

# **GLOSSARY**

**Approval.** A process for assessing and enhancing academic and educational quality through voluntary peer review, and assuring the public that a professional education unit and/or program has met institutional, state, and national standards of educational quality; also, a PSC decision rendered when a professional education unit or program meets PSC standards.

**Action Letter.** Official letter from the Executive Secretary of the Professional Standards Commission to the institution/agency communicating the Commission's decision concerning the institution's/agency's unit and program approval status.

**Advanced Preparation.** Programs at post-baccalaureate levels for (1) the continuing education of teachers who have previously completed initial preparation or (2) the preparation of other professional school personnel. Advanced preparation programs commonly award graduate credit and include master's, specialist, and doctoral degree programs as well as non-degree licensure programs offered at the graduate level.

**Annual Report.** Report to the PSC from all approved educator preparation units containing data required for Title II reporting and other data used by the Commission to monitor the continuing health of educator preparation units and programs in Georgia.

**Assessment System.** A comprehensive and integrated set of evaluation measures that provides information for use in monitoring candidate performance and managing and improving unit operations and programs for the preparation of professional educators.

**Benchmark.** A description or example of candidate or institutional performance that serves as a standard of comparison for evaluation or judging quality.

**Board of Examiners.** Panel of education professionals from institutions of higher education, Regional Education Service Agencies, and local education agencies who are trained to apply the Georgia 2000 Standards for the Approval of Educator Preparation Units and Programs in unit and program evaluation.

**Board of Examiners (BOE) Report.** The report prepared by the Board of Examiners team that conducts the on-site approval review of a unit or program(s). The report describes how the unit or program(s) meet the Georgia Standards, and cites any weaknesses in relation to the standards.

**Candidate Performance Data.** Information derived from assessments of candidate proficiencies, in areas of teaching and effects on student learning, candidate knowledge, and dispositions. Candidate performance data may be derived from a wide variety of sources, such as projects, essays or tests demonstrating subject content mastery; employer evaluations; state licensure tests; and mentoring year "portfolios" including assessments, projects, reflections, clinical observations, and other evidence of pedagogical and professional teaching proficiencies.

**Candidates.** Individuals admitted to, or enrolled in, programs for the initial or advanced preparation of teachers, teachers continuing their professional development, or other professional school personnel. Candidates are distinguished from students in P-12 schools.

**Certification.** The process by which a non-governmental agency or association grants professional recognition to an individual who has met certain predetermined qualifications specified by the agency or association.

**Clinical Faculty.** School and higher education faculty responsible for instruction, supervision, and assessment of candidates during field experience and clinical practice.

**Clinical Practice.** Student teaching or internships that provide candidates with an intensive and extensive culminating activity. Candidates are immersed in the learning community and provided opportunities to develop and demonstrate competence in the professional roles for which they are preparing.

**Conceptual Framework.** An underlying structure in a professional education unit that gives conceptual meanings through an articulated rationale to the unit's operation, and provides direction for programs, courses, teaching, candidate performance, faculty scholarship and service, and unit accountability.

**Content.** The subject matter or discipline that teachers are being prepared to teach at the elementary, middle, and/or secondary levels. Content also refers to the professional field of study (e.g., special education, early childhood, school psychology, reading, or school administration).

**Content Review Panel.** A group of content specialists convened by the PSC for the purpose of applying national and/or state program content standards to educator preparation programs.

**Content Review Panel Report.** The written report of the Content Review Panel to the institution/agency and the Board of Examiners that discusses program strengths and weaknesses with respect to the applicable national and/or state program content standards.

**Continuing Approval.** The approval decision rendered by the PSC following a successful approval review five years after an institution's professional education unit has been approved. Approval is continued for as long as the unit continues to satisfy the PSC's standards and requirements.

**Continuing Approval with Provisos.** A PSC decision rendered following a five-year continuing approval review that indicates that the unit is granted continuing approval, but has significant weaknesses related to one or more standards that must be addressed within a specific period of time.

