (MPA/MPP) programs, including designated programs open only to students with high-quality experience in relevant settings. Thus the objective of the study was to compare similar programs with a view to seeing how far a common core curriculum exists.

Public administration is conceived here as the particular stewardship and accountability roles that describe the relationship of the civil servant to elected officials, as well as the geography of the state's organizations and the functions of the key elements in it. Public management seeks to maximize achievement of public service goals at minimal cost in the above-described environment. Public policy refers to policy-making for the public good in general, as opposed to particular interests, incorporating normative considerations, the instruments of policy-making, and technical tools for research and analysis.

American studies of the evolution of public administration research and training have tracked the relative predominance of political science (the American Political Science Association created a committee on public service training in 1912) and management (whose takeoff Henry places at the founding of *Administrative Science Quarterly* in

1956).² In recent decades, traditional public administration has been challenged by two other models, public policy and public management.

Recent research on master's programs in public administration in the United States reflects these categories. They have asked if institutional location, program mission and staff's academic background are reflected in course offerings and degree requirements. They have also tried to establish the effect of accreditation by NASPAA on the core curriculum. NASPAA, founded in 1970, began "rostering" programs that generally conformed to their standards in 1977, and received formal designation as an accreditation body from the Council on Post Secondary Accreditation in 1986.³ A study published in 1990 by Robert Cleary of 173 master's programs found accreditation had not led to a standardization of curriculum even though there was already in 1986 a "reasonably widespread" agreement on an "inner core."⁴ He also found that program location was relevant: free-standing schools required a more complete core curriculum, and political science programs a less complete one. The most recent study, by Breux and colleagues, categorized programs, staff and courses according to whether their emphasis was on acquisition of professional skills or on knowledge of the environment of public service and administration.⁵ Since Cleary's study, it would appear that accreditation has reduced considerably the variations among programs. The most recent study found that location of the unit had more impact on the composition of the staff than it did on program components. It seems that "core curricula emphasize professional skills more than one would expect based on faculty characteristics alone" (267) and that "core curriculum content is not sensitive to program location" (268). Institutions that also offer a political science degree are more likely to be oriented toward the environment and less on professional skills (with the exception of public policy schools). In all locations faculty

tend to be more oriented toward the environment than to the content of the program.

Both these studies went into far more detail than we could, given our mandate and the means at our disposal. They studied course descriptions as well as calendars and more general documents. Breaux et al. point out that one course could cover more than one major topic. Requests by schools or programs for accreditation generate what they call self study or organization self evaluations that are very useful for comparative studies like theirs and ours. Without pre-accreditation self-study reports, or access to documents leading to provincial government reviews, we were unable to go into the kind of detail that they did.

Our research strategy consisted of several stages. First, information was gathered from Web sites about the Canadian programs offering graduate education at the master's level centred on the above topics and who are CAPP members. Information was compiled on program missions, institutional location, the availability of concentrations or joint degrees with other disciplines, admission requirements, degree requirements and compulsory courses. A generic list of core courses was derived from the list of compulsory courses and the prevalence of these courses in programs and schools, then confined to tables. Course listings for schools and programs in Canadian graduate programs in public administration, public policy and management were then screened and classified according to the generic list. The authors also compared this list with the curriculum standards used by NASPAA. The NASPAA standards are supplied in Appendix A.

Because of the context and purpose of this study, an early decision was taken to restrict comparisons to basic programs in order to have comparable data about core curricula. Therefore, although a number of the programs and schools may also offer joint degrees between themselves and a law school, or between themselves and schools of library science or business administration or public law, we have not included these joint graduate professional degrees in our comparison, although we believe they merit attention. The variety is such that if all were included, the common core curriculum would

be minuscule. This in itself is an important finding.

As a second step, the researchers designed a framework for a number of tables to summarize program emphases, admission requirements and requirements to graduate with the master's degree. The next step was the more time-consuming project of filling in the cells for the set of tables to the extent possible, using graduate calendars and the Web sites of the institutions in the universe. This was not a straightforward task. Each university, as well as each program, seems to have developed its own terms and classifications. Most classification schemes work as well as another, but the lack of standardization means judgment must be used and we usually had to rely on titles or short course descriptions. Therefore it was clearly necessary to add a step: to submit the information we had used for tables to each director or coordinator of each school or program retained for correction and addition of missing information. The fifth and final stage was to correct and complete the tabular presentation, and, finally, to draw whatever comparisons appear tenable.

The first table summarizes the central emphasis of the primary program offered by the academic unit responsible for broad graduate public administration, public policy and public management education. This primary program, where suitable, is in the table. About half of graduate programs in our universe are offered by self-standing units within a university. The rest of the programs are offered by departments of political science or political studies, often collaboratively with an academic unit in another university or in their own university.

