

GaPSC Certificate Level Upgrade Rule 505-2-.41

GUIDANCE FOR INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

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 Institutions of Higher Education regarding the implementation of GaPSC Rule 505-2-.41, Educator Certificate Upgrades. Foci of this guidance document include:

- Ensuring both in-state and out-of-state institutional representatives understand Rule 505-2-.41 and are able to provide current and potential students with accurate information;
- Explaining program design and approval requirements; 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 Induction, Professional, Advanced Profession, Lead Professional, 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 program provider?

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>.

Institutions 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. If the transcript does not reflect the major and the concentration, the educator will be asked to submit a transcript that does so in order to obtain an infield upgrade. If the institution does not include both on the transcript, the institution can send a letter on institutional letter head outlining the degree concentration/specialization, all coursework completed within the advanced degree program and 3 signatures; Registrar, Dean and Department Head. **Beginning January 1, 2015, upgrades will be awarded only if the transcript indicates the major and the concentration. The option to send a program of study/letter will not be available after December 31, 2014.**

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 should be designed 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.

In-Field advanced degree programs do not require GaPSC approval (state approval), as they do not lead to a new 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
English To Speakers of Other Languages	Disabilities
Gifted In-Field	Special Education Preschool (ages 3-5)
K-5 Mathematics	Special Education Transition Specialist
K-5 Science	Special Education Visual Impairment
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 candidate 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 Secondary Science (6-12) and Middle Grades (4-8) an educator may elect to upgrade in either Secondary Science

(6-12) 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.

An educator may complete an M.A.T. or an M.Ed. to include an initial teacher preparation in a field they already hold certification as long as they did not previously complete an initial preparation program in that field. Because educators can pass a GACE content area assessment and add additional teaching fields (with the exception of ECE and ECE/Special Education) to their certificate, educators may want to seek teacher preparation programs intended for those educators who have little background in a teaching certification area. For the purpose of the new upgrade rule, all fields reflected on an Induction, Professional, Advanced Profession or Lead Professional certificate were considered as equal, regardless of how the educator qualified for the field. Testing into a field and completing an initial program should not be considered equal. An individual who completes an advanced degree program in a field they previously added to their certificate based on a test, will not be penalized/denied an upgrade because they did not previously study that particular field.

For example:

1. An ECE educator, who gained their initial Induction or Professional certificate based on completion of a state approved ECE program embedded within their Bachelor's degree, completes an MAT leading to initial certification in ECE. This educator will NOT qualify for an upgrade. Rationale: The educator is completing the same program at the graduate level that they completed in undergraduate and will not be taught higher level information, but rather will repeat courses.
2. An ECE educator, who gained their initial Induction or Professional certificate based on completion of a state approved ECE program embedded within their Bachelor's degree, adds Special Education General Curriculum by passing the appropriate GACE assessment. Then the educator, who is professionally certified in both ECE and Special Education, completes an MAT in Special Education. This educator will qualify for the certificate upgrade. Rationale: The educator never studied Special Education; therefore, completing a degree in this field will further their knowledge of the content area and the best practice for teaching the field.

If candidates 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 which has been approved for initial certification 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 program provider?

- First, it means that the name of the program must match a GaPSC certification field.
- Second, because the New Field programs lead to certification, they 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 have been 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 is 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.

Update for EPPs offering GaPSC-approved programs in the three new fields:

As candidates who enrolled in your programs soon after they were approved in 2012 may be nearing completion and the GACE content assessments for these fields were not administered prior to their completion of the programs, we are providing an extended period of time in which completers may earn a certificate upgrade prior to passing the content assessment and adding the field to the certificate.

Certificate Upgrade

For those completers who were enrolled and attending classes in a GaPSC-approved program in Curriculum and Instruction, Instructional Technology, and Teacher Leadership on or before January 15, 2014, a Non-Renewable certificate in the field and a certificate upgrade will be awarded upon the recommendation of the EPP. The certificate upgrade, as you know, is the action that enables an educator to earn a salary increase for completing an advanced degree. In order to maintain this certificate upgrade, completers will need to pass the GACE content assessment in the appropriate field no later than July 1, 2016, and add the field to their certificates. The upgrade will be rescinded for those completers who earned an upgrade within this timeframe and do not pass the GACE content assessment by July 1, 2016.