**Continuing Approval with Probation.** A decision rendered by the PSC following a five-year continuing approval review that indicates that the unit is granted continuing approval, but has significant weaknesses that place the unit's approval in jeopardy if they are left uncorrected. A comprehensive approval visit must be scheduled by the unit within two years of the semester in which the probationary decision was rendered.

**Cultural Background.** The context of one's life experience as shaped by membership in groups based on ethnicity, race, socioeconomic status, gender, exceptionalities, language, religion, sexual orientation, and geographic area.

**Curriculum.** Courses, experiences, and assessments necessary to prepare candidates to teach or work with students at a specific age level and/or to teach a specific subject area.

**Developmental Approval.** An approval decision rendered by the PSC that indicates that a unit and/or program is ready to begin to admit students, recommend them for certification, and prepare for a comprehensive unit/program approval review.

**Dispositions.** The values, commitments, and professional ethics that influence behaviors toward students, families, colleagues, and communities and affect student learning, motivation, and development, as well as the educator's own professional growth. Dispositions are guided by beliefs and attitudes related to values such as caring, fairness, honesty, responsibility, and social justice. For example, they might include a belief that all students can learn, a vision of high and challenging standards, or a commitment to a safe and supportive learning environment.

**Distance Learning.** A formal educational process in which the major portion of the instruction occurs when the learner and the instructor are not in the same place at the same time.

**Diversity.** Differences among groups of people and individuals based on ethnicity, race, socioeconomic status, gender, exceptionalities, language, religion, sexual orientation, and geographical area.

**Elements of Standards.** The major components of each standard that are described in the rubrics and explanations that accompany the standards. Board of Examiners teams will look for evidence that the unit and its programs address the elements.

**Evaluation Review Panel.** A sixteen-member panel appointed by the PSC that reviews Board of Examiners Reports for units and programs and makes approval recommendations to the PSC.

**Exceptionalities.** Physical, mental, or emotional conditions, including gifted/talented abilities, that require individualized instruction and/or other educational support or services.

**Field Experiences.** A variety of early and ongoing field-based opportunities in which candidates may observe, assist, tutor, instruct, and/or conduct research. Field experiences occur in off-campus settings such as schools, community centers, or homeless shelters.

**Full-time faculty.** Employees of a higher education institution with full-time assignments with the professional education unit as instructors, professors at different ranks, administrators, and professional support personnel.

**General Education Knowledge.** Theoretical and practical understanding generally expected of a liberally educated person. General education includes developing knowledge related to the arts, communications, history, literature, mathematics, philosophy, sciences, and the social studies, from multicultural and global perspectives.

**Global Perspective.** An understanding of the interdependence of nations and peoples, and the political, economic, ecological, and social concepts and values that affect lives within and across national boundaries. It allows for the exploration of multiple perspectives on events and issues.

**Governance.** The system and structure for defining policy, providing leadership, and managing and coordinating the procedures and resources that ensure the quality of all school personnel prepared at the institution.

**Higher Education Faculty.** Full-time or part-time employees of an institution of higher education.

**Information Technology.** Computer hardware and software; voice, data, network, satellite, and other telecommunications technologies; and multimedia and application development tools. These technologies are used for the input, storage, processing, and communication of information.

**Initial Educator Preparation.** Programs at baccalaureate or post-baccalaureate levels that prepare candidates for the first license to teach.

**Institutional Report.** A report that provides the institutional and unit contexts, a description of the unit's conceptual framework, and evidence that the unit is meeting PSC unit standards. The report serves as primary documentation for Board of Examiners teams conducting on-site visits.

**Institutional Standards.** The unit's declaration of the knowledge, skills, and dispositions expected of candidates preparing to teach or do other work in schools. The institutional standards should identify candidate proficiencies and be reflected in the unit's conceptual framework.