The self-standing units are, in alphabetical order, Carleton's School of Public Policy and Administration, Dalhousie's School of Public Administration, Moncton's MPA, the School of Policy Studies at Queen's, Simon Fraser's MPP and the School of Public Administration at the University of Victoria. The public administration, public policy, and public management programs that are not self-standing, but which are offered by disciplinary departments or faculties, are comprised of Concordia's graduate degree in Public Administration and Public Policy, the two degrees offered jointly by Guelph and McMaster, the MPA concen-

Table 1. Degree Emphasis for Canadian Master's Programs in Public Administration, Public Policy and Public Management

(Programs in **bold** are those core courses retained for comparative analysis) Revised 25/3/04

	Location	Degree Titles	Concentrations
Carleton	School in Pub. Affairs and Mgt. Fac.	MA	Canadian , Development, Innovation, Science and Technology
Concordia	Political Science	MPPPA	PA and decision-making PP and social and political theory, Internat'l PP and A Political economy and Public Policy Geography and Public Policy
Dalhousie	School of PA in Management Fac.	MPA MPA-M	MPA MPA (management) (distance program) MPA/LLB MPA/M. Library and Information Studies
ENAP	Univ. du Québec (ENAP campuses in Québec City, Trois Rivières, Gatineau, Montréal and Saguenay)	MPA	Managers' Option Analysts' Option with concentrations in - International Admin. - Organization Analysis and Devt. - Program Evaluation - Human Resources Mgt.
Guelph-McMaster	Political Science	MA (Pol Sci)	Public policy and administration Public policy and Global economy
Laval	Political Science	MPA (Policy Analysis)	MPA
Manitoba-Winnipeg	Political Studies	MPA	MPA
Moncton	Faculty of Arts and Soc Sc.	MPA LL.B.-MPA	MPA
Queen's	School of Policy Studies	MPA PMPA MPA/LLB	possibility of minor concentrations (3 courses) in 5 policy areas MPA/LLB
Regina	Fac. of Admin.	MPA	Public Management Public Policy
Simon Fraser	Public Policy Prog. Fac of Arts	MPP	Public Policy Analysis
York	Schulich School of Bus.	MPA	MPA MBA in Public Mgt MPA/LLB MPA/MBA
Victoria	School of PA	MPA	5 concentrations (3 courses) Plus possible ad hoc conc.

trated on policy analysis offered jointly by Laval's departments of Political Science and Economics, the Manitoba-Winnipeg MPA offered by Political Studies and Politics (respectively), the Regina MPA housed in the Faculty of Administration, Simon Fraser's new public policy program in the Faculty of Arts and York's MPA housed in the Schulich School of Business.

Table 1 also shows that the most common degree designation in published materials (as in the U.S.) is the MPA, with Concordia and Guelph adding a reference to policy. The MPP is offered by Laval and Simon Fraser. Carleton and Guelph-McMaster offer an MA.⁶

On the above criterion of comparing the comparable, for an example, Carleton's primary concentration is identified by us as the domestic program, called the Canadian program in the school and in

Table 1. Concordia's primary offering covers public administration and decision-making. Table 1 also briefly indicates the availability of combined degrees, major concentrations, and what are called "minor concentrations." These latter reflect the unit's capacity to offer their students the opportunity to consolidate the topical emphasis of optional or non-core courses in a systematic way that will be reflected either on their credential or on their transcripts as a "concentration." Concentration courses may be offered within the unit or in collaboration with other academic units. Combined or joint degrees inevitably take longer to obtain than a simple master's with concentration. The programs retained for detailed course analysis are those indicated in bold type. They total 16 programs in 13 institutions.

Table 2. Summarized Statements of Philosophies and/or Goal Statements of the Schools and Programs: Web and Calendar Materials Mixed

Carleton: The School's goal is to help prepare individuals for professional careers and opportunities in the public sector, both in Canada and abroad. The M.A. program provides a broad and balanced exposure to public policy development, public management and policy administration. The School's vision of fundamentals includes the views that a balance of technical and conceptual skills is needed and that these should come to the student through exposure to a variety of disciplines.

Concordia: The program objectives are to blend scholarly and vocational values to prepare graduates for both further studies and for employment, in the public and private sectors. The program teaches how public policy is made and administered in Québec, Canada and the world. It encourages students to tackle policy issues in the context of the processes that operate nationally and internationally. A core feature of the program emphasizes learning about the "dynamic interdependence between public and private responsibilities."

Dalhousie: The MPA provides the foundation and theoretical grounding for professional competence; the internship, which is credited, places more emphasis on the connection between work and study. The MPA (Management) takes in theory, analysis and practice of public sector management. The MPA-M program concentrates on management issues and stresses people, relationships, organizations and policy. Each course ends with a mandatory two-and-one-half-day intensive session on campus. The publicity says that the amount of classroom interaction time for the online degree is similar to that of the full-time MPA.

