



# **Georgia Professional Standards Commission**

## **DECISION OPTIONS**

**Effective September 9, 2022**

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## Definitions of Key Terms

**Area for Improvement (AFI):** A statement written by a review team that identifies an area for growth from the evidence (or lack of evidence) for a component or a standard.

**Stipulation:** A statement written by a review team that identifies a deficiency related to one or more components of a standard. A stipulation is of sufficient severity that a standard may be determined to be unmet.

## Commission Decision Making Process

Prior to a Commission decision, all approval reports are examined by the Educator Preparation and Certification Committee (EPCC), a standing committee of the Commission. Members of the EPCC recommend approval actions to the Commission.

In the following instances, the Evaluation Review Panel (ERP), a ten-member panel comprised of experienced reviewers, examines reports prior to their examination by the EPCC and recommends approval actions:

- An approval review team recommends one or more standards are not met, or cites stipulations.
- A Progress Report is submitted.
- A Focused Review or a Probationary Review occurs.
- A Deferral of an approval review is requested.

EPPs are informed of ERP recommendations prior to their review by the EPCC and if an EPP disagrees with the recommendations, an Exception can be presented to the EPCC. After considering ERP recommendations, and if applicable an EPP's Exception, the EPCC will either agree with ERP recommendations or develop different recommendations for the consideration of the full Commission. Commission decisions are final.

## Commission Authority to Change Review Team Findings

The EPCC has the authority to recommend to the Commission approval decisions reflecting changes to the findings of an approval review team. For instance, if a review team cites multiple stipulations for a standard and recommends the standard is met, the EPCC can recommend the standard is not met. Similar action can be taken if after multiple progress reports, an EPP has not provided evidence that stipulations or AFIs have been corrected. The EPCC can recommend changes to approval status based on a lack of evidence that AFIs and stipulations are being addressed. Conversely, the EPCC has the authority to recommend positive changes to approval status when evidence confirms AFIs or stipulations have been resolved.

# APPROVAL REVIEW DECISION OPTIONS

## Approval Reviews of Educator Preparation Provider (EPP) and All Programs

**Developmental Approval Reviews** (for new EPPs and their proposed programs):

- **Developmental Approval of the EPP and all programs is the appropriate choice when the review team recommended all six standards are met.**
  - A [progress report](#) will be required if AFIs or stipulations were cited.
  - The next review, the First Continuing Approval Review, will be scheduled three to four years from the semester of the Developmental Approval Review.
- **Provisional Approval of the EPP and all programs is the appropriate choice when the review team recommended one or two standards are not met.**
  - Depending on which standard(s) are not met:
    - A [progress report](#) will be required
    - A [Focused Review](#) will be required if the unmet standard(s) have not been reclassified as met after the submission of up to three progress reports.
    - Depending upon the severity of the problems, the Commission may specify candidates are not to be enrolled until after the Focused Review.
- **Denial of Approval of the EPP and all programs is the appropriate choice when the review team recommended multiple standards are not met and stipulations and AFIs in other standards were cited, indicating there are pervasive problems that limit the capacity of the EPP to prepare effective educators.**
  - The EPP may not begin offering programs.
  - The EPP may reapply for approval by submitting the Intent to Seek Approval Form one year after the review.

**First Continuing Approval Review Decision Options for EPP** (Conducted three to four years after Developmental Approval to allow Developmental EPPs and programs time to implement the proposed requirements, enroll candidates, and collect data on the effectiveness of the EPP and the programs):

Decision options for Continuing Approval Reviews are utilized for First Continuing Reviews.

