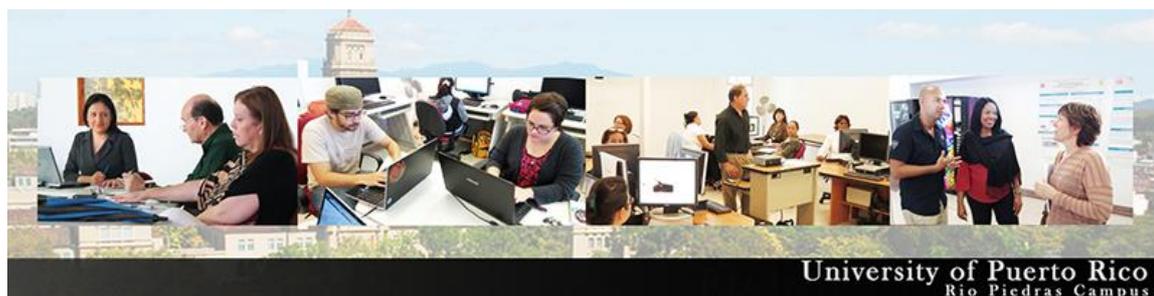


STANDARD IV. STUDENTS



Coordinator: Dr. Sergio Chaparro-Univazo, Ph.D.
Associate Professor, GSIST-UPRRP
sergio.chaparro@upr.edu

Introduction

The following introduction explains the School's recruitment, admissions, financial aid and other student procedures and policies that relate to and support the School mission, goals and objectives. These procedures and policies reflect also the current student needs and values. Information about the School, its curriculum, faculty, admissions, policies and procedures is updated and available online, on the GSIST's website. The admissions process, involving a combination of criteria and standards, ensures that students that are admitted to the Master's program are able to complete the program and contribute to the field. Students are allowed to construct coherent programs of study, meeting their needs and goals in accordance to the school objectives. They receive the appropriate guidance and advising to select courses based on the curriculum sequence and design. Their academic work and performance are evaluated through a variety of assessment techniques. The School's environment facilitates their participation in committees, plans, and projects of the School, in addition to the student organization. Academic and administrative policies and procedures involving students are systematically evaluated, with faculty, student and staff participation. In this way, the School has complied with the directives presented in Standard IV: Students.

Student issues and concerns are one of the major focuses of the School's planning efforts. This chapter describes how GSIST's plans, policies and procedures guide and affect student recruitment, admissions, guidance, evaluation, and support. The section includes a description of the student body, the learning environment and its assessment, as well as programs of study, student participation, and activities.

Section IV.1 [Part 1]: *The school formulates recruitment, admission, financial aid, placement, and other academic and administrative policies for students that are consistent with the school's mission and program goals and objectives, the policies reflect the needs and values of the constituencies served by the program.*

Summary of the School's compliance with this section of the standard

At the University of Puerto Rico, Río Piedras campus, each graduate program develops recruitment and admission criteria consistent with the institutional policies established by the Dean of Graduate Studies and published in the Graduate Studies Catalog and Bulletin of Information, University of Puerto Rico. The School presents its admission requirements in its own catalog, called the [Bulletin of Information](#) [Boletín Informativo], and in the [GSIST Bylaws](#). Prospective students use the [Electronic Graduate Admissions System of the University of Puerto Rico, Río Piedras Campus](#) [Sistema Electrónico de Admisiones Graduadas del Recinto de Río Piedras de la Universidad de Puerto Rico] to apply to the graduate program.

[Financial aid policies](#) are developed by the Dean of Students of the University, and are included in the Bulletin of Information [Boletín Informativo]. This information is also published at the School's website.

The Center for Occupational Development and Employment develops policies relating to placement. In addition, the School's Officer of Student Affairs receives employment notices and announcements that are placed on the School's bulletin board and website. Placement information is also published on the school's website in a special section about [scholarship](#) [becas] and [job opportunities](#) [ofertas de empleos] in Puerto Rico and the United States. This website section also uses syndicated news (RSS) channels to deliver updated information about employment and scholarships from different professional organizations, such as American Library Association (ALA) Job List, Special Libraries Association (SLA) Career Center, Jobs for Librarians and Information Professionals (LIS Jobs), Universia's Scholarships Opportunities, and others.

Academic and administrative policies affecting students are discussed in the Admissions Committee [Comité de Admisiones] and the Joint Committee of Faculty and Students [Comité Conjunto], and they are revised in accordance with changes in University policy, as well as with the changing needs and concerns of faculty and students. The committees have the responsibility to establish procedures to implement these policies.

The policies and procedures developed by each graduate program within the institutional context take into account the needs and values of their constituencies. These are developed within guidelines of the University of Puerto Rico Students General Bylaws [[Reglamento General de Estudiantes de la Universidad de Puerto Rico](#)]. They reflect academic standards and criteria for each graduate program proposed by the University in key policy documents such as the [Graduate Admissions](#), [Graduate Studies Catalog](#) [Catálogo de Estudios Graduados], the [Bulletin of Information](#) [Boletín Informativo], [Certification #72](#), and [Certification #38](#)