GACE Content Assessment & Addition of the Field

The GACE content assessments for Curriculum and Instruction, Instructional Technology, and Teacher Leadership will be administered as follows:

- Teacher Leadership - registration will be available on November 3, 2014. There are two submission deadlines to choose from: December 31, 2014, or May 31, 2015. Complete information is available at http://gace.ets.org/teacher_leadership/about/.
- Curriculum and Instruction - Registration is open. There will be multiple administration windows. The first window is June 21-27, 2014; the second window is August 23-29, 2014. More information is available at <http://gace.ets.org>.
- Instructional Technology – Information is not yet available but will be posted soon at <http://gace.ets.org>.

Completers who pass the GACE content assessment by July 1, 2016, will qualify for the new field of certification and after adding the field will maintain the certificate upgrade.

Passing the content assessment is a Special Georgia Requirement for fields in which a content assessment exists. This requirement cannot be waived as the purpose is to help the GaPSC, along with the EPPs, ensure that candidates have the knowledge and skills needed to perform the job of an educator in Georgia's public schools. In addition, the content assessment results provide critical information that informs EPP efforts to continuously improve programs.

All GACE assessments, including the assessments for these fields, are developed in collaboration with separate test development, bias review, and standard setting committees, which consist of representation from P-12, higher education, and other stakeholders. Each GACE assessment is aligned with state and national content standards.

These fields are categorized as “New Field” options and will therefore require GaPSC approval. 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 Technical Specialist (TS) with a bachelor degree or higher, a teaching or a service certificate field held by the educator. A single certificate filed must be selected for focus in the program when the educator is certified in multiple teaching and/or service fields. All twelve hours may be satisfied through advanced level content or content pedagogy courses in which candidates are required to demonstrate advanced skills related to their TS, teaching or service 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 TS, teaching or service certificate field held by the educator. All nine hours may be satisfied through advanced level content or content pedagogy courses in which candidates are required to demonstrate advanced skills related to their TS, teaching or service 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 candidates 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. 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. Note: the content to be expanded and enhanced for these three degrees must be from a teaching or service certificate area. Educational Leadership content would not meet the content requirements for these three new certificate areas.

For each of these three new fields IHEs 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 candidate 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 certification areas were finalized. In order to honor their work and commitment, IHEs may establish a process (conversion mechanism) that would allow an IHE 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 for which certification is being sought. The IHE with a GaPSC-approved program in that particular area 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 IHE has established documented evidence that the candidate meets the standards, the IHE could recommend them for certification.

It may be that educators choose to complete degree programs for one of these three new certification fields from an out of state institution that meets the out of state requirements. A degree program can only qualify for a new field upgrade if the program is a state approved program leading to initial certification in the home state where the institution is administratively based. Many states do not currently offer certification in Georgia's three new fields. As a result an educator who completes an advanced degree from an out of state institution in Curriculum and Instruction, Instructional Technology or Teacher Leadership after the extended grandfathering period, will not automatically qualify for a certificate upgrade; however, if they affiliate with a state approved provider, pass the GACE, complete the conversion mechanism and receive a recommendation for the certification from the Georgia Educator Program Provider, they can then qualify for a new field upgrade.

The institution must seek GaPSC approval to offer this conversion mechanism. The mechanism would be part of the Board of Examiners review process. Only GaPSC-approved EPPs with approved programs in one of the three new areas may provide the conversion mechanism for that area.

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. IHEs 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. 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.

It is expected that all existing, or "old", programs in the three new fields will sunset by September 1, 2015 for Master's and Specialist degrees and by September 1, 2017 for Doctoral degree programs. New programs may begin as early as the summer or fall semester of 2013 or immediately after program approval is granted by the GaPSC. Programs which begin before approval may have negative consequences for students in the program. The first step to program approval is to submit an Intent to Seek Approval Form. Georgia Professional Standards Commission personnel will provide direction for the approval process.

