



GOVERNING BOARD
UNIVERSITY OF PUERTO RICO

(Translation)

CERTIFICATION NUMBER 163
2022-2023


I, Margarita E. Villamil Torres, Secretary of the University of Puerto Rico Governing Board, HEREBY CERTIFY THAT:

The Governing Board, at its regular meeting on June 29, 2023, having considered the recommendation of the President of the University of Puerto Rico, the Office of the Vice President of Academic Affairs and Research, and the endorsement of the Academic and Student Affairs and Research and Innovation Committee, agreed:

To approve a compiled version of Certification 64 (2018-2019) of the Governing Board, *Rules for the Creation of New Academic Programs at the University of Puerto Rico*, as amended by Certification 32 (2020-2021).

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I issue the present Certification, in San Juan, Puerto Rico, this 10th day of July 2023.




Margarita E. Villamil Torres
Secretary

COMPILED VERSION
CERTIFICATION NO. 64 (2018-2019), AS AMENDED
BY CERTIFICATION NO. 32 (2020-2021)



**RULES FOR THE CREATION OF NEW
ACADEMIC PROGRAMS AT THE
UNIVERSITY OF PUERTO RICO**

Certification No. 163 (2022-2023)

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SECTION 1. TITLE

These rules shall be known as the “Rules for the Creation of New Academic Programs at the University of Puerto Rico.”

SECTION 2. LEGAL BASIS

These Rules are adopted pursuant to the University of Puerto Rico. Act, Law No. 1 of January 20, 1966, as amended, and the General Regulations of the University of Puerto Rico. These Rules are adopted pursuant to the Fiscal Plan of the University of Puerto Rico, certified pursuant to Section 201(e)(2) of the Puerto Rico Oversight, Management, and Economic Stability Act (PROMESA), as revised by the Puerto Rico Fiscal Oversight Board and notified on October 24, 2018.

SECTION 3. PURPOSE AND APPLICATION

- A. These regulations shall establish the rules that apply to the drafting and processing of proposals to create new academic programs at the University of Puerto Rico (UPR), the reports on the implementation of such programs, and assessments.
- B. These Rules are of general application to all the institutional units comprising the University of Puerto Rico System. They shall apply to any efforts to create a new program, whether face-to-face or online, leading to an academic degree granted by the University of Puerto Rico, in collaboration or in consortium with other recognized institutions. The first proposal from a unit to create a new online academic program that is approved will be the only one offered at the University of Puerto Rico.

SECTION 4. OBJECTIVES

The Rules are adopted to advance the following objectives:

- A. Respond to the institutional mission to ensure that academic offerings are of the highest quality.
- B. Gather in a single document the legal basis concerning the drafting, processing and consideration of academic proposals to create new academic programs at the University of Puerto Rico.
- C. Adapt the contents and processes related to the creation of new academic programs to changes in standards, licensing and legal requirements, content, approaches, forms of structuring a curriculum, and contemporary teaching-learning modes.
- D. Streamline the creation of new academic programs.

SECTION 5. DEFINITION OF ACADEMIC PROGRAM

For the purposes of these Rules, a “new academic program” refers to the set of courses, subjects or educational offerings, organized by discipline or as interdisciplinary studies, in such a way as to entitle the person who successfully completes it to receive official recognition from the institution offering it as a result of their formal education at the undergraduate, graduate, or professional level, which has not been authorized previously by the Governing Board or by the Puerto Rico Council of Higher Education, now the Board of Postsecondary Institutions (BPI) under the Department of State, for the applicant unit or units, regardless of whether it is active, inactive or under moratorium. On the other hand, an “online academic program” is defined as “a set of courses and formal educational activities whose course offerings are fully accessible through the Internet.”

