

GaPSC Certificate Level Upgrade Rule 505-2-.41

GUIDANCE FOR EDUCATORS

Introduction and Use of This Document

In Georgia the Professional Standards Commission (GaPSC) is the state agency authorized to assume full responsibility for the certification, preparation and conduct of certified, licensed or permitted education personnel employed in Georgia, and the development and administration of educator certification testing. The GaPSC's authority applies to certified, licensed and permitted personnel employed in Georgia public schools and institutions of higher learning that prepare educators.

This document is intended to provide guidance to educators regarding the implementation of GaPSC Rule 505-2-.41, Educator Certificate Upgrades. Foci of this guidance document include:

- Ensuring educators understand Rule 505-2-.41
- Explaining how Rule 505-2-.41 affects Georgia educators; and
- Providing links to other relevant and important documents or resources.

Organized by the foci listed above, topics and relevant links are provided in the order and locations referenced below. E-mail suggested additions or improvements to this document to Dr. Bobbi Ford at bobbi.ford@gapsc.com.

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Section I: Key Components of Rule 505-2-.41

Rule 505-2-.41 applies to Georgia educators holding a valid Clear Renewable, Performance-Based, or Life Certificate at Level-4, -5 or -6, as long as they hold one of the following certificate types: Teaching (T), Service (S), Leadership (L or PL) or Technical Specialist (TS at level 4 or higher). The rule does not impact the first, or initial, assignment of a Georgia educator certificate; see Rule 505-2-.02 for information on the initial assignment of a certificate.

The process of earning a higher academic degree and raising the certificate level is called *upgrading*. The certificate level is part of the formula used to calculate placement on the state salary schedule. Rule 505-2-.41 was adopted by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission (GaPSC) on November 10, 2010, and it became effective on December 15, 2010. The rule was created to ensure that educators earn advanced degrees which are both relevant and rigorous and, therefore, more likely to positively impact student achievement as well as school and school district improvement. To receive the upgrade and commensurate pay, educators may upgrade in any certification field applicable to certification upgrades even if they are not currently working in that field (Note that for the field of Educational Leadership, pay raises are given only when the educator is working in a leadership position that requires leadership certification as mandated by Georgia House Bill 455/923).

Under certification rules in place prior to the adoption of Rule 505-2-.41, a certificate level was upgraded based on completion of any advanced degree from any GaPSC-accepted accredited institution of higher education, regardless of the relationship between the degree major and the certificate fields held by an educator. Rule 505-2-.41 encourages educators to seek advanced degrees in fields relevant to the work they currently do in schools or relevant to work they plan to do in the future.

Changes brought about by GaPSC Rule 505-2-.41 include:

- Eligibility requirements for institutions and advanced degree program majors;
- Programs used for certificate level upgrades must be in fields for which the GaPSC issues certification; and
- Eligible out-of-state institutions must meet the same, rigorous quality standards as Georgia institutions.

Rule 505-2-.41 requires Georgia institutions to meet at least one of the following criteria:

- The institution's college/school/department of education must be approved by the GaPSC at the time the individual is admitted to the program, or
- The institution must hold a Carnegie Classification of Research University-Very High Research Activity (RU/VH) or Research University-High Research Activity (RU/H) at the time the individual is admitted to the program.

Out-of-state institutions must meet at least one of the following criteria:

- In lieu of GaPSC approval, the institution must be accredited by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) or by the Teacher

Education Accreditation Council (TEAC), at the time the individual is admitted to the program; or the institution or advanced program, at the time the individual is admitted to the program, must be accredited by the GaPSC-accepted national accrediting agency replacing NCATE and TEAC, The Council for Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP), after the two agencies completely merge; or

- The institution must hold a Carnegie Classification of Research University-Very High Research Activity (RU/VH) or Research University-High Research Activity (RU/H) at the time the individual is admitted to the program.

For more information about Rule 505-2-.41 please see the GaPSC webpage http://www.gapsc.com/Policies_guidelines/pg_certificateUpgrade.asp and click on Rule 505.2-.41 Educator Certificate Upgrades.

Section II: Advanced Degree Program Options and Requirements

There are two options, or types, of advanced degree programs eligible to result in a certificate level upgrade: In-Field programs and New Field programs.

