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**Comparative Analysis**  
of the  
**Middle States**  
**Standards for Accreditation**  
and the  
**Puerto Rico Regulatory**  
**Criteria for Evaluation**

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**Middle States Commission on Higher Education**  
and the  
**Puerto Rico Council on Higher Education**

Published by the

Middle States Commission on Higher Education  
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Web: [www.msache.org](http://www.msache.org)

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*Published online in Portable Document Format (PDF)*

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# Introduction

**T**he Puerto Rico Council on Higher Education (PRCHE) and the Middle State Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) have conducted collaborative reviews of accredited institutions of higher education operating in Puerto Rico, pursuant to a Memorandum of Understanding signed by both parties.

According to the *Handbook for Collaborative Reviews* (Middle States Commission on Higher Education, 2002, p. 3), "A collaborative review is a cooperative process, in which an institution invites institutional, specialized, or professional accrediting agencies; state or federal agencies; or other organizations to join with MSCHE in a review of the institution." The decision to request a collaborative review rests with the institution, and these reviewing organizations may choose whether to participate.

The MSCHE and PRCHE signed the Memorandum in December 2003 to facilitate such a review process. This agreement delineates the protocols and issues that should be addressed.

To further facilitate the process, the Commission and the Council prepared a careful analysis of the similarities and differences among the Commission's standards for accreditation and the Council's criteria for evaluation. The following document, *Comparative Analysis of the Middle States Standards for Accreditation and the Puerto Rico Regulatory Criteria for Evaluation*, is intended to serve as a guide during the preparation of an institutional self study or Periodic Review Report by a regionally accredited institution in Puerto Rico that also holds a license to operate issued by the Council.

The *Comparative Analysis* is presented in a two-column format. In the left-hand column are the 14 Middle States standards for accreditation and their respective fundamental elements as outlined in *Characteristics of Excellence in Higher Education* (2002). In the right-hand column are the Council's applicable criteria for evaluation contained in the PRCHE *Regulation Governing the Issuance of Licenses to Higher Education Institutions in Puerto Rico* (1997, as amended).

In some cases, there will be no direct correlation between the fundamental elements and the criteria. In addition, there may be some criteria that the Council requires that Middle States does not require, and these are addressed separately at the end of this document. The institution is responsible for assuring both agencies that it complies with both the MSCHE standards and the PRCHE criteria.

This document was part of a special project of the Middle States Commission on Higher Education and the Puerto Rico Council on Higher Education, with the assistance of Lic. Sandra Espada Santos, 2003 MSCHE Fellow. Also assisting Ms. Espada Santos was a distinguished group of colleagues from the higher education community in Puerto Rico, representatives of the MSCHE, and representatives of the PRCHE's Office of License and Accreditation.

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## ***Special thanks to:***

Prof. Nilda García, PRCHE Member, and Mr. Oswald Ratteray, MSCHE Associate Director, for their suggestions to improve the comparison

Ms. Yolanda Diaz, Ms. Nivia Santiago, Ms. Sonia Pomales, and Ms. Maribel Cruz, PRCHE Administrative Assistants, whose valuable services facilitated the preparation of the document.

# Quick Reference Tables

| <i>Characteristics of Excellence<br/>in Higher Education (2002)</i><br><b>Fundamental Elements for Accreditation</b> | <b>PRCHE Regulation Governing<br/>Issuance of Licenses (1997)</b><br><b>Elements and Evaluation Criteria</b>                                       |
|--|--|
| Standard 1: Mission, Goals and Objectives  | Section 51.4   |
| Standard 2: Planning, Resource Allocation and Institutional Renewal  | Section 51.3   |
| Standard 3: Institutional Resource   | Section 51.1<br>Section 51.3 (a) (b) (c) (d)<br>Section 51.4 (g)<br>Section 51.5 (c)<br>Section 51.7 (a) (c) (e) (f)<br>Section 51.8 (o)           |
| Standard 4: Leadership and Governance  | Section 51.2<br>Section 58 (a) (7) (8)<br>Section 58 (c)   |
| Standard 5: Administration   | Section 51.2<br>Section 58 (a) (7)   |
| Standard 6: Integrity  | Chapter 1 Statement of Purposes<br>Section 51.4 (g)<br>Section 51.8 (a) (g) (l)<br>Chapter III Public Responsibility (Section 65, 66)              |
| Standard 7: Institutional Assessment   | Section 58 (e) (1) (3)   |
| Standard 8: Student Admissions   | Section 51.4 (d) (f)<br>Section 51.8 (a) (b) (f) (g) (u)   |
| Standard 9: Student Support Services   | Section 51.4 (f)<br>Section 51.8 (d) (e) (h) (l)   |
| Standard 10: Faculty   | Section 51.4 (g)<br>Section 51.5 (a) (b) (c) (d)   |
| Standard 11: Educational Offering  | Section 51.1<br>Section 51.4 (a) (b) (c) (d)<br>Section 51.5 (a) (b)<br>Section 51.7 (a) (c)<br>Section 24.2.2<br>Section 53 (e)<br>Section 60.2.2 |
| Standard 12: General Education   | Section 51.4 (a) (b)   |
| Standard 13: Related Educational Activities  |  |
| Basic Skills   | Section 51.8 (m)   |
| Certificate Programs   | Section 51.4 (a)   |

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| Experiential Learning   |  |
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| Branch Campuses, Additional Locations, and Other Instructional Site (Including Business/Corporate Locations and   Study Abroad) | Section 60.2.2                             |
| Distance or Distributed Learning  | Section 24.2.2                             |
| Contractual Relationships and affiliated Providers  | Section 62 (5)<br>Section 63.5 (a) (b) (c) |
| Standard 14: Assessment of Student Learning   | Section 58 (e)                             |

***PRCHE Additional Requirements (PRCHE Regulation 1997, As Amended)***

|   |                            |
|---|----------------------------|
| <b>Chapter IV Minimum Evaluation Elements and Requirements</b>              |                            |
| Level and sufficiency of academic programs                                  | Section 51.4 (e)           |
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| Physical facilities, laboratories and auxiliary educational equipment       | Section 51.7 (b), (d), (g) |
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| <b>Chapter VII Public Responsibility of Institution of Higher Education</b> |                            |
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| Academic records  | Section 68                 |
| Insurance and bonds   | Section 69                 |



# Comparative Analysis, by Section

## Section 1

| <p>MSCHE <i>Characteristics of Excellence in Higher Education</i> (2002)</p> <p>Fundamental Elements for Accreditation</p>   | <p>PRCHE Regulations Governing Issuance of Licenses (1997)</p> <p>Elements and Evaluation Criteria</p>   |
|--|--|
| <p><b>Standard 1:<br/>Mission, Goals, and Objectives</b></p> <p><b>The institution’s mission clearly defines its purpose within the context of higher education and explains whom the institution serves and what it intends to accomplish. The institution’s stated goals and objectives, consistent with the aspirations and expectations of higher education clearly specify how the institution will fulfill its mission. The mission, goals, and objectives are developed and recognized by the institution with its members and its governing body and are utilized to develop and shape its programs and practices and to evaluate its effectiveness.</b></p> | <p><b>Chapter 1 General Provisions (Statement of Purposes)</b></p> <p>These Regulations seek to establish the standards and proceedings that will govern the issuance of licenses by the Puerto Rico Council on Higher Education to public and private higher education institutions in Puerto Rico, in keeping with the following objectives set forth in Act No. 17 of June 16, 1993, as amended, also known as the “Puerto Rico Council of Higher Education Act”:</p> <p>(a) ...to respect and protect the autonomy of higher education institutions, and to ascertain that said institutions respect the civil right of all members of the academic community</p> <p>These Regulations recognize the transcendental mission of higher education institutions and the importance of ascertaining that they meet their obligation to the students and the community they serve. The Regulations also recognize the importance of diversity in the field of higher education, and acknowledge the fact that our institutions must develop in an environment, and within the dynamics of essential freedom, continuous readaptation, and openness to change and to individual initiatives.</p> |

| <p style="text-align: center;"><b>MSCHE <i>Characteristics of Excellence in Higher Education</i> (2002)</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Fundamental Elements for Accreditation</b></p>   | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>PRCHE Regulations Governing Issuance of Licenses (1997)</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Elements and Evaluation Criteria</b></p>   |
|--|--|
| <p><b><i>Fundamental Elements:</i></b></p> <p>Relative to this standard, an accredited institution is characterized by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ clearly defined mission, goals and objectives that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✧ guide faculty, administration, staff and governing bodies in making decisions related to planning, resource allocation, program and curriculum development, and definition of program outcomes;</li> <li>✧ include support of scholarly and creative activity, at levels and of the kinds appropriate to the institution’s purposes and character;</li> <li>✧ are developed through collaborative participation by those who facilitate or are otherwise responsible for institutional improvement and developments;</li> <li>✧ are formally approved, publicized and widely known by the institution’s members;</li> </ul> </li> <li>➤ mission, goals and objectives that relate to external as well as internal contexts and constituencies;</li> <li>➤ institutional goals and objectives that are consistent with mission; and</li> <li>➤ goals and objectives that focus on student learning, other outcomes, and institutional improvement.</li> </ul> | <p><b>Section 51.4 – Level and sufficiency of academic programs to develop the skills and knowledge that are to be communicated to students</b></p> <p>(a) The institution has defined its philosophy, mission, goals and objectives, and the academic programs it seeks to offer are consistent with those definitions and with the skills, attitudes, and knowledge it purports to communicate to students</p> |

## Section 2

| <p style="text-align: center;"><i>MSCHE Characteristics of Excellence<br/>in Higher Education (2002)</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Fundamental Elements<br/>for Accreditation</b></p>   | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>PRCHE Regulations Governing<br/>Issuance of Licenses (1997)</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Elements and Evaluation Criteria</b></p>  |
|---|---|
| <p><b>Standard 2:<br/>Planning, Resource Allocation, and<br/>Institutional Renewal</b></p> <p><b>An institution conducts ongoing<br/>planning and resource allocation<br/>based on its mission and utilizes the<br/>results of its assessment activities for<br/>institutional renewal.</b></p> <p><b>Implementation and subsequent<br/>evaluation of the success of the<br/>strategic plan and resource allocation<br/>support the development and change<br/>necessary to improve and to maintain<br/>institutional quality</b></p> <p><b><i>Fundamental Elements:</i></b></p> <p>Relative to this standard, an accredited<br/>institution is characterized by:</p> |   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ clearly stated goals and objectives, both institution-wide and for individual operational units, used for planning and resource allocation at the institutional and unit levels;</li> <li>➤ planning and improvement processes that are clearly communicated, provide for constituent participation, and incorporate the use of assessment results;</li> <li>➤ objectives for improvement that are clearly stated, reflect conclusions drawn from assessment results, and are linked to mission and goal achievement, both institution-wide and for individual units;</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;">cont'd ↓</p>  | <p><b>Section 51.3 – Financial Standing</b></p> <p>Financial stability is one of the essential requirements that must be met by all higher education institutions. To obtain a license, the institution shall have the necessary resources and reserves to guarantee its continuity. The income and subventions received must be of such nature and for such amounts as may be necessary to guarantee each student that he or she will complete his or her studies in the institution under adequate conditions</p> |