**Continuing Approval Review Decision Options** (for EPPs and all programs, conducted every seven years):

- **Continuing Approval of the EPP and all programs is the appropriate choice when the review team recommended all six standards are met for the EPP and all programs.**
  - A [progress report](#) will be required if AFIs or stipulations were cited.
  - The next Continuing Approval Review will be scheduled seven years from the semester of the Continuing Approval Review.
- **Continuing Approval with Conditions of the EPP and all programs is the appropriate choice when the review team recommended one or more standards are not met.**
  - A [progress report](#) will be required.
  - A [Focused Review](#) will be required if the unmet standard(s) have not been reclassified as met after the submission of up to three progress reports.
- **Continuing Approval with Probation of the EPP and all programs is the appropriate choice when the review team recommended multiple standards are not met and stipulations in other standards were cited, indicating there are pervasive problems that limit the capacity of the EPP to prepare effective educators.**
  - One or more progress reports will be required.
  - If progress reports do not indicate satisfactory progress and therefore, do not result in the reclassification of standards to met, a [Probationary Review](#) will be required.
  - Depending upon the severity of the problems, the Commission may require the EPP to pause enrollment in programs.
  - Within sixty (60) days after the decision is rendered, candidates must be notified of probationary approval status and any resulting implications for their progression through or completion of programs.

**Focused Review Decision Options for EPP** (only unmet standards reviewed):

- **Approval (Developmental or Continuing, whichever is appropriate) of the EPP and all programs is the appropriate choice when the review team recommended the standard(s) under focused review are met.**
  - A [progress report](#) will be required if AFIs were cited.
  - For **Developmental Approval**, a First Continuing Approval Review will be scheduled three to four years from the semester of the Focused Review.
  - For **Continuing Approval**, the next approval review will be scheduled seven years following the semester in which the previous Continuing Approval Review occurred.
- **Revocation of Approval of the EPP and all programs is the appropriate choice when the review team recommended the standard(s) under focused review remain unmet or one or more stipulations were cited** (only for Focused reviews following Developmental reviews).
  - If candidates were allowed to enroll in program(s), those enrolled prior to revocation of approval may continue for a specified period of time to complete programs and seek certification; however, no new candidates may be enrolled as of the date of the revocation.
  - The EPP may reapply by submitting the Intent to Seek Approval Form one year after the review.

- **Continuing Approval with Probation of the EPP and all programs is the appropriate choice when the review team recommended the standard(s) under focused review remain unmet or stipulations were cited** (only for Focused reviews following Continuing Approval Reviews).
  - A **Probationary Review** will be required within two years.
  - A **progress report** will be required in the interim.
  - Depending upon the severity of the problems, the Commission may require the EPP to pause enrollment in programs.
  - Within sixty (60) days after the decision is rendered, candidates must be notified of probationary approval status and any resulting implications for their progression through or completion of programs.

#### **Probationary Review Decision Options (all standards reviewed)**

- **Continuing Approval of the EPP and all programs is the appropriate choice when the review team recommended all standards are met.**
  - A **progress report** will be required if AFIs and/or stipulations were cited.
  - The next approval review will be scheduled seven years following the semester in which the previous Continuing Approval Review occurred.
- **Revocation of Approval of the EPP and all programs is the appropriate choice when the review team recommended one or more standards are unmet.**
  - Candidates who were enrolled in program(s) prior to revocation of approval may continue for a specified period of time to complete programs and seek certification; however, no new candidates may be enrolled as of the date of the revocation.
  - The EPP may reapply by submitting the Intent to Seek Approval Form one year after the review.

#### **Approval Reviews of Initial Teaching/Service/Leadership Programs**

*These decision options apply to reviews of programs when the entire EPP is being reviewed, as well as when programs are being reviewed apart from an EPP.*

#### **Developmental Approval Review Decision Options for Programs**

- **Developmental Approval is the appropriate choice when the review team recommended both program standards are met.**
  - A **progress report** will be required if AFIs or stipulations were cited.
  - A First Continuing Approval Review will be scheduled for three to four years from the semester of the Developmental Approval Review.
- **Denial of Approval is the appropriate choice when the review team recommended one or both program standards are not met.**

The EPP may reapply by submitting the Intent to Seek Approval Form one year after the review.

