

505-3-.01 REQUIREMENTS AND STANDARDS FOR APPROVING PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION UNITS AND EDUCATOR PREPARATION PROGRAMS

(1) **PURPOSE.** This rule states requirements and standards for the approval of professional education units and educator preparation programs that recommend individuals for certification as education personnel in Georgia.

(2) **DEFINITIONS.**

(a) Accreditation: A process for assessing and enhancing academic and educational quality through voluntary peer review; also the decision rendered by an accrediting body when an institution/agency or professional education unit meets its standards and requirements.

(b) Approval: A process for assessing and enhancing academic and education quality through peer review, to assure the public that a professional education unit and/or program has met institutional, state, and national standards of educational quality; also, a Professional Standards Commission (PSC) decision rendered when a professional education unit or program meets PSC standards.

(c) Approval Review: Examination of evidence and interviews of stakeholders conducted by the PSC Board of Examiners (BOE) either on-site, at an institution/agency, or electronically through the use of web and telephone conferencing systems as part of a developmental, initial, continuing, or focused review.

(d) 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.

(e) Content Review Panel: A group of BOE members convened by the PSC for the purpose of applying national and/or state program content standards to educator preparation programs for approval review.

(f) Educator Preparation Program: A planned sequence of courses and experiences for preparing P-12 teachers and other professional school personnel. These courses and experiences sometimes lead to a recommendation for a state certification to work in schools.

(g) Georgia Framework for Teaching: A description of the attributes of accomplished teachers, based on the principles and framework developed by the Georgia Systemic Teacher Education Project.

(h) Georgia Systemic Teacher Education Project (GSTEP): A project of the University of Georgia, Valdosta State University, and Albany State University, funded by the United States Department of Education, to develop a framework and resources for the ongoing professional development of teachers.

(i) Nationally Recognized Program: A program that has met the standards of a national specialized professional organization (SPA) that is a constituent member of the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE).

(j) Out-of-State Institution: An institution of higher education that is administratively based in a U.S. state other than Georgia.

(k) Preconditions: Seven (7) fundamental requirements that undergird the PSC's standards that must be met before a professional education unit is permitted to schedule a developmental approval review of a new professional education unit.

(l) Professional Education 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.

(m) Program Completer: A candidate who has completed all of the institutional/agency requirements for a recommendation for certification.

(n) Specialized Professional Association (SPA): A constituent member of NCATE representing a particular disciplinary area that develops standards for the approval of educator preparation programs in that area and reviews programs for compliance with those standards.

(3) GENERAL REQUIREMENTS APPLICABLE TO ALL PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION UNITS/PROGRAMS.

(a) Authorization for the Establishment of Professional Education Units

1. Institutions of higher education, local education agencies, private P-12 schools, Regional Education Service Agencies (RESAs), and other education service organizations shall be approved by the Professional Standards Commission (PSC) to establish a professional education unit for the purpose of preparing individuals for state certification. Out-of-State institutions operating in the state of Georgia through a satellite campus or by online delivery of programs, must have a professional education unit that is accredited by NCATE and must maintain accreditation to offer programs leading to Georgia certification in the field of Educational Leadership.

(b) Accreditation of Institutions/Agencies with Professional Education Units.

1. Institutions of higher education with approved professional education units shall be fully accredited by a PSC accepted accreditation agency at the level(s) of degree(s) granted by the institution. The institution must be accredited at Level II to grant a bachelor's degree, at Level III to grant a master's degree, Level IV to grant a specialist's degree, and Level V or VI to grant doctoral degrees. The institution shall submit program(s) for Professional Standards Commission approval that correspond to the appropriate level of accreditation and in a field recognized for certification by the Professional Standards Commission. If an institution has submitted an application for change in degree level to a PSC accepted accreditation agency, and is seeking developmental approval of a program(s) at the proposed new degree level by the PSC, the institution must be accredited at the new degree level prior to approval review by the PSC. See Rule 505-2-.22, PSC-Accepted Accreditation, Rules for Certification of Education Personnel in Georgia.

2. Local education agencies, private schools, RESAs, or other approved providers shall admit candidates who hold at least a bachelor's degree from a PSC accepted accredited institution of higher education. See Rule 505-2-.22, PSC-Accepted Accreditation, Rules for Certification of Education Personnel in Georgia.

(c) PSC Approval of Professional Education Units

1. An education agency's degree(s), professional education unit, and/or program(s) shall be approved by its governing board prior to seeking Professional Standards Commission approval.