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ well defined decision-making processes and authority that facilitates planning and renewal;</li><li>➤ the assignment of responsibility for improvements and assurance of accountability;</li><li>➤ a record of institutional and unit improvement efforts; and</li><li>➤ periodic assessment of the effectiveness of planning, resource allocation, and institutional renewal processes.</li></ul> |  |
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# Section 3

| <p><i>MSCHE Characteristics of Excellence in Higher Education (2002)</i></p> <p><b>Fundamental Elements for Accreditation</b></p>   | <p><b>PRCHE Regulations Governing Issuance of Licenses (1997)</b></p> <p><b>Elements and Evaluation Criteria</b></p>  |
|---|---|
| <p><b>Standard 3<br/>Institutional Resources</b></p> <p><b>The human, financial, technical, physical facilities and other resources necessary to achieve an institution’s mission and goals are available and accessible. In the context of the institution’s mission, the effective and efficient uses of the institution’s resources are analyzed as part of ongoing outcomes assessment.</b></p> <p><b><i>Fundamental Elements:</i></b></p> <p>Relative to this standard, an accredited institution is characterized by:</p> |   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ strategies to measure and assess the level of, and efficient utilization of, institutional resources required to support the institution’s mission and goals;</li> </ul>   | <p><b>Section 51.3 – Financial Standing</b></p> <p>b. show that the operation is financially feasible—regardless of whether the institution is or is not a for-profit institution—through a feasibility study that contains revenue and expenditure projections for the period covered by the license, indicating sources and accounts.</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ rational and consistent policies and procedures in place to determine allocation of assets;</li> </ul>   | <p><b>Section 51.3 – Financial Standing</b></p> <p>b. show that the operation is financially feasible—regardless of whether the institution is or is not a for-profit institution—through a feasibility study that contains revenue and expenditure projections for the period covered by the license, indicating sources and accounts.</p> |

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| <p>➤ an allocation approach that ensures adequate faculty, staff, and administration to support the institution’s mission and outcomes expectations;</p>   | <p><b>Section 51.3 – Financial Standing</b></p> <p>b. show that the operation is financially feasible—regardless of whether the institution is or is not a for-profit institution—through a feasibility study that contains revenue and expenditure projections for the period covered by the license, indicating sources and accounts.</p> <p><b>Section 51.5 – Academic experience and credentials of faculty and adequacy for institutional offerings</b></p> <p>c. The institution’s policy concerning the faculty’s maximum academic load and number of preparations allows professors to keep up to date in their fields and to fully and efficiently meet their teaching responsibilities as defined by the institution.</p>  |
| <p>➤ a budget process aligned with the institution’s mission, goals, and strategic plan that provides for an annual budget and multi-year budget projections for at least three-years, both institution-wide and among departments; utilizes planning and assessment documents; and addresses resource acquisition and allocation for the institution and any subsidiary, affiliated, or contracted educational organizations as well as for institutional systems as appropriate;</p> | <p><b>Section 51.1 – Physical Facilities</b></p> <p>Physical facilities shall fulfill the necessary conditions to adequately guarantee the operation of the institution in terms of teaching, research and student services.</p> <p><b>Section 51.3 – Financial standing</b></p> <p>c. show that it has a detailed budget for the first year of operations, as well as detailed budgetary projections for the rest of the period covered by the license;</p> <p><b>Section 51.7 – Laboratories and auxiliary educational equipment</b></p> <p>a. The institution has the necessary adequate facilities for the laboratories or practices offered in connection with courses requiring the same.</p> <p><b>Section 51.7</b></p> <p>(1) The institution has an equipment maintenance and replacement plan, and maintains a budgetary reserve to such ends.</p> <p><b>Section 51.7</b></p> <p>f. The institution has the necessary technological equipment to facilitate the teaching process and to achieve academic program objectives.</p> |

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| <p>➤ a comprehensive facilities or infrastructure master plan and facilities/infrastructure life-cycle management plan, as appropriate to mission, and evidence of implementation;</p> | <p><b>Section 51.1 – Physical Facilities</b></p> <p>Physical facilities shall fulfill the necessary conditions to adequately guarantee the operation of the institution in terms of teaching, research and student services.</p> <p><b>Section 51.7– Laboratories and auxiliary educational equipment</b></p> <p>a. The institution has the necessary technological equipment to facilitate the teaching process and to achieve academic program objectives.</p> <p><b>Section 51.7– Laboratories and auxiliary educational equipment</b></p> <p>f. The institution has the necessary technological equipment to facilitate the teaching process and to achieve academic program objectives.</p> |
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| <p>➤ recognition in the comprehensive plan that facilities, such as learning resources fundamental to all educational and research programs and libraries, are adequately supported and staffed to accomplish the institution's objectives for student learning, both on campuses and at a distance;</p> | <p><b>Section 51.1 – Physical Facilities</b></p> <p>Physical facilities shall fulfill the necessary conditions to adequately guarantee the operation of the institution in terms of teaching, research and student services.</p> <p><b>Section 51.4– Level and sufficiency of academic programs to develop the skills and knowledge that are to be communicated to students</b></p> <p>g. The institution has operational and financial plans for hiring and recruiting professors and other human resources that may be necessary to implement its academic programs.</p> <p><b>Section 51.7 – Laboratories and auxiliary educational equipment</b></p> <p>a. The institution has the necessary adequate facilities for the laboratories or practices offered in connection with courses requiring the same.</p> <p><b>Section 51.7 – Laboratories and auxiliary educational equipment</b></p> <p>c. Laboratory equipment and materials are adequate for their use, and the laboratories have the safety resources and equipment required by law.</p> <p><b>Section 51.7 – Laboratories and auxiliary educational equipment</b></p> <p>(2) The institution has the necessary technological equipment to facilitate the teaching process and to achieve academic program objectives.</p> <p><b>Section 51.8 – Student Services</b></p> <p>o. it has adequate facilities and the required permits to provide lodging and meals, if such services are offered</p> |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ an educational and other equipment acquisition and replacement process and plan, including provision for current and future technology, as appropriate to the educational programs and support services, and evidence of implementation;</li> </ul> | <p><b>Section 51.7 – Laboratories and auxiliary educational equipment</b></p> <p>(3) The institution has an equipment maintenance and replacement plan, and maintains a budgetary reserve to such ends.</p>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ adequate institutional controls to deal with financial, administrative and auxiliary operations, and rational and consistent policies and procedures in place to determine allocation of assets;</li> </ul>   | <p><b>Section 51.3 – Financial Standing</b></p> <p>a. have an adequate internal control system that includes an accounting systems which may allow the institution to prepare financial statements in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles;</p> <p><b>Section 51.8 – Student Services</b></p> <p>(4) it has adequate facilities and the required permits to provide lodging and meals, if such services are offered</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ an annual independent audit (institutional or system-wide), confirming financial responsibility, with evidence of follow-up on any concerns cited in the audit’s accompanying management letter; and</li> </ul>                                     | <p><b>Section 51.3 – Financial Standing</b></p> <p>d. present annual financial statements duly audited and certified by certified public accountants not connected with the institution, in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles for higher education institutions.</p>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ periodic assessment of the effective and efficient use of institutional resources.</li> </ul>   |   |

# Section 4

| <p><i>MSCHE Characteristics of Excellence<br/>in Higher Education (2002)</i></p> <p>Fundamental Elements<br/>for Accreditation</p>  | <p>PRCHE Regulations Governing<br/>Issuance of Licenses (1997)</p> <p>Elements and Evaluation Criteria</p> |
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| <p><b>Standard 4</b><br/><b>Leadership and Governance</b></p> <p><b>The institution’s system of governance clearly defines the roles of institutional constituencies in policy development and decision-making. The governance structure includes an active governing body with sufficient autonomy to assure institutional integrity and to fulfill its responsibilities of policy and resource development, consistent with the mission of the institution.</b></p> <p><b><i>Fundamental Elements:</i></b></p> <p>Relative to this standard, an accredited institution is characterized by:</p> |  |

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| <p>➤ a well-defined system of collegial governance including written policies outlining governance responsibilities of administration and faculty and readily available to the campus community;</p> | <p><b>Section 51.2 Experience and Credential of Administrator</b></p> <p>The experience and academic credentials of administrators shall be consistent with the mission and purposes of the institution, with the type of institution to be created, and with the particular function to be performed in the same.</p> <p><b>Section 58 Document supporting the application for Renewal License</b></p> <p>a. the updated catalog of the institution, which must contain, at least...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(7) government structure of the institution;</li> <li>(8) names of chief officers;</li> </ul> <p><b>Section 58</b></p> <p>(c) (1) an updated summary containing the name, professional experience, academic credentials, position to be held, and academic load (if applicable) of each of the chief administrators of the institution, including academic administrators, as well as a list of the duties and responsibilities of administrators, as identified in the institution's organizational chart. In cases involving positions whose holders have not been recruited yet, the institution shall include a profile of the person to be recruited, containing the information requested in this subsection;</p> |
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- written governing documents, such as a constitution, by-laws, enabling legislation, charter or other similar documents, that:
  - ✧ delineate the governance structure and provide for collegial governance, the structure's composition, duties and responsibilities. In proprietary, corporate and similar types of institutions, a separate document may establish the duties and responsibilities of the governing body as well as the selection process;
  - ✧ assign authority and accountability for policy development and decision making, including a process for the involvement of appropriate institutional constituencies in policy development and decision making;
  - ✧ provide for the selection process for governing body members
- appropriate opportunity for student input regarding decisions that affect them;
- a governing body capable of reflecting constituent and public interest and of an appropriate size to fulfill all its responsibilities, and which includes members with sufficient expertise to assure that the body's fiduciary responsibilities can be fulfilled;
- a governing body not chaired by the chief executive officer;
- a governing body that certifies to the Commission that the institution is in compliance with the eligibility requirements, accreditation standards and policies of the Commission; describes itself in identical terms to all its accrediting agencies; communicates any changes in its accredited status; and agrees to disclose information required by the Commission to carry out its accrediting responsibilities, including levels of governing body compensation, if any;
- a conflict-of-interest policy for the governing body (and fiduciary body members, if such a body exists), which addresses matters such as remuneration, contractual relationships, employment, family, financial or other interests that could pose conflicts of interest, and that assures that those interests are disclosed and that they do not interfere with the impartiality of governing body members or outweigh the greater duty to secure and ensure the academic and fiscal integrity of the institution;

cont'd ↓

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ a governing body that assists in generating resources needed to sustain and improve the institution;</li><li>➤ a process for orienting new members and providing continuing updates for current members of the governing body on the institution's mission, organization, and academic programs and objectives;</li><li>➤ a procedure in place for the periodic objective assessment of the governing body in meeting stated governing body objectives;</li><li>➤ a chief executive officer, appointed by the governing board, with primary responsibility to the institution; and</li><li>➤ periodic assessment of the effectiveness of institutional leadership and governance.</li></ul> |  |
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# Section 5

| <p><i>MSCHE Characteristics of Excellence in Higher Education (2002)</i></p> <p><b>Fundamental Elements for Accreditation</b></p>  | <p><b>PRCHE Regulations Governing Issuance of Licenses (1997)</b></p> <p><b>Elements and Evaluation Criteria</b></p>   |
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| <p><b>Standard 5 Administration</b></p> <p><b>The institution’s administrative structure and services facilitate learning and research/scholarship, foster quality improvement, and support the institution’s organization and governance</b></p> <p><b><i>Fundamental Elements:</i></b></p> <p>Relative to this standard, an accredited institution is characterized by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ a chief executive whose primary responsibility is to lead the institution toward the achievement of its goals and with responsibility for administration of the institution;</li> </ul> |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ a chief executive with the combination of academic background, professional training, and/or other qualities appropriate to the institution’s mission;</li> </ul>   | <p><b>Section 51.2 – The experience and academic credentials of administrator shall be consistent with the mission and purposes of the institution with the type of institution to be created, and with the particular function to be performed in the same.</b></p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ administrative leaders with appropriate skills, degrees and training to carry out their responsibilities and functions;</li> </ul>  | <p><b>Section 51.2 – The experience and academic credentials of administrator shall be consistent with the mission and purposes of the institution with the type of institution to be created, and with the particular function to be performed in the same.</b></p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ qualified staffing appropriate to the goals, type, size, and complexity of the institution;</li> <li>➤ adequate information and decision-making systems to support the work of administrative leaders;</li> </ul>   |  |

