



# **Georgia Professional Standards Commission**

## **Guidance for Out-of-State Educator Preparation Providers Seeking GaPSC Approval**

**Version 1, April 2024**

# Table of Contents

<a href="#">Introduction</a> .....	3
<a href="#">Relevant Georgia Policies and Standards</a> .....	4
<a href="#">GaPSC Educator Preparation Rule 505-3-.01</a> .....	4
<a href="#">Georgia Standards for the Approval of Educator Preparation Providers and Educator Preparation Programs</a> .....	5
<a href="#">GaPSC Educator Preparation Rule 505-3-.05</a> .....	5
<a href="#">GaPSC Educator Preparation Rules 505-3-.13 through 505-3-.60</a> .....	6
<a href="#">GaPSC Educator Preparation Rules 505-2-.02 and 505-3-.03</a> .....	6
<a href="#">GaPSC Certification Rules</a> .....	7
<a href="#">Eligibility for GaPSC Approval</a> .....	8
<a href="#">Eligibility Criteria and Rationales</a> .....	8
<a href="#">Is Your EPP Eligible to Seek GaPSC Approval?</a> .....	9
<a href="#">Implementation Timeline</a> .....	10
<a href="#">Approval Review Process</a> .....	11
<a href="#">Maintaining GaPSC Approval</a> .....	13

## Introduction

The Georgia Professional Standards Commission (GaPSC) is responsible for assuring the citizens of Georgia that certified educators are well prepared for their roles in schools. In pursuit of this mission, the agency sets and enforces policies related to the authorization of organizations to operate in Georgia as approved providers of programs leading to educator certification. A policy change effective January 1, 2024, allows eligible out-of-state educator preparation providers (EPPs) to seek Georgia Professional Standards Commission (GaPSC) approval to offer a non-traditional preparation program to individuals pursuing teacher certification while employed in a Georgia public school.

Intended to provide guidance and information to out-of-state EPPs interested in seeking (GaPSC) approval, this document addresses related Georgia policies, eligibility criteria, procedures, and requirements for earning and maintaining approval. Also included is an implementation timeline, and hyperlinks to relevant policies and resources available on the GaPSC website at [www.gapsc.com](http://www.gapsc.com).

Questions related to the policies and requirements described herein should be directed to [OOSApproval@gapsc.com](mailto:OOSApproval@gapsc.com).

## Relevant Georgia Policies and Standards

### GaPSC Educator Preparation Rule 505-3-.01

Georgia Professional Standards Commission [Educator Preparation Rule 505-3-.01 Requirements and Standards for the Approval of Educator Preparation Providers and Educator Preparation Programs](#), is the overarching policy governing Georgia preparation providers and programs that result in state educator certification. Amendments to the Rule, adopted by the Commission in December 2023, effective January 1, 2024, allow eligible out-of-state educator preparation providers (EPPs) to seek GaPSC approval to offer non-traditional teacher preparation programs to individuals seeking Georgia teacher certification. The applicable portion of [Rule 505-3-.01](#) follows.

Out-of-state organizations that are Accredited without conditions or probation by the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) and that are approved without conditions or probation by the state in which the organization is administratively based are eligible to seek GaPSC approval to offer, through a branch or satellite campus and/or by online delivery, non-credit-bearing certification-only programs leading to initial teacher certification. Out-of-state program providers offering credit-bearing and/or degree-granting programs are not eligible for GaPSC approval. Once approved by GaPSC, an out-of-state organization must maintain CAEP Accreditation and home state approval in good standing (without conditions or probation) to continue qualifying for GaPSC approval (effective 1/1/2024, paragraph (3) (a) 2, p. 7).

Note in the first sentence the policy stipulates the teacher certification program must be non-credit-bearing. In Georgia, such programs are classified as Non-Traditional and they are offered by Regional Educational Service Agencies (RESAs) or eligible local units of administration (e.g., school districts). As explained in the second sentence, the policy excludes programs offered by colleges and universities, the rationale for which is explained in the [Eligibility Criteria](#) section, beginning on page 8. Rule 505-3-.01 further defines requirements for EPPs, as well as for programs leading to Georgia educator certification.

