

Curriculum and Instruction Guidelines

Rule 505-3-.55

The purpose of the Curriculum and Instruction standards is to improve P-12 teaching and learning by providing educators with deeper and broader knowledge of curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment. Programs based upon these standards will prepare curriculum and instruction professionals who positively impact learning for every student and who advocate for and contribute to the field of education. Curriculum and Instruction is a new field of certification and will be classified as a Service (S) certificate (P-12) when it is added to an existing clear renewable Georgia certificate.

The Curriculum and Instruction standards are designed based on the recognition that the quality of the education profession rests on the intellectual stamina of educators who can affect change in various settings and in multiple ways, thus enhancing society and culture. Intellectual stamina encompasses a balanced knowledge of curriculum, instruction, and the student; a greater depth of content knowledge within the context of curriculum and instruction; a knowledge of and ability to use the tools of assessment and research; the ability to discern problems and patterns; the ability to perceive both the whole concept, concretely and abstractly, and to understand simultaneously the related parts of that concept; and the professional practice and perseverance to find solutions to problems and issues in various contexts.

The following guidelines are provided to assist in the development of advanced degree and/or certification programs at the Masters, Education Specialist, and Doctoral levels. They are intended to offer clarification, to provide for differentiation among the three levels of degree programs, and to give guidance in meeting the intent of the standards. Guidelines are provided for certification -only programs and a mechanism is provided to allow educators who have earned a Curriculum and Instruction degree before standards were developed and before Curriculum and Instruction was a certification area to obtain the Curriculum and Instruction certification field on their certificate. Further clarification is provided for the content hours required for the Curriculum and Instruction degree program as well as including guidance for field experiences.

While these are guidelines and are not mandated, variances should be justifiable.

Guideline 1: Differentiating Master's, Educational Specialist, and Doctoral Degrees

Informed Educator

Master's degree completers possess understandings of curriculum, instruction, assessment, students, and professional practices in the context of a certificate field that will allow the application of the developed understandings to new instructional situations.

Specifically, completers are able to implement and evaluate curriculum along with instructional and assessment approaches that lead to student learning in the context of a certificate field. Completers' efforts at implementation and evaluation are informed by understandings of culturally and linguistically diverse students, research about how students learn and research in their certificate field. Completers will become informed consumers and/or practitioners of research.

Imaginative Leader

Educational specialist degree completers possess the understandings expected of master's degree completers, as well as understandings that enable them to develop curriculum, design complex learning environments, and assess instructional practices that facilitate student learning in the context of the certificate field. Completers also possess the understandings that enable them to use fundamental research methods to address educational problems and to assume leadership roles beyond the classroom.

Independent Researcher

Doctoral degree completers possess the understandings expected of master's degree and educational specialist degree completers. They also possess the understandings and skills to examine the core principles and theories of the certificate field, function as independent researchers, and make novel contributions to the certificate field through advanced research.

Each institution will determine the appropriate program of study for each educator based on the credentials the educator brings to the program. Transcripts and artifacts will be reviewed to determine coursework and experiences the educator must complete in order to meet the Curriculum and Instruction standards. The expectation is that programs will be designed and implemented so that increased rigor and intensity are demonstrated at each advanced degree and/or certificate level.

Recommendation for certification requires passing scores on the state-approved content assessments.

Guideline 2: Non-degree Certification -only Option

Certification-only status may be achieved through an add-on/stand-alone format or through an embedded structure. The stand alone program is a planned sequence of courses/experiences that build upon the respective advanced degree program and leads to an educator meeting all Curriculum and Instruction standards.

A program of study will be developed based on the needs of the educators and all previous coursework will be compared with the Curriculum and Instruction standards to determine if they align with program appropriate courses. Other required courses, if needed, will be selected from the unit's approved Curriculum and Instruction program.

Certification-only programs must be approved by the GaPSC as separate programs.