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ clear documentation of the lines of organization and authority; and</li> </ul>                | <p><b>Section 58 Document supporting the application for Renewal License</b></p> <p>(a) the updated catalog of the institution, which must contain, at least:</p> <p>(7) government structure of the institution;</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ periodic assessment of the effectiveness of administrative structures and services</li> </ul> |   |

## Section 6

| <p><i>MSCHE Characteristics of Excellence in Higher Education (2002)</i></p> <p><b>Fundamental Elements for Accreditation</b></p>  | <p><b>PRCHE Regulations Governing Issuance of Licenses (1997)</b></p> <p><b>Elements and Evaluation Criteria</b></p>  |
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| <p><b>Standard 6 Integrity</b></p> <p><b>In the conduct of its programs and activities involving the public and the constituencies it serves, the institution demonstrates adherence to ethical standards and its own stated policies, providing support to academic and intellectual freedom.</b></p> <p><b><i>Fundamental Elements:</i></b></p> <p>Relative to this standard, an accredited institution is characterized by:</p> |   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ fair and impartial processes, published and widely available, to address student concerns or alleged violations of institutional policies. The institution assures that student concerns are addressed promptly, appropriately and equitably;</li> </ul>  | <p><b>Section 51.8 Student Services</b></p> <p>I. it has established internal proceeding to adequately receive, investigate, and resolve complaints filed by students and graduates.</p>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ fair and impartial practices in the hiring, evaluation and dismissal of employees;</li> </ul>   | <p><b>Section 51.4 Level and sufficiency of academic programs to develop the skills and knowledge that are to be communicated to students</b></p> <p>(g) The institution has operational and financial plans for hiring and recruiting professors and other human resources that may be necessary to implement its academic programs.</p> |



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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ sound ethical practices and respect for individuals through its teaching, scholarship/research, and service, and administrative practice, including the avoidance of conflict of interest or the appearance of such conflict in all its activities and among all its constituents;</li> </ul>                               | <p><b>Chapter I General Provisions</b><br/>(Statement of Purposes)</p> <p>These Regulations seek to establish the standards and proceedings that will govern the issuance of licenses by the Puerto Rico Council on Higher Education to public and private higher education institutions in Puerto Rico, in keeping with the following objectives set forth in Act No. 17 of June 16, 1993, as amended, also known as the "Puerto Rico Council of Higher Education Act":</p> <p>(b) ...to respect and protect the autonomy of higher education institutions, and to ascertain that said institutions respect the civil right of all members of the academic community</p> <p>These Regulations recognize the transcendental mission of higher education institutions and the importance of ascertaining that they meet their obligation to the students and the community they serve. The Regulations also recognize the importance of diversity in the field of higher education, and acknowledge the fact that our institutions must develop in an environment, and within the dynamics of essential freedom, continuous readaptation, and openness to change and to individual initiatives.</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ equitable and appropriately consistent treatment of constituencies, as evident in such areas as student discipline, student evaluation, grievance procedures, faculty promotion, tenure, retention and compensation, administrative review, curricular improvement, and institutional governance and management;</li> </ul> | <p><b>Section 51.8 Student Services</b></p> <p>I. it has established internal proceeding to adequately receive, investigate, and resolve complaints filed by students and graduates.</p>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ a climate of academic inquiry and engagement supported by...</li> <li>➤ ...widely disseminated policies regarding academic and intellectual freedom;</li> <li>➤ an institutional commitment to principles of protecting intellectual property rights;</li> </ul>  |  |

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ a climate that fosters respect among students, faculty, staff, and administration for a range of backgrounds, ideas, and perspectives;</li> </ul> | <p><b>Chapter I General Provisions</b><br/>(Statement of Purposes)</p> <p>These Regulations seek to establish the standards and proceedings that will govern the issuance of licenses by the Puerto Rico Council on Higher Education to public and private higher education institutions in Puerto Rico, in keeping with the following objectives set forth in Act No. 17 of June 16, 1993, as amended, also known as the "Puerto Rico Council of Higher Education Act":</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">(c) to respect and protect the autonomy of higher education institutions, and to ascertain that said institutions respect the civil right of all members of the academic community</p> <p>These Regulations recognize the transcendental mission of higher education institutions and the importance of ascertaining that they meet their obligation to the students and the community they serve. The Regulations also recognize the importance of diversity in the field of higher education, and acknowledge the fact that our institutions must develop in an environment, and within the dynamics of essential freedom, continuous readaptation, and openness to change and to individual initiatives.</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ honesty and truthfulness in public relations announcements, advertisements, and recruiting and admissions materials;</li> </ul>                   | <p><b>See Chapter VII</b><br/><b>PUBLIC RESPONSIBILITY OF</b><br/><b>INSTITUTIONS, Section 65 and 66 (a)-(j)</b></p> <p><b>Section 65 Concept</b></p> <p>Higher education institutions, aware of their transcendental mission and of the important and delicate function they perform, shall see to it that their operations are consistent with standards of conduct that honor the integrity of their mission and set an example for their students and for the Puerto Rican community in general. The institution shall operate at the highest level of public responsibility and shall diligently and scrupulously fulfill their obligations to their students, the community and the State, including the faithful and continuous performance of their duties under these Regulations.</p> <p><b>Section 66 Advertisements and other expressions of general circulation</b></p> <p>See subsections (a) thru (j)</p>  |

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ reasonable, continuing student access to paper or electronic catalogs;</li> <li>➤ when catalogs are available only electronically, the institution's web page provides a guide or index to catalog information for each catalog available electronically;</li> <li>➤ when catalogs are available only electronically, the institution archives copies of the catalogs as sections or policies are updated;</li> <li>➤ availability of factual information about the institution, such as the Middle States Commission on Higher Education annual data reporting, the self-study or periodic review report, the team report, and the Commission's action, accurately reported and made publicly available to the institution's community;</li> </ul> |   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ institutional information provided in a manner that ensures student and public access, such as print, electronic, or video presentation;</li> </ul>   | <p><b>Section 51.8 – Student Services</b></p> <p>a. it furnishes truthful information to students during the recruitment and admission process.</p> <p><b>Section 51.8 – Student Services</b></p> <p>(d) it includes in its catalog, or in any other official publication, information about available financial aid, and has adequate administrative systems and resources to provide financial aid services to student.</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ fulfillment of all applicable standards and reporting and other requirements of the Commission; and</li> <li>➤ periodic assessment of the integrity evidenced in institutional policies, processes, practices, and the manner in which these are implemented.</li> </ul>  |   |

# Section 7

| <p style="text-align: center;"><i>MSCHE Characteristics of Excellence<br/>in Higher Education (2002)</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Fundamental Elements<br/>for Accreditation</p>   | <p style="text-align: center;">PRCHE Regulations Governing<br/>Issuance of Licenses (1997)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Elements and Evaluation Criteria</p> |
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| <p><b>Standard 7<br/>Institutional Assessment</b></p> <p><b>The institution has developed and implemented an assessment plan and process that evaluates its overall effectiveness in: achieving its mission and goals; implementing planning, resource allocation, and institutional renewal processes; using institutional resources efficiently; providing leadership and governance; providing administrative structures and services; demonstrating institutional integrity; and assuring that institutional processes and resources support appropriate learning and other outcomes for its students and graduates.</b></p> <p><b><i>Fundamental Elements:</i></b></p> <p>Relative to this standard, an accredited institution is characterized by:</p> |  |

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ a written assessment plan and process that meet the following criteria: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✧ a foundation in the institution’s mission, goals, and objectives periodic assessment of institutional effectiveness that addresses the total range of educational offerings, services, and processes, including planning, resource allocation, and institutional renewal processes; institutional resources; leadership and governance; administration; institutional integrity; and student learning outcomes</li> <li>✧ support and collaboration of faculty and administration</li> <li>✧ systematic and thorough use of multiple qualitative and/or quantitative measures, which maximize the use of existing data and information</li> <li>✧ evaluative approaches that yield results that are useful in institutional planning, resource allocation, and renewal</li> <li>✧ realistic goals and a timetable, supported by appropriate investment of institutional resources</li> <li>✧ periodic evaluation of the effectiveness and comprehensiveness of the institution’s assessment plan;</li> </ul> </li> </ul> | <p><b>Section 58 Documents supporting the application for Renewal License</b></p> <p>h. updated documentation on the study programs to be offered:</p> <p>(a) a progress report on the programs offered by the institution, including, in each case, a description of the changes and of the progress made in the following areas since the program was authorized: the reasons justifying each of the programs, their goals and objectives, and their correspondence with the goals and objectives of the institution, as well as a profile of its graduates, admission and graduation requirements, the correspondence between credit-hours or contact-hours and the programmatic level of the degree to be conferred, the curricular sequence and design, and the distribution of total credits according to the course classification model identified by the institution.</p> <p>(3) an evaluation report on each previously authorized program in terms of number of students, students retention, and graduates</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ use of assessment results to improve and gain efficiencies in administrative services and processes, including activities specific to the institution’s mission (e.g., service, outreach, research); and</li> <li>➤ a written institutional (strategic) plan that reflects consideration of data from assessment.</li> </ul>  |  |