SECTION 6. CONTENT OF THE PROPOSAL

- A. The creation of a new academic program requires drafting a proposal following the *Guidelines for Drafting Proposals for New Academic Programs at the University of Puerto Rico* (guidelines) and provisions on content and format that may be established by the President of the University of Puerto Rico or his or her authorized representative.
- B. The aforementioned guidelines and provisions shall require that the proposal for the creation of a new academic program contain a minimum of information on the following categories:
 1. Executive Summary - A brief and concise explanation of its purposes or the reasons for its adoption or amendment that includes an executive summary that clearly and precisely sets forth the purpose, justification, and costs and benefits of the proposed regulation, pursuant to Law No. 38 of 2017, as amended.
 2. Title and degrees conferred under the new academic program.
 3. Start date and duration of the new academic program.
 4. Professional accreditation and professional practice requirements, if applicable.
 5. Justification and relevance of the new academic program.
 6. Connection between the new academic program and the mission and current strategic plan of the UPR, as well as with the mission and strategic plan of the unit where it will be offered.
 7. Connection of the proposed academic program with others existing within the unit and within the System and in the country.
 8. Competencies that define the alumni profile in view of the unit's profile and applicable accreditation standards.

9. Curriculum components: full or part-time curriculum course sequence.
10. Mode in which the program is offered: part-time, online, etc.
11. Admission and enrollment criteria.
12. Criteria for awarding the academic degree. It will include minimum and maximum time for completion.
13. Enrollment projection based on a market study or information that supports the demand for the program.
14. Include all course syllabi.
15. Effective teaching strategies.
16. Faculty profile, include their CV.
17. Administrative structure of the new academic program.
18. Teaching resources, including bibliographic resources, facilities, laboratories, practice centers and others.
19. Student services.
20. Budget and enrollment projection for the first three (3) years.
21. Plan to assess program effectiveness.
22. Dissemination of the new academic program, including the catalog.

SECTION 7. PROCESSING AND CONSIDERING THE PROPOSAL

Any proposal for the creation of a new academic program shall be considered and processed digitally or electronically at the corresponding level and within the scope of authority of each, as indicated below:

A. INSTITUTIONAL UNIT

1. Department, College, or School

The proposal shall comply with these Rules and shall have the endorsement of head of the academic units where the new academic program will be offered. Proponents of a new academic program will work together with the institutional unit to clarify doubts, incorporate suggestions and agreements to the proposal expeditiously, and ensure compliance with the evaluation periods established in these Rules.

2. Dean of Academic Affairs

The Dean of Academic Affairs (dean), together with program proponents, will verify that the proposal meets the standards established in these Rules and with licensing and accreditation requirements, as applicable. The dean shall notify the proposing Department, School or College whether or not the proposal will be endorsed within thirty (30) calendar or consecutive days from the date the proposal was received from the proponent unit. The dean will submit the proposal to the Academic Senate, together with by a report with their analysis and recommendations, and will forward the proposal to the Administrative Board conterminously.

3. Academic Senate

The Academic Senate will consider the proposal and the report forwarded by the dean. It will verify that the proposal is consistent with the institutional unit's mission and strategic plan. The Academic Senate will issue its recommendations and its decision as to whether or not the proposal should be endorsed by way of a Certification within thirty (45) calendar or consecutive days from the date the proposal was received from the proponent unit. If no action is taken by the Academic Senate after 45 days, *i.e.*, approval, rejection or request for extension, it shall be deemed endorsed.

4. Administrative Board

The Administrative Board will verify the requested budget allocation for the proposal considering the fiscal impact and will identify the necessary resources at the unit or campus. The Administrative Board will issue its recommendations and its decision as to whether or not the proposal should be endorsed by way of a Certification within thirty (30) calendar or consecutive days from the date the proposal was received from the proponent unit. If no action is taken by the Administrative Board after 30 days, *i.e.*, approval, rejection or request for extension, it shall be deemed endorsed.

5. Appointing Authority

The appointing authority will submit electronically to the Office of the Vice President of Academic Affairs and Research (VPAAR) at Central Administration the proposal as approved T the institutional unit, after the Dean of Academic Affairs confirms that it meets all the criteria, and contains the certifications of the Academic Senate and the Administrative Board and the endorsement of the Chancellor.

B. OFFICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT OF UNIVERSITY OF PUERTO RICO

The Office of the Vice President of Academic Affairs and Research of the UPR, in addition to assuming the role of facilitator and training, will evaluate that all the requirements of the proposal have been met by the institutional unit and will forward the proposal to the president of the

University within fifteen (15) calendar or consecutive days from the date the proposal was received by the VPAAR.