Achievements

1. Requirements for admission have been reexamined and revised. In addition to the institutional admission requirements (Certification #72 and #38). The interview is aimed to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the applicant's qualifications and background.
2. The school provides students with information about placement, posting job opportunities existing in Puerto Rico and the United States on the website. Local employers are encouraged to place information about available jobs on the School's website which includes access to a feature for online publication.
3. Detailed information about admissions and financial aid is available in the School's *Bulletin of Information* in print and online (on the School's website). The School's Bylaws includes other academic policies relating to students, such as requirements for graduation, student retention, academic load, comprehensive exam, grading, and readmission.
4. The School's Student Affairs Officer provides orientation to students regarding admission procedures. She is easily accessible and knowledgeable about rules and regulations relating to admissions, financial aid, course sequence, graduation requirements, and other issues of concern to students. She has established good rapport with students, and provides a service that effectively responds to student's needs and concerns.
5. An academic advising initiative has been launched this semester at the School in an effort to orient students in their academic planning and learning success. Students have been assigned to each one of the faculty members. This program is explained and described on the GSIST Bylaws (articles 7, 7.1, 7.2). The functions and responsibilities are defined and articulated by it. Included in this academic advising is the development of the required electronic professional portfolio. This advising initiative complements the work of Student Affairs Officer, Mrs. Migdalia Dávila.
6. The Admissions Committee is at this moment (2015) composed of Prof. Carlos Suárez-Balseiro, chair, and Student Affairs Officer Mrs. Migdalia Dávila-Pérez. It is in charge of analyzing admission applications and it also plans and implement related workshops for new students and prospective students.
7. A significant achievement has been the online application by students through Apply Yourself, a web-based application implemented by the Office of the Dean of Graduate Students. Prospective students fill all forms required online. Then, these forms are submitted to the School's Office of Students Affairs.
8. The revised procedure was published in the School's *Bulletin of Information* and the GSIST's Bylaws. (The comprehensive exam was eliminated in January of 2011) as a result of the Curriculum Review.

Evidence

1. University of Puerto Rico, Río Piedras Campus, Office of the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research and the GSIST website section on “Information for Applicants” describe [admission requirements and procedures](#). It also includes information on placement and financial assistance. This information is available in printed and online format.
2. The EGCTI Portal includes relevant and updated information about [job opportunities](#), [scholarships](#), [awards](#) and other source of [financial support](#) for students. The section also presents information from several professional associations’ job list (ALA, ALIA, LISjobs.com, and SLA Career Center). This information is available in online and printed formats.
3. EGCTI –Information Bulletin [*Boletín Informativo*]. The bulletin describes requirements for admission, retention, and graduation. It describes School policies and services offered to students.
4. University of Puerto Rico Students General Bylaws [*Reglamento General de Estudiantes de la Universidad de Puerto Rico*] describes the rights and responsibilities of students and their participation in different aspects of academic life.
5. GSIST’s Bylaws [*Reglamento de la Escuela Graduada de Ciencias y Tecnologías de la Información 1987, rev. 2014*] includes information on student services, admissions, retention, graduation, and other issues of concerns to students. This information is available in online and printed format.
6. *Certificación #72, Academic Senate* [*Certification #72 Academic Senate 1991-1992*], University of Puerto Rico, Río Piedras Campus regulates graduate studies at the University of Puerto Rico. See on-site and online evidence.
7. *Certificación #38, Academic Senate* [*Certification #38 Academic Senate 2012-2013*].

Challenges

- Develop formal written promotion and recruitment policies. Continue to examine and update admissions policies and procedures.
- Develop distance education strategies to attract new students (focus on Latin America and the Caribbean and Latino communities in the United States)
- Develop formal policies (and procedures) to improve placement for students (current students and alumni).
- Organize and offer workshops about the job market and practical strategies to find a job, both within and outside of Puerto Rico, with the assistance of the Students Council.

Steps to be taken

- Ongoing evaluation of admissions policies and procedures.
- Evaluate the Mentorship program and seek suggestions to strengthen its implementation.
- Discuss and develop recruitment and promotion policies as part of faculty retreats, meetings, and committee work. The Admissions Committee and the *Comité Conjunto* (Joint Faculty-Student Committee) can collaborate in this area.

Standard IV.1 [Part 2]: *The school has policies to recruit and retain students who reflect the diversity of North America's communities.*

Summary of the School's compliance with this section of the standard

In its recruitment efforts the School actively seeks to recruit and retain students from other countries, specifically from the Caribbean and Latin America region, thus encouraging the development of a multicultural, multiethnic and multilingual student body. This has been a focus of the School since its beginnings, as reflected in its statement of goals and objectives. The different ethnic groups represented in Puerto Rican society today have been included in the School's student body. During 2008 to 2014, students from Mexico, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, and USA have been part of the student body. The School also includes and accommodates students with special needs, who further contribute to the overall diversity of the student body.

Achievements

1. In its recruitment efforts, the School actively seeks to attract and retain students from other countries, specifically from the Caribbean and Latin America region. Different ethnic groups represented in Puerto Rican society today have been represented in the School's student body. In recent years, students from the Mexico, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, and USA have been part of the student body. The proposal to launch the online Master's Degree Program will strengthen the School's efforts to increase diversity in the student body.

Table 4.1: International students enrolled by country of origin							
Country/Year	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Colombia			1	2	1	1	1
Brazil	1	1					
Costa Rica	1		1				
Mexico	2	3	3	3	1	2	2
Chile	1	1	2	2	1		
Venezuela	1	1	1			1	
Haiti			1	1	1		
Dominican Republic						3	3
Peru							1
Total	6	6	9	8	4	7	7

2. Regular meetings with students and special activities planned for them (speakers, research forums, continuing education programs) have created a supportive environment and positive quality of student life.
3. Although the value of Latin American and Caribbean countries currency is much less than the US dollar, making it difficult to study in Puerto Rico, the School has been able to offer all international students economic aid through research and project assistantships. The funds for this aid are obtained from the Formative Academic Experience Program (PEAF in Spanish), the School's external funds projects, and from the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research.

4. At present, the School has two officially recognized special needs students. The School has provided these students with assistive technologies. The Officer of Students Affairs, the Computer and Technologies Specialist and the School's administrative officer at the School have evaluated and acquired new technologies and equipment in order to accommodate their special needs. In addition, these students have access to University wide programs, including the [Services for Handicapped Persons](#) Library (Sala de Servicios Bibliotecarios para Personas con Impedimentos), at the José M. Lázaro Library that provide information resources in accessible formats, assistive technologies and other services.