## Section 8

| <p><i>MSCHE Characteristics of Excellence in Higher Education (2002)</i></p> <p><b>Fundamental Elements for Accreditation</b></p>   | <p><b>PRCHE Regulations Governing Issuance of Licenses (1997)</b></p> <p><b>Elements and Evaluation Criteria</b></p>   |
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| <p><b>Standard 8</b><br/><b>Student Admissions</b></p> <p><b>The institution seeks to admit students whose interests, goals and abilities are congruent with its mission.</b></p> <p><b><i>Fundamental Elements:</i></b></p> <p>Relative to this standard, an accredited institution is characterized by:</p> |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ admissions policies, developed and implemented, that support and reflect the mission of the institution;</li> </ul>  | <p><b>Section 51.8 – Student Services</b></p> <p>b. it has a written admission policy in accordance with the institution’s mission and purposes.</p>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ admissions policies and criteria available to assist the prospective student in making informed decisions;</li> </ul>  | <p><b>Section 51.8 – Student Services</b></p> <p>a. it furnishes truthful information to students during the recruitment and admission process.</p> <p>b. it has a written admission policy in accordance with the institution’s mission</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ accurate and comprehensive information regarding academic programs, including any required placement or diagnostic testing;</li> </ul>   | <p><b>Section 51.8 – Student Services</b></p> <p>(b) it has a written policy concerning the student’s academic progress</p>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ information on student learning outcomes available to prospective students;</li> </ul>   | <p><b>Section 51.8 – Student Services</b></p> <p>a. it furnishes truthful information to students during the recruitment and admission process</p>   |

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ accurate and comprehensive information, and advice where appropriate, regarding financial aid, scholarships, grants, loans, and refunds;</li> </ul>  | <p><b>Section 51.4 – Level and sufficiency of academic programs</b></p> <p>f. the institution has an academic counseling program that meets the students needs</p> <p><b>Section 51.8 – Student Service</b></p> <p>g. it includes in its catalog, or in any other official publication, information about available financial aid, and has adequate administrative systems and resources to provide financial aid services to student</p> <p>(c) it has rules governing the performance, academic progress, class attendance, and conduct expected from its students;</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ published and implemented policies and procedures regarding transfer credit and credit for extra-institutional college level learning; and</li> </ul>  | <p><b>Section 51.4 – Level and sufficiency of academic programs to develop the skills and knowledge that are to be communicated to students</b></p> <p>(d) The institution has a course validating policy that facilitates student transfers from and to other higher education institutions.</p>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ ongoing assessment of student success, including but not necessarily limited to retention, that evaluates the match between the attributes of admitted students and the institution’s mission and programs.</li> </ul> |   |

## Section 9

| <p><i>MSCHE Characteristics of Excellence in Higher Education (2002)</i></p> <p><b>Fundamental Elements for Accreditation</b></p>   | <p><b>PRCHE Regulations Governing Issuance of Licenses (1997)</b></p> <p><b>Elements and Evaluation Criteria</b></p>   |
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| <p><b>Standard 9</b><br/><b>Student Support Services</b></p> <p><b>The institution provides student support services reasonably necessary to enable each student to achieve the institution's goals for students.</b></p> <p><b><i>Fundamental Elements:</i></b></p> <p>Relative to this standard, an accredited institution is characterized by:</p> |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ a program of student support services appropriate to student strengths and needs, reflective of institutional mission, consistent with student learning expectations, and available regardless of place or method of delivery;</li> </ul>  | <p><b>Section 51.8 – Student Services</b></p> <p>(e) its guidance and counseling service program is consistent with the number of students and the schedule, programs, and type of institution, and with the academic and socioeconomic profile of its students, and has the necessary professional, administrative, and technical personnel</p>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ qualified professionals to supervise and provide the student support services and programs;</li> </ul>   | <p><b>Section 51.8 – Student Services</b></p> <p>(f) its guidance and counseling service program is consistent with the number of students and the schedule, programs, and type of institution, and with the academic and socioeconomic profile of its students, and has the necessary professional, administrative, and technical personnel</p>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ procedures to address the varied spectrum of student academic and other needs, in a manner that is equitable, supportive, and sensitive, through direct service or referral;</li> </ul>  | <p><b>Section 51.4 – Level and sufficiency of academic programs</b></p> <p>f. the institution has an academic counseling program that meets the students needs</p> <p><b>Section 51.8 – Student Services</b></p> <p>h. its guidance and counseling service program is consistent with the number of students and the schedule, programs, and type of institution, and with the academic and socioeconomic profile of its students, and has the necessary professional, administrative, and technical personnel</p> |



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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ appropriate student advisement procedures and processes;</li> </ul>  | <p><b>Section 51.8 – Student Services</b></p> <p>h. its guidance and counseling service program is consistent with the number of students and the schedule, programs, and type of institution, and with the academic and socioeconomic profile of its students, and has the necessary professional, administrative, and technical personnel</p>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ if offered, athletic programs that are regulated by the same academic, fiscal, and administrative principles, norms, and procedures that govern other institutional programs;</li> </ul> |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ reasonable procedures, widely disseminated, for equitably addressing student complaints or grievances;</li> <li>➤ records of student complaints or grievances;</li> </ul>                | <p><b>Section 51.8 – Student Services</b></p> <p>(f) it has established internal proceedings adequately receive, investigate, and resolve complaints filed by students and graduates</p>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ policies and procedures, developed and implemented, for safe and secure maintenance of student records ;</li> </ul>  | <p><b>Section 51.8 – Student Services</b></p> <p>c. it has a registrar’s office whose main function is to keep the students’ academic records (both active and inactive and to issue certificates of the courses completed and the degrees or titles conferred</p> <p>(g) it keeps the student’s academic records in safe areas duly protected from fire, floods and other disasters</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ published and implemented policies for the release of student information; and</li> </ul>  | <p><b>Section 51.8 – Student Services</b></p> <p>d. it keeps the student’s academic records in safe areas duly protected from fire, floods and other disasters</p> <p>e. it has rules to protect the confidentiality of the information contained in the student’s academic records;</p>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ ongoing assessment of student support services and the utilization of assessment results for improvement.</li> </ul>   |  |

# Section 10

| <p style="text-align: center;"><i>MSCHE Characteristics of Excellence<br/>in Higher Education (2002)</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Fundamental Elements<br/>for Accreditation</p>  | <p style="text-align: center;">PRCHE Regulations Governing<br/>Issuance of Licenses (1997)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Elements and Evaluation Criteria</p> |
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| <p><b>Standard 10<br/>Faculty</b></p> <p><b>The institution’s instructional, research, and service programs are devised, developed, monitored and supported by qualified professionals.</b></p> <p><b><i>Fundamental Elements:</i></b></p> <p>Relative to this standard, an accredited institution is characterized by:</p> |  |

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| <p>➤ faculty and other professionals appropriately prepared and qualified for the positions they hold, with roles and responsibilities clearly defined, and sufficiently numerous to fulfill those roles appropriately;</p> | <p><b>Section 51.4 – Level and sufficiency of academic programs to develop the skills and knowledge that are to be communicated to students</b></p> <p>g. The institution has operational and financial plans for hiring and recruiting professors and other human resources that may be necessary to implement its academic programs.</p> <p><b>Section 51.5 – Academic experience and credentials of faculty and adequacy for institutional offerings</b></p> <p>(j) The institution’s faculty members have the necessary academic background for the level, program (discipline) and degree of specialization of the courses they teach, to wit:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) A bachelor’s degree is needed to teach courses leading to an associate degree, as well as a major academic background in the field of the courses taught</li> <li>2) A master’s degree is needed to teach courses leading to a bachelor’s degree, as well as a major or academic background in the field of the courses taught</li> <li>3) A professional or doctoral degree is needed to teach courses leading to a master’s or doctoral degree, as well as academic background or professional experience in the field of the courses taught.</li> </ol> <p>In exceptionally meritorious circumstances, the institution may recruit specially gifted professionals who, though lacking the required academic credentials, have been particularly distinguished for their significant contributions to their respective disciplines or fields of activity regardless of their titles.</p> <p><b>Section 51.5 b.</b> Faculty members who teach courses in areas of great recruitment difficulty have the necessary capacity, knowledge and experience to teach such courses.</p> <p><b>Section 51.5 c.</b> The institution's policy concerning the faculty's maximum academic load and number of preparations allows professors to keep up to date in their fields and to fully and efficiently meet their teaching responsibilities as defined by the institution.</p> |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ educational curricula designed, maintained, and updated by faculty and other professionals who are academically prepared and qualified;</li> <li>➤ faculty and other professionals, including teaching assistants, who demonstrate excellence in teaching and other activities, and who demonstrate continued professional growth;</li> </ul> |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ demonstrated institutional support for the advancement and development of faculty;</li> </ul>   | <p><b>Section 51.5 – Academic experience and credentials of faculty and adequacy for institutional offerings</b></p> <p>c. The institution’s policy concerning the faculty’s maximum academic load and number of preparations allows professors to keep up to date in their fields and to fully and efficiently meet their teaching responsibilities as defined by the institution.</p> <p>d. The institution’s has a faculty development policy that seeks to strengthen its academic offerings</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ recognition of appropriate linkages among scholarship, teaching, student learning, research, and service;</li> </ul>  | <p><b>Section 51.5 – Academic experience and credentials of faculty and adequacy for institutional offerings</b></p> <p>(k) The institution’s policy concerning the faculty’s maximum academic load and number of preparations allows professors to keep up to date in their fields and to fully and efficiently meet their teaching responsibilities as defined by the institution.</p>   |

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ published and implemented standards and procedures for all faculty and other professionals, for actions such as appointment, promotion, tenure, grievance, discipline and dismissal, based on principles of fairness with due regard for the rights of all persons;</li><li>➤ carefully articulated, equitable, and implemented procedures and criteria for review of all individuals who have responsibility for the educational program of the institution;</li><li>➤ criteria for the appointment, supervision, and review of teaching effectiveness for part-time, adjunct, and other faculty consistent with those for full-time faculty; and</li><li>➤ adherence to principles of academic freedom, within the context of institutional mission.</li></ul> |  |
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# Section 11

| <p style="text-align: center;"><i>MSCHE Characteristics of Excellence<br/>in Higher Education (2002)</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Fundamental Elements<br/>for Accreditation</b></p>   | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>PRCHE Regulations Governing<br/>Issuance of Licenses (1997)</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Elements and Evaluation Criteria</b></p>  |
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| <p><b>Standard 11<br/>Educational Offerings</b></p> <p><b>The institution’s educational offerings display academic content, rigor and coherence that are appropriate to its higher education mission.</b></p> <p><b>The institution identifies student learning goals and objectives, including knowledge and skills, for its educational offerings.</b></p> <p><b><i>Fundamental Elements:</i></b></p> <p>Relative to this standard, an accredited institution, whatever its mission, is characterized by the elements listed below.</p> <p><i>(Note: These elements also apply to all other educational activities addressed within Standard 13.)</i></p> |   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ educational offerings congruent with its mission, which include appropriate areas of academic study of sufficient content, breadth and length, and conducted at levels of rigor appropriate to the programs or degrees offered;</li> </ul>   | <p><b>Section 51.4 – Level and sufficiency of academic programs to develop the skills and knowledge that are to be communicated to students</b></p> <p>(l) The institution has defined its philosophy, mission, goals and objectives, and the academic programs it seeks to offer are consistent with those definitions and with the skills, attitudes, and knowledge it purports to communicate to students</p> <p><b>Section 51.4 b</b> The credit totals of the programs are in keeping with the established practice in higher education institutions.</p> <p><b>Section 51.4 c</b> The number of credits required to complete and earn a degree is in keeping with the established practice in higher education institutions (i.e., general education courses, fundamental courses, major courses, elective courses, etc.) or with any other course classification model identified by the institution</p> |

