

## **Standard II Ethics and Integrity**

*Ethics and integrity are central, indispensable, and defining hallmarks of effective higher education institutions. In all activities, whether internal or external, an institution must be faithful to its mission, honor its contracts and commitments, adhere to its policies, and represent itself truthfully.*

The UPR-RP campus exemplifies its dedication to its mission by consistently demonstrating unwavering commitment, adherence, and fidelity to policies and practices that uphold ethics and integrity in all realms. This commitment to excellence transcends mere guidelines, steering the institution towards a trajectory of credibility, trust, and enduring excellence.

**Requirement of Affiliation 5:** *The institution complies with all applicable government (usually Federal and state) laws and regulations.*

**Requirement of Affiliation 6:** *The institution complies with applicable Commission, interregional, and inter-institutional policies. These policies can be viewed on the Commission website, [msche.org/policies](http://msche.org/policies).*

**Requirement of Affiliation 7:** *The institution has a mission statement and related goals, approved by its governing board, that defines its purposes within the context of higher education.*

**Requirement of Affiliation 8:** *The institution systematically evaluates its educational and other programs and makes public how well and in what ways it is accomplishing its purposes.*

**Requirement of Affiliation 9:** *The institution's student learning programs and opportunities are characterized by rigor, coherence, and appropriate assessment of student achievement throughout the educational offerings, regardless of certificate or degree level or delivery and instructional modality.*

**Requirement of Affiliation 10:** *Institutional planning integrates goals for academic and institutional effectiveness and improvement, student achievement of educational goals, student learning, and the results of academic and institutional assessments.*

**Requirement of Affiliation 11:** *The institution has documented financial resources, funding base, and plans for financial development, including those from any related entities (including without limitation systems, religious sponsorship, and corporate ownership) adequate to support its educational purposes and programs and to ensure financial stability. The institution demonstrates a record of responsible fiscal management, has a prepared budget for the current year, and undergoes an external financial audit on an annual basis.*

**Requirement of Affiliation 12:** *The institution fully discloses its legally constituted governance structure(s) including any related entities (including without limitation systems, religious sponsorship, and corporate ownership). The institution's governing body is responsible for the*

*quality and integrity of the institution and for ensuring that the institution's mission is being accomplished.*

**Requirement of Affiliation 13:** A majority of the institution's governing body's members have no employment, family, ownership, or other personal financial interest in the institution. The governing body adheres to a conflict of interest policy 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. The institution's district/system or other chief executive officer shall not serve as the chair of the governing body.

**Requirement of Affiliation 14:** The institution and its governing body/bodies make freely available to the Commission accurate, fair, and complete information on all aspects of the institution and its operations. The governing body/bodies ensure that the institution describes itself in comparable and consistent terms to all of its accrediting and regulatory agencies, communicates any changes in accredited status, and agrees to disclose information (including levels of governing body compensation, if any) required by the Commission to carry out its accrediting responsibilities.

## **2.1 Commitment to Academic and Intellectual Freedom, Freedom of Expression, and Respect for Intellectual Property Rights**

Our campus protects and is committed to academic and intellectual freedom as cornerstones of its mission. Guided by the institution's General Bylaws (S-II 1), faculty teach, discuss, and engage with resources, knowledge, and opinions in their area(s) of expertise objectively and honestly and do so in the pursuit of truth. This commitment, which reflects that they contribute to and remain abreast with the latest discussions, developments, and debates in their fields, extends into the classroom and in extracurricular activities, encompassing freedom of expression, research, and respect for intellectual property rights and research ethics. These practices are observed in multiple realms. For example, students and faculty frequently debate controversial topics such as climate change, political violence, war, colonialism and divergent perspectives on truth in classroom discussions and other activities, such as forums. Academic and intellectual freedom also shapes research, creative work, and collaboration with other faculty and graduate students in Puerto Rico as well as internationally.

The campus' broader commitment to ethics and integrity is evident in concrete actions that include the responsible use of technology, compliance with copyright policies, and other ethical considerations that are woven into the fabric of courses, research, and the dissemination of knowledge. Institutional norms like the Institutional Copyright Policy (S-II 2) and the UPR Policy for Patents, Inventions, and their Commercialization safeguard this keystone of academic innovation (S-II 3). The UPR System's Office of Intellectual Property is the unit that ensures protection for intellectual property (S-II 41). This area is constantly evolving in response to changes in the institutions' environment.