2. Georgia professional education unit approval standards shall be adapted by the Professional Standards Commission from the standards published by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE).

3. NCATE accreditation of a professional education unit shall be accepted as a route to PSC approval of a professional education unit administratively based in the state of Georgia. Out-of-State institutions operating in Georgia must have NCATE accreditation of the professional education unit in order to recommend program completers for Georgia certification in the field of Educational Leadership.

4. Education agencies seeking Georgia Professional Standards Commission unit approval shall follow Georgia Professional Standards Commission policies and procedures, e.g., preconditions to determine eligibility for a review, approval review requirements, cost guidelines, post review requirements, Commission decisions, public disclosure policy, and annual reporting procedures. Out-of-state institutions accredited by NCATE and recommending program completers for Georgia certification in the field of Educational Leadership shall follow all applicable Georgia Professional Standards Commission policies, including, but not limited to, those regarding annual reporting and data submission requirements. Failure by an in-state or an out-of-state provider to comply with annual reporting and/or data submission requirements may result in changes in approval status and/or fines.

5. Georgia professional education unit approval shall include developmental approval review valid for three (3) years to determine if the new professional education unit has the capacity to meet state standards, followed by an initial performance review to determine that the professional education unit has evidence of meeting state standards. Following the initial performance review, the PSC will conduct continuing reviews of the professional education unit at seven (7) year intervals.

6. Each professional education unit approved to offer programs leading to Georgia certification shall report annually to the PSC on the performance of its professional education unit and educator preparation programs.

7. The PSC may require a focused approval review of an approved or accredited professional education unit and/or its educator preparation programs in fewer than seven (7) years if annual performance data warrant.

(d) PSC Approval of Educator Preparation Programs

1. Approved educator preparation programs shall be offered only by Georgia PSC-approved professional education units.

2. Georgia PSC-approved professional education units seeking approval for preparation programs leading to Georgia educator certification shall follow all applicable Georgia Professional Standards Commission program approval policies and procedures in effect at the time of the requested approval.

3. Georgia PSC-approved professional education units seeking approval for preparation programs leading to Georgia educator certification may elect to seek National Recognition of programs through an NCATE-accepted national Specialized Professional Association (SPA). If National Recognition is granted for a program, state approval procedures will be reduced to remove duplication in processes and will include only those procedures necessary to ensure that Georgia-specific standards and requirements are met. Programs submitted for national recognition that are not granted national recognition must comply with all applicable Georgia PSC program approval review procedures.

4. Out-of-State NCATE-accredited professional education units seeking approval to offer programs leading to Georgia certification in the field of Educational Leadership must gain National Recognition for each program through the appropriate NCATE-accepted Specialized Professional Association (SPA) and must comply with all Georgia Professional Standards Commission program approval policies and procedures in effect at the time of the requested approval. Educational Leadership programs offered by out-of-state institutions that do not receive National Recognition by the appropriate NCATE-accepted SPA are not eligible for GaPSC program approval and therefore completers will not be eligible for Georgia Educational Leadership certification.

5. Georgia PSC educator preparation program approval shall include developmental approval review valid for three (3) years to determine if the new educator preparation program has the capacity to meet state standards, followed by an initial performance review to determine if the educator preparation program has evidence of meeting state standards. Following the initial performance review, the PSC will conduct continuing reviews of the educator preparation programs at seven (7) year intervals.

6. The professional education unit shall submit program(s) for PSC approval that correspond to the appropriate level of accreditation (initial or advanced) and in a certification field authorized in PSC Certification Rules.

7. PSC-approved professional education units shall prepare, in conjunction with preparations for a unit approval review, program reports conforming to PSC-adopted standards and shall submit them for evaluation either by the appropriate SPA or by a PSC-appointed content review panel. Educator preparation programs nationally recognized by SPAs meet a significant portion of Georgia program approval standards. Programs nationally recognized by the SPAs shall submit additional information required by the PSC prior to the approval review.

8. Ongoing Georgia PSC approval of educator preparation programs shall be dependent upon the performance of the professional education unit and its programs as determined by performance measures included in the annual report.

(e) Preparation Program Requirements

1. Preparation programs for educators prepared as teachers shall incorporate the Georgia Framework for Teaching, based on the Principles and Framework for Accomplished Teaching developed by the Georgia Systemic Teacher Education Project (GSTEP).

2. Georgia PSC-approved professional education units shall offer student teaching/internships/practica only in those fields for which the unit has been approved by the PSC.