## First Continuing Approval Review Decision Options for Programs

- **Continuing Approval is the appropriate choice when the review team recommended both program standards are met.**
  - A [progress report](#) will be required if AFIs or stipulations were cited.
  - The next review of the program will occur in conjunction with the EPP's next Continuing Approval Review.
- **Continuing Approval with Probation is the appropriate choice when the review team recommended one standard is not met.**
  - A [Probationary Review](#) of both program standards will be required within two years.
  - A [progress report](#) will be required prior to the Probationary Review.
  - Depending on the severity of the problems, the Commission may pause enrollment in the program.
  - Within sixty (60) days after the decision is rendered, candidates must be notified of probationary approval status and any resulting implications for their progression through or completion of programs.
- **Revocation of Approval is the appropriate choice when the review team recommended both program standards are not met.**
  - Candidates who were enrolled in program(s) prior to revocation of approval may continue for a specified period of time to complete programs and seek certification; however, no new candidates may be enrolled as of the date of the revocation.
  - The EPP may reapply by submitting the Intent to Seek Approval Form one year after the review.

## Probationary Review Decision Options for Programs

- **Continuing Approval is the appropriate choice when the review team recommended both standards are met.**
  - A [progress report](#) will be required if AFIs or stipulations were cited.
  - The next review of the approved program will occur at the time of the EPP's next Continuing Approval Review.
- **Revocation of Approval is the appropriate choice when the review team recommended one or both program standards are not met.**
  - Candidates who were enrolled in program(s) prior to revocation of approval may continue for a specified period of time to complete programs and seek certification; however, no new candidates may be enrolled as of the date of the revocation.
  - The EPP may reapply by submitting the Intent to Seek Approval Form one year after the review.

## Progress Report Decision Options

### **Progress is Satisfactory; Areas for Improvement and/or Stipulations Removed.**

This decision indicates evidence was presented confirming the AFIs and/or stipulations have been corrected. If the AFIs and/or stipulations were associated with an unmet standard, and sufficient progress has been made toward addressing the deficiencies that led to the unmet standard, the unmet standard may be reclassified as met. After unmet standards are reclassified to met, the Commission may change approval status to Developmental Approval or Continuing Approval to indicate all standards are met.

### **Incremental Progress is Evident; Areas for Improvement and/or Stipulations Remain.**

This decision indicates plans were presented which may lead to correction of AFIs, stipulations, and/or not met standards; however, evidence was not included confirming they have been corrected. If evidence indicates improvements have been made, stipulations may be reclassified as AFIs. The Commission will ask for one or more subsequent Progress Reports and evidence the AFIs and/or stipulations have been corrected.

### **Progress is Unsatisfactory.**

If the Commission determines satisfactory progress has not been made in addressing AFIs and/or stipulations, the decision options are:

- **Progress is Unsatisfactory; Additional Progress Report Required.** This decision indicates evidence was not presented to demonstrate the AFIs and/or stipulations have been addressed. The Commission will require a subsequent Progress Report by a specified date.
- **Progress is Unsatisfactory; a Focused Review is Required.** This decision indicates neither plans nor evidence were presented to indicate the AFIs and/or stipulations have been addressed. If after multiple progress reports there is no evidence AFIs and/or stipulations have been corrected, one or more standards may be changed from met to not met and as a result, approval status may be changed. The Commission will require a Focused Review on the standards for which the AFIs and/or stipulations were cited within one year.

## Changes in Accreditation Status

GaPSC has sole authority for the review and approval of Georgia educator preparation providers and programs. EPPs must be regionally accredited to qualify for GaPSC approval and they must maintain regional accreditation to maintain GaPSC approval. If regional accreditation of a GaPSC-approved EPP is revoked, GaPSC approval will also be revoked. Candidates enrolled in programs as of the date of GaPSC revocation of approval will be eligible for certification upon completion of the program and all applicable certification requirements. Effective on the date of revocation, the EPP must cease enrollment in programs leading to Georgia educator certification.

Although national accreditation is not required of Georgia EPPs, some are or were accredited by CAEP and GaPSC previously accepted national accreditation in lieu of provider approval. If national accreditation of an EPP is revoked or if an accredited EPP elects not to continue accreditation, GaPSC will render a decision regarding EPP approval to offer educator preparation programs.