One example of our commitment to ethics and integrity is the recent adoption of the Academic Integrity policy (S-II 4), during the academic year 2022-2023. This policy reinforces the institution's obligation to fostering an intellectual and ethical environment based on academic integrity and rigor, trust, mutual respect, and peaceful dialogue among the members of the university community. Upholding integrity involves adhering to essential ethical values like honesty, respect, and responsibility. Academic integrity is an essential component of teaching and learning, as well as the relationships and interactions that are inherent to the educational, research, and administrative processes. Academic integrity permeates all aspects of the university community.

Academic honesty is also supported by the UPR-RP Library System's extensive workshop offerings (S-II 39), which have addressed topics such as searching strategies in the sources subscribed by the Library System, writing according to style manuals, academic dishonesty and plagiarism. A total of 767 workshops were delivered between 2016 and 2023 to 12,233 students. These are proactive academic activities that demonstrate some ways that the campus fosters responsibility through experiences that support a culture of ethics and integrity.

UPR-RP faculty are required to include an academic integrity clause in all their syllabi and students are aware of the norms that define the responsible use of information, the avoidance of plagiarism, and the implications and consequences of not abiding by this policy. In 2018, a mandatory reporting process was instituted for professors, requiring them to submit a report to the Department Chair detailing their adherence to the syllabi content requirements set forth by AS Certification 39 2018-19 (Policy Against Sexual Harassment), GB Certification 33 2020-2021 (Reasonable Accommodation, Academic Integrity and Contingency Plan), and Course Modality. Subsequently, a summary report is compiled by the Dean of Academic Affairs and forwarded to the Academic Senate for review and further action. This process is outlined in S-II 42 and must be meticulously observed by all relevant parties.

Also, the institution has turned to technology to broaden coursework modalities and teaching methods, offering in-person, hybrid, and online classes supported by online technologies. All of these adhere to the standards for ethical and academic integrity set by the Academic Senate as well as policies and laws for higher education. Recognizing the importance of ethics and honesty in all learning environments, UPR-RP mandates that professors offering online courses complete certification covering legal, policy, and ethical components.

Research ethics in areas that require special attention and training are of utmost importance. The Institutional Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research (S-II 5) ensures adherence to ethical principles and human subjects protection in research endeavors. Since 2019, over 8,200 professors, students, and personnel have taken courses in the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI Program). Participation in the CITI Program Courses (S-II 40) has been substantial: 4,274 have completed the module for Social and Behavioral Human Research; 1,860 for Social and Behavioral Responsible Conduct of Research; 1,182 for Research with Human Subjects, and 934 for Conflict of Interest. This program is a web-based platform that equips researchers, faculty, and students with the necessary knowledge to navigate the challenges of

ethical regulations within research through customizable modules that address informed consent, data privacy, conflict of interest, and animal welfare.

CITI's impact extends beyond mere compliance. It fosters a culture of ethical research, empowering individuals to make informed decisions throughout the research process. This translates to tangible benefits for universities: reduced risk of misconduct, enhanced reputation through demonstrably ethical practices, streamlined compliance, and improved research quality due to reliable data and trustworthy outcomes. The CITI Program prioritizes fostering a culture of responsible research conduct by emphasizing ethical principles and empowering informed decision-making. This ultimately safeguards the rights of participants, contributing to trustworthy research that benefits the broader community. In summary, it empowers universities to navigate the ethical landscape while nurturing responsible research, leading to enhanced research quality, strengthened reputation, and a commitment to ethical principles that benefit the research community at large.

## **2.2 A Climate of Respect Among Students, Faculty, Staff, and Administration**

Campus actively cultivates an atmosphere of respect for diversity and inclusivity. This is important for students, faculty, non-teaching staff, and administrators as well as for the contributions that the campus makes to higher education and Puerto Rican society. This commitment is evidenced through a robust set of policies, practices, and procedures which ensure that an atmosphere of dialogue and respect for social, ideological, and epistemological difference is prioritized and valued.

For example, student's rights and responsibilities are clearly established in the University of Puerto Rico Law (S-II 9), which emphasizes the central importance of respectful dialogue and academic integrity. *The General Student Regulations* also provide further resources that help to cultivate and maintain a climate of respect by identifying measures that promote harmonious coexistence within the student body and the other groups that form part of the broader university community. These play important roles in student government and in day-to-day operations and discussions about ongoing improvement.