ENAP: The School offers programs adapted to the needs of individuals and of public organizations while fully meeting university and professional standards. The approach is multidisciplinary—this approach accompanied by a concrete professional vocation in public management. All aspects of management, whether human resources, budgets, processes of management, or the impact of technology are included. The School has a notable international theme and presence.

Guelph-McMaster: The public policy and administration field includes the study of the operation and management of government institutions and selected areas of public policy. There is the possibility of a research focus on the global economy, which explains the emphasis on languages.

Laval: The objective of the program is the education of practitioners and researchers in the area of policy analysis. The program follows a bidisciplinary approach, using methods derived from each. Students who choose to write a thesis are required to make sure that it will reflect the bidisciplinary nature of the program. The program is aimed toward individuals already in, or aspiring to, a senior position in planning, evaluation, or in the research units of public, parapublic or private organizations.

Manitoba-Winnipeg: The program provides full- and part-time students with an interdisciplinary program with emphasis on courses in politics and political studies. The core courses reflect a public administration focus, with an emphasis on public policy, focusing on theory and practice of government organizations, including the political, economic and social contexts in which they operate. The degree is useful for those wishing to undertake or advance a career in public sector organizations or in the non-profit sector.

Moncton: The program is multidisciplinary, the list of required courses covering the main aspects of public administration conceived as management, politics, and public policy. The program addresses itself primarily but not exclusively to individuals who already have a first degree in political science, economics, administration, or other social sciences. The goal of the program is to educate individuals who will be capable of attaining positions of responsibility in the public sector. The degree content accordingly emphasizes an understanding of the forces in the political, social, economic and cultural environments that influence the evolution of public activity; the decision-making process in the public sector; the capacity to conduct analysis and take decisions; as well as an understanding of the structures and policies that inform public and parapublic sectors.

Queen's: The MPA provides a multidisciplinary program, with advanced skills in policy and management for those seeking careers in policy-making in public, non-profit and private sector organizations. It also emphasizes the social and ethical issues that inform policy debates. The PMPA part-time program offers executives, managers and other professionals the skills, knowledge and confidence to become policy leaders and agents of change in an environment that includes prominent academics, leading practitioners and their fellow students, who are experienced.

Regina: The purpose of the MPA is to help the student develop management skills needed to assume leadership positions in the public service, crowns or non-profit sectors. The discussion of benefits stresses that management skills are enhanced, as well as knowledge of the major functional areas in administration.

Simon Fraser: The MPP emphasizes techniques to undertake and manage public policy analysis and planning for public, private and non-governmental organizations. The program's mandate is to provide the education such that graduates will scrutinize a problem, interpret and analyze relevant data, and evaluate alternative courses of action. There is emphasis on the direct application of principles and analysis from the social science disciplines. Students will master core skills in policy analysis, politics, economics, research and quantitative methods.

Victoria: MPA On Campus: "The goal of a professional program is to graduate students who can move into professional employment and be effective immediately. Students are taught not only the context of public administration, but how to perform critical tasks. In the on-campus MPA the practical experience gained on the structured and supervised work terms is an integral part of the student's education." The MPA-Online: " ... is specifically designed for part-time learners who want to combine graduate studies with work and family responsibilities.

York: The MPA is a combined business and public administration degree, intended for persons with about two years of work experience. MPA students complete nine 3-credit core courses of the MBA program. The MBA with Specialization in Public Administration is recommended for continuing students who have not had significant work experience. Admission standards are the same as for the MPA, and program requirements are "similar."

Table 2 provides a textual description of the mission of each school as taken or paraphrased from their Web sites. One can summarize these briefly.

Of the self-standing schools, in alphabetical order, Carleton sees itself as providing balanced exposure to policy development and administration, and to management skills; Dalhousie places the emphasis on management; ENAP is a management school; Moncton says it covers all three areas; Simon Fraser is concentrated on public policy analysis and planning; and Victoria is competencies-oriented such that graduates will “move into professional employment and be effective immediately.”

Of the other programs, Concordia, Laval, and Manitoba-Winnipeg state that they are policy-focused. Guelph-McMaster emphasizes management and policy, Manitoba-Winnipeg appears policy- and theory-oriented, with a credit from its core devoted to either a comprehensive examination or a major paper; Regina stresses management skills for leadership, and York offers training in both the “hard” technical skills and the politics-policy area. All make some claim to cover both the acquisition of skills and the necessary knowledge of the environment.

Table 3 summarizes the extent to which admission requirements present a difficult hurdle for applicants to surmount, as well as whether a particular educational attainment may be required. What is most striking in this table is, to be sure, the bilingualism of schools and programs located in Québec and Moncton, and the unilingual nature of requirements in English-speaking Canada.⁷ Next, there is considerable variety in prerequisites. Carleton requires economics and Canadian government as pre-requisites for work to be done in the program, both of these two-term courses, and it considers algebra to be an advantage. Likewise, Laval uses prerequisites to select students who have a background in the appropriate area. L’ENAP analysis option and Simon Fraser give preference to social science backgrounds. Concordia and Regina take a different strategy, reserving the right to add requirements if the applicant’s scholarly background is not closely

aligned. Dalhousie does not stipulate particular course requirements.