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ formal undergraduate, graduate, and/or professional programs—leading to a degree or other recognized higher education credential—designed to foster a coherent student learning experience and to promote synthesis of learning;</li> </ul>  | <p><b>Section 51.4 – Level and sufficiency of academic programs to develop the skills and knowledge that are to be communicated to students</b></p> <p>(m) The institution has defined its philosophy, mission, goals and objectives, and the academic programs it seeks to offer are consistent with those definitions and with the skills, attitudes, and knowledge it purports to communicate to students</p> <p><b>Section 51.4 c)</b> The number of credits required to complete and earn a degree is in keeping with the established practice in higher education institutions (i.e., general education courses, fundamental courses, major courses, elective courses, etc.) or with any other course classification model identified by the institution</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ program goals that are stated in terms of student learning</li> <li>➤ periodic evaluation of the effectiveness of any curricular, co-curricular, and extra-curricular experiences it provides its students and utilization of evaluation results as a basis for improving its student development program and for enabling students to understand their own educational progress;</li> </ul> |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ learning resources, facilities, instructional equipment, library services, and professional library staff adequate to support the institution’s educational programs;</li> </ul>   | <p><b>Section 51.1 – Physical Facilities</b></p> <p>Physical facilities shall fulfill the necessary conditions to adequately guarantee the operation of the institution in terms of teaching, research and student services</p> <p><b>Section 51.7 – Laboratories and auxiliary educational equipment</b></p> <p>(n) The institution has the necessary adequate facilities for the laboratories or practices offered in connection with courses requiring the same.</p> <p><b>Section 51.7 c</b> Laboratory equipment and materials are adequate for their use, and the laboratories have the safety resources and equipment required by law.</p>  |

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ collaboration between professional library staff and faculty in teaching and fostering information literacy skills relevant to the curriculum;</li> <li>➤ programs that promote student use of information and learning resources;</li> </ul> |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ provision of comparable quality of teaching/instruction, academic rigor, and educational effectiveness of its courses and programs regardless of the location or delivery mode;</li> </ul>  | <p><b>Section 24.2.2 Institutions with unconventional teaching and learning methods</b></p> <p>When evaluating institutions with unconventional educational methods (such as schools without walls, correspondence schools, schools through the radio, television, or other telecommunications media), the minimum evaluation elements and requirements shall be adjusted to the particular circumstances of each case. In all cases, however, the institution shall demonstrate that its operations are trustworthy and subject to corroboration, shall show the quality of its offerings and its financial standing, and shall guarantee the continuity of its offerings and its institutional responsibility. The institution using said methods shall make sure that its schemes are subject to evaluation by the Council, which shall determine whether the institution meets the minimum elements and requirements established in these Regulations.</p> <p><b>Section 60.2.2 Creation of an extension center, or move or expansion of the same to a different geographical area than that authorized in the institution's license</b></p> <p>c. ...an explanation of how the change complies with the minimum elements and requirements applicable to physical facilities established in Section 51 of these Regulation, including the documents and information required in Section 53(b) of these Regulations;</p> <p>d. an explanation of how these change complies with the minimum elements and requirements applicable to administration and government, faculty members, educational resources, laboratories, students services, and public security established in Section 51 of these Regulation, including the documents and information required in Section 53I, 53(d), 53(e), 53(f), 53(g), 53(h), 53(i), and 53(j) of these Regulations.</p> |



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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ published and implemented policies and procedures regarding transfer credit. The acceptance or denial of transfer credit will not be determined exclusively on the basis of the accreditation of the sending institution or the mode of delivery but, rather, will consider course equivalencies, including expected learning outcomes, with those of the receiving institution's curricula and standards. Such criteria will be fair, consistently applied, and publicly communicated;</li> </ul> | <p><b>Section 51.4 – Level and sufficiency of academic programs to develop the skills and knowledge that are to be communicated to students</b></p> <p>(d) The institution has a course validating policy that facilitates students transfers from and to other higher educational institutions.</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ policies and procedures to assure that the educational expectations, rigor, and student learning within any accelerated programs are comparable to those that characterize more traditional program formats;</li> <li>➤ consistent with the institution's educational programs and student cohorts, practices and policies that reflect the needs of adult learners;</li> </ul>  |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ course syllabi that incorporate expected learning outcomes; and</li> <li>➤ assessment of student learning and program outcomes relative to the goals and objectives of the undergraduate programs and the use of the results to improve student learning and program effectiveness (see Standard 14: Assessment of Student Learning)</li> </ul>  | <p><b>Section 53 (e)</b> Course syllabi or proposal including, for each course, title, codification, contact hours, and it hours, description thematic context, objectives, activities, resources, assessment, strategies, bibliography</p>  |

**Additional Elements for  
Graduate and Professional Education**

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| <p>➤ graduate curricula providing for the development of research and independent thinking which studies at the advanced level presuppose;</p>   | <p><b>Section 51.4 – Level and sufficiency of academic programs to develop the skills and knowledge that are to be communicated to students</b></p> <p>(o) The credit totals of the programs are in keeping with the established practice in higher education institutions.</p>  |
| <p>➤ faculty with credentials appropriate to the graduate curricula; and</p>   | <p><b>Section 51.5 – Academic experience and credentials of faculty and adequacy for institutional offerings</b></p> <p>(p) The institution’s faculty members have the necessary academic background for the level, program (discipline) and degree of specialization of the courses they teach, to wit:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) A bachelor’s degree is needed to teach courses leading to an associate degree, as well as a major academic background in the field of the courses taught</li> <li>2) A master’s degree is needed to teach courses leading to a bachelor’s degree, as well as a major or academic background in the field of the courses taught</li> <li>3) A professional or doctoral degree is needed to teach courses leading to a master’s or doctoral degree, as well as academic background or professional experience in the field of the courses taught.</li> </ol> <p>In exceptionally meritorious circumstances, the institution may recruit specially gifted professionals who, though lacking the required academic credentials, have been particularly distinguished for their significant contributions to their respective disciplines or fields of activity regardless of their titles.</p> <p><b>Section 51.5 b</b> Faculty members who teach courses in areas of great recruitment difficulty have the necessary capacity, knowledge and experience to teach such courses.</p> |
| <p>➤ assessment of student learning and program outcomes relative to the goals and objectives of the graduate programs (including professional and clinical skills, professional examinations and professional placement where applicable) and the use of the results to improve student learning and program effectiveness (see Standard 14: Assessment of Student Learning).</p> |  |

## Section 12

| <p><i>MSCHE Characteristics of Excellence in Higher Education (2002)</i></p> <p><b>Fundamental Elements for Accreditation</b></p>  | <p><b>PRCHE Regulations Governing Issuance of Licenses (1997)</b></p> <p><b>Elements and Evaluation Criteria</b></p>  |
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| <p><b>Standard 12<br/>General Education</b></p> <p><b>The institution’s curricula are designed so that students acquire and demonstrate college-level proficiency in general education and essential skills, including oral and written communication, scientific and quantitative reasoning, critical analysis and reasoning, technological competency, and information literacy.</b></p> <p><b><i>Fundamental Elements:</i></b></p> <p>Relative to this standard, an accredited institution is characterized by:</p> |   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ a program of general education of sufficient scope to enhance students’ intellectual growth, and equivalent to at least 15 semester hours for associate degree programs and 30 semester hours for baccalaureate programs; (An institution also may demonstrate how an alternative approach fulfills the intent of this fundamental element.)</li> </ul>   | <p><b>Section 51.4 – Level and sufficiency of academic programs to develop the skills and knowledge that are to be communicated to students</b></p> <p>(a) The institution has defined its philosophy, mission, goals and objectives, and the academic programs it seeks to offer are consistent with those definitions and with the skills, attitudes, and knowledge it purports to communicate to students</p> <p>b. The credit totals of the programs are in keeping with the established practice in higher education institutions.</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ a program of general education where the skills and abilities developed in general education are applied in the major or study in depth;</li> </ul>   |   |

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ consistent with institutional mission, a program of general education that incorporates study of values, ethics, and diverse perspectives</li> </ul>  | <p><b>Section 51.4 – Level and sufficiency of academic programs to develop the skills and knowledge that are to be communicated to students</b></p> <p>(q) The institution has defined its philosophy, mission, goals and objectives, and the academic programs it seeks to offer are consistent with those definitions and with the skills, attitudes, and knowledge it purports to communicate to students</p>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ general education requirements assuring that, upon degree completion, students are proficient in oral and written communication, scientific and quantitative reasoning, technological capabilities appropriate to the discipline, and information literacy which includes critical analysis and reasoning;</li> </ul>                   | <p><b>Section 51.4 – Level and sufficiency of academic programs to develop the skills and knowledge that are to be communicated to students</b></p> <p>(r) The institution has defined its philosophy, mission, goals and objectives, and the academic programs it seeks to offer are consistent with those definitions and with the skills, attitudes, and knowledge it purports to communicate to students</p> <p><b>Section 51.4 b.</b> The credit totals of the programs are in keeping with the established practice in higher education institutions.</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ general education requirements clearly and accurately described in official publications of the institution; and</li> <li>➤ assessment of general education outcomes within the institution’s overall plan for assessing student learning, and evidence that such assessment results are utilized for curricular improvement</li> </ul> |   |

# Section 13

| <p><i>MSCHE Characteristics of Excellence in Higher Education (2002)</i></p> <p><b>Fundamental Elements for Accreditation</b></p>  | <p><b>PRCHE Regulations Governing Issuance of Licenses (1997)</b></p> <p><b>Elements and Evaluation Criteria</b></p>  |
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| <p><b>Standard 13</b><br/><b>Related Educational Activities</b></p> <p><b>Institutional programs or activities that are characterized by particular content, focus, location, mode of delivery, or sponsorship meet appropriate standards.</b></p>   |   |
| <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Basic Skills</b></p> <p>Underprepared students may benefit from basic skills or developmental courses provided by an institution as part of its educational offerings. When offered, such pre-college level courses, taken prior to or concurrent with enrollment in degree credit courses, can prepare the student for success in achieving his or her educational goals.</p> <p><b><i>Fundamental Elements Basic Skills</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ systematic procedures for identifying students who are not fully prepared for college level study;</li> </ul> | <p><b>Section 51.8 – Student Services</b></p> <p>(s) it provides tutorial and remedial courses if its admission policy is an “open-door” policy.</p>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ provision of or referral to relevant courses and support services for admitted underprepared students; and</li> </ul>   | <p><b>Section 51.4 – Level and sufficiency of academic programs to develop the skills and knowledge that are to be communicated to students</b></p> <p>(u) The institution has an academic counseling program that meets the student’s needs.</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ remedial or pre-collegiate level courses that do not carry academic degree credit.</li> </ul>   | <p><b>Section 51.8 – Student Services</b></p> <p>(v) it provides tutorial and remedial courses if its admission policy is an “open-door” policy.</p>  |

## **Certificate Programs**

Certificate programs are non-degree credentials at the pre-baccalaureate, pos-baccalaureate, pos-masters, or pos-doctoral level, granted upon completion of a coherent, sequential program of study, usually for credit. Such programs and the courses included within them should follow the institution's usual development, approval, review, and assessment processes; should include articulated expected student knowledge, skills, and competency levels; and should comply with industry, national, or other definitions of such credentials, where appropriate.