**Internship.** Generally, the post-licensure and/or graduate clinical practice under the supervision of clinical faculty; sometimes refers to the pre-service clinical experience.

**Knowledge Bases.** Empirical research, disciplined inquiry, informed theory, and the wisdom of practice.

**Licensure.** The official recognition by a state governmental agency that an individual has met certain qualifications specified by the state and is, therefore, approved to practice in an occupation as a professional. (Some state agencies call their licenses certificates or credentials.)

**Multicultural Perspective.** An understanding of the social, political, economic, academic, and historical constructs of ethnicity, race, socioeconomic status, gender, exceptionalities, language, religion, sexual orientation, the geographical area.

**Nationally Recognized Program.** A program that has met the standards of a national specialty organization that is a constituent member of NCATE.

**Other Professional School Personnel.** Educators who provide professional services other than teaching in a school. They include, but are not limited to, principals, reading specialists and supervisors, school library medial specialists, school psychologists, school superintendents, and instructional technology specialists.

**Part-time faculty.** Employees of a higher education institution who have less than a full-time assignment in the professional education unit. Some part-time faculty are full-time employees of the college or university with a portion of the assignments in the professional education unit. Other part-time faculty are not full-time employees of the institution and are commonly considered adjunct faculty.

**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.

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

**Performance Assessment.** A comprehensive assessment through which candidates demonstrate their proficiencies in subject, professional, and pedagogical knowledge, skills, and dispositions, including their abilities to have positive effects on student learning.

**Performance-based Program.** A professional preparation program that systematically gathers, analyzes, and uses data for self-improvement and candidate advisement, especially data that demonstrate candidate proficiencies, including positive effects on student learning.

**Performance-based Approval system.** An approval system based on the use of assessment information describing candidate proficiencies or actions of professional education units as evidence for determining whether standards are met, rather on course offerings and program experiences.

**Performance Criteria.** Descriptions or rubrics that specify qualities or levels of candidate proficiency that are used to evaluate candidate performance.

**Performance Data.** Information that describes the qualities and levels of proficiency of candidates, especially in application of their knowledge to classroom teaching and other professional situations.

**Portfolio.** An accumulation of evidence about individual proficiencies, especially in relation to explicit standards and rubrics, used in evaluation of competency as a teacher or in another professional school role.

**Preconditions.** Nine fundamental requirements that undergird the PSC's standards that must be met before a unit is permitted to schedule an on-site approval review.

**Professional Community.** Full- and part-time faculty (including clinical faculty) in the professional education unit, faculty in other units of the college/university, P-12 practitioners, candidates, and other involved in professional education.

**Professional Development.** Opportunities for professional education faculty to develop new knowledge and skills through in-service education, conference attendance, sabbatical leave, summer leave, intra and inter-institutional visitations, fellowships, work in P-12 schools, etc.

**Professional Development Schools.** Specially structured schools in which the P-12 school and higher education faculty collaborate to (1) provide practicum, student teaching, and internship experiences; (2) support and enable the professional development of school and higher education faculty; (3) support and enable inquiry directed at the improvement of practice; and (4) support and enhance student achievement. PDSs require the institutional commitment of colleges and universities, school districts, and teachers' organizations.

**Professional Education Faculty.** Those individuals employed by a college or university, including graduate teaching assistants, who teach one or more courses in education, provide services to candidates (e.g. advising), supervise clinical experiences, or administer some portion of the unit.

**Professional Knowledge.** The historical, economic, sociological, philosophical, and psychological understanding of schooling and education. It also includes knowledge about learning, diversity, technology, professional ethics, legal and policy issues, pedagogy, and the roles and responsibilities of the profession of teaching.

**Professional Standards Commission.** Sixteen-member panel appointed by the Governor with responsibility for the preparation, certification, and conduct of certified, licensed, or permitted personnel employed in the P-12 schools of Georgia.