Some schools and units stipulate somewhat higher standards for application than others, but we have no information on the actual selection average. In some cases, anecdotal information leads one to believe that the stipulated standard is exceeded in the real-world selection process, but this is beyond the scope of the research. Some schools are silent on the length of the first degree required for continuing students. A question remains: do they require a three-year or a four-year or “honours” degree for admission to this graduate program?

Another aspect captured in Table 3 is how the university in question recognizes good-quality employment experience. Carleton, for example, on occasion, will admit a student without an undergraduate degree to full-time graduate education if that student has proven him- or herself successfully in relevant employment. Concordia may credit experience in employment. At Dalhousie, experience is necessary for admission to the MPA Management degree, and can sometimes substitute for a first degree (the MPAM also recognizes an applicant’s attendance at the Canadian Centre for Management Development’s Direxion program for advanced standing).⁸ At Moncton, good-quality work performance and experience can substitute for the first degree, for professional students, and a work term is obligatory for students who have not held relevant employment. At Queen’s, a general requirement is a four-year degree with a solid standing, while PMPA students must have five years of experience to be considered for admission. (All PMPA courses are taught separately from MPA courses, in one weekend each month for fall and winter terms, with some courses offered by practitioners. There is also an intensive spring session in which options are offered.) For the York MPA, experience is required, and two years of relevant employment may receive some recognition in the form of credit toward the degree. Continuing students or those without appropriate work experience are steered toward the MBA with Specialization in Public Administration. ENAP has two degree tracks: the Management option requires

Table 3. Admission Requirements for Canadian MPA, MPP, MPM Programs

	Undergrad Degree	Work Experience	Required Subject(s)	GMAT?	TOEFL*?	Lang.
Carleton	preferably 4 year may be waived for mid-career	may be credited	Economics, Can Gvt, Algebra encouraged	-	yes	-
Concordia	honours or equival.	-	nec. background can be added	-	foreign students	**
Dalhousie	B+ average	no for MPA, for online,*** work nec. and can subs for first degree; CCMD adv. std.	online degree: computer config, to School system	foreign	yes	-
ENAP	BSc or equivalent With avg of 3.2 of possible 4.3	Managers' option: significant exp. required.; not for Analysts' option	-	-	-	fluent French
Guelph- McMaster	B avg in honours BA	-	political science	-	yes	Eng. & other
Laval	diplôme de premier cycle; average of 3 from 4,33 (approx 75%) "approp. discipline"	-	Macro and micro econ stats pub ad intro	-	-	r, w Fr., r Eng.
Manitoba- Winnipeg	B+ avg in honours (or 3 yr B.A.)	accept B avg with experience	Pol Sc or Econ pref. at entry	-	yes	-
Moncton	MAP:bacc (diplôme de 1er cycle); avg of 3 from 4,33	may subs. for bac for civil servants, work term oblig.	both lang, statistics	-	-	formal French (courses tests):
Queen's	4 yr, min. B+	five years work for PMPA	-	-	or other	-
Regina	4 yr, B, or less if progress in last 2 yrs	-	-	-	-	-
Simon Fr.	BA	desired	strong social sc. preferred	-	yes	-
Victoria	B avg in last 2 yrs	-	-	req. for foreign	yes	-
York	B in last 2 yrs	two years, may be credited	computer skills	yes	evid. of fluency	-

Table 3 continued

- Most programs state that TESL is required for students whose language is other than English

** Concordia requires competency in French as a graduation requirement.

*** Admission requirements for the Dalhousie distance (online) program include a “prior learning assessment” which is a portfolio of the applicant’s accomplishments, emphasizing skills and competencies relevant to the degree. This is not waived.

at least two years of experience in the public sector; the analysis option is for recent university graduates.

There is so much variety in degree requirements that it is difficult to say much about Table 4. It should be kept in mind that different systems are used to give credit weights to individual units of instruction. We believe the longest and heaviest full-time degree is offered by the University of Victoria, with a degree that require more than two years for completion. The modal time for program completion is two years. The Manitoba-Winnipeg and Queen’s degrees take less time, if one has the admission requirements. Two of the shortest courses (as in the US) are in political science Guelph-McMaster and Manitoba-Winnipeg, but Concordia’s political science MPPPA requires the modal two years.