A. In-Field Program Requirements

Educators can earn a certificate level upgrade by successfully completing an advanced degree program in a Georgia PSC certification field held. What does this mean for the educator?

First, it means that an advanced degree used to upgrade a certificate must be in a field in which GaPSC issues a certificate. All certificates issued by GaPSC are listed on the GaPSC website at <http://www.gapsc.com/Rules/Current/Certification/index.asp>.

Educators must be certain that names of programs match a GaPSC certification field and that transcripts reflect both the major and the concentration.

Second, an In-Field advanced degree program used to upgrade a certificate must be in a GaPSC field of certification already held by the educator. The field of certification must be listed on the educator's certificate **before** the educator begins the advanced degree program intended for an In-Field upgrade. In-Field advanced degree programs are intended to advance and enhance existing knowledge and skills in the field.

Eligible programs include education degrees, as well as content (non-education) degrees for teachers holding special education (P-12), middle grades (4-8) or secondary (6-12) content area certifications. Early Childhood Education educators may also complete advanced education degrees as well as complete advanced content (non-education) degrees, however the content (non-education) degrees must be specifically targeted to elementary educators and for the needs of their students. For Early Childhood Education educators who desire to upgrade In-Field in the content field of reading, the educator must be certain the advanced content degree in reading is targeted to elementary educators or be GaPSC-approved for the Reading Specialist certification. While the Reading Specialist program would result in an In-Field

upgrade for the educator, in order for the educator to hold the Reading Specialist certification, the appropriate state-approved content assessment must be passed and the field must be added to the educator's certificate.

For purposes of In-Field upgrades, specified endorsements are considered the equivalent of certificate fields. Holders of the endorsements listed below will be able to complete advanced degrees in an endorsement field and be eligible for an upgrade, as long as the institution meets eligibility requirements. Note that while individuals earning degree programs in the endorsement field will earn the upgrade, they will not earn a full certificate in that field unless the degree program is state-approved for that field and they pass the Georgia state-approved content assessment.

Birth Through Kindergarten	Reading
Computer Science	Special Education Deaf Education
Culinary Arts	Special Education Physical & Health Disabilities
English To Speakers of Other Languages	Special Education Preschool (ages 3-5)
Gifted In-Field	Special Education Transition Specialist
K-5 Mathematics	Special Education Visual Impairment
K-5 Science	
Middle Grades	

If the educator holds more than one certificate field, the educator may earn an In-Field upgrade by successfully completing an advanced degree program in any one of his/her fields of certification. That upgrade will apply to all fields for which certification is held. For middle grades certification where two concentrations are typically required, the educator must choose one area of certification for upgrade purposes.

It may be that Georgia educators hold certificate fields that are no longer issued by the GaPSC. In that case, those obsolete certificate areas are not eligible for In-Field certificate upgrades. An example of this would be Instructional Supervision.

When there are overlapping certification areas such as Early Childhood Education (P-5) and Middle Grades (4-8) an educator may elect to upgrade in either Early Childhood Education (P-5) or Middle Grades (4-8). Two options exist: the educator may pass the state-approved content assessment in the other overlapping area, thus making it a certification field for them. The educator may then upgrade with an advanced degree in that certification area. Or the educator may add the overlapping field as a new field which includes completing the advanced degree which must be an initial preparation program, passing the state-approved content assessment and adding the field to his/her certificate. The difference in the options is the timing of the passing of the state- approved content assessment.

If educators are interested in adding the field of Educational Leadership, they should refer to the GaPSC rules on Educational Leadership (Certification Rule 505-2-.300 and Educator Preparation Rule 505-3-.58) as well as guidelines regarding House Bill 455/923 impacting pay for unused Educational Leadership degrees. Also, note that

Georgia educators must be in an educational leadership role or position in order to be admitted to a GaPSC-approved Educational Leadership program.

For examples of In-Field upgrade scenarios see Appendix C.