Also, the Institutional Policy of Coexistence is an important resource. It guarantees all campus constituents the right to voice their opinions and exercise their rights in an environment that rejects violence while prioritizing respect, tolerance, open dialogue, and peaceful exchange. The environment that it values is the basis for the support that the institution offers its student, staff, and faculty associations, which include the General Student Council, the Brotherhood of Exempt Non-Teaching Staff Employees (HEEND), the Workers Syndicate, and the Association of University Professors (APPU).

Our institution has a zero-tolerance stance against discrimination and provides extensive resources for reporting and addressing such incidents. The UPR System's Policy Against Discrimination (S-II 7) prohibits discrimination in education, employment, and service based on race, color, sex, birth, age, social origin, ancestry, marital status, religious and political ideas or beliefs, gender, sexual preference, nationality, ethnic origin, veteran status, and physical disability.

The campus upholds principles of non-discrimination, relevant for all university community members, including students, faculty, and non-teaching staff, regardless of background, beliefs, rank, or position. It is further bolstered by the Policy and Procedures for Responding to Situations of Sex and Gender Discrimination at UPR, which ensures comprehensive protection for those who experience discrimination in these areas and provides effective practices related to problem solving. The anti-discrimination policy that focuses on sex and gender offers protection in the classrooms and all the institution's functions and activities.

In adherence with its anti-discrimination policy, support is provided for pregnant students through a dedicated prevention and management protocol (S-II 8, Article XII). In addition, a chosen name protocol implemented in 2023-2024 allows transgender and non-binary students and others to register a preferred name in various contexts, including course lists, student IDs, and email (S-II 15). Nine gender-neutral bathrooms have been designated across campus, thereby fostering a more Inclusive and welcoming environment for all (S-II 16). In addition, the UPR has established a protocol for handling situations related to discrimination based on sex, gender, or pregnancy as well as sexual harassment, sexual violence, domestic violence, date violence, and stalking at work and in the educational context (S-II 8).

For example, if a person experiences an incident of sex discrimination that violates Title IX at the university, they can (and should) report it to the appropriate office. Employees who want to report an incident should first contact their supervisor, dean, or director of their unit, or the Office of the Employee Assistance Program (EAP). These officials will provide guidance and support and will immediately refer the matter to the Office of Human Resources and the Title IX Coordinator for further action. On the other hand, if a student needs to report an incident, they should contact the Office of the Title IX Coordinator or the Office of the Student Ombudsman. These offices will provide information on the investigative procedures and services available to the student. For further assistance, students can visit the <https://tituloix.uprrp.edu/> website or contact the Office of Title IX Coordinator.

If the person reporting the incident is not part of the university community, they should report the situation through the Office of the Title IX Coordinator. The complaint or grievance can be made orally or in writing, depending on the complainant's preference. It should include the complainant's name, residential and postal address, telephone number, witness names (if any), and a brief account of the events and the date they occurred. The university will keep the proceedings strictly confidential within the available resources.

The following figure shows the procedure for reporting an incident for sex discrimination:

## Proceso para presentar una queja por discrimen por sexo durante el periodo de distanciamiento físico



Envía un correo electrónico a [titulo9.rp@upr.edu](mailto:titulo9.rp@upr.edu) o llama a la Oficina de Cumplimiento y Auditoría UPRRP 787-764-0000 ext. 83275, 83278 En ambos casos debes proveer solo tu nombre e información contacto para que el personal de Título IX se comunique.



Luego de tu comunicación recibirás una llamada de las coordinadoras de la Oficina de Título IX. Las entrevistas se llevarán a cabo a través de métodos de comunicación remota.



Se harán los arreglos con las oficinas pertinentes para garantizar que se mantengan las medidas cautelares y de seguridad.

La ley de Título IX prohíbe el discrimen por sexo o género en instituciones educativas que reciben fondos federales.

Se manifiesta en conductas de acoso, hostigamiento sexual, discrimen basado en roles de género, violencia doméstica y agresión sexual.



