



Georgia Professional Standards Commission Substantive Change Policies and Procedures

The Georgia Professional Standards Commission (GaPSC) recognizes the Educator Preparation Provider (EPP) as having the capacity to respond to changes affecting the educational environment and to initiate changes between approval reviews in order to improve the performance of programs and program completers. This capacity includes addressing changes in standards or rules, the delivery of the curriculum, resources, and stakeholder needs. All changes to approved EPPs and programs must comply with GaPSC rules and standards. Failure to report substantive changes may result in changes in the approval status of the EPP and preparation programs. Because substantive changes may impact the EPP's ability to continue to meet standards, it is necessary for the EPP to notify the GaPSC of these changes and possibly provide additional information to describe them in further detail. The information provided in this document defines substantive changes, explains the level of reporting necessary, and describes the GaPSC response.

Section I: Definitions and Examples

What is a substantive change?

Substantive changes are defined as significant changes impacting the following aspects of EPP or program operations:

1. Changes in personnel such as the EPP Head, dean/department head/executive director, president, program coordinator, certification official, assessment coordinator, Title II coordinator, field placement coordinator, or review coordinator.
2. Program of study changes necessitated by changes in GaPSC preparation rules or content standards, or for EPPs within the University System of Georgia, institutional changes necessitated by system rule changes.
3. Changes deemed substantive by a regional accrediting agency, such as changes in program degree level (e.g., baccalaureate to M.A.T.) or loss (or potential loss) of accreditation.
4. Major changes in, or discontinuance of, key assessments (applicable only to initial preparation programs). *As a reminder, three key assessments are required for an EPP and two additional key assessments are required for each program. If there are major changes to key assessments (e.g., an EPP replaces one key assessment with another) a substantive change notification is warranted.*
5. Deletion of programs (initial or degree-only programs), or addition of degree-only programs.
6. Significant change in budget, which is defined as a 25% decrease in the overall EPP budget from the previous reporting year.
7. Significant changes (reductions or additions) in the number of hours required for field experiences or clinical practice (applicable only to initial preparation programs).

8. Changes in EPP organizational structure or administration of programs, (e.g., EPP changed from school to college).
9. Permanent significant changes resulting from unforeseen circumstances, such as those resulting from a natural disaster. (Temporary changes are not considered substantive.)
10. Changes in program completion requirements or admission requirements (applicable only to initial preparation programs).
11. Changes in program delivery mode (e.g., face-to-face delivery changed to hybrid or online delivery; applicable to initial preparation programs and endorsements).
12. Changes to program names (both initial and degree-only programs).

What types of changes are not considered substantive?

According to the Georgia Standards for the Approval of Educator Preparation Providers and Preparation Programs (2023), changes to programs and EPP operations based on regular and systematic evaluation procedures are expected. Changes associated with continuous improvement are not considered substantive and need not be reported to the GaPSC outside of the normal approval review process. A few examples of changes which are a normal part of the continuous improvement cycle include “tweaks,” improvements, or enhancements to:

- course activities, assignments, or requirements;
- course sequences;
- field experiences or clinical practice;
- key assessments or assessment procedures;
- changes associated with required progress reports or the approval decision-making process;
- EPP operations related to the management of candidate and program performance data (e.g., a change in database systems, a change in EPP assessment calendar);
- EPP operations related to advisement or supervision of candidates; and
- EPP operations related to processes surrounding collaboration with school partners.

Section II: Procedures for Reporting Substantive Changes to the GaPSC

The first step in reporting any type of substantive change is to submit a signed cover letter from the head of the EPP on the provider’s letterhead, addressed to either the GaPSC Director of Program Approval (traditional EPPs) or Director of Non-Traditional Preparation (non-traditional EPPs), and copied to the education specialist assigned to the EPP. (EduPrep@gapsc.com is the best point of contact if individuals are unsure of names/e-mail addresses.) The substantive change letter should provide a brief summary of changes, along with a rationale for the changes, and it must be accompanied by the appropriate document(s) indicated in the chart below. EPPs planning to make major changes must also submit the accompanying [template](#). Upon receipt of the substantive change letter, GaPSC staff will determine the appropriate level of reporting required (reporting options are described in the chart below).