A new resource is available which will greatly enhance an educator's ability to acquire information concerning In-Field upgrades. This new web-based tool, the Certification Upgrade Advisor, allows educators to search and quickly see which programs from specific institutions will be accepted by GaPSC as an In-Field upgrade. This assures both the candidate and the institutions that a program will result in an In-Field upgrade upon completion and the commensurate pay increase, if applicable. GaPSC will maintain records for each search so that documentation is maintained for Georgia educator certificate holders. The Certification Upgrade Advisor may be found at http://www.gapsc.com/Policies_guidelines/UpgradeUtility/Upgrade_Initial.aspx. Criteria used to make In-Field upgrade decisions may be found at http://www.gapsc.com/Policies_guidelines/documents/Criteria_for_In-field_Certificate_Upgrades.pdf

B. New Field Program Requirements

In order to earn a certificate level upgrade with a New Field program, educators must complete all of the following:

- successfully complete an advanced degree program in a GaPSC field of certification not held by the educator—a new field of certification,
- pass the state-approved content assessment for the new field, and
- apply for and successfully add the new field to the GaPSC certificate.

What do these requirements mean for the educator?

- First, it means that the name of the program must match a GaPSC certification field.
- Second, because the New Field programs lead to certification, the program must be approved by the GaPSC or be state-approved by the equivalent state agency if offered by an out-of-state institution.
- Third, the programs must be aligned with the appropriate Georgia approved content assessment.
- Since educators must apply for and successfully add the new field to their certificate, officials in the education department or dean's office will be expected to complete and submit to the GaPSC Certification Division the GaPSC Approved Program Recommendation Form.

C. Three New Fields of Certification

Three new fields of certification are being developed to address the needs of certified educators who wish to advance in fields not previously represented by GaPSC

certification rules: Curriculum and Instruction, Instructional Technology, and Teacher Leadership. Each field will be classified as a P-12, Service (S) certificate and will be accompanied by a state-approved content assessment. These three new fields are classified as P-12 Service fields because the intent is for holders of these certificates to provide support and service to all levels of the P-12 system. The work involved in developing standards and programs for the new fields is expected to last from one and a half to two years. Teams of experts in each field have developed standards, and content assessment development will begin soon, as will program development. When this work concludes and the new fields are officially adopted, for purposes of upgrading they will be categorized as “New Field” options. The focus of each of the three new fields is described below:

Programs in Instructional Technology will focus on preparing teachers who wish to effectively integrate technology into their own teaching practice, and educators who wish to assist other teachers in utilizing technology to improve the teaching and learning process.

Programs in Teacher Leadership will focus on preparing individuals to serve in teacher leader roles in grades P-12. This may include providing professional development, building a school culture of continuous improvement and becoming change agents while maintaining the role of classroom teacher.

Programs in Curriculum and Instruction will focus on preparing individuals to support the instructional program for any content area and at any level of schooling by providing educators with deeper and broader knowledge of curriculum, pedagogy and assessment. This will prepare curriculum and instruction professionals who positively impact learning for every student and who advocate for and contribute to the field of education.

Master’s degree programs in the new fields must include 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. All twelve hours may be satisfied through advanced level content or content pedagogy courses in which educators are required to demonstrate advanced skills related to their field of certification. Three of the twelve semester hours may be satisfied through a thesis, research project or capstone directly focused on the content of a certificate field held by the educator. Programs at the Specialist or Doctoral degree level must include 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 related to their field of certification, or these hours may be satisfied through work on a thesis, research project or dissertation directly focused on a content field held by the educator.

The requirement of content or content pedagogy courses for all levels of the three new fields may be met in a variety of ways. One way might include a pedagogy course that is offered to a number of educators with a variety of content backgrounds. If this occurs, the assignments and experiences must be tailored to the individual educator so that his/her certification/content field would be expanded/enhanced. However, it must be clear in the program that these 9 hours or 12 hours, depending upon the degree level, are to be used only for that purpose. These 9/12 hours COULD NOT be used to add a new endorsement to their certificate, for example. The intent of the three new fields is to expand/enhance knowledge, skills and dispositions reflected in their previously awarded certificate area.

For each of these three new fields institutions may offer degree programs and or certification-only programs. For both configurations GaPSC approval is necessary. The content requirement for the degree program (12 hours for a Masters and the 9 hours for the Specialist or Doctoral degree program) would not be necessary for the educator who already holds an advanced degree and is seeking certification-only in one of the three new fields.