Plaza Universitaria 3er Piso Torre Norte, UPR-Recinto de Río Piedras Teléfono: 787-764-0000 ext. 83275, 83278 [titulo9.rp@upr.edu](mailto:titulo9.rp@upr.edu)

Source: <https://tituloix.uprrp.edu/>

The Office of Students with Disabilities (OSEI) oversees reasonable accommodations and academic support services for students (S-II 13). In addition to facilitating communication between faculty and students in ways that prioritize inclusion and positively impact teaching and student learning, the office also offers students the chance to have their concerns or grievances addressed. The latter is useful for students who feel their requests need to be addressed more adequately and for those who wish to document issues or experiences that can inform future improvement. This office deals with a relatively large number of students, as shown in Table 2.1. It presents data related to requests for services and the corresponding numbers of complaints.

**Table 2.1 OSEI: Reasonable Accommodations for Students**

| Academic Year                         | 2018-19 | 2019-20 | 2020-21 | 2021-22 | 2022-23 | 2023-24 |
|---------------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Requests for reasonable accommodation | 2,178   | 2,250   | 1,954   | 1,087   | 1,198   | 1,263   |
| Complaints                            | 15**    | 23      | 29      | 33      | 21      | 6       |

Source: Report to UPR-RP Academic Senate.

Our commitment to ethics is also aligned with the Puerto Rico Government Ethics Act of 2011 (S-II 14). An Ethics Committee spearheads ongoing education efforts, ensuring that all personnel complete at least twenty contact hours of ethics-related training every two years through mandatory courses, workshops, and reading materials. While changes have been made to the format, modality, and scheduling of these training courses, further improvements can be made to increase the percentage of employees who comply with this requirement.

### **2.3 Institutional Grievance Policies**

Our campus works toward the fair and transparent resolution of grievances through a variety of practices, procedures, and policies. These practices are clearly delineated and readily accessible to students, faculty, and non-teaching staff. They ensure that all community members have access to resources that allow their concerns to be addressed diligently, impartially, and in a timely matter. There is information available regarding institutional policies and procedures on different webpages such as those pertaining to Human Resources, Title IX, OSEI, and other campus offices.

One example of procedures related to the students' grievances is the AS Certification 118, 2022-2023 (S-II 43) that outlines a standardized process for students to request grade revisions. If a student disagrees with a grade on an assignment, exam, or their final course grade, they can follow specific steps that involve discussions with the professor, the department director, and potentially a committee. Throughout the process, confidentiality is maintained, and the aim is to reach a fair resolution through dialogue. Key elements of this certification are: (1) students have deadlines to initiate reviews, and decisions at each level cannot lower the initial grade; (2) the Appeals Committee serves as the final step for both mid-term and final grade disputes; (3) specific schools/programs with their own procedures may be exempt, provided they guarantee the right to challenge a grade following the general process; and (4) confidentiality and avoiding punitive measures are emphasized. Accordingly, the Law School has a detailed procedure for revising exam results and course grades ([Examen-y-Revision-de-Calificacion-APROBADO-4- dic-13-Rev.-2-2017-1.pdf \(uprrp.edu\)](#)).

At the same time, numerous efforts are made to limit challenges and obstacles that students encounter while also providing them resources that allow for these to be addressed should they occur. For example, new students receive comprehensive information about institutional policies and regulations, including relevant webpages and offices as part of their new admission orientation. This ensures understanding and access to support services from the outset. Graduate programs typically have student representatives that facilitate communication between students and relevant administrators (Graduate Program Coordinators, Department Directors). Students also solve problems in more traditional ways, including meeting with professors in office hours and making appointments with their advisors or their Associate Deans of Student Affairs assigned to their colleges or schools.

Another essential resource to address grievances is the Office of the Student Ombudsman, with staff trained to help students navigate the grievance process and provide guidance and support for various concerns. As shown in Table 2.2, this office becomes more active at times when challenges that students face increase. This can be seen, for example, in the higher number of students who sought support during the AY 2019-20, a period in which students were dealing with both the

COVID-19 pandemic and a series of earthquakes that caused substantial damage to some parts of the island.