Substantive Changes <i>Numbers correlate to substantive changes described in Section I</i>		Required Documents (if none listed, the letter will suffice)	Prior Approval Required?	Prior Notification Required?	Time Frame for Notifying GaPSC
1	Changes in personnel such as the dean/department head/executive director, president, program coordinator, certification official, assessment coordinator, Title II coordinator, field placement coordinator, or review coordinator.		No	No	Immediately
2	Program of study changes necessitated by changes in GaPSC preparation rules or content standards, or for University System of Georgia EPPs, institutional changes necessitated by system rule changes.		No	No	Immediately
3	Changes deemed substantive by a regional accrediting agency, such as changes in program degree level (e.g., baccalaureate to M.A.T.) or loss (or potential loss) of accreditation.	A comparison of the proposed program of study (e.g., M.A.T. program) alongside the approved program (e.g., baccalaureate program). Program admission requirements must be included.	Yes	Yes	Before changes are publicized and implemented

	Substantive Changes <i>Numbers correlate to substantive changes described in Section I</i>	Required Documents (if none listed, the letter will suffice)	Prior Approval Required?	Prior Notification Required?	Time Frame for Notifying GaPSC
4	Major changes in, or discontinuance of, key assessments (applicable only to initial preparation programs). <i>As a reminder, three key assessments are required for an EPP and two additional key assessments are required for each program. If there are major changes to key assessments (e.g., an EPP replaces one key assessment with another) substantive change notification is warranted.</i>	Description of the approved key assessments and those proposed	No	No	Immediately
5	Deletion of programs (initial or degree-only programs), or addition of degree-only programs.		No	Yes	Immediately upon decision
6	Significant change in budget, which is defined as a 25% decrease in the overall EPP budget from the previous reporting year.		No	No	As soon as possible
7	Significant reductions or additions in the number of hours required for field experiences or clinical practice (applicable only to initial preparation programs).		Yes	Yes	Before changes are publicized and implemented
8	Changes in EPP organizational structure or administration of programs (e.g., EPP changed from school to college).		No	No	Immediately upon decision
9	Permanent significant changes resulting from unforeseen circumstances, such as those resulting from a natural disaster. (Temporary changes are not considered substantive.)		No	No	As soon as possible
10	Changes in program completion requirements or admission requirements (applicable only to initial preparation programs).	Description of the approved requirements and those proposed	Yes	Yes	Before changes are publicized and implemented

	Substantive Changes <i>Numbers correlate to substantive changes described in Section I</i>	Required Documents (if none listed, the letter will suffice)	Prior Approval Required?	Prior Notification Required?	Time Frame for Notifying GaPSC
11	Changes in program delivery mode (e.g., face-to-face delivery changed to hybrid or online delivery; applicable only to initial preparation programs).	See Appendix A .	Yes	Yes	Before changes are publicized and implemented
12	Changes to program names (initial and degree-only programs).		No	No	Immediately

Section III: GaPSC Response to Substantive Change Notification

All substantive changes should be reported according to the information provided in the chart in Section II. The information below may assist in understanding how substantive change notifications and reports are processed.

After an EPP...	The EPP can expect	Within
submits a letter identifying simple changes and no approval is necessary	acknowledgement from the assigned Education Specialist that the notification has been received and a response that no further action is necessary	10 business days
submits a letter and the template with additional documentation	acknowledgement from the assigned Education Specialist that the notification/report has been received and a staff analysis of changes will be completed	10 business days
	a response to the substantive change notification/report (approval or next steps) from GaPSC Director of Program Approval or Director of Non-Traditional Preparation	45 business days after the internal analysis is completed
submits any additional documentation requested	a response indicating no additional action is necessary, OR describing any necessary additional actions to include a report submission due date and a timeframe	45 business days after the internal analysis of new information is completed

Appendix A

Programs Offered in an Online/Hybrid Format

When initial preparation *program delivery modes change to include online and/or hybrid delivery, in addition to the substantive change notification letter describing the rationale, EPPs must provide a separate document summarizing the changes for each program and the following:

- Adapted/adjusted Program of Study and syllabi: Copy of the new/old Program of Study with differences notated/identified.
- Key assessment changes (only if caused by changes in delivery mode).
- Information on the learning environment “adjustments” (e.g., differences between instructional delivery: Face-to-face, online, and hybrid).
- Description of how cooperating teachers will be selected for their roles, as well as how they will be trained to measure candidates’ effectiveness.
- Description of how clinical practice will be supervised.

Endorsement Program Requirements:

- Letter AND syllabi (synchronous/asynchronous)
- Key assessment changes (only if caused by changes in delivery mode)

**These requirements do not apply to degree-only programs that do not lead to initial certification.*

Georgia Professional Standards Commission Substantive Change Analysis Form

EPP:

Date Submitted:

Date of Staff Analysis:

Current Program	Proposed Program	Supporting Documents	Staff Analysis