3. Georgia PSC-approved professional education units shall include a variety of options for program completion, e.g. multiple delivery models, degree options and individualized programs.

4. Georgia PSC-approved professional education units shall ensure that candidates are prepared to implement the appropriate sections of any Georgia mandated curriculum (e.g., Georgia Performance Standards, GPS) in each relevant content area.

5. Georgia PSC-approved professional education units shall ensure that candidates complete a well-planned sequence of courses and/or experiences in professional studies that includes knowledge about professional ethics and social behavior appropriate for school and community, as well as specific knowledge about the Georgia Code of Ethics for Educators.

6. Georgia PSC-approved professional education units shall require a major or equivalent in all secondary and P-12 fields, where appropriate.

7. Georgia PSC-approved professional education units shall ensure that candidates complete supervised field experiences consistent with the grade levels of their certification field (e.g., early childhood P-5 shall require field experiences in PK-K, 1-3, and 4-5; middle grades shall require field experiences in 4-5 and 6-8; P-12 shall require field experiences in PK-2, 3-5, 6-8, and 9-12; and secondary fields shall incorporate 6-8 and 9-12.)

8. Georgia PSC-approved professional education units shall ensure that candidates admitted into initial certification programs at the baccalaureate level have a minimum GPA of 2.5 on a 4.0 scale, and that candidates admitted into initial certification programs at the post-baccalaureate level have attained appropriate depth and breadth in both general and content studies, with a minimum of a bachelor's degree from a PSC accepted accredited institution. (A 2.5 is not required for entry into post-baccalaureate programs.) See Rule [505-2-.22](#), PSC-Accepted Accreditation, Rules for Certification of Education Personnel in Georgia.

9. Georgia PSC-approved professional education units may accept professional learning units/staff development units (PLU/SDU) or documented experience relevant to the program of study in lieu of requiring candidates to repeat the same or similar coursework for college credit.

10. Georgia PSC-approved professional education units shall provide information to each candidate about professional ethical standards, the Georgia Code of Ethics for Educators, background check, and clearance for certification and employment.

11. Georgia PSC-approved professional education units shall provide information to candidates about instructional policies and requirements needed for completing professional education programs, including the Special Georgia Requirements necessary to meet each candidate's certification objective(s), the availability of social and psychological counseling services, job opportunities, and market needs based on supply and demand data.

12. Georgia PSC-approved professional education units shall monitor and analyze teacher supply and demand data for the purpose of making unit and program decisions.

(f) Special Georgia Requirements

1. Georgia PSC-approved professional education units shall require candidates seeking certification in a teaching field, educational leadership and/or the service fields of Media Specialist and School Counseling to complete either five (5) or more quarter hours or three (3) or more semester hours of coursework, approved by the Professional Standards Commission, in the identification and education of children who have special educational needs or the equivalent, through a Georgia-approved professional learning program. This requirement may be met in a

separate course, or content may be embedded in courses and experiences throughout the preparation program. See Rule [505-2-.20](#) Special Georgia Requirements, Rules for Certification of Education Personnel in Georgia.

2. Georgia PSC-approved professional education units shall require that candidates seeking certification demonstrate satisfactory proficiency in computer and other technology applications and skills and satisfactory proficiency in integrating technology into student learning. This requirement may be met through content embedded in courses and experiences throughout the preparation program. See Rule [505-2-.20](#) Special Georgia Requirements, Rules for Certification of Education Personnel in Georgia.

(g) Recommendation for Certification

1. A single administrative professional education unit within the educational organization and a designated official within the professional education unit shall provide evidence to the Professional Standards Commission that program completers have met the requirements of the approved programs, including Special Georgia Requirements, and thereby qualify for state certification.

2. Georgia PSC-approved professional education units shall recommend program completers for certification only in fields for which the unit has PSC-approved educator preparation programs.

3. Georgia PSC-approved professional education units shall require that candidates completing baccalaureate programs have a 2.5 GPA overall average on a 4.0 scale; and that candidates completing post-baccalaureate programs have a 2.5 GPA on a 4.0 scale for the required coursework in the approved non-degree program in order to be recommended for certification.

4. Georgia PSC-approved professional education units shall require a passing score on the appropriate certification assessment(s) required by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission before making a recommendation for clear renewable certification to the Professional Standards Commission.

5. Georgia PSC-approved professional education units may recommend program completers for certification under the approved program in effect at the time the student was officially admitted to the program or the approved program in effect when the student successfully completes the program.

Authority O.C.G.A. § 20-2-200