### ***Fundamental Element Certificate Programs***

- certificate programs that have clearly articulated expectations of student learning and that are designed, approved, administered, and periodically evaluated under established institutional procedures.

### **Section 51.4 – Level and sufficiency of academic programs to develop the skills and knowledge that are to be communicated to students**

(v) The institution has defined its philosophy, mission, goals and objectives, and the academic programs it seeks to offer are consistent with those definitions and with the skills, attitudes, and knowledge it purports to communicate to students

## **Experiential Learning**

Experiential learning generally refers to knowledge or skills obtained outside of a higher education institution. Recognition of college-level experiential learning, which is derived from work, structured internships, or other life experience, may facilitate a student's progress without compromising an institution's integrity or the quality of its degrees. An institution's policies and procedures should provide appropriate consideration, consistent with good educational practice, for the individual student who has gained college level learning from other sources. However, procedures to assess learning for the award of academic credit (especially where such credit is part of an accelerated degree program) should define college-level learning and state clearly that credit is awarded for demonstrated learning, and not merely for experience.

### ***Fundamental Elements Experiential Learning***

- credit awarded for experiential learning that is supported by evidence in the form of an evaluation of the level, quality and quantity of that learning;
- published and implemented policies and procedures defining the methods by which prior learning can be evaluated and the level and amount of credit available by evaluation;
- published and implemented policies and procedures regarding the award of credit for prior learning that define the acceptance of such credit based on the institution's curricula and standards;
- published and implemented procedures regarding the recording of evaluated prior learning by the awarding institution;
- credit awarded appropriate to the subject and the degree context into which it is accepted; and
- evaluators of experiential learning who are knowledgeable about the subject matter and about the institution's criteria for the granting of college credit.

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| <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Non-credit Offerings</b></p> <p>Non-credit offerings may be offered on-site and through distance learning modalities. To the extent that these offerings are an important part of an institution’s activities, they should be consistent with its mission and goals. Whether these offerings are internally or externally developed, appropriately qualified professionals with responsibility to the institution should have oversight for the design, delivery, and evaluation of such offerings.</p> <p>If non-credit courses are potentially applicable to for-credit programs at the institution, academic oversight should assure the comparability and appropriate transferability of such courses.</p> <p><b>Fundamental Element Non-Credit Offerings</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ non-credit offerings that are designed, approved, administered, and periodically evaluated under established institutional procedures</li> </ul>                |  |
| <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Branch Campuses, Additional Locations, and Other Instructional Sites (Including Business/Corporate Locations and Study Abroad)</b></p> <p>Educational offerings at branch campuses, additional locations, or other instructional sites—including study abroad locations and business/corporate locations—may extend learning opportunities to a variety of populations, some of which are not otherwise served by the institution. Programs so delivered should meet standards comparable to those of other institutional offerings.</p> <p><b>Fundamental Element Branch Campuses, etc.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ offerings at branch campuses, additional locations, and other instructional sites (including study abroad locations and programs offered at business/corporate sites) that meet standards for quality of instruction, academic rigor, and educational effectiveness comparable to those of other institutional offerings.</li> </ul> | <p><b>Section 60.2.2 Creation of an extension center, or move or expansion of the same to a different geographical area than that authorized in the institution’s license</b></p> <p>c. an explanation of how the change complies with the minimum elements and requirements applicable to physical facilities established in Section 51 of these Regulation, including the documents and information required in Section 53(b) of these Regulations;</p> <p>d. an explanation of how these change complies with the minimum elements and requirements applicable to administration and government, faculty members, educational resources, laboratories, students services, and public security established in Section 51 of these Regulation, including the documents and information required in Section 53I, 53(d), 53(e), 53(f), 53(g), 53(h), 53(i), and 53(j) of these Regulations.</p> |



## Distance or Distributed Learning

Distance learning or distributed learning is a formal educational process in which some or all of the instruction occurs when the learner and the instructor are not in the same place at the same time; information or distributed learning technology is often the connector between the learner and the instructor or the site of origin. Programs delivered through distance learning modalities—whether by the internet, television, video-conferencing, or other means—should meet academic and learning support standards, appropriate to the type of delivery, comparable to those offered in more traditional formats within higher education. Student learning objectives and outcomes should be consistent across comparable offerings, regardless of where or how they are provided.

### ***Fundamental Elements Distance Learning, etc.***

- distance learning offerings (including those offered via accelerated or self-paced time formats) that meet institution-wide standards for quality of instruction, articulated expectations of student learning, academic rigor, and educational effectiveness. If the institution provides parallel on-site offerings, the same institution-wide standards should apply to both;
- consistency of the offerings via distance learning with the institution's mission and goals, and the rationale for the distance learning delivery;
- planning that includes consideration of applicable legal and regulatory requirements;
- demonstrated program coherence, including stated program learning outcomes appropriate to the rigor and breadth of the degree or certificate awarded;
- demonstrated commitment to continuation of offerings for a period sufficient to enable admitted students to complete the degree or certificate in a publicized timeframe;
- assurance that arrangements with consortial partners or contractors do not compromise the integrity of the institution or of the educational offerings;
- validation by faculty of any course materials or technology-based resources developed outside the institution;

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### **Section 24.2.2 Institutions with unconventional teaching and learning methods**

When evaluating institutions with unconventional educational methods (such as schools without walls, correspondence schools, schools through the radio, television, or other telecommunications media), the minimum evaluation elements and requirements shall be adjusted to the particular circumstances of each case. In all cases, however, the institution shall demonstrate that its operations are trustworthy and subject to corroboration, shall show the quality of its offerings and its financial standing, and shall guarantee the continuity of its offerings and its institutional responsibility. The institution using said methods shall make sure that its schemes are subject to evaluation by the Council, which shall determine whether the institution meets the minimum elements and requirements established in these Regulations.

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ available, accessible, and adequate learning resources (such as libraries or other information resources) appropriate to the offerings at a distance;</li><li>➤ an ongoing program of appropriate orientation, training, and support for faculty participating in electronically delivered offerings; and</li><li>➤ adequate technical and physical plant facilities , including appropriate staffing and technical assistance, to support electronic offerings.</li></ul> |  |
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## **Contractual Relationships and Affiliated Providers**

As institutions seek to improve the ways in which they provide education to their students, institutions may find that it is more practical or efficient to enter into consortial arrangements or to contract with other institutions or organizations to provide certain aspects of the education experience, including faculty, recruitment of students, and course/program development. Because an accredited institution is responsible for all activities carried out in the institution's name, the Commission's accreditation standards, policies, and procedures—including those on outcomes assessment, advertising, and recruitment—are fully applicable to any contractual arrangements with another regionally accredited institution or with a non-regionally accredited organization. Contractual relations with for-profit firms or other institutions require diligent care to protect an institution's integrity and to avoid abuse of its accredited status.

An affiliated provider may be a subsidiary, parent, "sister" or other entity (for-profit or non-profit) legally related to the institution or unrelated (except through contractual arrangement) to the accredited institution. Depending on the specific relationship, such providers may or may not be included within the scope of the institution's accreditation. Relevant factors might include matters such as use of the same or similar names, ownership, incorporation, management, control of curriculum, finances, acceptance of credits, degree-granting authority, and extent of activities. However, whether or not the affiliate is included within the scope of the institution's accreditation, the nature of the affiliation should be made clear both to the Commission and to the public, with particular attention to such issues as whether the provider offers its own programs or grants its own degrees; whether students are distinct from or considered to be students of the parent institution; what student learning and support services are available; and whether courses offered by the affiliated provider are applicable to a degree program offered by the accredited institution.

Attention should be given to the impact of the affiliated entity on the institution's resources and the institution's ability to fulfill its mission and goals.

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### **Section 62 (5) Significant Changes that shall be notified to PRCHE:**

(5) establishment of consortiums or agreements with other entities of Puerto Rico, the United States, and other countries, which are directly related to the institution's academic offering

### **See also Section 63.5 for documentation to accompany the notification:**

- a. a description of the change, including its purpose, the reasons justifying the same, and the date of commencement
- b. an explanation of how the project will operate, including: facilities, resources, programs, academic offering, and degrees and other academic recognition involved; and of the collaboration and participation of the institutions
- c. a copy of the compact, agreement, and any other documentation containing the terms, conditions and obligations of the institutions involved in the project.

***Fundamental Element Contractual Relationships, etc***

- contractual relationships with affiliated providers, other institutions, or organizations that protect the accredited institution's integrity and assure that the institution has appropriate oversight of and responsibility for all activities carried out in the institution's name or on its behalf.

# Section 14

| <p style="text-align: center;"><i>MSCHE Characteristics of Excellence<br/>in Higher Education (2002)</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Fundamental Elements<br/>for Accreditation</b></p>  | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>PRCHE Regulations Governing<br/>Issuance of Licenses (1997)</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Elements and Evaluation Criteria</b></p>   |
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| <p><b>Standard 14<br/>Assessment of Student Learning</b></p> <p><b>Assessment of student learning demonstrates that the institution's students have knowledge, skills, and competencies consistent with institutional goals and that student at graduation have achieved appropriate higher education goals.</b></p> <p><b><i>Fundamental Elements:</i></b></p> <p>Relative to this standard, an accredited institution is characterized by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ articulated expectations of student learning at various levels (institution, degree/program, course) that are consonant with the institution's mission and with the standards of higher education and of the relevant disciplines;</li> <li>➤ a plan that describes student learning assessment activities being undertaken by the institution, including the specific methods to be used to validate articulated student learning goals/objectives;</li> <li>➤ evidence that student learning assessment information is used to improve teaching and learning; and</li> <li>➤ documented use of student learning assessment information as part of institutional assessment.</li> </ul> | <p><b>Section 58 Documents supporting the application for Renewal License</b></p> <p>e. updated documentation on the study programs to be offered</p> <p>(1) a progress report on the programs offered by the institution, including, in each case, a description of the changes and of the progress made in the following areas since the program was authorized: the reasons justifying each of the programs, their goals and objectives, and their correspondence with the goals and objectives of the institution, as well as a profile of its graduates, admission and graduation requirements, the correspondence between credit-hours or contact-hours and the programmatic level of the degree to be conferred, the curricular sequence and design, and the distribution of total credits according to the course classification model identified by the institution.</p> <p>(2) a list of program closedowns and moratoriums that have occurred since the issuance of the previous license;</p> <p>(3) an evaluation report on each previously authorized program in terms of number of students, students retention, and graduates</p> |

# PRCHE Additional Requirements And Documentation

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Puerto Rico Council on Higher Education Regulations applicable to the Renewal and Amendment of Licenses of institutions of higher learning operating in Puerto Rico contains several requirements not included within the "Comparative Analysis." The following section identifies those areas and cite the pertinent regulatory provisions as stated in "Regulations Governing the Issuance of Licenses to Higher Education Institutions in Puerto Rico (1997 as amended)." Reference is made on this section to the following: Chapter IV-Minimum Evaluation Elements and Requirements, and Documentation Supporting Applications for Licenses (Sections 49-58); Chapter V-License Amendments and Supporting Documents (Sections 59-61); Chapter VI-Notice of Significant Changes and Supporting Documents (Sections 62-64) and Chapter VII-Public Responsibility of Institutions (Sections 65-69).