**Program.** A planned sequence of courses and experiences leading to a degree or to recommendation for state licensure.

**Program Approval.** Process by which the PSC reviews a professional education program to determine if it meets Georgia's standards for the preparation of school personnel.

**Program Report.** Report that describes how an educator preparation program meets applicable national and/or state program content standards.

**Provisional Approval.** A decision rendered by the PSC following a comprehensive approval review that indicates that the unit is approved, but has significant weaknesses related to one or more standards that must be addressed within a specified period of time.

**PSC Staff Consultant.** An employee of the Professional Standards Commission who is assigned to provide technical assistance to an institution/agency involved in the unit/program approval process. The consultant also serves as a resource to the BOE team during on-site approval reviews, providing clarification of state conditions and policies.

**Regional Education Service Agency.** An education entity providing services to a group of school systems in a particular part of Georgia.

**Rejoinder.** Response of an institution/agency to the Board of Examiners Report.

**Rubric.** Written and shared criteria for judging performance that indicate the qualities by which levels of performance can be differentiated, and that anchor judgements about the degree of success on a candidate assessment.

**Scholarship.** Systematic inquiry into the areas related to teaching, learning, and the education of teachers and other school personnel. Scholarship includes traditional research and publication as well as the rigorous and systematic study of pedagogy and the application of current research findings in new settings. Scholarship further presupposes submission to one's work for professional review and evaluation.

**School Faculty.** Licensed practitioners in P-12 schools who provide instruction, supervision, and direction for candidates during field-based assignments.

**School Partners.** P-12 schools that collaborate with the higher education institution in designing, developing, and implementing field experiences, clinical practice, delivery of instruction, and research.

**Service.** Faculty contributions to college or university activities, schools, communities, and professional associations in ways that are consistent with the institution and the unit's mission.

**Skills.** The ability to use content, professional, and pedagogical knowledge effectively and readily in diverse teaching settings in a manner that ensures that all students are learning.

**Standards.** Written expectations for meeting a specified level of performance. Standards exist for the content that P-12 students should know at a certain age or grade level.

**State Approval.** Process through which the PSC affirms that education units and/or programs meet standards of quality so that their graduates will be eligible for state certification (licensure).

**State Protocol.** Rules and expectations for NCATE, the PSC, and the unit for conducting joint NCATE/PSC on-site unit and program approval reviews.

**Student Teaching.** Pre-service clinical practice for candidates preparing to teach.

**Students.** Children and youth attending P-12 schools, as distinguished from teacher candidates.

**Technology, Use of.** What candidates must know and understand about information technology in order to use it in working effectively with students and professional colleagues in the (1) delivery, development, prescription, and assessment of instruction; (2) problem solving; (3) school and classroom administration; (4) educational research; (5) electronic information access and exchange; and (6) personal and professional productivity.

**Third-year Review.** A report prepared by the PSC three years following an approval visit that provides feedback to the unit based on annual reports submitted since the previous visit. This review is intended to help the unit focus on areas of continuing weakness, to indicate weaknesses that appear to have been corrected, and to indicate areas of emerging concern.

**Unit.** The institution, college, school, department, agency, or other administrative body with the responsibility for managing or coordinating all programs offered for the initial and continuing preparation of teachers and other school personnel, regardless of where these programs are administratively housed. Also known as the “professional education unit.”

**Unit Head.** The individual designated to provide leadership for the unit (e.g. dean, director, or chair), with the authority and responsibility for its overall administration and operation.

**Unit Review.** Process by which the PSC applies state standards for the preparation of education personnel to the education unit.

**Weakness.** A statement in a BOE report indicating that a unit has not met expected levels of achievement in one or more elements of a standard. The BOE may cite a weakness or weaknesses and still recommend that the standard is met. Units must report on progress made toward correcting weaknesses in their annual reports to the PSC. **Note: Now referred to as "Areas of Improvement"**