Throughout the years other students with special needs have been admitted, enrolled and graduated from the Program. For a variety of reasons, these students do not register their status with the campus, but make independent arrangements for reasonable accommodation with the offices at the University that serve the Handicapped: OAPI http://estudiantes.uprrp.edu/?page_id=75 and Vocational Rehabilitation <http://pratp.upr.edu/blog/bfcomo-solicito-mi-acomodo-razonable-en-la-universidad-1>

Evidence

1. Data and reports of students accepted in the Program; student files. See Student's Affairs Office documents on-site.
2. H. W. Wilson Scholarship Fund. The funds from this scholarship were used to assist students with their registration fees at a time when the University increased tuition. Funds have also been assigned to aid students' participation to conferences.
3. EGCTI - [Boletín Informativo](#). The bulletin describes requirements for admission, retention, and graduation. It describes School policies and services offered to students. See on-site and online evidence.
4. Purchase orders for assistive software and equipment. (On-site)

Challenges

- To increase the number of international students in the Program, and identify additional financial aid sources to promote recruitment of these students.
- Increase the recruitment of international students from the Caribbean region, Latin America and the Latino community in the United States through distance learning initiatives and projects.

Steps to be taken

- Continue efforts to recruit international students by means of an active promotion of the School's Program in different forums (Conferences, Congresses, professional association meetings).
- Explore and develop alliances with LIS schools in the United States in order to attract more Hispanic students from the U.S. and discuss offering joint courses. A partnership has already been established with the School of Information Sciences at the University of Tennessee (Knoxville).

Standard IV.1 [Part 3]: *The composition of the student body is such that it fosters a learning environment consistent with the school's mission and program goals and objectives.*

Summary of the School's compliance with this section of the standard

The School's student body is characterized by a diversity of academic backgrounds, reflecting the variety of undergraduate degrees that students hold. The School's students come mostly from education, humanities business administration, natural sciences, communications and social sciences among other academic backgrounds. International students (mostly from Latin America) have entered the Program, contributing to a diverse student body and a dynamic learning environment.

The University of Puerto Rico has formal agreements with other universities (in Spain, for example), and encourages faculty and student exchange between them. During the past five years there have been at least eleven (11) students from Latin America and the Caribbean region. Many opportunities exist for interaction and interchange among these groups of students. The diverse composition of the student body has contributed to the dynamic learning environment that the School's mission, goals and objectives emphasize. For example, the diversity of students' interests, particularly in new trends and technological developments impacting the field, has impacted the creation of new courses and collaborations with other academic units.

Achievements

1. The participation of the School in different projects, attracting students from other Latin American countries, has resulted in a dynamic and diverse student body.
2. A variety of students from different countries, academic backgrounds and institutions have contributed to the intellectual environment of the School. Recruitment of highly qualified candidates has resulted in a strong student body with leadership, critical perspective and professional values.
3. Student participation in faculty committees has resulted in new ideas and perspectives on issues of concern, including planning and evaluation. The

opportunities students have for research and involvement in School projects and activities contribute to a diverse, dynamic learning environment.

Table 4.2: **Mixed Committees Faculty and Students**

	Faculty	Students
Curriculum Committee	3	1
Admissions Committee	2	1
Technology Committee	2	1
Library Committee	2	1
Faculty and Students Joint Committee	1	1

4. Throughout the past years, a significant percentage of students admitted to the master's program have had more than a 3.5 grade point average in their undergraduate studies.

Evidence

1. [Portfolios](#) of international students enrolled in the Program demonstrate the type of educational opportunities available to them during their studies.
2. Events in which students are participating (See [Jornadas de Investigación](#), [Simbiosis Estudiantil](#), national and international conferences in Web Portal and on-site)

Challenges

- Identify new projects to attract more students from different countries (including distance education projects); To keep on stimulating for development of proposals in this area.
- Strengthen and expand the School's community-based projects using new trends like community informatics or professional education.
- Stimulate faculty research on topics of special interest to students from Latin America and the Caribbean; involve more students in faculty research.

Steps to be taken

- Have brainstorming sessions to generate ideas for new projects and research.

- Work with the University office of external relations to identify relevant sources of support for these project and research ideas.
- Strengthen work with ACURIL to involve students to work on research relating to Latin America and the Caribbean.

Standard IV.2: *Current, accurate, and easily accessible information on the school and its program is available to students and the general public. This information includes announcements of program goals and objectives, descriptions of curricula, information on faculty, admission requirements, availability of financial aid, criteria for evaluating student performance, assistance with placement, and other policies and procedures. The school demonstrates that it has procedures to support these policies.*

Summary of the School's compliance with this standard

Students and the general public have access to current information about the School's Programs through various publications, such as the [Information Bulletin](#) which is revised regularly. The Bulletin offers clear and precise information about all the School's educational offerings, and the necessary procedures for admission, as well as requirements for graduation. In addition, the *Bulletin* includes information related to the School's goals and objectives, academic programs, physical facilities, curriculum, faculty, economic assistance, housing and international students. The Economic Assistance Program, part of the Dean of Students of the University, describes procedures related to financial aid. This information can be obtained in the administrative offices of the School.

Another source of information on the School and its programs is available through the Internet, on the website of the School, and also on the website of the University of Puerto Rico, Río Piedras. Recently, the website of the Río Piedras Campus was completely redesigned. A new section has been included with more relevant information about all campuses and academic programs, undergraduate and graduate. In addition, the [Catalog of Graduate Studies](#) of the University provides information about all masters and doctoral programs offered on campus.