Completers of these programs will earn a certificate level upgrade 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.

Please note: The information posted above concerning the GACE and a non-renewable certificate does not apply to programs that were in place previous to 2012 and were not intended for initial certification in the three new areas.

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 we are 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: Advising Current and Potential Students

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

Information the candidate must have prior to beginning a program:

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

Educators are responsible for making sure that their selected advanced degree is in a Georgia certification field 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

Admissions counselors and all appropriate university personnel should be prepared to answer questions regarding the certificate upgrade rule. Questions educators seeking an In-Field upgrade might ask include:

- Is the institution 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?
- Does the institution hold a Carnegie Classification of RU/VH or RU/H?
- 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 might pose include:

- Is the institution 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?
- In addition to successfully completing the degree program, what other requirements must I complete in order to gain an upgrade in the new field?
- Will I be required to pass a Georgia content assessment in order to upgrade?
- Will I be required to add the new field to my certificate in order to be awarded the upgrade?

- What if I decide to later voluntarily delete the field from my certificate?

Before advising current and potential students, please familiarize yourself with the resources available on the GaPSC website for certificate upgrades, located at http://www.gapsc.com/Policies_guidelines/pg_certificateUpgrade.asp.

Section IV: Program Approval

A. In-state Institutions

All programs offered by Georgia institutions that lead to initial certification require GaPSC approval, regardless of the degree level. Advanced preparation programs offered by GaPSC-approved units which do not lead to initial certification do not require GaPSC approval.

Initial certification programs must meet the applicable Georgia Standards 2008 found on the GaPSC website. For approval and reporting purposes, each initial certification program must incorporate six-to-eight key assessments aligned with the appropriate program content standards as well as the elements of Georgia Standards 2008, Standard 1. Standards 1, 2, 3, 4, and the elements of Standards 5 and 6 relevant to the delivery of a new program must be met (see Appendix E for details). Initial certification programs for previously certified educators offered at the advanced degree level will not be required to meet the elements of Georgia Standard 7 (e.g. programs in Curriculum and Instruction, Instructional Technology, and Teacher Leadership). The Georgia Standards 2008 are available on the GaPSC website at <http://www.gapsc.com/EducatorPreparation/Standards2000/IndexGA2000.asp>.

New initial certification programs may be reviewed during upcoming GaPSC/NCATE/CAEP reviews or through a group electronic review if the EPP does not have an approval review scheduled near the desired program start date.

If institutions have their program/EPP approval revoked, candidates who were admitted to preparation programs prior to revocation of approval may complete them and be recommended for certification; however, no new candidates may be admitted.

B. Out-of-state Institutions

Out of state institutions that plan to seek approval for Educational Leadership must submit an Intent to Seek Approval form to the GaPSC. Before a review can be scheduled, the institution must show evidence of meeting the following requirements:

- the institution must be accredited by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) or the Council for Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) after 2013, and
- the Educational Leadership program(s) must be Nationally Recognized by Educational Leadership Constituent Council (ELCC).

The out-of-state Intent to Seek Approval Form includes several assurances which require careful consideration by institutional leaders and program coordinators, as well as signatures by the chief executive of the institution and dean of the college/school/department of education. Upon receipt of the signed Intent to Seek Approval Form, a web-based Program Report form will be made available to the institution for submission of additional information, a timeline will be established, and an approval review will be scheduled.

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
- The GaPSC Rule 505-2-.041 Guidance Document for Educators
- 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 to make In-Field upgrade decisions
- 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/CAEP-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).

Please send any questions not addressed via guidance documents or by Certificate Upgrade e-mail help to the appropriate staff according to the protocol shown below.