Otherwise, the interesting aspect of this table would seem to be whether a program is able to offer a good-quality and well-supervised internship to its full-time students. Schools offering internships include Carleton, Concordia, Dalhousie, ENAP, Laval, Manitoba, Moncton, Queen’s, Simon Fraser, and Victoria, the latter with an impressive guaranteed three work terms. The internship is, of course, less central in the programs offered within political science or politics departments: most of these are training analysts, who may expect to remain in the category of intellectual workers as opposed to people who desire functional and personal skills to enable them to join management ranks fairly soon after graduation.

Degrees are long or short, at least formally, but most allow a high proportion of elective courses. Carleton’s Canadian program is constructed with seven “inner” core one-term courses and two “outer” core choices (one course must be taken out of two. The rest of the 16-course degree is comprised of options.) In Dalhousie’s even longer full-

time MPA, requiring 18 one-term courses, 10 of the 18 courses are core, or required, while the entire set of 14 courses is required in the distance professional degree. Victoria, with a full-time program that can be completed in 2.3 years, has 9 required courses. Queen’s, with a lower degree requirement of 12 (MPA) or 10 (professional degree) one-term courses, has five core, or required, courses in each, leaving approximately half the full-time degree for electives. Thus it appears that about half or somewhat less of the degree in most of the schools is made up of required courses. Parenthetically, it would be interesting to have data on recorded completion times and rate of completion.

The “mission” statement or desire of each school for its graduates is not necessarily an evident fit with the apparent core coursework emphasis. The undergraduate degree may assist some schools and programs to bring the two into alignment. Schools and programs that offer long programs and a large number of electives may be able to admit students with a three-year degree and graduate them with a carefully programmed master’s degree that has taken five years of coursework. On the other hand, the same schools may also award advanced standing with credit to students whose undergraduate degrees are four-year degrees and a good fit to core courses, allowing them, also, to acquire their master’s degree in approximately five years. But this is speculation.

Table 5 (in three parts) again compares the most similar elements of the programs, the required courses that cluster around a central group of topics in graduate education in Canada. Some schools and programs stipulate more, and more varied, requirements than others. Our mandate led us to retain only the courses that all students must take to obtain their degree. Some programs, such as Carleton and Manitoba-Winnipeg, offer very

Table 4. Degree Requirements for Canadian Master's Degrees in PA, PP and PM

	Duration		Credits/Courses	Comprehensive Examinations	Thesis	Internship
	Full time	Part time				
Carleton	2 yrs	5-8 yrs	16 1/2 courses	-	optional	optional coop work terms, no cr.
Concordia	2 yrs	3 yrs	45 cr.	Yes, 6 cr.	option B 6cr. defense 12 cr	option C 9 cr. defense 9 cr.
Dalhousie	2 yrs	6 yrs max	18 1/2 cr. ft; 14 cr. Distance	-	-	yes
ENAP	2 yrs	4 yrs	Mgt option: 45 cr. 11 courses	-	-	projet d'intervention 12 cr.
			Analysts' option: 45 cr., 6 courses	-	optional. 27 cr	optional: 12 cr.
Guelph-McMaster	1 yr		8 courses (5 core)	Yes	major research paper 4.25 cr.	-
Laval	2 yrs		45 credits	-	paper for 9 thesis 24 cr.	optional or 12 cr.; or 12 cr.
Manitoba-Winnipeg	1-2 yrs	up to 6 yrs	24-48 credits (background)	Yes (except for thesis students)	option (12 credits)	co-op for FT (6 cr. on top of pgm reqs)
Moncton	2 yrs for MPA		60 cr.	-	-	12-16 weeks (oblig.)
Queen's	MPA FT 1 yr (3 terms)		12 1/2 courses	-	-	optional
	PMPA 2-3 yrs		10 1/2 courses	-	paper (2 cr) -	-
Simon Fraser	2 yrs (4 semesters) Limited # PT spaces available		14 courses	-	policy analysis project	summer, oblig. adv. cr. for exper.
Regina	PM,PP FT, 1 yr		8 grad courses (24 cr. hours)	-	research project 6 cr. hrs.	-
	PT, 2-5 yrs		10 grad courses (30 cr. hours)	-		
Victoria	FT 2.33 yrs 2.5 yrs;		22.5 units	-	mgt rpt (4.5 cr)	3 coop terms (opt.)
	PT 3.5-5 yrs		22.5 units	-	mgt rpt.	
York MPA	16 mos. 4 consec terms	2-6 yrs	60 credit hrs	-	-	-

restricted choices at certain points in the program, but we could find no logical cut-off for such choices, as opposed to more fully optional courses, and the fact remains that a student may graduate without having taken one of them.