## Changes in Program Quality

Preparation program quality is monitored between approval reviews via the Preparation Program Effectiveness Measures (PPEMs). Although the primary purpose of PPEMs is program improvement, an important secondary purpose is accountability. PPEMs assess how well Georgia program providers prepare teachers and leaders for their roles in schools. Effective July 1, 2022, PPEMs are non-consequential, in that ratings are no longer applied. Available data for each of the measures are summarized and provided in an annual report on the GaPSC website. GaPSC staff review PPEMs annually to monitor trends and identify potential areas of concern. Persistently negative trends may result in a recommendation to the EPCC for a progress report or other actions aimed at improving preparation programs.

## Non-Compliance

### Rules

When GaPSC staff members become aware of a GaPSC-approved EPP's confirmed, persistent and/or pervasive non-compliance with GaPSC rules, GaPSC staff will investigate the potential violation and gather pertinent documentation to determine if a violation is confirmed, and if the violation is persistent and/or indicative of pervasive violations of one or more rules. For these purposes, the term persistent is defined as continued, or repeating; the term pervasive is defined as existing in or spreading through every part. In the context of an EPP, the term pervasive is used when a violation impacts multiple programs and the term persistent is used if the violation has occurred more than once.

For rules violations determined to be **non-persistent/non-pervasive**, staff will take the following actions:

- Send a warning letter to include a description of the rule violation(s) and required corrective action steps; and
- Require the submission of documentation describing and possibly including evidence of, the corrective actions taken.

The Educator Preparation and Certification Committee of the Commission will be formally notified of the issue(s) and actions taken by staff at the next appropriate meeting. Failure by an EPP to meet GaPSC requirements related to rules violations will result in escalation to the Commission and the actions described below.

For rules violations determined to be **persistent and/or pervasive or not corrected after a staff warning letter**, Commissioners will

Require the submission of a report and a presentation to the Commission by the head of the educator preparation provider or his/her designee.

Failure on the part of the EPP to correct rules violations and meet Commission requirements will result in a change of approval status to Approval with Probation for the educator preparation provider and all preparation programs. See [Probationary Review Decision Options](#).

### Commission Decisions

Failure to comply with Commission decision requirements will, depending upon the severity of the situation, result in either a warning letter or a change of approval status to Probation, potentially followed by Revocation, for the educator preparation provider and all educator preparation programs.

## Violation of GaPSC Procedures

Failure to comply with GaPSC procedures (e.g., reporting in TPMS/NTRS) will, depending upon the severity of the situation, result in one or more of the following actions.

- Warning letter
- Submission of documentation/Progress Report

Unaddressed or repeated violations will be reported to the Educator Preparation and Certification Committee of the Commission for further action and if not corrected, may eventually result in Probation.

## Non-Compliance by Out-of-State EPPs

When GaPSC staff members become aware of an out-of-state EPP's non-compliance with GaPSC rules or procedures, staff will investigate the potential violation, gather pertinent documentation and determine if the violation is persistent and/or indicative of pervasive violations of one or more rules.

For rules and/or procedural violations determined to be **non-persistent/non-pervasive**, staff will take the following actions:

- Send a warning letter to include a description of the rule violation(s) and required corrective action steps;
- Require the submission of documentation describing and possibly including evidence of, the corrective actions taken; and
- Send a letter describing violations and GaPSC-required corrective actions to the state agency(ies) that approved the EPP and, if applicable, any national accreditors.

The Educator Preparation and Certification Committee of the Commission will be formally notified of the issue(s) and actions taken by staff at the next appropriate meeting. Failure by an EPP to meet GaPSC requirements related to rules or procedural violations will result in escalation to the Commission and the actions described below.

For rules violations determined to be **persistent and/or pervasive or not corrected after a staff warning letter**, Commissioners will:

- Require submission of a report and a presentation to the Commission by the head of the educator preparation provider or his/her designee; and
- Send a letter describing violations and GaPSC-required corrective actions to the state agency(ies) that approved the EPP and, if applicable, any national accreditors.

Failure on the part of the EPP to correct rules violations and meet Commission requirements will result in a cessation of acceptance of the EPP's programs for Georgia certification.