## **Georgia Standards for the Approval of Educator Preparation Providers and Educator Preparation Programs**

To earn and maintain GaPSC approval to offer programs leading to teacher certification, EPPs must provide evidence of meeting the applicable components of the [Standards for the Approval of Educator Preparation Providers and Educator Preparation Programs](#). Eligible out-of-state EPPs will be held accountable for meeting these same standards. See the [Guidance](#) accompanying the Standards for assistance interpreting the Standards, as well as possible sources of evidence.

### **GaPSC Educator Preparation Rule 505-3-.05**

Out-of-state EPPs that successfully complete the GaPSC approval process will be classified as Non-Traditional. As such, their teacher certification program will be classified as Non-Traditional and will therefore be subject to the requirements and standards delineated in GaPSC [Educator Preparation Rule 505-3-.05, Georgia Teacher Academy for Preparation and Pedagogy \(GaTAPP\)](#), in addition to the requirements described in Rule 505-3-.01 and the Georgia Approval Standards. This means the program will operate in Georgia as a GaTAPP program and the EPP will be held accountable to the same expectations as Georgia-based GaTAPP program providers.

Before deciding to pursue GaPSC approval, interested out-of-state EPPs are strongly encouraged to carefully read Rule 505-3-.05 to gain an understanding of all GaTAPP requirements, to include those related to program admission, program curriculum (candidate competencies and dispositions), partnerships with P-12 schools, field and clinical experiences, candidate supervision and support, and general and [field-specific completion requirements](#). To learn more about GaTAPP program requirements and currently approved programs, see the [GaTAPP program suite of webpages](#).

## **GaPSC Educator Preparation Rules 505-3-.13 through 505-3-.60**

GaTAPP programs may offer certification in any field of Teacher (T) certification issued by the GaPSC. As such, GaTAPP program providers must be aware of the content knowledge expectations specified in [Educator Preparation Rules 505-3-.13 through 505-3-.60](#). Each rule delineates the field-specific content standards candidates must demonstrate to earn certification. Although many GaTAPP candidates demonstrate content knowledge by passing the GACE Content Assessment prior to program entry, program assessments and observations may indicate the need for additional support. Also, for candidates seeking certification in fields for which there are no related degrees (e.g., Birth Through Kindergarten, Elementary Education, Special Education) GaTAPP program providers may require additional coursework to address the program content standards specified in the applicable Educator Preparation Rules. See [GaTAPP Field-Specific Requirements](#) for more information on content area requirements.

## **GaPSC Educator Preparation Rules 505-2-.02 and 505-3-.03**

Additional GaPSC Rules apply to all teacher preparation programs. Among them are [Rule 505-3-.02, Educator Preparation Provider Annual Reporting and Evaluation](#) and [Rule 505-3-.03, Foundations of Reading, Literacy, and Language](#). Rule 505-3-.02 describes EPP reporting requirements, specifically the regular and accurate submissions of candidate-level data in the Non-Traditional Reporting System (NTRS) according to the timelines established in Rule 505-3-.01. Also described in Rule 505-3-.02 are federal reporting requirements (Title II), Preparation Program Effectiveness Measures, and expectations for the use of data for program improvement.

Rule 505-3-.03 specifies reading, literacy, and language content standards for programs that prepare individuals to teach children aged birth through kindergarten and children in any subject in grades P-12. The standards delineated in Rule 505-3-.03 must be implemented in all GaPSC-approved teacher preparation programs by August 2024.

## GaPSC Certification Rules

Multiple [Certification Rules](#) apply to Non-Traditional preparation programs to ensure that candidates complete all state requirements for earning a Georgia Teaching (T) Certificate. Among them are:

- [505-2-.01](#) Georgia Educator Certification
- [505-2-.02](#) Classification
- [505-2-.05](#) Professional Certificate
- [505-2-.08](#) Provisional Certificate
- [505-2-.10](#) Permit
- [505-2-.13](#) Waiver Certificate
- [505-2-.22](#) Certification By State-Approved Program
- [505-2-.24](#) Special Georgia Requirements
- [505-2-.26](#) Certification and Licensure Assessments
- [505-2-.31](#) GaPSC-Accepted Accreditation for Certification Purposes
- [505-2-.42](#) Clearance Certificate
- [505-2-.57](#) Teaching Fields

GaPSC-approved EPPs are expected to understand and comply with all applicable Certification Rules.