Only a few, somewhat obvious, distinguishing features can be identified. The range of the core requirements in each program tends to reflect the length of the program, with the shorter degrees generally concentrating on policy, building upon a first degree in a cognate discipline. Looking at particular topics, besides the lack of French language in English Canada, the many programs in Canada tend not to offer courses dedicated to civil service accountability—skills in reading a balance sheet, or ensuring compliance in contract performance, as well as specific education in ethics. Dalhousie, ENAP, Manitoba-Winnipeg, Victoria, and York seem to be the only programs with a core element of financial management and accountability. We found only three programs with an obligatory course in program evaluation (Dalhousie, Victoria and York). Also in this general theme, Moncton, Victoria and York are the only programs requiring a course in public law.

Only the Dalhousie full-time MPA has a dedicated ethics course, although some programs state that ethical concerns permeate all of their offerings—Carleton says all its work stresses democratic ideals and ethical content, Dalhousie makes a similar claim, as does Queen's. In the management area, again only Dalhousie offers content for “middle management,” which the law of averages would suggest is the most realistic aspiration for the greatest number of graduates. Dalhousie is also alone in offering a course in information management. Only Dalhousie, ENAP and York offer strategic management.

Some further illumination of the nature of the core curriculum in Canadian master's programs is offered by Table 6, which compares basic course areas with the NASPAA curriculum standards. This table allows us to see that most Canadian

programs would be short on management courses in their required lists for a NASPAA accreditation. The least covered are information technology, personnel administration, law and organization studies. Budget and financial management are a little better covered at 8 courses out of 16. The courses that are most required deal with research techniques and knowledge of the political and economic environment (although, as Cleary remarked in 1990, economics are part of the tool kits of policy analysts). Another interesting finding that does not appear in the table is that 12 of 16 Canadian programs have a course on the theory of PA and/or PP, whereas such a course is not considered a requisite for the NASPAA schools. This also underlines a tendency toward favouring analysis over teaching principles of management.

In looking at Table 6, one must keep in mind that some programs cover some of the missing subjects as prerequisites, others offer them among a restricted “outer core,” and some subjects are claimed to be treated in several courses.

This topic needs to be pressed further. Almost all of the schools claim to offer fundamental skills and necessary knowledge of the political, social and economic environment. Being able to place management in its context is what makes public management different from generic management. Nevertheless, it is possible to use our various indicators to draw out further the distinctions we have made. If we consider that a research orientation is demonstrated by course requirements for research methods, theory and economics, and by the obligation to do a thesis or a research paper, we can distinguish schools in this group from those that have primarily a management orientation, with courses on personnel, financial and information management, law and a required internship. If we also make the distinction between programs that stress the acquisition of skills and those that emphasize knowledge of the environment, we can roughly group our programs as shown in Table 7 (page 14).

Table 5.1 Compulsory Courses in Canadian, MPA, MPP and MPM Programs

	Governance Political Syst.	Theory of PA & PP	Policy Process Decision Mkg	Macro Econ.	Micro Econ.
Carleton	XX	-	X	X	X
Concordia Options A,B,C	-	X	-	-	-
Dalhousie **					
MPA	X	-	X	X	X
MPA(M)	XX	-	X	-	X
ENAP					
Option Mgt	X	X	-	-	-
Option Analysis	X	X	-	-	-
Guelph- McMaster	X	X	X	-	-
Laval	-	X	X	-	-
Manitoba- Winnipeg	X	X	X	X	-
Moncton	X	X	X	X	-
Queen's (both degrees)	X	X	X	X	X
Regina					
Public Mgmt	X	X	X	-	-
Public Policy	X	X	X	X	X
Simon Fraser	XX	XX	X	-	X
Victoria (FT, PT)	X	-	X	X*	X*
York MPA	-	X	-	-	-

Table 5.2 Compulsory Courses (continued)

	Research Methods	Quantitative Methods	Organization Theory	Human resource Management	Middle Mgmt	Prof. Devt
Carleton	-	X	X	-	-	-
Concordia	X	-	-	-	-	-
Dalhousie						
MPA	X	X	-	X	-	-
MPA(M)	XX	-	-	X	XXX	-
ENAP						
Option Mgt	-	-	X	X	-	-
Option Analysis	X	-	X	-	-	-
Guelph-McMaster	-	X	-	-	-	-
Laval	X	-	-	-	-	-
Manitoba-Winnipeg	-	-	X	-	-	-
Moncton	-	-	-	-	-	-
Queen's (both degrees)	X (PMPA)	X (MPA)	-	-	-	-
Regina						
Public Admin	-	-	-	-	-	-
Public Policy	-	X	-	-	-	-
Simon Fraser	X	X	X	-	-	X
Victoria (FT, PT)	X	X	X	-	-	-
York MPA	X	X	X	-	-	-

Table 5.3 Compulsory Courses (cont'd)