For a collaborative review to be successful, it is essential that the evaluated institution prepares itself in advance for such review modality. It is strongly advised to design a self study and to prepare documentation addressing all PRCHE and MSCHE required evaluation criteria and standards. Also the institution must prepare the reports needed to evaluate those substantive changes scheduled for review during the up coming cycle.

Evaluation criteria or elements that the institution of higher education (IHE) must satisfy, in addition to the criteria and elements described in the "Comparative Analysis," includes:

## Chapter IV-Minimum Evaluation Elements and Requirements

### **Section 51 Elements and requirements to be met:**

*Section 51.4 - Level and sufficiency of academic programs to develop the skills and knowledge that are to be communicated to students*

- e. The institution has a defined policy that guarantees that students will complete and obtain their degree in the event their study program is eliminated or if, for any reason, the institution closes down its operations.

*Section 51.5 - Academic experience and credentials of faculty and adequacy for institutional offerings*

- a. The institution's faculty members have the necessary academic background for the level, program (discipline) and degree of specialization of the courses they teach, to wit:
  - (1) A bachelor's degree is needed to teach courses leading to an associate degree, as well as a major or academic background in the field of the courses taught.
  - (2) A master's degree is needed to teach courses leading to a bachelor's degree, as well as a major or academic background in the field of the courses taught.
  - (3) A professional or doctoral degree is needed to teach courses leading to a master's or doctoral degree, as well as academic background or professional experience in the field of the courses taught.

In exceptionally meritorious circumstances, the institution may recruit specially gifted professionals who, though lacking the required academic credentials, have been particularly distinguished for their significant contributions to their respective disciplines or fields of activity regardless of their titles.

- b. Faculty members who teach courses in areas of great recruitment difficulty have the necessary capacity, knowledge and experience to teach such courses.

#### *Section 51.6 - Library resources*

The institution has the necessary library resources to support the academic program. The institution must show that:

- (a) it has defined the goals and objectives of the library, and that they meet the needs of students in the different study programs;
- (b) the size, lighting, ventilation, and equipment of the space provided for the library and other information services is adequate for the services to be provided and for the collections required by the institution's academic offerings;
- (c) the institution has the necessary up-to-date collections to achieve the educational goals of the institution's academic offerings, as well as general and specialized information in some of the available formats;
- (d) the catalog is encoded in an electronic format, or such process is under way, and can access remote information sources;
- (f) the institution has a library education program as well as the necessary resources to implement the same;
- (h) the library's working hours satisfy the users' needs, and the quality of its services is consistently adequate—both during the regular working hours and during the extended service hours—and in keeping with the institution's course program.

#### *Section 51.7 - Laboratories and auxiliary educational equipment*

- b. The laboratories meet federal and state law and regulation requirements, and have the pertinent permits.
- d. The institution has adequate administrative procedures and clear guidelines governing laboratory operation.
- g. The institution has scientific research development policies and plans to protect laboratories and research projects developed of the institutions permits, including contingent plans in cases of natural disasters and other foreseeable events.

#### *Section 51.8 - Student services*

The student services provided by a higher education institution are fundamental to the achievement of its educational mission. The institution shall show that:

- i. it furnishes information to students about job opportunities in areas related to their fields of study, and conducts periodical studies about its graduates to evaluate the pertinence of its curriculum;
- j. it provides educational (preventive) and curative health services to its students, as well as first-aid services, either directly or through an effective referral method;
- k. it provides adequate access for handicapped students;

*Section 51.9 - Personal security guarantees for students and the academic community*

- a. The institution keeps in force a public liability insurance policy with an insurance company recognized by the Commissioner of Insurance of Puerto Rico, in compliance with the requirements of Section 69 of these Regulations.
- b. The institution keeps in force a performance bond with an insurance company recognized by the Commissioner of Insurance of Puerto Rico, duly endorsed in favor of the Council on Higher Education, in compliance with the requirements of Section 69 of these Regulations.
- c. The institution keeps in force a plan aimed at providing adequate security to its visitors, students and academic personnel on the institution's premises.

**Section 58 - Documents supporting the application for Renewal License**

Any application for Renewal License shall consist of a self-study made according to the instructions provided in the Renewal License application form, and accompanied by the following documents. The institution applying for a Renewal License may present the documents marked with an asterisk when visited by the Advisory Board.

- a. the updated catalog of the institution, which must contain, at least:
  - (1) the philosophy and purposes of the institution;
  - (2) admission and graduation requirements;
  - (3) a description of all the programs, majors, specializations, and courses to be offered by the institution during the term in which the catalog is in force (which shall be at least one year), as well as the number of credit-hours or contact-hours of each study program;
  - (4) registration and enrollment costs and fees required from students, and the institution's policy on changes in such costs;
  - (5) rules governing the cancellation and reimbursement of enrollment fees and of other payments made by the students to the institution;
  - (6) reciprocal rights and duties of the institution and the students;
  - (7) government structure of the institution;
  - (8) names of chief officers;
  - (9) a record of faculty members, their academic degrees, and the names of the institutions in which said degrees were obtained; or, in the alternative, a profile of the faculty members to be recruited;
  - (10) a description of the main physical structures in which the institution is to make its academic offerings;
  - (11) a description of the library, audiovisual, laboratory, and other special services to be provided by the institution in order to comply with its academic offerings;
- b. the documents necessary to establish the adequacy of the physical facilities to be used, containing the following information:
  - (1) plans or diagrams of the physical facilities to be built, remodeled, or used by the institution, showing the size, specifications, and manner in which the space is to be used, for purposes of showing the changes that have taken place since the issuance of the previous license;
  - (2) permits issued by the Regulations and Permits Administration (ARPE, by its Spanish acronym) to use the physical facilities;



- (3) updated inspection reports made by the Puerto Rico Fire Department;
- (4) updated inspection reports made by the Department of Health;
- (5) updated permits to use, handle, preserve, and dispose of chemical substances and explosives, if applicable;
- (6) any other permit required to use laboratories for teaching and investigation purposes, if applicable;
- (7) any other permit required by any Commonwealth or federal department or agency allowing the institution to operate;

c. an updated summary containing the name, professional experience, academic credentials, position to be held, and academic load (if applicable) of each of the chief administrators of the institution, including academic administrators, as well as a list of the duties and responsibilities of administrators, as identified in the institution's organizational chart. In cases involving positions whose holders have not been recruited yet, the institution shall include a profile of the person to be recruited, containing the information requested in this subsection;

d. updated documentation showing the financial standing of the institution:

- (1) an updated budget and detailed revenue and expenditure projections (indicating sources and accounts) for the five-year period covered by the requested license, including projections of the total number of enrolled students, of full-time-equivalent students, and credit-hours or contact-hours;
- (2) duly audited financial statements of the institution;
- (3) evidence showing that the institution has the necessary economic guaranties to make operation feasible for the period covered by the license, such as a performance bond, credit lines, and assets;
- (4) a description of the changes made (since the issuance of the previous license) in the internal control system, including the accounting system used by the institution;
- (5) changes made (since the issuance of the previous license) to the institutional policy that guarantees that students will complete their studies in the event the study programs are eliminated or the institution closes down its operations;

e. updated documentation on the study programs to be offered:

- (1) a progress report on the programs offered by the institution, including, in each case, a description of the changes and of the progress made in the following areas since the program was authorized: the reasons justifying each of the programs, their goals and objectives, and their correspondence with the goals and objectives of the institution, as well as a profile of its graduates, admission and graduation requirements, the correspondence between credit-hours or contact-hours and the programmatic level of the degree to be conferred, the curricular sequence and design, and the distribution of total credits according to the course classification model identified by the institution;
- (2) a list of program closedowns and moratoriums that have occurred since the issuance of the previous license;
- (3) an evaluation report on each previously authorized program in terms of number of students, student retention, and graduates;

f. documentation on the experience and credentials of faculty members:

(1) an updated summary containing the name of each faculty member, his/her professional experience, academic credentials, titles of courses taught, type of contract (part-time or full-time), academic load, number of preparations, and other tasks. In cases involving positions whose holders have not been recruited yet, the institution shall include a profile of the person to be recruited, containing the information requested in this subsection;

(2) changes made to the faculty manual (since the issuance of the previous license) with regard to the institutional regulations on maximum academic load and number of preparations of part-time and full-time faculty members at undergraduate and graduate levels; as well as rules governing recruitment, evaluation, tenure, promotions, academic freedom, functions and duties of faculty members, and participation of faculty members in the establishment and development of academic rules and of teaching and research programs;

(3) a description of the criteria governing the faculty development policy;

g. documentation concerning the bibliographical resources:

(1) a description of the changes that have occurred (since the issuance of the previous license) in the goals and objectives of the library;

(2) a description of the changes that have occurred (since the issuance of the previous license) in the distribution of internal space, work areas, location of collections and equipment, and in other aspects of the physical facilities, including lighting and ventilation;

(3) an updated library collection development plan showing the resources, equipment and materials to be acquired, as well as the changes that have occurred in the goals, objectives, activities, budget, and services to be offered;

(4) a description of available resources for making interlibrary loans;

(5) an inventory of programs and equipment;

(6) a summary or profile of the library personnel, including their names, academic credentials, and service hours;

(7) a description of the changes that have occurred (since the issuance of the previous license) in the user instruction program and in the library's service policy and working hours;

(8) statistics about library use;

h. documentation on the laboratories and auxiliary educational equipment, including the following:

(1) changes that have occurred (since the issuance of the previous license) in the distribution of laboratory space, as well as in work units and storage areas;

(2) updated letters of understanding between the institution and those institutions that serve as centers for clinical practices;

(3) an inventory or plan for the purchase of the equipment and materials (including safety equipment) to be used in the laboratories;

(4) updated equipment maintenance and replacement plan indicating the sums allocated to such ends;

(5) a description of the changes that have occurred (since the issuance of the previous license) in the laboratory operation manual or guidelines in terms of the responsibilities of the personnel in charge, the procedures governing the use of physical facilities, equipment and materials, aspects of chemical hygiene, the emergency evacuation plan, chemical, biological and radiological waste

disposal procedures, and explosives management, maintenance and disposal procedures;

i. documentation on student services:

- (1) samples of promotional material used to recruit students;
- (2) a description of the changes that have occurred (since the issuance of the previous license) in the guidance and counseling programs, job placement services, health services, extracurricular activity program, and student complaint procedures;
- (3) a description of the changes that have occurred (since the issuance of the previous license) in the admission policy at undergraduate, graduate and professional levels;
- (4) plan for offering tutorials and remedial courses if the institution's admission policy is an "open-door" policy.
- (5) an organizational chart of the Registrar's Office, and a description of the services it provides;
- (6) an updated copy of the transcript form;
- (7) changes that have occurred (since the issuance of the previous license) in the procedures, and in the measures taken to restrict the access to academic records and to protect them from fire, floods and other disasters;
- (8) changes that have occurred (since the issuance of the previous license) in the confidentiality policy concerning the protection of the information contained in said records;
- (9) a description of the changes that have occurred (since the issuance of the previous license) in the available financial aid for students, the means used for divulging this information, and the credentials required from the personnel recruited to manage financial aid funds;
- (10) changes that have occurred in the plan for the establishment and promotion of student organizations;
- (11) changes that have occurred in the policy on student participation in institutional committees;
- (12) changes that have occurred in the plan to facilitate the access of handicapped students to the institution's facilities and activities;
- (13) changes that have occurred in the rules governing student conduct, academic performance and progress, and class attendance;
- (14) changes that have occurred in the student academic counseling program;
- (15) an updated license issued by the Department of Consumer Affairs (DACO, by its Spanish acronym) if lodging is provided;
- (16) an updated license issued by the Department of Health if meals are provided;

j. documentation on security guarantees:

- (1) an insurance policy and a performance bond issued by insurance companies duly recognized by the Commissioner of Insurance of Puerto Rico, in keeping with the requirements established in Section 69 of these Regulations;
- (2) a plan to provide security to visitors, students and professors on the institution's premises.