1. Bobbi Ford at bobbi.ford@gapsc.com for program-related certificate upgrade questions
2. Angie Gant at angie.gant@gapsc.com for program approval questions
3. Kelli Young at kelli.young@gapsc.com for general certification questions
4. Penney McRoy at penney.mcroy@gapsc.com for general educator preparation questions

Appendix C: Examples of Certificate Upgrade Scenarios

Infield:

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) degrees 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 Education 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 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 a Master's degree program approved for initial certification, 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

Advanced Professional Certificate: The Advanced Professional certificate is a renewable certificate that is part of Georgia's tiered teacher certification system and provides a statewide structure to recognize expert classroom practice and professional growth resulting in higher levels of student learning.

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 EPP or program completed the process for assessing and enhancing academic and education quality through peer review, to assure the public that an educator preparation provider and/or program has met institutional, state, and national standards of educational quality).

Induction Certificate: The Induction certificate is part of Georgia's tiered teacher certification system that provides a statewide structure for the professional development of early career educators (three years) and educators new to the state of Georgia.

Lead Professional Certificate: The Lead Professional certificate is part of Georgia's tiered teacher certification system and provides a statewide structure to promote, support, and expand opportunities for teacher leadership in grades P-12 to improve effective classroom practice resulting in higher levels of student learning.

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.

Pre-Service Certificate: The Pre-Service certificate is part of Georgia’s tiered teacher certification system and provides a statewide structure to organize procedures related to pre-service teachers once admitted to certain state-approved educator preparation programs.

Professional Certificate: The Professional 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. Professional 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.

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

Appendix E: Georgia Standards 2008 Applicable to Initial Certification Programs offered at the Advanced Degree Level

The table below is intended solely for the use of identifying the standards and elements applicable in GaPSC approval reviews of programs leading to initial certification in the fields of Curriculum and Instruction, Instructional Technology, and Teacher Leadership. As program providers must have an approved EPP and certification is required for program entry to these programs, certain standards/elements and requirements for initial Georgia educator certification are assumed to have been met. Therefore, several Georgia 2008 standards and elements are intentionally not listed here.

Standard	Element	Element Title and Description of Acceptable Performance
1	e	<p>CONTENT KNOWLEDGE AND PEDAGOGICAL SKILLS FOR OTHER SCHOOL PROFESSIONALS</p> <p>Candidates for other professional school roles have an adequate understanding of the knowledge expected in their fields and delineated in professional, state, and institution/agency standards. They know their students, families, and communities; use data and current research to inform their practices; use technology in their practices; and support student learning through their professional services. Eighty percent or more of the professional education unit's program completers pass the academic content examinations required by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission for certification.</p>
1	f	<p>STUDENT LEARNING FOR OTHER SCHOOL PROFESSIONALS</p> <p>Candidates for other professional school roles are able to create positive environments for student learning. They understand and build upon the developmental levels of students with whom they work; the diversity of students, families, and communities; and the policy contexts within which they work.</p>
1	g	<p>PROFESSIONAL DISPOSITIONS FOR ALL CANDIDATES</p> <p>Candidates are familiar with the professional dispositions delineated in professional, state, and institution/agency standards. Candidates demonstrate classroom behaviors that are consistent with the ideal of fairness and the belief that all students can learn. Their work with students, families, colleagues and communities reflects these professional dispositions.</p>
2	a	<p>ASSESSMENT SYSTEM</p> <p>The professional education unit has an assessment system that reflects the conceptual framework and professional and state standards and is regularly evaluated by its professional community. The professional education unit's system includes a comprehensive and integrated set of assessment and evaluation measures to monitor candidate performance and manage and improve professional education unit's operations and preparation programs. Decisions about candidate performance are based on multiple assessments made at admission into preparation programs, appropriate transition points, and preparation program completion. The professional education unit has taken effective steps to eliminate bias in assessments and is working to establish the fairness, accuracy, and consistency of its assessment procedures and professional education unit operations.</p>
2	b	<p>DATA COLLECTION, ANALYSIS, AND EVALUATION</p>

The professional education unit maintains an assessment system that provides regular and comprehensive information on applicant qualifications, candidate proficiencies, competence of graduates, professional education unit operations, and preparation program quality. Using multiple assessments from internal and external sources, the professional education unit collects data from applicants, candidates, recent graduates, faculty, and other members of the professional community. Candidate assessment data are regularly and systematically collected, compiled, aggregated, summarized, and analyzed to improve candidate performance, preparation program quality, and professional education unit operations. The professional education unit disaggregates candidate assessment data when candidates are in alternate route, off-campus, and distance learning programs. The professional education unit maintains records of formal candidate complaints and documentation of their resolution. The professional education unit maintains its assessment system through the use of information technologies appropriate to the size of the professional education unit and institution/agency.