Out-of-state EPPs seeking GaPSC approval are advised to review each of the rules listed in this section to determine if existing program practices or procedures will need to be revised, or if new procedures will need to be added to meet Georgia requirements.

## Eligibility for GaPSC Approval

### Eligibility Criteria and Rationales

As described in [Rule 505-3-.01](#), paragraph (3) (a) 2., to qualify for the GaPSC approval review process, out-of-state program providers must meet the following criteria. Out-of-state EPPs must meet all three of these criteria to become eligible to seek GaPSC approval.

1. CAEP Accreditation without conditions or probation.

Rationale: As the Georgia Standards for the Approval of Educator Preparation Providers and Educator Preparation Programs are adapted from the CAEP Standards, this criterion ensures that the out-of-state EPP meets the same rigorous standards to which Georgia EPPs are held accountable.

2. Home State Approval without conditions or probation.

Rationale: An EPP that meets this criterion proves it is successfully operating in the state in which it is administratively based—a critically important indicator of quality and capacity to meet state standards.

3. The EPP offers a program that is non-credit-bearing and is approved to result in state teacher certification. This means the program does not issue college/university credit and it does not result in a degree at any level. In Georgia, such programs are classified as Non-Traditional Preparation programs, whereas programs resulting in college/university credit (whether or not they result in a degree) are classified as Traditional Preparation programs.

Rationale: There is no need for EPPs offering state-approved Traditional preparation programs (e.g., colleges or universities) to seek GaPSC approval because they are already authorized to operate in Georgia under the authority of their home-state approval. (See GaPSC [Certification Rule 505-2-.22 Certification by State-Approved Program.](#)) Rule 505-3-.01 was amended because in some states, approval for Non-Traditional Preparation programs does not allow EPPs to serve candidates employed outside of the home state.



## Is your EPP Eligible to Seek GaPSC Approval?

Answer the following questions to determine if your EPP and program are eligible to seek GaPSC approval.

**1. Is your EPP fully accredited without conditions or probation by the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP)?**

If YES, proceed to question 2.

If NO, your EPP is not eligible to seek GaPSC approval.

**2. Is your EPP fully approved without conditions or probation by the state in which your organization is administratively based (where the office of the chief executive officer is physically located)?**

If YES, proceed to question 3.

If NO, your EPP is not eligible to seek GaPSC approval.

**3. Does your EPP offer a non-credit-bearing certification-only program (a program that neither results in college/university credit nor a degree of any kind) approved to result in teacher certification by the state in which your organization is administratively based?**

If you answered YES to all three questions, you may apply for GaPSC Approval.

If you answered NO to one or more questions, your EPP is not eligible to seek GaPSC approval.

All three criteria must be met to qualify for the [GaPSC approval review process](#), which is described on pages 11-12.

## Implementation Timeline

### First Round, beginning July 2024:

Timeline	Activities
April 1, 2024	GaPSC Approval Application Information and Guidance available.
July 1 – August 31, 2024	Out-of-State EPP Applications (Intent to Seek Approval) accepted.
October 1, 2024	GaPSC confirms eligibility for up to two out-of-state EPPs (based on GaPSC verification of eligibility and submission of Intent to Seek Approval Form, on a first-come-first-served basis).
Fall 2024 – Summer 2025	Eligible EPPs prepare for the approval process.
Fall 2025	Approval Process begins.
Spring 2026	Approval Process concludes.
June - July 2026	GaPSC Approval Decisions rendered.
August 2026	Approved programs may begin admitting candidates.

### Ongoing: Beginning July 1, 2025, the GaPSC out-of-state EPP Developmental Approval Review process will be conducted one time annually according to the following schedule:

Timeline	Activities
July 1 - August 31	Out-of-State EPP Applications (Intent to Seek Approval) accepted. This is the only window of time in which an out-of-state EPP can submit the intent to apply for GaPSC approval.
October 1	GaPSC Verification of Eligibility.
October - November	Approval Review(s) Scheduled. <i>GaPSC staff will determine the maximum number of OOS EPP approval reviews per year based on staff capacity and reviewer availability.</i>
January – July	EPP prepares for the approval process.
August 1	EPP submits approval documentation and artifacts via the GaPSC Provider Reporting System (PRS)-III.
September - October	GaPSC Reviewers Conduct the Formative Review (online).
December 1	EPP submits Addendum in response to Formative Review Findings.
February – March	GaPSC Reviewers Conduct the Summative Review (online).
April	EPP receives Approval Review Report with a 30-day response window.
June - July	Approval Decision rendered by the Commission.
August	Approved programs may begin admitting candidates.