*Section 58.1 - Progress or compliance reports*

In addition to the above-listed documents, the institution applying for a Renewal License shall submit, together with the application, the progress reports required under Section 61 of these Regulations, and the reports on its compliance with the indications made by the Council during the concluding evaluation cycle, which, as it was provided, would be evaluated at the time of renewing the license.

## **Chapter V-LICENSE AMENDMENTS AND SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS**

### **[Sections 59-60]**

*A licensed institution must amend a license when it effects a substantial change as required by Sections 59.2, 59.3 and 59.4 of the regulations. Documents needed to submit petitions for amendments are identified in Sections 60.1 thru 60.3.*

*Note: Also see MSCHE Policy Statement on Substantive Change.*

### **Section 61 - Obligation to submit progress reports on programmatic changes duly authorized through a License Amendment**

All substantial programmatic changes that have been duly authorized through License Amendments shall be reviewed together with the other institutional programs and areas during the license renewal procedure or five (5) years after the change was authorized.

#### *Section 61.2 - Obligation to submit progress reports*

The institution shall submit progress reports about a change described in Section 61.1 together with its application for license renewal, or five (5) year after such change was authorized.

#### *Section 61.3 - Contents of reports*

Progress reports shall contain a description of the development and/or the changes made to the program in terms of its objectives, development plan, administration, budget, curriculum, faculty, facilities, library, and student services. Progress reports shall also contain the necessary information to verify the institution's compliance with the indications, if any, made by the Council with regard to said program.

## **Chapter VI- NOTICE OF SIGNIFICANT CHANGES AND SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS**

### **Section 62 - Significant changes**

a. Unlike substantial changes, significant changes effected by an institution do not require license amendments. Such changes shall only be notified to the Council.

b. The following institutional actions constitute significant changes:

- (1) change in tuition (study charges and/or fees);
- (2) change in the name of the academic program or offering which does not entail a change in the level or in the curricular approach of the institution's academic offering;
- (3) change in admission and/or graduation requirements;

- (4) change in the institution's mission or objectives which does not modify or alter the structure of the institution or the level or nature of its academic offerings, and which does not go beyond the scope of its authorized operations;
- (5) establishment of consortiums or agreements with other entities of Puerto Rico, the United States, and other countries, which are directly related to the institution's academic offering;
- (6) change in the academic registry documents (forms) or procedures;
- (7) changes in the institution's chief administrators, including academic administrators.

**Section 63 - Procedure for notifying the Council about a significant change**

Any institution that effects or intends to effect any of the significant changes described in Section 62 of these Regulations shall submit a written notice to the Council prior to the date on which the change takes effect. The notice of change must be accompanied by the documents and information described in this section.

**Chapter VII - PUBLIC RESPONSIBILITY OF INSTITUTIONS**

**Section 65 - Concept**

Higher education institutions, aware of their transcendental mission and of the important and delicate function they perform, shall see to it that their operations are consistent with standards of conduct that honor the integrity of their mission and set an example for their students and for the Puerto Rican community in general. The institutions shall operate at the highest level of public responsibility and shall diligently and scrupulously fulfill their obligations to their students, the community and the State, including the faithful and continuous performance of their duties under these Regulations.

**Section 66 - Advertisements and other expressions of general circulation**

Any advertisement or expression of general circulation made by a higher education institution with regard to its academic offerings shall meet the following tests, as they may be applicable to each case:

- a. it shall be completely true as to its contents and shall be free from misrepresentations and exaggerated information about the institution, its personnel, its offerings, and its services;
- b. it shall state the full name of the institution;
- c. the institution may claim to have the endorsement, support or recommendation of any person or persons only if such fact is attested to in writing above the signature of such person or persons;
- d. shall clearly establish that what the institution offers is education or training, not employment or promises of future employment;
- e. it shall indicate the type of license (authorization or renewal) issued by the Council, and shall abstain from using expressions that may imply or insinuate that the Council has endorsed or recommended the institution beyond the issuance of such license;
- f. it may use the term "accredited" or any word derived therefrom to make reference to the institution, only if the institution holds a certificate to such effect issued by the Council or by any of the regional or national institutions duly recognized by the Department of Education of the United States of

America or by the Council, in which case it shall indicate the official name of the accrediting entity;

g. it may promise or offer scholarships or any other financial benefits to students only when the institution can guarantee the granting of such benefits or when granting the same is within their exclusive power;

h. may express or imply that the credits given for its educational offerings will be accepted by other institutions for purposes of pursuing further studies at a higher level only when there exist signed formal agreements to such effect, copies of which must have been previously submitted to the Council;

i. it shall not identify the institution or any of its institutional units by a name that is different from that registered in the records of the Council, especially when the difference lies in the use of terms such as "university," "college," "junior college," or other terms that are likely to be associated with the nature or level of institutional offerings;

j. it shall not illegally discriminate against any person on account of his/her birth, sex, race, national origin, social condition, physical impairments, political ideas, or religious beliefs.

## **Section 67 - Student fees and charges**

### *Section 67.1 - Duty to inform*

Every institution shall adequately inform its students, as well as applicants for admission, within a reasonable term prior to each enrollment period, about all the charges, fees, and monetary deposits related to the programs, courses, laboratories, assistantships, and other offerings and services of the institution resulting from enrollment and acceptance of the offerings. The information to be provided by the institution shall include the rules governing cancellations and refunds, and the policy concerning changes in fees and charges.

### *Section 67.2 - Changes in fees and charges*

Once a student is enrolled, the institution shall not increase his/her enrollment charges, fees, or monetary deposits during the academic term for which the student is enrolled. Changes in fees and charges for future academic terms shall be made in keeping with the institution's policy on changes in fees and charges published in the catalog or in any other official document distributed by the institution to its students.

### *Section 67.3 - Obligations of the parties shall be set forth in the institution's catalog*

The institution's catalog shall set forth the obligations of both parties from the moment the student pays, and the institution accepts payment for the enrollment costs and other services at the beginning of a program, course, semester, or academic period.

## **Section 68 - Files**

### *Section 68.1 - Transcripts*

Every higher education institution shall provide its students with transcripts of their academic records in keeping with the rules and the reasonable fees it may adopt. To such effect, every institution shall keep adequate and permanent files that must be duly protected from theft, fire, floods, improper use, and other risks to their safety and integrity.

#### *Section 68.2 - Contents of academic records*

Academic records shall contain the necessary information to verify or transcribe the academic work performed by each active or inactive student. Each record shall include at least the information listed in Sections 68.3 and 68.6 of these Regulations.

#### *Section 68.3 - Contents of transcripts*

Each transcript shall contain at least the following information:

- a. name and address of the institution and institutional unit in which studies were completed;
- b. full name and address of student;
- c. social security number and identification number assigned by the institution, if any;
- d. record of courses in which the student enrolled, and final performance results;
- e. study programs and courses passed;
- f. grades obtained and academic progress index, in keeping with the institution's grading rules;
- g. certificates, degrees, diplomas, or any other official academic recognitions received;
- h. academic progress status of student.

#### *Section 68.4 - Records of financial transactions*

The institution shall keep records of the students' financial transactions with the institution. Said records shall show the enrollment fees and other payments made by each student, as well as any refund made to each student.

#### *Section 68.5 - Records of financial assistance*

If the institution or its students receive financial assistance from the State or federal government, it shall keep all the records required by the programs under which it receives or has received such funds.

#### *Section 68.6 - Evidence of compliance with admission and graduation requirements*

The files of every institution shall contain evidence of how each student met each of the established admission requirements, and of how each graduate student met each of the established graduation requirements.

### **Section 69 - Insurance and bonds**

#### *Section 69.1 - Public liability insurance*

Every institution shall acquire and keep in force a public liability insurance policy with an insurance company approved by the Commissioner of Insurance of Puerto Rico, to cover risks such as bodily injuries to persons entering its premises, buildings and other structures, with a coverage of not less than five hundred thousand dollars (\$500,000.00) for each individual case, and one million dollars (\$1,000,000.00) for each incident.

## *Section 69.2 - Bonds*

### *Section 69.2.1 - General rule*

Every institution shall acquire and keep in force a performance bond with an insurance company approved by the Commissioner of Insurance of Puerto Rico, endorsed to the Council on Higher Education.

### *Section 69.2.2 - Purpose of the bond*

The purpose of the bonds established in this Section shall be to cover the following aspects of institutional activity:

- a. guarantee the refund of payments for enrollment, and for other services paid in advance by students in the event the institution fails to comply with the obligations assumed by accepting such payments;
- b. guarantee payment of the costs incurred in the microfilming or digitization of academic records if an institutional closedown or any other event should require such process;
- c. guarantee payment of the maintenance and registry service costs (including issuance of certified copies of transcripts) related to the institution's files (microfilmed, digitized, or otherwise) if for any reason the institution cannot continue providing such services after a closedown or any other event of similar consequences.

### *Section 69.2.3 - Amount*

- a. The performance bond shall be in an amount equal to forty percent (40%) of the institution's total gross earnings for the previous academic year on account of enrollment and other charges made to students; but in no event shall this amount be less than five thousand dollars (\$5,000.00) or more than one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000.00). The amount of the bond shall be adjusted yearly within thirty (30) days following the beginning of the new academic year.
- b. The concept of operational year shall be used in cases involving institutions whose operations are not based on academic years, and the computation of each operational year shall be based on the effective date of its most recent renewal or authorization license, or any other date formally agreed upon with the Council and applied yearly.
- c. In cases involving institutions that are to start operations, the Council shall fix the amount of the bond on the basis of the institution's projected gross earnings from the above-mentioned sources, during its first academic or operational year, as the case may be.

### *Section 69.2.4 - Execution of the bond*

Once the Council determines that any of the circumstances covered by the bond has occurred, it shall demand that the bond be executed, taking whatever steps it may deem pertinent.

*PRCHE:*  
SE/spp/Oct. 28, 2003; SE/spp/Nov. 3, 2003; SE/mcf/Jan. 14, 2004

*MSCHE:*  
Approved by the Commission November 2004

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