

<b>Name:</b> Puerto Rico State Agency for the Approval of Public Postsecondary Vocational, Technical Institutions and Programs	<b>Meeting Date:</b> 06/23/2016	<b>Response Submit Date:</b> 12/29/2015	<b>Status:</b> Final Review	<b>Type:</b> Compliance Report
--	------------------------------------	--	--------------------------------	-----------------------------------

## U.S. Department of Education

Staff Report

to the

Senior Department Official

on

Recognition Compliance Issues

### Recommendation Page

1. **Agency:** Puerto Rico State Agency for the Approval of Public Postsecondary Vocational, Technical Institutions and Programs
2. **Action Item:** Compliance Report
3. **Current Scope of Recognition:** Recognition as the state agency for the approval of public postsecondary vocational technical education in the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.
4. **Date of Advisory Committee Meeting:** June 23, 2016
5. **Staff Recommendation:** Continue the agency's recognition for one year
6. **Issues or Problems:** The agency has no remaining compliance issues.

### Executive Summary

#### **Part I: General Information About The Agency**

The Puerto Rico State Agency for the Approval of Public Postsecondary Vocational, Technical Institutions and Programs (PRSAA) is the state agency in Puerto Rico for accrediting public postsecondary vocational education programs and institutions in the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. The agency currently accredits programs located in seven vocational technical schools located in Puerto Rico, with one institution awaiting approval.

The agency approves institutions and programs in public postsecondary institutions that are legally authorized to offer postsecondary programs that have been operating for a minimum of two years. These institutions and programs award both Associate Degrees and Certificates, and admit as regular students only individuals with a high school diploma or its equivalent or who are above the compulsory school age to attend high school, which in Puerto Rico is 16 years of age.

According to the Accreditation Group's records, the Department has received no complaints about the agency during the current recognition cycle.

#### **Recognition History**

The PRSAA was granted authority to approve public postsecondary vocational technical education institutions and programs in Puerto Rico in 1982 by Puerto Rico's Secretary of Education. The agency was granted initial recognition as a state approval agency by the U.S. Secretary of Education in 1983 and has received continued recognition since that time.

The agency's most recent petition for continued recognition was reviewed at the Spring 2012 NACIQI meeting. Following that meeting, the Secretary continued the agency's recognition and requested that it submit a report on its compliance with certain issues. That report was considered at the Spring 2014 NACIQI meeting, at which time the Committee granted the agency an extension of its recognition for good cause and requested an additional compliance report. The agency's second report is the subject of this analysis.

#### **Part II: Summary Of Findings**

**603.24(a)(2)(iii)(A) Site Team Representatives**

(A) to participate on visiting teams,

ASL\_MVC\_v1.Models.TblAslstep2Analyst??.Remarks

**Analyst Remarks to Response:**

In the draft staff analysis, the agency was requested to provide additional information showing that its policies have been revised to indicate how long or how often a site visitor may serve, as well as documentation related to the implementation of policies that have been revised related to the size of the on-site visitor pool members and the pool members' qualifications.

In response to the draft staff analysis, the agency provided a copy of its policies and procedures manual, which includes detailed information on the qualification of on-site reviewers and the on-site review process (Ex. 1, pp. 9-15). The agency notes in its narrative that it has conducted an assessment of how many evaluators are needed for its institutions, in total (Ex. 4). The agency provided a copy of its current list of on-site evaluators (Ex. 3) to demonstrate that it has 145 trained reviewers in its on-site evaluation pool, which is more than ample to cover the number of reviewers who are needed. The agency also reports that its on-site reviewers may serve more than one year, but that the agency attempts to bring in new reviewers on an ongoing basis in order to have a mix of both experienced and developing evaluators.

Staff accepts the agency's response, and no additional information is requested.

---

**603.24(a)(2)(iii)(B) Consultant Representatives**

(B) to engage in consultative services for the evaluation and approval process, and

ASL\_MVC\_v1.Models.TblAslstep2Analyst??.Remarks

---

**603.24(a)(2)(iii)(C) Decision-Making Representatives**

(C) to serve on decision-making bodies.

ASL\_MVC\_v1.Models.TblAslstep2Analyst??.Remarks

---

**603.24(b)(1)(vii) Review of Standards**

(vii) Regularly reviews its standards, policies and procedures in order that the evaluative process shall support constructive analysis, emphasize factors of critical importance, and reflect the educational and

training needs of the students;

ASL\_MVC\_v1.Models.TblAslstep2Analyst??.Remarks

---

**603.24(b)(1)(xi) School/Program Changes**

(xi) Requires each approved school or program to report on changes instituted to determine continue compliance with standards or regulations;

ASL\_MVC\_v1.Models.TblAslstep2Analyst??.Remarks

---

**603.24(b)(2)(iv) Adverse Action and Right to Appeal Notice**

(iv) Provides the chief executive officer of the institution with a specific statement of reasons for any adverse action, and notice of the right to appeal such action before an appeal body designated for that purpose;

ASL\_MVC\_v1.Models.TblAslstep2Analyst??.Remarks

**Analyst Remarks to Response:**

In the draft staff analysis the agency was requested to provide documentation demonstrating that an institution's CEO is provided a notification letter stating the reason for any adverse action, as well as a statement that the institution has the right to appeal the adverse action before an appeals body.

In response to the draft staff analysis, the agency provided a sample of a letter to a CEO providing notification of the right to appeal an adverse action (Ex. 5).

Staff accepts the agency's response, and no additional information is requested.

---

**603.24(b)(2)(vi) Approval Status Pending Appeal**

(vi) Continues the approval status of the institution or program pending disposition of an appeal;

ASL\_MVC\_v1.Models.TblAslstep2Analyst??.Remarks

**Analyst Remarks to Response:**

In the draft staff analysis, the agency was requested to provide a copy of its policy stating that an institution's/program's accredited status continues pending the outcome of the appeals process.

In response to the draft staff analysis, the agency provided a copy of its policies and procedures manual, which clearly specifies that

an institution's accredited status continues pending the outcome of the appeals process (Ex. 1, p. 34).

Staff accepts the agency's response, and no additional information is requested.

---

**603.24(b)(2)(vii) Notifications: Appeal Decisions**

(vii) **Furnishes the chief executive officer of the institution or program with a written decision of the appeal body including a statement of its reasons therefore.**

ASL\_MVC\_v1.Models.TblAslstep2Analyst??.Remarks

---

**Part III: Third Party Comments**

The Department did not receive any written third-party comments regarding this agency.