Coursework for the certification recommendation through the embedded route is achieved as the educator selects courses that meet both the requirements of the advanced degree as well as the Curriculum and Instruction initial certification. Coursework and other experiences will be matched with relevant Curriculum and Instruction standards.

Evidence that all standards have been met through either option must be documented through appropriate artifacts such as programs of study, portfolios and transcripts.

The certification-only program options will include an appropriate field based experience that will allow the educator to merge practice and theory in job embedded, performance based practice.

Recommendation for certification requires passing scores on the state approved content assessments.

Guideline 3: Conversion Mechanism

Individuals wishing to acquire certification in Curriculum and Instruction based upon previously completed Curriculum and Instruction (or equivalent) degree programs must meet the following criteria:

- Hold an advanced Curriculum and Instruction or equivalent degree
- Submit a passing score on the Georgia state-approved content assessment in the area of Curriculum and Instruction and
- Provide evidence of meeting GaPSC Curriculum and Instruction standards through a mechanism decided upon by the approved program provider.

GaPSC approved institutions with approved Curriculum and Instruction programs must review transcripts, artifacts, and professional and/or educational experiences against program standards. Educators who meet all standards may be recommended for certification. In the event that the educator does not meet all standards, the institution will require additional coursework or experiences.

The institution will determine if the degree meets the guidelines for recency of study of its institution, but no degree may be older than ten (10) years.

Only GaPSC approved units with approved Curriculum and Instruction programs may be approved for offering the conversion mechanism. The conversion mechanism will be reviewed as part of the review process.

Each institution will maintain evidence of completing this process for each educator.

Guideline 4: Clarification of Content Requirement

Educators seeking initial certification in the field must complete the following requirements at the appropriate level:

1. Master's Degree level: a minimum of twelve (12) semester hours (or the quarter hours equivalent) of advanced level coursework focused on the content or content pedagogy of a certificate field held by the educator. These hours may be satisfied through advanced pedagogy courses in which educators are required to demonstrate advanced pedagogical skills/understandings related to their field(s) of certification. Three of the twelve semester hours may also be satisfied through a thesis or research project focused on the content or content pedagogy knowledge of a certificate field held by the educator.
2. Specialist or Doctoral degree level: a minimum of nine (9) semester hours (or the quarter hours equivalent) of advanced level coursework focused on the content or content pedagogy of a certificate field held by the educator. All nine hours may be satisfied through advanced level content or content pedagogy courses in which educators are required to demonstrate advanced skills/understandings related to their field of certification, or these hours may be satisfied through work on a thesis, research project or dissertation directly focused on content or content pedagogy knowledge of a certificate field held by the educator.

Certification-only programs will not require a minimum of twelve (12) semester hours (or the quarter hours equivalent) of advanced level coursework focused on the content or content pedagogy of a certificate field held by the educator for the Master's degree level or a minimum of nine (9) semester hours (or the quarter hours equivalent) of advanced level coursework focused on the content or content pedagogy of a certificate field held by the educator at the Specialist or Doctoral degree level..

Coursework in the following examples (but not limited to the following examples) is appropriate to satisfy the content or content pedagogy requirements:

- Content specific to the subject area in which the educator holds certification
- Methods or education strategies specific to the content area in which the educator holds certification
- Methods of teaching reading and writing to support learning in content areas
- Coursework focused on teaching specific content to students with special needs
- Coursework in integrating technology into content area instruction
- In- depth study of assessments of a content area
- Study of pedagogical content knowledge of specific content areas
- Study of curriculum models specific to a content area

The intent of the Curriculum and Instruction degree is to extend/enhance skills reflected in the educator's previously awarded certificate field.

Guideline 5: Field Experience

Program providers must provide appropriate field experiences for educators. A minimum of 20 clock hours of field work must be included in the program. Educators must document experiences working in settings that affect the learning of students. This might include working directly with students, teachers, other educational professionals or pre-service teachers through coaching, professional development or research. Since this a P-12 certificate, it is incumbent upon the program provider to assure that the educator is well-prepared in all levels of curriculum and instruction.