Furthermore, the [School's new website](#) was launched in spring of 2011. This website provides continuous information for students about the program, faculty, School policies, course offerings, activities and other pertinent information.

Students receive notification through email from the academic advising services about courses to be offered each semester, and dates for pre-registration. This information is also available on the GSIST Portal.

Information about the school is offered at the annual conferences of local professional associations in the field. In addition, information about the School is available during Graduate Studies Fairs held in the Student Center, as well as in other educational fairs held at different UPR campuses and at other universities on the Island.

Information about the School has been disseminated by means of the campus radio broadcasting system ([Radio Universidad](#)) through interviews with faculty members. Radio Universidad is available throughout Puerto Rico.

Achievements

1. Important information about the School and its Program is available on the school's website environment, which also includes information about the Research Center ([OERI](#)) and the Library Science and Informatics Library ([BCBI](#)). The [School's Portal](#) is an important means of keeping students, alumni and the community informed, since it is continually updated, accurate and easily accessible. Policies and procedures relating to students have been available in both traditional print forms, as well as in electronic format.
2. Faculty and course descriptions, admissions and financial aid information, program goals and objectives are accessible on the School's website. Announcements of new courses, School and professional activities, plans and projects are also described on the website. This information is presented in a clear, easily accessible readable manner.
3. The Students Affairs Officer works closely with the website editor to keep students up-to-date on School news, activities, new courses, job opportunities. The Students Affairs Officer also uses a mailing list to send this type of information to faculty and students via email. Faculty and administrative personnel use e-mail to keep students informed about School activities, issues and concerns.
4. [Brochures](#) have been designed to provide information about the School, its Master's degree and post-graduate certificate programs. These brochures are distributed at job and educational fairs, professional conferences and other activities.
5. Using the School's strong technological infrastructure, more effective dissemination of information about all services available for students has been achieved, as well as improved communication channels between faculty, administration and students.
6. The School's website was fully redesigned and re-launched in the Spring of 2011, as a result of an information needs analysis. This website uses an open source platform (Joomla) and incorporates the BCBI website in an innovative 3-in-1 interface to provide a more integrated approach to satisfying information needs of the users.

Evidence

1. *GSIST Information Bulletin* describes School goals, objectives, courses, admissions, faculty, etc. Procedures as well as policies are included.
2. The [Graduate Studies and Research Portal](#), at the Río Piedras Campus, is a key source of information about admissions, financial aid, and placement.

3. EGCTI [Web Environment](#) is most important to keep all the community abreast of information and documentation about the School and issues related.
4. The EGCTI intranet (in progress) will provide a new space to keep faculty and research assistants informed about internal activities at the School. (On-site).
5. Information from the School's online calendar, available on the School's website, keeps faculty and students up-to-date about School and professional activities and events.
6. [Listing of e-mail addresses of faculty](#) and [Student's Council members](#) helps to facilitate communication and sharing of information about School policies, procedures events and activities. (See on-site and online evidence).
7. [Brochures](#) about the Program.
8. The School's website facilitates the update of alumni addresses, telephone numbers, e-mails, work phone, among other information. (On-line).

Challenges

- Students and faculty need to be encouraged to participate more in the school's online environment. They need to be oriented on how to most effectively do this.
- The *Bulletin* needs to be continually revised and updated to reflect changes in the Program, new projects and activities of the School.
- The electronic mailing list needs to be continually updated (students, alumni).
- The School needs to foster and expand its website environment; gain more collaboration from students, faculty, alumni, local, and international regional organizations.

Steps to be taken

- Inclusion of training sessions about the use of electronic communications, as part of the standard student orientation at the beginning of the new semester.
- Update demographic information about students, including work and home addresses.
- Offer regular orientation about new products and services, or provide sections on the school's website.
- Create valued-added contents on the website to support student and faculty needs related to the curriculum.
- Create an e-reserve section on the Library's website.

- Promote open access initiatives among faculty and students in order to facilitate free access to information (e.g. theses, working papers, and projects).

Standard IV.3 [Part 1]: *Standards for admission are applied consistently. Students admitted to the program have earned a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution; the policies and procedures for waiving any admission standard or academic prerequisite are stated clearly and applied consistently.*

Summary of the School's compliance with this section of the standard

The School's Admission Committee ensures that admission standards are applied consistently to all candidates that apply to the School. Each candidate's credentials are carefully examined. In exceptional cases the School can admit a student that has not satisfied all of the requirements. This admission is conditional, assuming that the student can demonstrate that the potential student has the knowledge and skills necessary to function effectively in the School (as evidenced by course evaluations). All students admitted to the Program have a bachelor's degree or its equivalent. Cases in which admission is denied because of a lack of basic requirements are considered on an individual, one-to-one basis.

Achievements

1. Admissions policies and procedures are clearly stated in the *Bulletin of Information*.
2. The revised policies and procedures are included in the GSIST's Bylaws [[Reglamento EGCTI](#)]. To be admitted to the school, the student must have at least a 3.0 GPA and they must have approved the EXADEP test with a minimum score of 500 points.
3. Revised policies and procedures relating to admissions are available on the website. The Admissions Committee is committed to ensure that admission standards are applied consistently to all candidates. Their credentials are carefully examined, case by case. In addition to basic requirements mentioned above, students should be able to read and write both Spanish and English and possess computer skills and basic statistics skills.

Evidence

1. Latest edition of the School's [Information Bulletin](#) includes information on admissions policies and procedures. The admission process is described on the [GSIST Bylaws](#) (articles 9, 9.1, 9.1.2, 9.1.3, 9.1.4, 9.2,). The protocols include an admission form and application, evidence of payment, and requirements. The only major change to the admission process is the fact that personal interviews are not required anymore. Application costs and fees had also an impact on the number of applicants in recent years (specially until 2010). It was on that year, 2010, that the admission committee composed by Mrs. Migdalia Dávila, officer of student affairs, and professors Dr. Carlos Suárez-Balseiro and Dr. Luisa Vigo-Cepeda recommended the elimination of the

application letters. The current requirements are the *Exadep* exam and the Index.