**Table 2.2 Office of the Student Ombudsman: Cases**

| Academic year | 2016-17 | 2017-18 | 2018-19 | *2019-20 | 2020-21 | 2021-22 | 2022-23 |
|---------------|---------|---------|---------|----------|---------|---------|---------|
| Cases         | 365     | 365     | 105     | 1,431    | 219     | 319     | 369     |

Source: Office of the Student Ombudsman

Newly hired faculty and non-teaching staff also receive comprehensive information about relevant policies and regulations (S-II 18 and S-II 19). Various offices handle concerns in accordance with the nature of the grievance. These include the Office of Human Resources, the Office of the Coordinator of Compliance with Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) of Title IX, the Offices of the Deans, and the Office of the Chancellor. This multipronged approach ensures appropriate and specialized support for the diverse issues that impact employees.

Our campus is seriously committed to fair and accessible grievance procedures according to established university policies. Through ongoing dialogue and review, UPR-RP strives to continuously improve its policies and procedures and strengthen its commitment to a respectful and equitable environment for all members of the university community.

## 2.4 Avoidance of Conflicts of Interest

Raising awareness about the significance of avoiding conflicts of interest is crucial to maintaining a fair, just, and conflict-free work environment. The Puerto Rico Government Ethics Act (S-II 14) outlines a set of ethical principles and responsibilities that all public service employees must follow. These principles and responsibilities are aimed at fostering impartiality, transparency, and integrity in all decision-making processes. They also ensure that public employees remain accountable to their employers and the public. Adhering to these guidelines can help public service employees build trust and confidence in government institutions and contribute to the overall welfare of their communities.

Therefore, the awareness of conflict of interests and the appearances of such conflicts is crucial to preventing them. The UPR reinforces norms focused explicitly on employees engaged in specialized activities, such as research and service (S-II 20, 21, 22). Also, this empowers the Institutional Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research (CIPSHI) to monitor compliance with the Policy on Conflict of Interests and Disclosure of Financial Interest in Research and Other Sponsored Programs. Additional oversight measures include:

- Mandatory notification of employment or participation in for-profit or non-profit activities outside regular work hours. This ensures transparency in external activities that may pose potential conflicts.
- Certification of the employment of relatives to avoid nepotism. This measure minimizes potential conflicts arising from family relationships within the university.
- Certification of the absence of conflict of interest of persons responsible for purchasing, contracts, business, and commercial transactions. This safeguards against conflicts in procurement and financial transactions.



These measures demonstrate a commitment to preventing conflicts of interest, but potential conflicts may still arise. To address such situations, clear channels for reporting concerns are maintained. Those with concerns about potential conflicts can seek guidance from relevant university offices and file formal complaints.

## **2.5 Fair and Impartial Practices**

In addition to the UPR General Regulations (Articles 35, 75), our campus has a general guide and rules for recruitment, hiring, promotion, and evaluation (S-II 24). It establishes fair and impartial practices related to hiring, evaluation, and promotion, as well as disciplinary and separation measures and procedures for all university members, detailed in the general bylaws and in the Procedural Guidelines for UPR Personnel.

When a tenure-track faculty position is announced, an internal and external call for applications is issued to guarantee equal employment opportunities, locally, nationally, and internationally. The Communication Office writes and sends to the main media in Puerto Rico, the Chronicle of Higher Education, and other outlets.

Personnel committees that operate at the levels of the department and college or school periodically evaluate faculty members. In this evaluation process, research or creative activity, service, and student perceptions of a faculty member's teaching and courses are considered systematically (S-II 25). The Faculty Manual (S-II 26) includes the policies and regulations related to the duties, responsibilities, and functions of faculty members.

In the case of non-teaching staff, norms and collective bargaining union agreements guarantee fair and impartial practices for hiring, leaves, promotion, and evaluation, along with Certification 142, 1994-1995 and Certification 35, 2018-2019 of the Governing Board. The UPR- RP Administrative Board assists the Office of the Chancellor in approving promotion, applications for different types of leave, and tenure, as established in the UPR General Regulations. If employees or applicants are not satisfied with a recruitment decision, they can appeal through a three-step internal process that includes:

- A request for process review by the Human Resources (HR) Office
- An petition to the Board of Appeals if unsatisfied with HR's decision
- An appeal to the Board within ten days if still unsatisfied (Certification 93-110 of Higher Education Council). If the Board's decision is unfavorable, they can appeal to court.