It may be that educators who hold degrees in the three new areas would desire to seek certification in that field in which they hold a degree that was conferred before the three new certification areas were finalized. In order to honor their work and commitment, institutions may establish a process (conversion mechanism) that would allow an institution who has a GaPSC-approved program in that field to recommend an educator who holds a degree in one of the three new fields for certification. The educator must have passed the Georgia approved content assessment for that certification area and met the standards for one of the three new certification areas. The institution with a GaPSC-approved program in any of the three new certification areas would examine records and artifacts to acquire evidence of the educator's meeting the standards for the specific certification field. If necessary, an educator may be assigned additional experiences or coursework to meet the standards. Once the institution has established documented evidence that the candidate meets the standards, the institution could recommend them for certification.

Field experiences will be embedded in each of the three new areas of certification as they are in all approved programs. While the rule does not specify numbers of hours, the expectation is that the field experiences would allow the educator to provide evidence of performance based opportunities at all levels P-12 that would allow educators to hone their skills for their new area of certification. 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. Institutions should schedule these hours dependent upon the needs of the educators.

D. Grandfathering Timelines

Although the new rule was effective as of December 15, 2010, two grandfathering timelines are in place.

The first grandfathering period, referenced in Rule 505-2-.41, addresses the overall implementation of the rule and it is intended to protect the interests of certified educators enrolled or prepared to enroll in advanced degree programs at or near the December 15, 2010 effective date of the rule. Students who were enrolled in advanced degree programs (enrolled means admitted to the program and actively participating in program coursework) by July 15, 2011, can upgrade their certificate level according to the rules in place prior to the adoption of Rule 505-2-.041 as long as they complete the program by the date specified for each degree level.

- Master's degree programs must be completed by December 15, 2014.
- Specialist degree programs must be completed by December 15, 2014.
- Doctorate degree programs must be completed by December 15, 2016.

The second grandfathering timeline relates only to advanced degree programs in the three new fields of certification being developed by GaPSC: Curriculum and Instruction, Instructional Technology, and Teacher Leadership. In these three fields and only in these fields, the certificate upgrade grandfathering period is extended until January 15, 2013, for existing programs offered by in-state or out-of-state institutions Candidates must be continuously enrolled in a program and actively taking courses by January 15, 2013 and must complete the program by the date specified for each degree level. Students who do not register for classes for an extended period of time and then must re-enroll in the program due to institutional policy would not be considered continuously enrolled.

Master's degree programs must be completed by September 1, 2015.

- Specialist degree programs must be completed by September 1, 2015.
- Doctorate degree programs must be completed by September 1, 2017.

Completers of these programs will earn a certificate level upgrade and the commensurate pay increase regardless of program state approval status and institutional accreditation. It is important to note that while completing an existing program in one of these fields will lead to a certificate upgrade, it will not result in the addition of the new certification field. When the three new fields are official certification fields, Institutions of Higher Education (IHE) will create a mechanism that will allow completers of degrees who finished prior to the certification field becoming official to gain the certification field on their certificate.

During the grandfathering period for the three new fields, existing programs similar in name or content to Curriculum and Instruction, Instructional Technology and Teacher Leadership degrees will be honored. Please see examples below of names of degrees the GaPSC is accepting in each of the three fields.

Instructional Technology: Specialization in Classroom Integration of Technology, Educational Technology, Technology in Education, Technology Integration, Instructional Technology and Distance Learning, Technology in Schools.

Curriculum and Instruction: Teaching and Learning, Accomplished Teaching, Curriculum Studies, Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment, Curriculum and Teaching, Curriculum Instruction Management and Administration

Teacher Leadership: Instructional Leadership

E. Voluntary Deletion of Certificate

GaPSC Certification Rule 505-2-.38 outlines the procedures for voluntarily deleting a certificate field from a Georgia teaching certificate. An amendment to Rule 505-2-.38 became effective October 15, 2011 and it established a significant change related to certificate upgrades. After the effective date of the amendment to Rule 505-2-.38, educators choosing to voluntarily delete a certificate field for which they have received an upgrade will, when the certificate is deleted, have the commensurate upgrade deleted as well.

Please refer to <http://www.gapsc.com/Rules/Current/Certification/505-2-.038.pdf> for more information.

Section III: Seeking Advisement

Educators wishing to pursue degrees leading to certificate upgrades should seek assurances from institutions that programs meet the criteria specified in Rule 505-2-.41. It is critical for students to verify that both the institution and its programs meet all applicable criteria before enrolling.