2. Revised School Bylaws ([Reglamento de la Escuela](#)) chapter on students describes the admission process and requirements.
3. Graduate [admission requirements](#) and policies can be accessed through the School's website.
4. Student Affairs Office files and materials, including students admitted to the program are available on-site.

Challenges

- Ongoing assessment of admissions criteria and procedures to ensure that students admitted to the Program are able to successfully complete the requirements for graduation, and contribute to the intellectual environment that the School aims to develop.

Steps to be taken

- Reassess and revise admissions criteria and procedures in the light of the curriculum revision process.

Standard IV.3 [Part 2]: *Assessment of an application is based on a combined evaluation of academic, intellectual and other qualifications as they relate to the constituencies served by a program, programs' goals and objectives and the career objectives of the individual. Within the framework of institutional policy and programs, the admission policy for a program ensures that applicants possess sufficient interest, aptitude and qualifications to enable successful completion of a program and subsequent contribution to the field.*

Summary of the School's compliance with this section of the standard

The Admission Committee has the responsibility to evaluate the academic, intellectual and other qualifications of each applicant. See [GSIST ByLaws](#). This evaluation takes into account program goals and objectives, as well as career objectives of the individual. The Committee ensures that admission standards are applied consistently to all candidates. In exceptional cases the School admits students that have not satisfied all requirements. This admission is conditional, assuming that the student can demonstrate that he/she has the knowledge and skills necessary to function effectively in the School (as evidenced by course evaluations- On-site).

The retention rate of students admitted to the program is relatively high (+60%).

From another standpoint, the following Table (4.3) shows the number of students admitted to the graduated program yearly and the number of those students that have graduated.

Table 4.3: **Number of admissions and graduates of the MIS Program**

Years	MIS Graduate	Total Admitted	Percentage	Commentaries
2008	16	30	53%	
2009	25	37	68%	
2010	21	35	60%	In spite of the UPR Students unrest, GSIST students continued in the program
2011	30	37	81%	Raise in number of graduates is due to the selection of the updated curriculum.
2012	16	22	73%	Graduation number maintained levels of previous years
2013	11	39	28%	An increased in demand has been observed
2014	0	34		

Achievements

1. Admissions policies and procedures are clearly stated in the *Information Bulletin*.
2. The revised policies and procedures are included in the GSIST's Bylaws (*Reglamento de la EGCTI*) and are available on the website.
3. The Admissions Committee is committed to following the School's admissions guidelines, policies and procedures. They carefully assess each applicant's qualifications in relation to the admissions criteria. These criteria include: a bachelor's degree with a minimum grade point average of 3.00; a minimum score of 500 in the Graduate Studies Admissions Test (*Prueba de Admisión a Estudios de Postgrado, EXADEP*); demonstration of basic computer skills; writing ability; and letters of recommendation.
4. The great majority of students admitted to the Program successfully complete it. The school retention rate is high (+80%). The process of evaluation of student retention is conducted by the Self-Assessment Committee. The process of changing the minimal score for admission from 450 point to 500 was made 15 years ago by the EGCTI's deanship. No specific reason was given. At that time the demand for admission was by far higher than now. (More information Mrs. Migdalia Dávila).
5. The GSIST increased the minimum score required from applicants in the Graduate Admittance Test from 450 to 500. This decision was made to increase the quality of students admitted to the Program.

Evidences

1. Latest edition of the School's [Information Bulletin](#) includes information on admissions policies and [procedures](#).
2. [The Revised School Bylaws \[Reglamento de la Escuela\]](#) chapter on Students describes the admission process and the admission requirements.
3. The Graduate [admission requirements and policies](#) can be accessed through the School's website.
4. Student Affairs Office materials, including students admitted to the program. (on-site)
5. Alumni Success Stories: Inés Flores de Rodríguez (Senior Acquisitions Specialist, European and Latin American Acquisitions Division, Hispanic Acquisitions Section, Library of Congress); Víctor Manuel Belén-Lora, Director, Biblioteca Nazario-Rizeck Badia Llabaly, Universidad Católica Nordestana, República Dominicana; Henry Torres (Library Director, faculty of Electrical and Mechanical Engineering, University of Zulia, Venezuela); Mirta Colón (Library Director, Universidad Politécnica de Puerto Rico); Dulce María Núñez de Taveras (Library Director, Pontificia Universidad Católica Madre y Maestra, República Dominicana), among others. Most of them are featured in the Alumni Section [[Galería de Egresados](#)] on the website.

Standard IV.4 [Part 1]: *Students construct coherent programs of study that allow individual needs, goals, and aspirations to be met within the context of program requirements established by the school.*

Summary of the School's compliance with this section of the standard

The Student Affairs Officer assist students to construct coherent programs of study, which allow students to satisfy their individual aims and objectives to be met within the context of program requirements. This is done through constant personal dialogue and mentorship, communication, and follow-up. The Student Affairs Officer is seminal in allowing the students to build up coherent and consistent programs of study.

Although students are encouraged to follow a logical, appropriate sequence in selection of courses, some may not have done so for various reasons. They may have needed to finish the program as quickly as possible, taking courses offered at a convenient time, rather than those of greatest interest. Desired elective courses may not have been offered because of a lack of demand. Students may not have consulted sufficiently with the advisor to understand the yearly pattern of course offerings.