C. PRESIDENT OF THE UNIVERSITY OF PUERTO RICO

The President of the UPR will submit the proposal for the consideration of the Governing Board along with the certifications of the Academic Senate and Administrative Board, the approval of the Dean of Academic Affairs, the endorsement of the Chancellor, the executive summary and required documents and reports provided in Section 7, within a period that may not exceed fifteen (15) calendar or consecutive days from the date of receipt of the proposal.

D. GOVERNING BOARD

1. The Governing Board will consider the recommendation of the UPR President and will decide whether or not to approve the proposal within thirty (30) calendar or consecutive days from the date the proposal was received.
2. Before making a decision, the Governing Board may return the proposal to the President of the University with recommendations it may deem appropriate to be addressed by the proposing unit.
3. The Governing Board will notify its final decision to the President of the UPR so he/she may inform the appointing authority, who in turn will inform the Academic Senate of the proposing unit.

E. BOARD OF POSTSECONDARY INSTITUTION (BPI) AND ACCREDITING AGENCIES

Once the proposal is approved by the Governing Board , the President of the University of Puerto Rico or an authorized representative will be charged with forwarding the proposal and required documents to the **Board of Postsecondary Institutions (BIP)**, the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE), and the accrediting agencies, as applicable. The proposing unit will be responsible for completing the procedures required by the PIPB BPI the [Present Levels of Educational Performance] PLEP.¹

F. PROFESSIONAL OR SPECIALIZED ACCREDITATION

The institutional unit will be responsible for carrying out the necessary procedures to receive professional or specialized accreditation for the new academic program.

¹ Effective August 1, 2019, the House of Representatives approved Law No. 119 of 2019 to exempt the University of Puerto Rico from any fee for the issuance of Authorization Licenses, Renewals, and Amendments to Licenses that comply with the procedures and requirements established by the Board of Postsecondary Institutions.

SECTION 8. REPORTS ON NEW ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

A. FIRST YEAR REPORT

The appointing authority at the unit will render a progress report to the Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Research at Central Administration one year after the new academic program was implemented. The report will include an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the academic program, its achievements in relation to its objectives, plans to address the weaknesses identified, and any other information required. The report will also indicate the necessary modifications to the program as shown in the program assessment.

B. FIVE-YEAR REPORT

If the new academic program is not subject to discipline-specific accreditations, the appointing authority at the unit will render a progress report every five years to the Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Research.

C. ANNUAL REPORT

The President of the University or authorized representative shall submit a report to the University Board on the status of new academic programs authorized each academic year. This report shall be filed at the end of the academic year.

SECTION 9. CONSTRUCTION AND SEVERABILITY

- A. For the purposes of these Rules, terms used to refer to a person or position include both genders and shall have the following meanings: Words and phrases used in these Rules shall be construed according to the context in which they are used and shall be understood in their usual meaning, unless otherwise provided.
- B. The President of the University of Puerto Rico shall be responsible for construing these Rules and for deciding any disputes in connection with its provisions or with situations not provided for herein.
- C. The provisions of these Rules are severable. If one or more sections, subsections or parts thereof were held to be invalid, it shall not affect the remaining provisions that can be given effect independently from those declared invalid.

SECTION 10. AMENDMENTS AND REPEAL

- A. These Rules may be amended only by the Governing Board, on its own initiative or at the request of the President of the University of Puerto Rico.
- B. These Rules amend the Rules for the Creation of New Academic Programs at the University of Puerto Rico, approved by the Governing Board through

Certification 64 (2018-2019), and any other certification, standard, procedure or communication that is inconsistent with these Rules.

- C. The President of the University of Puerto Rico shall draft and approve new *Guidelines for Drafting Proposals for New Academic Programs at the University of Puerto Rico* no later than thirty (30) calendar or consecutive days from the date of approval of these Rules, and shall draft other rules and procedures that may be necessary, in accordance with the provisions of these Rules.

SECTION 11. EFFECTIVE DATE

These Rules shall be approved by the Governing Board and shall take effect thirty (30) calendar or consecutive days thereafter.