- 2 c **USE OF DATA FOR PREPARATION PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT**
The professional education unit regularly and systematically uses data, including candidate and graduate performance information, to evaluate the efficacy of its courses, preparation programs, and clinical experiences. The professional education unit analyzes preparation program evaluation and performance assessment data to initiate changes in preparation programs and professional education unit operations. Faculty have access to candidate assessment data and/or data systems. Candidate assessment data are regularly shared with candidates and faculty to help them reflect on and improve their performance and preparation programs.
- 3 a **COLLABORATION BETWEEN PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION UNIT AND SCHOOL PARTNERS**
The professional education unit, its school partners, and other members of the professional community design, deliver, and evaluate field experiences and clinical practice to help candidates develop their knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions. The professional education unit and its school partners jointly determine the specific placement of student teachers and interns for other professional roles to provide appropriate learning experiences. The school and professional education unit share expertise to support candidates' learning in field experiences and clinical practice.
- 3 b **DESIGN, IMPLEMENTATION, AND EVALUATION OF FIELD EXPERIENCES AND CLINICAL PRACTICE**
Candidates meet entry and exit criteria for clinical practice. Field experiences facilitate candidates' development as professional educators by providing opportunities for candidates to observe in schools and other agencies, tutor students, participate in education-related community events, interact with families of students, attend school board meetings, and assist teachers or other school professionals prior to clinical practice. Both field experiences and clinical practice reflect the professional education unit's conceptual framework and help candidates continue to develop the content, professional and pedagogical knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions delineated in standards. They allow candidates to participate as teachers and other professional educators, as well as learners in the school setting.
Clinical practice allows candidates to use information technology to support teaching and learning. Clinical practice is sufficiently extensive and intensive for candidates to develop and demonstrate proficiencies in the professional roles for which they are preparing.

Criteria for school faculty are clear and known to all of the involved parties. School faculty are accomplished professionals who are prepared for their roles as mentors and supervisors.

Clinical faculty, which includes both higher education and P-12 school faculty, use multiple measures and multiple assessments to evaluate candidate skills, knowledge, and professional dispositions in relation to professional, state, and institution/agency standards. Clinical faculty provide regular and continuing support for student teachers and interns in conventional and distance learning programs through such processes as observation, conferencing, group discussion, email, and the use of other technology.

Candidates in advanced programs for teachers participate in field experiences that require them to apply course work in classroom settings, analyze P-12 student learning, and reflect on their practice in the context of theories on teaching and learning. Candidates in programs for other school professionals participate in field experiences and clinical practice that require them to engage in structured activities related to the roles for which they are preparing. These activities involve the analysis of data, the use of technology and current research, and the application of knowledge related to students, families, and communities.

3 c **CANDIDATES' DEVELOPMENT AND DEMONSTRATION OF KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, AND PROFESSIONAL DISPOSITIONS TO HELP ALL STUDENTS LEARN**

Candidates demonstrate mastery of content areas and pedagogical and professional knowledge before admission to and during clinical practice. Assessments used in clinical practice indicate that candidates meet professional, state, and institution/agency standards identified in the professional education unit's conceptual framework and affect student learning. Multiple assessment strategies are used to evaluate candidates' performance and impact on student learning. Candidates and clinical faculty jointly conduct assessments of candidate performance throughout clinical practice. Both field experiences and clinical practice allow time for reflection and include feedback from peers and clinical faculty. Candidates and clinical faculty systematically examine results related to P-12 learning. They begin a process of continuous assessment, reflection, and action directed at supporting P-12 student learning. Candidates collect data on student learning, analyze them, reflect on their work, and develop strategies for improving learning.