Information the educator must have prior to beginning a program:

- Verification that the institution and the program(s) under consideration meet all requirements described in Rule 505-2-.41.
- Confirmation of the alignment of educators program interests to their Georgia certification credentials.

Educators are responsible for making sure that their selected advanced degree is in a Georgia certification field or on the approved list of degrees to upgrade an existing field of certification and that the institution meets accreditation standards at the time of enrollment.

A new resource is available which will greatly enhance an educator's ability to acquire information concerning In-Field upgrades. This new web-based tool, the Certification

Upgrade Advisor, allows educators to search and quickly see which programs from specific institutions will be accepted by GaPSC as an In-Field upgrade. This assures both the candidate and the institutions that a program will result in an In-Field upgrade upon completion and the commensurate pay increase, if applicable. GaPSC will maintain records for each search so that documentation is maintained for Georgia educator certificate holders. The Certification Upgrade Advisor may be found at http://www.gapsc.com/Policies_guidelines/UpgradeUtility/Upgrade_Initial.aspx. Criteria used to make In-Field upgrade decisions may be found at http://www.gapsc.com/Policies_guidelines/documents/Criteria_for_In-field_Certificate_Upgrades.pdf

Questions educators seeking an In-Field upgrade should consider include:

- Was I enrolled and actively taking classes in my program before the grandfathering date for the old rule? (July 15, 2011) If so, will I complete my program before the dates outlined above? (If the answer is yes to both of these questions, the educator can upgrade their certificate level according to the rules in place prior to the adoption of Rule 505-2-.041 as long as they complete the program by the date specified in the rule for each degree level.
- Is the institution that I am considering approved by the GaPSC, does it hold a Carnegie Classification of RU/VH, or RU/H or is it accredited by NCATE, TEAC, or CAEP? If not, will it be approved or accredited by the time I am admitted?
- Is the program in which I plan to enroll considered “In-Field” with my current certification field(s)?
- Will completion of this degree program result in an In-Field upgrade?

Questions educators seeking a new field upgrade should consider include:

- Is the institution I am considering approved by the GaPSC or accredited by NCATE, TEAC, or CAEP? If not, will it be approved or accredited by the time I am admitted?
- Will completion of this program result in a recommendation for a new field of certification? Is the program approved by the GaPSC or approved by an equivalent state agency if offered by an out-of-state institution?
- Can I enroll and actively begin coursework before January 15, 2013 and will I be able to complete the program according to the grandfathering timeline for the three new fields of Curriculum and Instruction, Instructional Technology or Teacher Leadership?

Reminders of requirements for new fields:

Educator must pass the GACE corresponding to the new field

Educator must add the field to his/her certificate

Appendices

Appendix A: Resources

The GaPSC will continue to post a number of informational materials, such as Guidelines, web links, and overview power point presentations, on its website at http://www.gapsc.com/Policies_guidelines/pg_certificateUpgrade.asp. On this webpage you will find links to:

- Rule 505-2-.041
- Transition Plan for Three New Certificate Fields
- Instructional Technology Standards
- Teacher Leadership Standards
- Curriculum and Instruction Standards
- Curriculum and Instruction Guidance Document
- GaPSC Fields Applicable to Upgrades
- GaPSC-approved Institutions and Programs
- Criteria used for In-field Upgrade
- Contacts for State-approved Programs from Other States
- Selected U.S. Institutions and Upgrade Eligibility Status -- by state
- Selected U.S. Institutions and Upgrade Eligibility Status – by institution
- NCATE-accredited Institutions
- TEAC-accredited Institutions
- Institutions Classified by the Carnegie Foundation as RU/VH and RU/H
- A PowerPoint overview of the Upgrade rule

Appendix B: GaPSC Certificate Level Upgrade Contacts and Protocol for Seeking Additional Information

First, seek answers to your questions in guidance documents and other resources provided on the GaPSC webpage located at

http://www.gapsc.com/Policies_guidelines/pg_certificateUpgrade.asp.

If your questions are not addressed in guidance documents, please e-mail them to [**CertUpgrade@gapsc.com**](mailto:CertUpgrade@gapsc.com).