The School's curriculum facilitates construction of coherent programs of study because of its structure and number of basic and required courses. A sequence is established in offering these courses, so that students, particularly part-time students, take them in a systematic, planned fashion. In addition, the Student Affairs Officer

focuses on making sure that students select courses in a coherent, systematic manner, in accordance with curriculum guidelines.

During the past seven years, the School has taken into account needs of students to take advanced, specialized courses reflecting new issues, trends and developments of the field. The new curricular sequence of studies identifies core classes and tracks. This [brochure](#) is available to all students in printed format. Different professors from Spain have come to the School and have offered some of these courses. The Program is flexible enough to offer courses that interest and attract students (using the “special topics” option), satisfying their needs, goals, and aspirations. The last visiting professor at the School was Dr. Antonio Hernández-Pérez, of Universidad Carlos III de Madrid, from February 16 to May 8, 2014.

Achievements

1. Over the years students’ feedback and evaluation of the School’s program in general has been positive. The School’s alumni association’s support [*Asociación de Egresados de la Escuela de Bibliotecología y Ciencias de la Información*, ASEGRABCI] indicates that needs and aspirations of alumni have been met.
2. Alumni and current students have been taking elective courses outside of the School, expanding their perspectives and ideas from other disciplines. These electives however are by student’s free choice; the School does not supervise them. The Schools of Education, Communication, Humanities, Business and Public Administration have been selected as areas of most interest. Alumni are pursuing studies at the doctoral level.
3. A course on Media and Digital Libraries: Journalism and Documentation was offered by Professor Antonio Hernández, Ph.D., of Universidad Carlos III de Madrid, España, from February 16 to May 8, 2014.

Evidence

1. Examples of results of graduates exit interviews and student and alumni surveys. These results have indicated that student’s and graduate’s needs, goals and aspirations have been met. (See assessment documents)
2. Annual comparison of student satisfaction resulting from course questionnaires for the master’s program
3. Syllabi of courses offered by visiting professors. (On-site)

Challenges

- The effectiveness of the advising function needs to be continually evaluated to ensure that student needs, goals and aspirations are being successfully met.
- A list of elective courses available for students (information about different schools, universities) needs to be prepared and updated. It is important to notice that one of the major developments lately has been the fact that the

elective courses catalog is now available at [MIUPI](#), the UPR's website of electronic services for students.

- Information about opportunities to participate in student exchange programs with other LIS schools should be developed.

Steps to be taken

- Review and reassess the academic advising procedures involving participation of students, faculty, and staff.
- Identify and prepare a listing of types of elective courses that student can consider taking within and outside of the University.
- Explore options for student exchange with other LIS schools, and prepare information about these possibilities.

Standard IV.4 [Part 2]: <i>Students receive systematic, multifaceted evaluation of their achievements.</i>

Summary of the School's compliance with this standard

There are a variety of ways in which students receive evaluation of their achievements. The measures used by faculty in the classroom as part of their teaching methodology include, for example, exams, written projects and reports, papers, oral presentations, fieldwork exercises. The feedback provided by the faculty as part of the evaluation of each student assignment gives students opportunities to learn from what they have done. Now, after completion of 12 credits in core courses, the students will need to present evidence of their electronic portfolio to their academic advisors. The electronic portfolio is a students' requirement intended to evidence their experience in the School. It provides the opportunity for students to document their learning, to demonstrate the acquisition of basic knowledge of the field, to acquire the ability to critically reflect, integrate, interrelate and apply knowledge, skills and attitudes important for the new information professional.

The use of a portfolio as a requirement for graduation also provides a means to evaluate student achievement. This technique provides formal documentation of the work and accomplishments of the student.

Achievements

1. The use of a professional [student portfolio](#) to document and assess student achievement is part of the curriculum, a requirement for graduation.
2. The faculty, using a variety of both traditional and innovative techniques, systematically evaluates student work. A description of this evaluation, including the criteria, is included in the course syllabi.

3. During 2008 to 2014, a [set of rubrics](#) was developed to provide the faculty with more structured evaluation tools to measure student achievement.
4. Student participation in School committees involves feedback and evaluation of many aspects of the Program, including student achievements.
5. The faculty agreed to review the professional student portfolio requirements to facilitate the portfolio creation process.
6. *Although not implemented as yet, [Certification #38](#) has extended the grade format to A+, A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, C-, D and F (see section 3.D). The minimum grade to pass a graduate course is B-.*

Evidences

1. Examples of [student professional portfolios](#), evidence of the evaluation of student achievement in the Program.
2. [GSIST Bylaws](#).
3. [Examples of evaluation of student work](#), showing the variety of assignments and the type of feedback received by students.
4. Course syllabi, include a section on evaluation. (Core and required course syllabi are available [online](#), all course syllabi available on-site)
5. Composition of School committees reflects the [participation of students](#) in the discussion and evaluation of many aspects of the School's Program.
6. The School's Students [Learning Assessment Plan](#), including specific assessment tools.

Challenges

- Changes need to be made in the student portfolio requirement, based on feedback from students and faculty, so that it can be made simpler and easier to complete. This process is currently being undertaken.
- Faculty needs to emphasize the use of the portfolio, so that students can complete it in an efficient and effective manner.
- Faculty need to be up-to-date on how to most effectively use a variety of assessment and evaluation techniques and strategies in their classes

Steps to be taken

- Continue to provide training for faculty in effective use of assessment and evaluation strategies in their classes.
- Develop tutorials to strengthen the orientation and guidance of students in the process of preparing their portfolios.