Field experiences and clinical practice provide opportunities for candidates to develop and demonstrate knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions for helping all students learn. All candidates participate in field experiences or clinical practice that include students with exceptionalities and students from diverse ethnic/racial, linguistic, gender, and socioeconomic groups.

4 a **DESIGN, IMPLEMENTATION, AND EVALUATION OF CURRICULUM AND EXPERIENCES**

The professional education unit clearly articulates proficiencies related to diversity identified in the professional education unit's conceptual framework that candidates are expected to develop during their professional programs. Curriculum and field experiences provide a well grounded framework for understanding diversity, including English language learners and students with exceptionalities. Candidates are aware of different learning styles and adapt instruction or services appropriately for all students, including linguistically and culturally diverse students and students with exceptionalities. Candidates connect lessons, instruction, or services to students' experiences and cultures. They communicate with students and families in ways that demonstrate sensitively to cultural and gender differences. Candidates incorporate multiple

perspectives in the subject matter being taught or services being provided. They develop a classroom and school climate that values diversity. Candidates demonstrate classroom behaviors that are consistent with the ideas of fairness and the belief that all students can learn. Candidate proficiencies related to diversity are assessed, and the data are used to provide feedback to candidates for improving their knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions for helping students from diverse populations learn.

4 b **EXPERIENCE WORKING WITH DIVERSE FACULTY**
Candidates in conventional and distance learning programs interact with professional education faculty, faculty from other units, and/or school faculty, both male and female, from at least two ethnic/racial groups. Faculty with whom candidates work in professional education classes and clinical practice have knowledge and experiences related to preparing candidates to work with diverse student populations, including English language learners and students with exceptionalities. Affirmation of the value of diversity is shown through good-faith efforts made to increase or maintain faculty diversity.

4 c **EXPERIENCES WORKING WITH DIVERSE CANDIDATES**
Candidates engage in professional education experiences in conventional and distance learning programs with male and female candidates from different socioeconomic groups, and at least two ethnic/racial groups. They work together on committees and education projects related to education and the content areas. Affirmation of the value of diversity is shown through good-faith efforts the professional education unit makes to increase or maintain a pool of candidates, both male and female, from diverse socioeconomic and ethnic/racial groups.

5 a **QUALIFIED FACULTY**
Professional education faculty has earned doctorates or exceptional expertise that qualifies them for their assignments. School faculty is certified in the fields that they teach or supervise, but often do not hold the doctorate. Clinical faculty from higher education has contemporary professional experiences in school settings at the levels that they supervise.

5 b **MODELING BEST PROFESSIONAL PRACTICES IN TEACHING**
Professional education faculty has a thorough understanding of the content they teach. Teaching by professional education faculty helps candidates develop the proficiencies outlined in professional, state, and institution/agency standards and guides candidates in the application of research, theories, and current developments in their fields and in teaching. Professional education faculty value candidates' developments in their fields and in teaching. Professional education faculty value candidates' learning and assess candidate performance. Their teaching encourages candidates' development of reflection, critical thinking, problem solving and professional dispositions. Professional education faculty uses a variety of instructional strategies that reflect an understanding of different learning styles. They integrate diversity and technology throughout their teaching. They assess their own effectiveness as teachers, including the positive effects they have on candidates' learning and performance.

6 b **PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION UNIT BUDGET**
The professional education unit receives sufficient budgetary allocations at least proportional to other units on campus with clinical components or similar professional education units at other campuses to provide programs that

prepare candidates to meet standards. The budget adequately supports on-campus and clinical work essential for preparation of professional educators.

8

**ALIGNMENT WITH GEORGIA PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS
COMMISSION -ADOPTED PROGRAM CONTENT STANDARDS**

Candidates in all programs demonstrate competence on the appropriate program-specific content standards adopted by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission.