

GaPSC Approval Decision Options

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Categories:

- I. **Approval Reviews**
- II. **Progress Reports**
- III. **Changes in National Accreditation Status and/or Failure to Meet Standards**
- IV. **Non-compliance with Rules, Commission Decisions, or Procedures**

I. **Approval Reviews**

A. **Developmental Review Decision Options**

A Developmental Review is conducted for the purpose of verifying that a new professional education unit and/or proposed educator preparation programs have the capacity to meet the Georgia Standards (2008), and are ready to admit students and recommend them for certification.

1. **Developmental Approval** - Indicates the professional education unit and/or educator preparation program(s) meet the eight Georgia Standards (2008) and the professional education unit may begin offering the program and admitting candidates. Areas for improvement may be cited in the BOE Report, indicating concerns warranting the unit's attention. In its subsequent Preparation Approval Annual Report (PAAR) or in a Progress Report, the Commission may require the unit to describe progress made in addressing the area(s) for improvement cited. The next unit approval review, the Initial Performance Review, is scheduled within three years of the semester of the approval review.
2. **Provisional Approval** - Indicates the professional education unit and/or preparation program(s) have not met one or more of the Georgia Standards (2008). The unit/preparation program(s) has approved status and may admit candidates, but the unit must satisfy provisions by meeting the unmet standard(s) within a specified period of time. If Provisional Approval is granted, the Commission will require the actions described in either or both of the options described below, depending upon the severity of the unmet standard(s).
 - i. **Option 1:** submission of one or more Progress Reports addressing the unmet standard(s) and areas for improvement (if applicable) within a minimum of six months after the approval decision; and/or
 - ii. **Option 2:** a Focused Visit on the unmet standard(s) within two years of the semester the Provisional Approval decision was granted.

After one or more Progress Reports are submitted according to Option 1, the GaPSC will decide to either grant Developmental Approval or require a Focused Visit within one year of the semester in which the Progress Report was submitted. Focused Visit decision options are described in item D, below.

3. **Denial of Approval** - Indicates the professional education unit and/or educator preparation program(s) do not meet one or more of the Georgia Standards (2008) and have pervasive problems limiting capacity to offer quality professional education program(s) that adequately prepare candidates.

B. Initial Performance Review Decision Options

An Initial Performance Review is conducted for the purpose of determining whether performance data indicate the unit and programs are meeting standards and that candidates in the programs are meeting performance expectations delineated in standards. The Initial Performance Review typically occurs three years after a professional education unit and/or preparation programs are granted Developmental Approval.

After an Initial Performance Review, the GaPSC will apply the decision options listed below for Continuing Approval Reviews.

C. Continuing Review Decision Options

A Continuing Review is conducted periodically (typically every seven years) for the purpose of verifying that the professional education unit and educator preparation programs continue to meet the Georgia Standards (2008).

1. **Continuing Approval** - indicates the professional education unit and programs meet each of the eight Georgia Standards (2008). Areas for improvement may be cited, indicating problems warranting the unit's attention. In its subsequent Preparation Approval Annual Report (PAAR) or in a Progress Report, the Commission may require the unit to describe progress made in addressing the areas for improvement cited in the BOE Report. If Continuing Approval is granted, the next approval review will be scheduled for seven years following the semester of the previous Continuing Review.
2. **Continuing Approval with Conditions** - indicates the professional education unit and preparation program(s) have not met one or more of the eight Georgia Standards (2008). The professional education unit and program(s) maintain approval; however, the unit must provide evidence of meeting the unmet standard(s) within a specified period of time.

If Continuing Approval with Conditions is granted, the Commission will require the actions described in either or both Option 1 or Option 2.

- i. **Option 1:** submission of one or more Progress Reports addressing the unmet standard(s) and areas for improvement (if applicable) within a minimum of six months after the approval decision; and/or
- ii. **Option 2:** a Focused Visit on the unmet standard(s) within two years of the semester the Continuing Approval with Conditions decision was granted.

After one or more Progress Reports are submitted according to Option 1, the GaPSC will decide to either grant approval or require a Focused Visit within one year of the semester in which the Progress Report was submitted. After a Focused Visit occurs the GaPSC will decide to either grant Continuing Approval or revoke approval.

If Continuing Approval is granted, the next approval review will be scheduled for seven years following the semester in which the continuing approval review occurred. This scheduling maintains the unit's original approval review cycle.

3. **Continuing Approval with Probation** - indicates the professional education unit and/or preparation program(s) do not meet one or more of the standards, and have pervasive problems limiting capacity to offer quality programs that adequately prepare candidates.

If Continuing Approval with Probation is granted, the unit must schedule an approval review within two years of the semester in which the probationary decision was rendered. This review process will mirror that of a Developmental Review. The unit, as part of this approval review, must address all of the Georgia Standards in effect at the time of the Probationary Review.

D. **Focused Review Decision Options**

A Focused Review is conducted for a professional education unit and/or educator preparation programs when one or more standards were unmet at the previous review; it may occur within two years after a Developmental Review, Initial Performance Review, or a Continuing Review resulting in a GaPSC decision of Provisional Approval, Approval with Conditions, or Approval with Probation. After a Focused Review, approval is either granted at the appropriate level or it is revoked.

1. **Approval**, either developmental or continuing depending upon the status of the unit when a focused visit decision was rendered, is granted if the previously unmet standards are found to be met during the Focused Review.

If **Developmental Approval** is granted, an Initial Performance Review will be scheduled for three years following the semester in which the Focused Review occurred.

If **Continuing Approval** is granted, the next approval review will be scheduled for seven years following the semester in which the previous Continuing Approval Review occurred. This scheduling maintains the unit's original approval review cycle.

2. **Provisional Approval or Approval with Probation** may be granted after a Focused Review if the previously unmet standards are found to be met with significant areas for improvement, or if one of multiple previously unmet standards is found to be unmet. If approval status prior to the Focused Review was developmental, Provisional Approval will be granted. If approval status prior to the Focused Review was continuing, Approval with Probation will be granted.

If **Provisional Approval** is granted, the Commission will prescribe provisions, or requirements, which must be met within a specified period of time. Requirements may include an additional review or site visits by GaPSC staff, the submission of Progress Reports including evidence that areas for improvement have been addressed, or action plans addressing detailed steps the unit will take to address the unmet standard. If the areas for improvement or the unmet standard are satisfactorily addressed during the time allotted by the Commission, an Initial Performance Review will be scheduled for three years following the semester in which the Focused Review occurred. If the Commission deems they are not fully addressed within the time allotted, approval will be revoked.

If **Approval with Probation** is granted, the Commission will prescribe provisions, or requirements, which must be met within a specified period of time. Requirements may include an additional review or site visits by GaPSC staff, the submission of Progress Reports including evidence that areas for improvement have been addressed, or action plans addressing detailed steps the unit will take to address the unmet standard. If the areas for improvement or the unmet standard are satisfactorily addressed during the time allotted by the Commission, the next approval review will be scheduled for seven years following the semester in which the previous Continuing Approval Review occurred. This scheduling maintains the unit's original approval review cycle. If the Commission deems the areas for improvement or unmet standard are not fully addressed within the time allotted, approval will be revoked.

3. **Approval may be revoked** if the previously unmet standards are found to be unmet during the Focused Review. After approval is revoked, candidates who were admitted to preparation program(s) prior to revocation of approval may complete the programs within a specified period of time and be recommended for certification; however, no new candidates may be admitted as of the date of the revocation.

E. Probationary Review Decision Options

A Probationary Review is conducted after a GaPSC decision of Approval with Probation has been granted for a professional education unit or preparation program(s), indicating that one or more standards are not met and pervasive problems limit the unit or program's capacity to meet standards. The Probationary Review process mirrors the Developmental Review process; all of the Georgia Standards (2008) are applied to the unit and/or programs on probation. Candidate performance data are not required. After a Probationary Review, approval is either granted at the appropriate level or it is revoked.

1. **Developmental Approval** is granted if all standards are found to be met during the Probationary Review. If approval is granted, the next approval review (Initial Performance Review) will be scheduled for three years after the semester of the Probationary Review.
2. **Approval is Revoked** if one or more standards are found to be unmet during the Probationary Review. After approval is revoked, candidates who were admitted to preparation program(s) prior to revocation of approval may complete them within a specified period of time and be recommended for certification; however, no new candidates may be admitted as of the date of the revocation.

II. Progress Report Decision Options

A. Progress is Satisfactory

If the Commission deems a Progress Report indicates satisfactory progress has been made in addressing areas for improvement, the decision options are:

1. **Progress is Satisfactory; Areas for Improvement are Removed.** This decision indicates evidence was presented confirming the areas for improvement have been corrected.
2. **Progress is Satisfactory, Areas for Improvement Remain.** This decision indicates plans were presented which may lead to correction of areas for improvement; however, evidence was not included to confirm they have been corrected. The Commission will ask for a subsequent Progress Report to include evidence that the areas for improvement have been corrected.

B. Progress is Unsatisfactory

If the Commission deems a Progress Report indicates satisfactory progress has not been made in addressing areas for improvement, the decision options are:

1. **Progress is Unsatisfactory; a Progress Report is Required.** This decision indicates evidence was not presented to indicate the areas for improvement are being addressed. The Commission will require one or more subsequent Progress Reports by specified dates.
2. **Progress is Unsatisfactory; a Focused Visit is Required.** This decision indicates neither plans nor evidence were presented to indicate the areas for improvement are being addressed. The Commission will require a Focused Visit on the Standards for which the areas for improvement were cited within two years.

III. Changes in National Accreditation Status and/or Failure to Meet Standards

A. National Accreditation Status

Georgia-based program providers must have an approved professional education unit in order to seek or maintain GaPSC approval to offer programs leading to Georgia educator certification. NCATE/CAEP accreditation of the professional education unit is accepted by the GaPSC in lieu of GaPSC professional education unit approval. The University System of Georgia requires NCATE accreditation of all institutions offering education programs and many of Georgia's private colleges elect to earn national accreditation.

For the purposes of GaPSC approval, professional education units accredited by NCATE or CAEP must maintain unit accreditation to maintain GaPSC program approval. If, for any reason, NCATE/CAEP revokes professional education unit accreditation, GaPSC program approval must also be revoked. Likewise, if professional education unit approval is revoked by the GaPSC, program approval must also be revoked. Candidates enrolled in educator preparation programs prior to revocation of approval may complete the programs within a specified period of time and be recommended for certification; however, new candidates may not be admitted until unit and program approval is reinstated.

B. Failure to Meet Standards

All GaPSC-approved program providers must continue to meet standards between approval reviews. Through annual reports, the GaPSC collects candidate, program, and unit performance data from program providers. For example, to address the Standard 1 (*Candidate Knowledge, Skills, and Dispositions*), requirement that 80% of a professional education unit's completers pass the state-approved content assessment, GACE content assessment pass rates are compiled annually for each program provider, reviewed by GaPSC staff, and reported to the U.S. Department of Education in the U.S. Title II Annual Report. Failure to maintain state content assessment pass rates at or above 80% will result in adverse unit approval actions by the GaPSC and, if lower than 80% pass rates persist for three consecutive years, revocation of approval by the GaPSC or revocation of accreditation by NCATE/CAEP.

The following approval actions will be applied when pass rates fall below 80% for one or more consecutive years:

1. One year – program providers with state content assessment pass rates below 80% for one year will be identified as At-risk of Low Performing. Program providers identified as At-risk of Low Performing are reported to the U.S. Department of Education and published in the U.S. Title II Annual Report. Upon

identification as At-risk of Low Performing, GaPSC staff will initiate additional monitoring and technical assistance activities.

2. Two years - program providers with state content assessment pass rates below 80% for two consecutive years will be identified as Low Performing and professional education unit approval status will be changed to Approval with Probation (see approval definitions in section I above). GaPSC staff will continue to closely monitor and provide technical assistance. If unit pass rates meet or exceed 80% the next year, unit approval will be restored to the previous level and the unit's previous accreditation/approval cycle will be maintained.
3. Three years - program providers with state content assessment pass rates below 80% for three consecutive years will be identified as Low Performing and professional education unit and program approval will be revoked by the GaPSC. If the professional education unit is accredited by NCATE/CAEP, unit accreditation will be revoked and as a result, GaPSC approval must be revoked for all professional education programs offered by the unit. Candidates enrolled in educator preparation programs prior to revocation of approval may complete the programs within a specified period of time; however, new candidates may not be admitted until professional education unit and program approval is reinstated.

IV. Non-compliance

A. Rules

When GaPSC staff members become aware of a unit's confirmed, persistent and/or pervasive non-compliance with GaPSC rules, the Commission will be formally notified at the next appropriate meeting. Prior to bringing rules violations before the Commission, GaPSC staff will investigate the potential violation and gather pertinent documentation to determine if a violation is confirmed, and if the violation is persistent and/or indicative of pervasive violations of one or more rules.

For rules violations determined to be **non-persistent/non-pervasive**, staff will take the following actions:

1. Send a warning letter to include a description of the rule violation(s) and required corrective action steps; and/or
2. Require the submission of documentation, or a Progress Report describing and possibly including evidence of, the corrective actions taken.

Failure to meet staff requirements related to rules violations will result in escalation to the Commission and the actions described below.

For rules violations determined to be **persistent and/or pervasive**, Commissioners will decide to take one of the following actions, depending upon the severity of the violation(s):

1. Submission of documentation/Progress Report to the Commission
2. One or more Technical Visits by staff followed by a Report to the Commission
3. Submission of a report and a presentation to the Commission by the head of the professional education unit or his/her designee.

Failure to meet Commission requirements related to rules violations will result in a change of approval status to Approval with Probation for the professional education unit

and all preparation programs. The actions following a probationary decision are described in Section I, above.

B. Commission Decisions

Failure to comply with Commission decision requirements will, depending upon the severity of the situation, result in either a warning letter or a change of approval status to Probation for the professional education unit and all educator preparation programs.

C. Violation of GaPSC Procedures

Failure to comply with GaPSC procedures will, depending upon the severity of the situation, result in one or more of the following actions.

1. Warning letter
2. Submission of documentation/Progress Report
3. Technical Visit

Unaddressed or repeated violations will be reported to the Educator Preparation Standing Committee for further action and may eventually result in loss of approval.