Standard IV.4 [Part 3]: *Students have access to continuing opportunities for guidance, counseling, and placement assistance.*

Summary of the School's compliance with this standard

The Officer of Student Affairs offers guidance and help in this area, in addition to informal placement assistance. She provides information about grants, fellowships, internships, and job opportunities. In addition, the Office of Student Affairs communicates the student's needs to the appropriate channels (faculty and staff) and helps to connect the students with faculty for mentorship. One formal group orientation is offered at the beginning of the semester for new students, focusing on the School's Program, faculty, student activities and participation, physical facilities, including computer labs and library resources available for student use. With the new initiative of Academic Advising, the School has taken an active role in encouraging ways to better inform, orient, and guide students.

Achievements

1. More bulletin board space has been made available for posting placement information and job opportunities for students.
2. The School's directors have had formal and informal meetings with students on a regular basis to discuss issues of concern to them.
3. The expanded use of the School's website to communicate information to students regarding the School's program, projects, and activities is another way that students have access to important information about the School, their program of studies and job placement opportunities.
4. The University's and the School websites inform constantly the admitted students of opportunities and fellowships.

Evidence

1. University of Puerto Rico, Río Piedras Campus, *Graduate Studies and Research Portal's* section on "Information for Applicants" [describes admission requirements and procedures](#). It also includes information on placement and financial assistance. The relevant information is also available on the GSIST website.
2. Student orientation and course selection records (On-site)
3. Job description of Student Affairs Officer. (On-site)
4. After being granted admission to the Master's Program, students identify also professional opportunities in the field through the EGCTI's Students Council.

Challenges

- A more systematic approach to placement and job orientation for students needs to be developed, including providing more information and orientation in this area. The School needs to clarify its responsibilities in this area.

Steps to be taken

- Plan and develop workshops focusing on useful job and placement information and skills oriented for graduating students.

Standard IV.5: *The school provides an environment that fosters student participation in the definition and determination of the total learning experience. Students are provided with opportunities to form student organizations and to participate in the formulation, modification, and implementation of policies affecting academic and student affairs.*

Summary of the School's compliance with this standard

The School's Director, as well as faculty members, strives to promote active participation of students during meetings and other School activities informing them about issues and future plans of the School. Student's comments and concerns are encouraged. They are taken into consideration in planning and evaluating all aspects of the School's program. The faculty is open and interested in student participation in planning School activities.

The School offers awards and incentives for students to attend workshops and conferences of professional associations emphasizing the importance of professional participation in the field. In the curriculum revision process, student ideas and opinions are an important input.

Formalization of student organizations is explained by the [Decanato de Estudiantes](#) and described on the [UPR students bylaws](#) (articles 2.21, 2.22, 2.23). In addition [GSIST Bylaws](#) emphasize and explain (article 8, p.14) the student participation and voice in school policies and planning. Aside from the Student Council though, there are no other Library and Information student groups on campus.

During the second semester of each academic year, a meeting is held in which nominations are made for student officers and representatives in the School's Student Council, the Academic Senate, the General University Student Council, the Graduate Council and School Committees. The University of Puerto Rico student regulations provide guidance for student participation in these organizations. During this meeting the requirements and responsibilities of each position are explained. Students are elected to each position, including student representatives for the Joint Committee of Student and Faculty, the Admissions Committee, the Advisory Committee for the Library and Information Sciences Library, the Technology Committee, and the Curriculum Committee. Students participate actively in these councils and committees, which are involved with curriculum revision, re-accreditation, and other key issues and concerns relating to academic and student affairs, such as workshops

and other continuing education activities that students can participate in, enriching their total learning experience.

Achievements

1. Students are actively involved in the Puerto Rican chapter of ACURIL. Several students have attended [ACURIL](#) conferences in different countries and have presented results of their research and projects.
2. Many students are also actively involved in the Puerto Rican School Librarians Association ([ABESPRI](#)).
3. Students have taken an active role as representatives in the Academic Senate and in the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research Council, and well as in General University Student Council. In addition, the School has its own student council with a president, vice president, secretary, treasurer and three representatives.
4. The Student Council plans academic and social activities that expand and enrich the students' learning experience. The Student's Council has its own space in the School where they can meet.
5. Students are represented in all of the School's committees, except for the Personnel Committee. See Table 4.2
6. Active participation of students in the School's learning assessment plan provides them with opportunities to impact policies affecting academic and student affairs.

Evidence

1. Examples of student and alumni involvement in local, regional and USA professional activities and organizations. (On-site). Yadira Avendaño participated at IFLA, Glorimar Rodríguez-Sánchez attended the ACURIL Conference in Bahamas, June 2014, and presented a collaborative research poster on the 45th Anniversary of the School. Yara Hernández-Vélez participated in the Library of Congress Internship during the Summer of 2014. Two students attended the 2014 ALA Annual Conference, Carlos Pagán-Cuebas and Alejandra Méndez-Irizarry.
2. Results from [student surveys](#), graduate exit interviews, and focus groups describe the reaction of students to different aspects of the Program.
3. The [Student General Bylaws of the University of Puerto Rico](#) describe the opportunities for student participation in committees, councils, and organizations.

4. List of members of the GSIST Student Council, including representatives of different committees and councils. (On-site).

Challenges

- A greater number of students should be encouraged to take an active role in the School's activities, including community service activities, outside of attending classes.
- More students should be encouraged to participate actively in School committees, University student organizations, as well as professional organizations and associations in Puerto Rico, the U.S., Latin America, and the Caribbean. It is necessary to gather the appropriate statistics about this issue.
- Students should be encouraged to learn about and take greater advantage of School's and University's activities using collaborative technologies and the website environment.

Steps to be taken

- Develop creative strategies to promote greater student participation in School and University activities and committees, as well as in professional associations.

<p>Standard IV.6 [Part 1]: <i>The school applies the results of evaluation of student achievement to program development.</i></p>
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Summary of the School's compliance with this section of the standard

The Graduate School of Information Sciences & Technologies has continued implementing its program assessment plan. Evaluation and assessment strategies are administered annually, some at the end of December for students finishing their studies. Formative and summative assessments are part of the Learning Assessment Plan. This is a component of the School's overall assessment process.