Each step involves submitting a written appeal with supporting details. Also, for the appeals process, Certification 80 1988-1989, Higher Education Council is applied. There is also a procedure for addressing and researching complaints dealing with discrimination in employment (<https://www.uprrp.edu/2022/05/notificacion-de-aprobacion-del-reglamento-interno-para-atender-la-presentacion-investigacion-y-manejo-de-quejas-relacionadas-a-practicas-discriminatorias-en-el- empleo/>).

## **2.6 Honesty and Truthfulness in Public Relations Announcements and Internal Communications**

Open and honest communication practices are required for all campus functions, including announcements, advertisements, recruitment, admissions materials and practices, as well as internal communications. These inform communication efforts, ethical marketing practices, and digital accessibility initiatives, among other types of communication and outreach.

The Office of Communications spearheads strategic communication initiatives under the Chancellor's Office, ensuring authenticity and ethical integrity in portraying the university's image. Clear guidelines govern the dissemination of official announcements, adhering to state and federal regulations. Brand guidelines define authorized colors, logos, and designs for promotional materials, advertisements, brochures, and business correspondence, ensuring consistent brand identification in all contexts (S-II 27, 28).

Recognizing the effectiveness of technological communication tools, our campus utilizes a multi-channel approach, employing email, official social media platforms, and online educational platforms to share information and maintain the university's various sectors informed of news, policies, educational and grant opportunities, among other developments. The institution actively promotes digital accessibility within its communication channels, ensuring inclusivity for all members.

UPR-RP provides prospective students, as well as those who are admitted and enroll, an accurate representation of the institution, its programs, and university life. Crucial to these efforts are information resources like Undergraduate and Graduate Catalogues, brochures, webpages, and promotional materials. Open-house activities on campus are also celebrated to disseminate information about the institution and our programs, along with print and media advertising. This collaboration between academic programs and service offices empowers students to make well-informed decisions about their academic pursuits.

The commitment to honesty and transparency permeates all operations. Moreover, strategic communication, ethical marketing practices, and a focus on digital accessibility all work to foster a culture of trust and engagement. By prioritizing ethical conduct in education and providing accurate information to prospective students, UPR-RP upholds high standards of integrity, honesty, and truthfulness and in so doing attracts some of the most highly qualified students to its competitive academic programs.

## **2.7 Affordability, Accessibility, and Informed Decision-Making**

Campus policies and procedures reflect the belief that limited economic resources and or financial barriers should not hinder access to higher education. It has implemented a multifaceted approach to promote affordability and equip students with the knowledge, tools, and resources to confidently navigate the financial decision-making associated with their education.

The UPR-RP has been effective in promoting affordability and accessibility for incoming and current students. For example, "Open House" events provide clear and comprehensive information about tuition costs, fees, and available financial aid options. The information is also available online. This event and other initiatives empower students to make informed decisions about their

educational future and investment, ensuring that they understand the value received for their tuition dollars. Each faculty or college website includes the academic departments and students' services available. Since 2019, a survey is administered to new students for identifying their goals, expectations and needs (<https://academicos.uprrp.edu/diia/nuevos-informes-sobre-investigaciones-recientes-febrero-2024/>). The results are used to provide orientation and support.

Financial literacy is approached as a critical component of informed decision-making and the effective management of student debt. The Financial Aid Office, which is housed within the Office of the Dean of Students, supports students who need guidance related to paying for their education and meeting their financial needs. It offers a comprehensive range of programs, including scholarships, work-study opportunities, and support for applying for the Pell Grant and federal student loans, catering to undergraduate and graduate students alike. The Financial Aid Office seeks to help students maximize their financial resources and minimize their reliance on loans. Each undergraduate student is assigned a dedicated financial aid officer at the time of admission. This personalized approach ensures that every student receives tailored guidance for financial aid applications, the verification of FAFSA forms, and the certification of eligibility for various programs. In addition, a user-friendly Net Price Calculator allows students to estimate their net costs based on their specific circumstances.

Ethical and transparent practices are adhered to in financial aid administration. The University complies with the requirements of the US Department of Education and the Code of Federal Regulations 34 CFR 600.9 by establishing a clear and accessible procedure for students to file complaints if they believe any violation of policy has occurred. This helps to ensure that student rights are protected throughout the financial aid process.