## GaPSC Approval Review Process for Out-of-State EPPs

11-Step Approval Process	Process Descriptions
<p><b>1. Out-of-State EPP expresses interest in GaPSC Approval</b></p>	<p>The EPP head sends a letter of interest to the GaPSC Educator Preparation Division at <a href="mailto:OOSApproval@gapsc.com">OOSApproval@gapsc.com</a>. GaPSC staff respond with a link to Guidance, and instructions for verifying eligibility to seek GaPSC Approval.</p>
<p><b>2. GaPSC Verifies Eligibility.</b></p>	<p>GaPSC staff will verify eligibility and inform the EPP of status and next steps.</p>
<p><b>3. Out-of-State EPP Submits the Intent to Seek Approval Form (online).</b></p>	<p>After eligibility is verified, GaPSC staff will provide the out-of-state EPP with access to the online Intent to Seek Approval Form in the GaPSC secure portal at <a href="http://www.gapsc.org">www.gapsc.org</a>. The EPP will enter contact information, provide program information, and enter three preferred date ranges for the summative portion of the Developmental Approval Review.</p>
<p><b>4. GaPSC Schedules the Approval Review.</b></p>	<p>GaPSC staff will select and confirm the approval review dates. Report submission deadline and formative review dates will be set accordingly.</p>
<p><b>5. EPP prepares for the approval process.</b></p>	<p>The EPP will gather evidence and artifacts to support their case for meeting Georgia Standards 1 and 6. (CAEP Accreditation provides GaPSC assurance the EPP has met Standards 2 through 5.) The GaPSC online Provider Reporting System (PRS)-III, housed in the GaPSC secure portal at <a href="http://www.gapsc.org">www.gapsc.org</a>, will be open for data/document entry during this time.</p>
<p><b>6. EPP submits approval documentation and artifacts via PRS-III.</b></p>	<p>The EPP must finalize and submit PRS-III by the designated due date. Any Areas for Improvement (AFIs) cited by CAEP and/or the home state will be included in the report, along with steps the EPP has taken to address them.</p>
<p><b>7. GaPSC Reviewers Conduct the Formative Review (online).</b></p>	<p>GaPSC-trained Reviewers will conduct a Formative Approval Review of the EPP’s responses and artifacts in PRS-III. A Formative Feedback Report (FFR) will be compiled and sent to the EPP. The FFR will describe any concerns, list questions, and request additional sources of evidence.</p>
<p><b>8. EPP submits Addendum in response to Formative Review Findings.</b></p>	<p>The EPP will respond to the FFR in the PRS-III Addendum Report and upload additional sources of evidence or artifacts.</p>
<p><b>9. GaPSC Reviewers Conduct the Summative Review (online).</b></p>	<p>Reviewers will conduct the summative portion of the Developmental Review, which might include interviews of program officials, faculty, or other stakeholders. The summative portion of the review will conclude with the creation of the Approval Review Report, which will list findings for each of the applicable standards with any areas for improvement or stipulations cited by the Reviewers.</p>

11-Step Approval Process	Process Descriptions
<p><b>10. EPP receives Approval Review Report with a 30-day response window.</b></p>	<p>Upon receipt of the Approval Review Report, the EPP will have 30 days to respond by either agreeing with the findings or by submitting a Rejoinder to explain any disagreements with the findings.</p>
<p><b>11. The Georgia Professional Standards Commission renders an approval decision.</b></p>	<p>Approval Review Reports with all standards met and no stipulations will be fast-tracked to the Commission for an approval decision. Reports with stipulations, unmet standards, or those for which a Rejoinder was filed by the EPP will be reviewed by the Evaluation Review Panel, which will make an approval recommendation to the Commission. Commission decisions are final.</p>

## Maintaining GaPSC Approval

To maintain approval to offer programs leading to certification, GaPSC-approved out-of-state EPPs must meet the expectations set forth in applicable GaPSC policies in [Educator Preparation Rules](#) and [Certification Rules](#); comply with reporting requirements, GaPSC decisions, and procedures; successfully undergo periodic approval reviews; and notify GaPSC staff of any changes in home state approval or CAEP accreditation status. Applicable Educator Preparation and Certification Rules are addressed in the [Relevant Policies](#) section of this document.