	Public Finance	Financial Mgt & Accountability	Admin. Law	Program Eval.	Strategic Mgt	Commun.
Carleton	-	-	-	-	-	-
Concordia Options A,B,C	-	-	-	-	-	-
Dalhousie MPA	X	X	-	-	-	-
MPA(M)	-	XX	-	X	-	-
ENAP Option mgt	-	X	-	-	X	-
Option analysis	-	-	-	-	X	-
Guelph- McMaster	-	-	-	-	-	-
Laval	-	-	-	-	-	-
Manitoba- Winnipeg	-	X	-	-	-	-
Moncton	-	-	X	-	-	-
Queen's (both degrees)	-	-	-	-	-	-
Regina Public Admin	X	-	-	-	-	-
Public Policy	X	-	-	-	-	-
Simon Fraser	X	-	-	-	-	-
Victoria (FT, PT)*	X	X	X	X	-	X***
York MPA	X	X	X	X	X	-

X= One course required in this subject, not necessarily this title; XX= two courses required

* Victoria gives these subjects in one intensive economics course.

** All 14 courses in the Dalhousie MPA-M are required. We have placed three courses on managing people, diversity and projects under "middle management" in our framework. Extra to that framework are two required courses, "Managing the information resource" and "Business and government." The Dalhousie MPA also has a course in ethics.

***Students at Victoria may challenge written communications course.

Table 6. Comparison of NASPAA Standards and Core Curriculum of Canadian Masters Programs of PA, PM, and PP

NASPAA Components	Management of Organizations			Research Techniques			Public Policy and Organization Environment			
	Mgt of Hum. Resources	Budget & Fin.	Information Technology	Research Tech.	Policy Formation, Decision-mkg	Political Instns & Proc	Law	Econ.	Org.	
Carleton	-	-	-	X	X	XX	-	XX	X	
Concordia	-	-	-	X	-	-	-	-	-	
Dalhousie	X	XX	-	XX	X	X	-	XX	X	
MPA										
Dalhousie										
MPA/M	X	XX	X	XX	X	XX	-	X	X	
ENAP:Mgt	X	X	-	-	-	X	-	-	X	
ENAP:Anal.	-	-	-	X	-	X	-	-	X	
Guelph/										
McMaster	-	-	-	X	X	X	-	-	-	
Laval	-	-	-	X	X	-	-	-	-	
Manitoba/										
Winnipeg	-	X	-	-	X	X	-	X	X	
Moncton	-	-	-	-	X	X	X	X	-	
Queen's	-	-	-	X	X	X	-	XX	-	
Regina PM	-	X	-	-	X	X	-	-	-	
Regina PP	-	X	-	-	X	X	-	XX	-	
Simon Fr.	-	X	-	XX	X	XX	-	X	-	
Victoria	-	XX	-	XX	X	X	X	X	X	
York	-	XX	-	XX	-	-	X	-	X	

Table 7. Program Orientation and Weight Given to Learning Skills or Knowledge of the Environment

	Skills	Environment
Research Orientation	Carleton ENAP Analysis Laval Queen's Regina PP Simon Fraser	Carleton Concordia Guelph-McMaster Queen's Manitoba-Winnipeg Simon Fraser
Management Orientation	Dalhousie ENAP Mgt Regina PM Victoria York	Dalhousie ENAP Mgt Victoria York

The presence of certain programs in two columns suggests the following clusters:

- Management orientation: Dalhousie, ENAP (A and B), Regina
- Public Policy orientation: Carleton, Concordia, Laval, Queen's, Regina PP, Simon Fraser
- Political science orientation: Concordia, Guelph-McMaster, Manitoba-Winnipeg
- Management and Public policy combined: Dalhousie, Victoria, York

Generally, whether an institution has set up an independent unit to deliver such programs is not a powerful predictor for any central node of characteristics. Perhaps the one element that may most distinguish schools from programs located in political studies or in other units is one that we do not capture in our tables. In the schools, the annual intake of students will tend to pass through the core requirements as a cohort, particularly in the smaller schools where the core courses are offered in sequence. While this is speculation, one would imagine that the cohort effect would increase collegiality between students, networks of collaboration present and future, and perhaps improve the timeliness of completion of degree because of either mutual support or competitiveness, or both together.

Conclusion

Overall, therefore, our conclusion is that we have a considerable degree of variety in our master's programs because of differing objectives, institu-

tional emphasis and opportunities for specialization or combined degrees. Victoria seems to offer the longest degree with opportunities for students to pick up sub-specializations, while ENAP and York teach somewhat more full skill sets for management. The most clear distinction is between analytical programs or schools that look for high-achievement applicants wanting a graduate education in analytical work (but note, not necessarily acquiring the empirical research skills in breadth and depth), as compared with programs or schools that emphasize skills and competencies for management of public business or an approach taking in many topics.

Much more could be done to study further this topic. As we have said, we had not the mandate nor the means to go into each program in detail. Whether pursuit of comparisons in more depth would serve a useful purpose is not clear. Moreover, we have not touched on the whole question of the effectiveness of these programs, either for the graduate seeking work or for the employer hoping for either a specific set of competencies or, more vaguely, "the best and the brightest" person. CCMD and CAPPa wanted a summary comparison of master's programs, which we have provided with such information as we have been able to glean from published material, Web sites and the programs themselves.