Faculty meetings are another instance where the Learning Assessment Committee reports their findings. This informs any modification of change to the Master's Program and allows a constant monitoring of the curricula and student's performance.

At the end of each academic year, a questionnaire is submitted to students, along with other evaluation instruments, such as interviews and focus groups. Feedback from students has not only been used for curriculum revision purposes, but it has been also used to improve the opportunities the students have to integrate learning to their clinical experiences, to offer community services, to participate in extra curricular activities, and to work in research projects with professors. Input from students participating in the School's continuing education activities, in the form of written evaluations, is reviewed and taken into account in the planning of future continuing education activities. The structure of the comprehensive exam was also revised on the

basis of feedback from students. As a result, students have been more successful when taking the exam.

Achievements

1. The [Students Learning Assessment Plan](#) has been developed and implemented, involving students and faculty.
2. The faculty prepared an Action Plan addressing and responding to students' recommendations about the learning process, including different aspects of the Program.
3. Discussions about the curriculum's continued update process take into account student recommendations, obtained through focus groups, questionnaires, and exit interviews.
4. The feedback obtained has been used in revising present courses and in planning new courses, programs and activities.

Evidence

1. GSIST Bylaws ([Reglamento de la EGCTI](#))
2. Implementation plan of the [Student Learning Assessment program](#).
3. [Rubrics](#) developed as part of the Student Learning Assessment Plan
4. Student electronic [Professional Portfolios](#) (Online)

Challenges

- Identify student's levels of satisfaction with online courses and the Seminar on Knowledge Application (Capstone).
- Stimulate more student participation with research and creative endeavors in *Simbiosis Estudiantil* and national and international conferences. Emphasize the need for students to participate in the aforementioned Journal. It has been discussed the need for faculty during orientation to explain the Journal's existence and professional usefulness.

Steps to be taken

- Assessment and revision of the School's guidelines regarding student's participation in the Seminar on Knowledge Application (Capstone), in the light of student's feedback in exit interviews.

Standard IV.6 [Part 2]: *Procedures are established for systematic evaluation of the degree to which a program's academic and administrative policies and activities regarding students are accomplishing its objectives. Within applicable institutional policies, faculty, students, staff and others are involved in the evaluation process.*

Summary of the School's compliance with this section of the standard

The University of Puerto Rico, Río Piedras Campus, sets guidelines and directives for its graduate programs with the Academic Senate's [Certification #38](#). The School, in accordance with this Certification, has developed policies and procedures related to admissions, knowledge and skills competences, and research endeavor. The policies and procedures are described in the School's *Information Bulletin*.

Because the School's admissions and curriculum committees include student representatives, they participate in the evaluation process considering the issues brought up as part of each committee's responsibilities. The Joint Committee of Student and Faculty (*Comité Conjunto*) has three student representatives and two faculty members. It serves as a clearinghouse for student feedback on a variety of issues and concerns relating to School policies and procedures. In this committee, students can critically evaluate any aspect of the Program. The function of the Committee is to examine student ideas or problems presented and stimulate dialogue among faculty, students and administration staff concerning these ideas or problems. Members of the Student Council meet with the Director to discuss issues and concerns. The Director's meetings with students provide an opportunity for students to express their opinions and participate in the evaluation process. Regular meetings with faculty and administrative staff provide opportunities for these groups to participate in this process.

The Director is involved in the exit interview with graduating students, along with the Officer of Students Affairs, to elicit their comments and ideas about the School's programs, services and activities.

Achievements

1. The Joint Committee of Student and Faculty meetings are held regularly whenever student issues and concerns about all aspects of the Program are raised and discussed.
2. Issues pertaining to different aspects of the program are discussed in an open, supportive environment in committee meetings, Student Council meetings, meetings with the faculty and the Director.
3. The Director's communications and meetings with students include discussion of academic and administrative issues and concerns. Meetings with Student Council members and those active in student organizations highlight and focus on important issues, concerns or problems needing to be resolved.
4. One of the important changes during the past seven years in the implementation of the new curriculum has been an increased focus on evaluation involving students, faculty, and staff. This is reflected in the development and use of evaluation instruments and a learning assessment

plan. There has been a shift toward assessment and evaluation in which students play a central role.

5. The School's evaluation process includes course and faculty evaluations, portfolios, exit interviews, focus groups and questionnaires. Students are involved in all these activities.
6. Throughout the past year, there has been consistent representation of students in faculty meetings.
7. The Students Council can also propose changes and affect the degree.

Evidence

1. [Certification #72](#) Academic Senate, University of Puerto Rico, provided the basis for graduate education at the University of Puerto Rico.
2. [Certification #38](#) Academic Senate, University of Puerto Rico. ([Online](#)).
3. GSIST Bylaws ([Reglamento de la EGCTI](#)) and the [Information Bulletin](#) describe student participation in committees and in other aspects of the School's program.
4. List of the School's Permanent Committees and the members of each includes student representatives.
5. Samples of evaluation instruments relating to students. ([Online](#))
6. GSIST's Students Learning Assessment Plan ([Online](#))
7. Results of [exit interviews](#), focus groups and [student surveys](#). (See Assessment documents online)
8. Examples of students [Professional Portfolios](#).

Challenges

- A greater number of students need to be encouraged to participate in meetings with the Director to take a more active role in the School's student organization, so that they can become more involved and have greater input in the evaluation process.

Steps to be taken

- Explore new options and strategies to encourage more active student participation in meetings with the Director and in the GSIST Student Council and its activities. Through discussions during student activities, ideas can be shared about ways to increase student participation in school functions.