Appendix C: Examples of Certificate Upgrade Scenarios

In-Field:

Example 1: If an educator is certified in the field of Early Childhood Education (P-5) and his certificate level is currently Level-4, he can upgrade In-Field to a higher level by successfully completing (from an eligible institution) an advanced **education** degree (M.Ed., Ed Specialist, or Doctoral) in Early Childhood Education or any content areas addressed in Early Childhood Education (Example: Masters in Elementary Mathematics Education) or an advanced content (non-education) degree specifically targeted to early childhood educators and the needs of their students.

Example 2: If an educator is certified to teach History (6-12) and his certificate level is currently Level-4, he can upgrade to a Level-5 by successfully completing (from an eligible institution) a Master's degree program in History Education or a Master's degree program in History that is a non-education degree offered by the institution's History Department.

Example 3: If an educator is certified in Middle Grades Mathematics (4-8) and Middle Grades Science (4-8), the educator may earn an In-Field upgrade by successfully completing (from an eligible institution) an advanced degree program in Middle Grades Mathematics Education, or in Mathematics (non-education advanced degree) if the educator chooses the Middle Grades Math concentration. If the educator chooses the Middle Grades Science concentration, the educator may earn an In-Field upgrade by successfully completing an advanced degree program in Middle Grades Science or in Science (non-education advanced degree).

New Field:

Example 1: If an educator is certified at Level-4 in the field of Early Childhood Education, the candidate can upgrade to Level-5 by successfully completing (from an eligible institution) a state-approved Master's degree, initial certification program in a new field, such as French Education, passing the GaPSC-approved content assessment, and adding French to his certificate. Since the candidate was not previously certified in French, this program represents a new field of certification for him.

Example 2: If an educator holds a Level-4 teaching certificate in the field of Middle Grades Language Arts, he may wish to add the service field of School Counseling. In order to earn an upgrade, the educator must complete (from an eligible institution) a Master's degree program approved for initial certification in counseling, pass the state-approved content assessment, and add the new field of School Counseling to his certificate.

New Certification Field:

Example: If an educator is certified at Level 5 in the field of Special Education, he may wish to add the new service field of Teacher Leadership. The educator can upgrade to Level 6 by successfully completing a state approved Educational Specialist program in Teacher Leadership, pass the GaPSC approved content assessment and add Teacher Leadership to his certificate.

Appendix D: Glossary of Relevant Terms

Clear Renewable Certificate: The Clear Renewable certificate is the title of Georgia's full, professional educator certificate. This category indicates that: all requirements for professional licensure in the field have been met including applicable Special Georgia Requirements; the certificate fields have a five-year validity period; and the standard renewal requirements apply to all fields in this category. Clear renewable status applies to Teaching (T), Service (S), and Leadership (L) fields. Traditionally, the clear renewable certificate may be obtained by completing a GaPSC-approved initial preparation program or through reciprocity of a professional certificate from another jurisdiction.

Enrolled: The educator has been admitted and is actively participating in coursework.

GaPSC-Accepted: In the context of certificate upgrade the term PSC-accepted applies to institutions and programs. When the term is used in conjunction with a college or university it implies that although the institution is not approved by the GaPSC, it meets the criteria stated in Rule 505-2-.41 and therefore has attained the required accreditation from NCATE, TEAC, or CAEP, or it is classified RU/VH or RU/H by the Carnegie Foundation. If used in conjunction with a program, the term means that although the program is not approved by the GaPSC, it is offered by a GaPSC-approved or a GaPSC-accepted institution and is acceptable for an In-Field upgrade, or if offered by an out-of-state institution it is state-approved if it leads to initial certification.

GaPSC-Approved: In the context of certificate upgrade the term PSC-approved means that the college/school/department of education and/or an educator preparation program has been approved by the GaPSC (the unit or program completed the process for assessing and enhancing academic and education quality through peer review, to assure the public that a professional education unit and/or program has met institutional, state, and national standards of educational quality).

Pedagogical Knowledge: The general concepts, theories and research about effective teaching regardless of content areas.

Pedagogical Content Knowledge: The interaction of the subject matter and effective teaching strategies to help students learn the subject matter. It requires a thorough understanding of the content to teach it in multiple ways, drawing on the cultural backgrounds and prior knowledge and experiences of students.

Upgrade: After the initial level is established, the educator earns a higher academic degree and raises the certificate level.