Another significant observation is that the member programs might want to consider again their Web sites. Some are very complete, others rudimentary. Most had information present on the Web

site that those responsible corrected when we contacted them. Most knew that this information was not reliable. Finally, the contact information was not helpful; we spent a lot of time trying to find the right person to get informed critiques of

our tables. It is ironic that programs dedicated to preparing people for careers in public service should perform so poorly in communicating the essentials of who they are and what they do.

1 The authors' affiliations are, respectively, Department of Political Science, University of Montréal, and School of Policy Studies, Queen's University.

2 Nicholas Henry, "Paradigms of Public Administration," *Public Administration Review* 35;4(1975):378-385, which has been the basis of chapter 2 in various editions of his book *Public Administration and Public Affairs*.

3 Laurin L. Henry, "Early NASPAA History," Washington, D.C.: National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration," (1995) as cited in David A. Breaux, Edward J. Clynch and John C. Morris, "The Core Curriculum Content of NASPAA-Accredited Programs: Fundamentally Alike or Different?" *Journal of Public Affairs Education (JPAAE)* 9;4(2003):260.

4 Robert E. Cleary, "What Do Public Administration Masters Programs Look Like? Do They Do What Is Needed?" *Public Administration Review* 50;6(1990):663-673.

5 Breaux, et al.: 259-273.

6 Note that these are the terms used for the programs in publicity; we did not verify what degree name is used on the degree parchment.

7 The lack of responsiveness of the English-language schools to the increasing unwillingness of the federal government to hire unilingual anglophones and teach them French is interesting and deserves further probing.

8 Whether there is an unambiguous and permanent way for schools and programs to comply with CCMD's policy of asking for credit at admission of employees who have pursued the Direxion program, the successor to the well-known Career Assignment Program, is unclear. First, some schools and programs award credits for work experience, and it may be that giving credit for Direxion is factored together with the recognition of the quality of work experience. That is, Direxion is a competitive program, and by definition mid-level high flyers tend to be its clients. Second, given that CCMD is not formally recognized as an institution offering post-secondary degrees by provincial regulatory bodies, there is an element of informality to these ententes that may make them reversible on review by the relevant province.

Appendix A: NASPAA Standards for Master's Degree Programs

(Professional Accreditation)

Section 8

4.0 Curriculum

4.1 Purpose of Curriculum. The purpose of the curriculum shall be to prepare students for professional leadership in public service.

4.2 Curriculum Components. The curriculum components are designed to produce professionals capable of intelligent, creative analysis and communication, and action in public service. Courses taken to fulfill the common curriculum components shall be primarily for graduate students. Both the common and the additional curriculum components need to be assessed as to their quality and consistency with the stated mission of the program.

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

These area requirements do not prescribe specific courses. Neither do they imply that equal time should be spent on each area or that courses must all be offered by the public affairs, public policy or public administration programs. Nor should they be interpreted in a manner that might impede the development of special strengths in each program.

4.22 Additional Curriculum Components. Each program shall clearly define its objectives for additional work and the rationale for the objectives, and shall explain how the curriculum is designed to achieve those objectives. The statement of objectives shall include any program specializations or concentrations and the main categories of students to be served (e.g., pre-service, in-service, full-time, part-time).

If a program advertises its ability to provide preparation for a specialization or concentration in its catalog, bulletin, brochures, and/or posters, evidence shall be given that key courses in the specialization or concentration are offered on a regular basis by qualified faculty. Specialization or concentration courses may be offered by units other than the public affairs or administration program. The specialization and concentration courses shall not be substitutes for the common curriculum components.

Section 9

Standards for Professional Masters Degree Programs

4.23 General Competencies. The common and additional curriculum components shall develop in students general competencies that are consistent with the program mission.

4.3 Minimum Degree Requirements. Students with little or no educational background or professional experience in the common and additional curriculum components are expected to devote the equivalent of two academic years of full-time study to complete the professional masters degree program. Where students have had strong undergraduate preparation in the common curriculum requirements or have been engaged in significant managerial activities, some of the subject matter requirements might be appropriately waived or reduced. Even in such cases, students ordinarily must spend the equivalent of a calendar year of full-time study in formal academic work, exclusive of an internship, to obtain the professional masters degree. A calendar year is defined as two semesters and a summer session at least eight weeks in duration or four quarters (exclusive of internship) of full-time academic work.

4.4 Internships. A carefully planned internship experience shall be made available by the program and students who lack a significant professional work background shall be strongly encouraged to take advantage of it. The program shall provide on-going academic supervision. Internship programs shall generally reflect NASPAA's internship guidelines.