## **2.8 Compliance With Reporting Policies, Regulations, and Requirements**

UPR-RP demonstrates a steadfast commitment to transparency and accountability by adhering to applicable federal (Title IX, Clearly Act, and IPEDS), state (financial auditing by Comptroller Office), and Middle States Commission on Higher Education reporting policies, regulations, and requirements. Compliance in these areas ensures that information about performance, administrative processes, and operations is disseminated effectively to uphold stakeholder trust and inform decision-making processes.

In addition, data on institution-wide assessments, such as student graduation and retention rates, licensing pass rates (in areas such as law and education), as well as employee profiles are readily accessible through the Division of Research and Assessment. Adherence to rigorous regional accreditation standards assures stakeholders that this University consistently maintains the highest quality of education and that it is dedicated to continuous improvement. The UPR- RP has been accredited by the MSCHE since 1946 and the last reaffirmation was in 2019 (<https://www.msche.org/institution/0606/>). Also, the institution responsibly houses 49 accredited programs in the faculty or colleges of Business Administration (15), Architecture (1), Natural Sciences (2), Social Sciences (7), Law (1), Education (17), Communication and Information Sciences (5) and Planning (1) (<https://academicos.uprrp.edu/licencia/>).

Recognizing the importance of timely communication, our campus ensures that any substantive changes affecting its mission, programs, or operations are disclosed promptly and accurately. The procedure for substantive changes follows the General Guide for the Preparation and Processing of Proposals for Academic Change at UPR, 2020-21.

Compliance reports are available online through relevant associate office webpages, ensuring convenient access for all stakeholders. Key reports and updates are disseminated through institutional email, directly reaching faculty, non-teaching staff, and students. For in-depth discussions and decision-making, the Chancellor regularly reports on the University's academic and administrative situation to the Academic Senate, as well as to the faculty in annual meetings, fostering shared governance, open communication, and engagement.

By consistently prioritizing transparency and accountability through comprehensive reporting practices, UPR-RP builds trust and confidence among its constituents and externally. This commitment to open communication and ethical conduct strengthens the campus' position as a leading institution of higher education that is dedicated to continuous improvement while meeting the needs of its students and society at large.

Responding to budget constraints, the Office of the Title IX Coordinator and the Office of Compliance were consolidated in a sole unit to be able to share human and fiscal resources without affecting services to the community.

## **2.9 Periodic Assessment of Ethics and Integrity**

UPR-RP complies with all the reports required by federal and state agencies, such as the Comptroller Office and the Federal Department of Education. It has also submitted periodic review reports, supplementary reports, and monitoring reports requested by the MSCHE.

In the last year, an Academic Integrity Policy was approved, the first in the UPR System (S-II 4). An Integrity Council was appointed for the implementation and assessment of this Policy. Our campus has also monitored the implementation of other ethics and integrity policies, procedures, and practices over the years.

In this context, an artificial intelligence policy is being developed at the Campus and UPR System levels. The first draft is available through [Certification 56, 2023-2024](#), of the Governing Board. This policy addresses the ethical issues involved in the use of artificial intelligence in the classroom and establishes guidelines for the proper utilization of these technological tools.

## **Findings**

- The UPR-RP complies with Standard II criteria.
- The institution consistently demonstrates its commitment to respecting ethical values and rights of academic freedom, intellectual freedom, freedom of expression, and intellectual property with policies, norms, offices, activities, and procedures to foster them.

- The campus demonstrates a conscientious stance in developing and implementing policies and procedures to ensure inclusion, equity, and respect among students, faculty, staff, and administration from diverse backgrounds, ideas, and perspectives.
- Institutional policies address the grievance procedures and accessibility by students, faculty, and staff for granting fair and impartial practices in discipline, evaluation, promotion, and separation.

### **Next Steps**

- Campus administration will program more professional training in ethics, integrity, diversity, equity and inclusion in order to continue to comply with local and federal laws, as well as enhancement of the university community.
- DTAA will monitor existing technological tools and/or create additional tools for providing easy access to information regarding policies, norms, protocols, and procedures for students, personnel, and the university community.
- Human Resources, Title IX, OSEI, and other campus offices, including Deanships and Programs will establish a practical procedures for recording/archiving the process of complaints, protecting people's confidentiality, to take proactive measures.
- DTAA will monitor and update information on the grievance and complaint process in diverse formats to ensure accessibility on college and school webpages.
- The Academic Senate will develop an artificial intelligence policy in accordance to that produced by the Governing Board.