GaPSC Reporting Requirements are referenced in multiple Rules. As Non-Traditional providers, approved out-of-state EPPs will use the Non-Traditional Reporting System (NTRS) accessible in the GaPSC secure portal at [www.gapsc.org](http://www.gapsc.org). Upon approval, the EPP head and other designated EPP representatives will be granted access to NTRS, which is a candidate-level data repository used to support the certification process and to house and monitor data related to candidate admission, program progression, compliance with GaPSC requirements, and satisfaction of all program completion requirements. In paragraph (3) (c) 8. (p. 9), [Rule 505-3-.01](#) specifies deadlines for EPP entry of enrollments, and completions and withdrawals, as well as the deadline for federal, Title II reporting purposes.

Approved EPPs must also comply with decisions rendered by the 18-member board of the Commission. Decision options available to Commissioners are described in the document, [GaPSC Approval Decision Options](#), which is publicly available on the GaPSC website at [www.gapsc.com](http://www.gapsc.com). Commissioners render decisions at multiple points including:

- After EPPs undergo approval reviews;
- After the submission of periodic progress reports by EPPs to address areas for improvement, stipulations, or unmet standards identified in an approval review; and
- When EPPs do not comply with Commission decisions, or requirements and procedures specified in GaPSC policies/rules.

Decisions of the Commission are final.

The peer-review approval review process is utilized by GaPSC to monitor EPP and program performance and to ensure compliance with applicable Rules and Approval Standards. Approval review process policies are described in [Rule 505-3-.01](#), paragraph (3) (c) (beginning on p. 7), and the five types of approval reviews are defined in paragraph (3) (c) 6. (p. 8). The first approval review eligible out-of-state EPPs will undergo is the Developmental Review. If Developmentally Approved, the EPP's next approval review, the First Continuing Review, will occur three to four years from the date of the Developmental Review. After a successful First Continuing Review, EPPs undergo a Continuing Review every seven years, unless a change in home-state approval status, national accreditation status, performance issues, or non-compliance issues emerge creating the need for a Focused or Probationary Review.

Preparation Program Effectiveness Measures (PPEMs) serve as another method for monitoring EPP and program performance. Published annually, the PPEMs provide data to EPPs to inform program improvement, and they provide transparency to P-12 schools and the public about the quality of educator preparation in Georgia. The public [PPEM dashboard](#) is available on the GaPSC website. GaPSC-approved EPPs have access to more details about their PPEMs via the GaPSC secure portal at [www.gapsc.org](http://www.gapsc.org).

Finally, to maintain GaPSC approval, out-of-state EPPs must remain approved in the home-state with no conditions or probation, and must maintain CAEP Accreditation with no conditions or probation. GaPSC-approved out-of-state EPPs are responsible for immediately informing GaPSC of any changes to home-state approval and/or CAEP Accreditation status. Failure to notify GaPSC of changes in approval and/or accreditation status will be addressed according to the Non-Compliance Policy described in the [Approval Decision Options](#) document. Also, as stated in [Rule 505-3-.01](#), paragraph (3) (a) 2. (p. 7), GaPSC approval of an out-of-state EPP is contingent upon home-state approval and CAEP Accreditation; therefore, a negative change in either home-state approval or CAEP Accreditation (or both) may result in a change in GaPSC approval status to Probation and an immediate suspension of admissions. If GaPSC approval status is changed to Probation, currently enrolled candidates will be able to complete the program and qualify for certification.

GaPSC Non-Traditional Preparation staff provide outreach and support to Non-Traditional EPPs through a variety of avenues, including regularly scheduled program provider meetings and periodic webinars. GaTAPP Provider meetings are held once most months and typically virtually, via Microsoft Teams. Webinars are provided periodically to address topics of interest related to GaPSC Standards or policies. All GaPSC-approved Non-Traditional EPPs are encouraged to take advantage of these opportunities to learn with and from other program providers.