Georgia Professional Standards Commission

Educator Preparation Division

Comprehensive Policy Manual
For Educator Preparation Providers

Version 5, September 2025

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Introduction

Georgia educator preparation providers (EPPs) must meet rigorous standards to earn and maintain Georgia Professional Standards Commission (GaPSC) approval to offer programs leading to educator certification. In addition to the expectations set forth in approval standards, GaPSC-approved EPPs are expected to adhere to other policies and procedures related to program design, national accreditation, reporting, and more. This document is intended to serve as a resource for EPPs where all relevant GaPSC educator preparation policies and procedures can be accessed.

Rather than repeating information in this document, EPP representatives will find herein links and references to policy or procedural documents posted on the GaPSC website or in the GaPSC secure portal. Where appropriate, references to Educator Preparation Rules are provided and hyperlinked. Policies and procedures that are not codified in rules are fully explained here.

Changes made since the prior version are noted in the Table of Contents with either a NEW or REVISED designator. Contact your GaPSC Education Specialist or Liaison with questions or to suggest additions to this document.

Adding New Programs between EPP Reviews (Program Only Group Approval Review)

GaPSC-approved EPPs seeking approval for new initial preparation programs between scheduled Reviews of the EPP and all preparation programs (either the First Continuing Review or a Continuing Approval Review), will utilize the Program Only Group Review process. This process is for programs leading to initial (a person's first) certification in teaching (T), leadership (L), or service (S) fields. It does not include endorsement programs.

See *Policies and Procedures for Adding New Programs between EPP Reviews*

Rule Reference: Rule 505-3-.01, paragraph (3) (d)

Administrative Approval of Endorsement Programs

GaPSC-approved EPPs seeking approval to offer an endorsement program between EPP reviews will utilize the Administrative Approval process by submitting the *Endorsement Approval Application* and a *Curriculum Map*.

Once administratively approved by GaPSC staff, the EPP can begin offering the program. At the next scheduled Commission meeting following administrative approval, Commissioners will formally grant Developmental Approval. During the EPP's next Continuing Approval Review (or First Continuing Review), Administratively Approved endorsement programs are reviewed against all applicable standards, along with all other programs offered by the EPP.

The Endorsement Approval Application and Curriculum Map template are available on the EPP Resources webpage. Please check the webpage for the current version of the application.

Rule Reference: Rule 505-3-.01, paragraph (3) (d) 7.

Guidance: Rule 505-3-.01 Guidance and Implementation Timeline, Section 18

Approval Reviews and Approval Review Cycles

Approval review cycles vary depending upon the types of programs offered by an educator preparation provider. EPPs offering programs leading to initial certification in Teaching (T), Leadership (L), and Service (S) fields are subject to the following review types and cycles.

Developmental Review

A Developmental Approval Review is conducted to determine if a new educator preparation provider (EPP) and/or educator preparation program has the capacity to meet state standards. Developmental Approval is required before candidates may be admitted to preparation programs and begin coursework. Developmental Approval is valid for three (3) to four (4) years. Prior to a Developmental Review, the organization seeking approval as a new EPP must submit the GaPSC Readiness Framework to demonstrate the foundational aspects necessary to operate as an EPP are in place. The Readiness Framework must be approved by GaPSC staff before the Developmental Approval Review can begin.

First Continuing Review

Three (3) to four (4) years after Developmental Approval is granted, a First Continuing Review is conducted to determine if the EPP and/or educator preparation programs have evidence of meeting all applicable standards. A successful First Continuing Review results in Continuing Approval, which is valid for seven (7) years.

Continuing Review

Continuing reviews are conducted every seven (7) years to determine if the EPP and educator preparation programs continue to meet applicable standards.

The approval review cycle for EPPs offering only endorsement programs is as follows.

Developmental Review of the EPP and Programs

A Developmental Approval Review is conducted to determine if a new educator preparation provider (EPP) and endorsement programs have the capacity to meet state standards. Developmental Approval of the EPP is required before programs can be approved and candidates are admitted to preparation programs. Developmental Approval for an Endorsement-only EPP is valid for seven (7) years.

Continuing Review

Continuing reviews are conducted every seven (7) years to determine if the EPP and educator preparation programs meet applicable standards.

Endorsement Program Approval

GaPSC-approved EPPs use the Administrative Approval process for adding new endorsement programs between Developmental and Continuing or between Continuing Reviews. Administratively approved endorsement programs are reviewed during the EPP's next Continuing Review, and in every Continuing Review thereafter.

Other Types of Approval Reviews.

Focused Review

Focused reviews are conducted when required by the Commission due to failure to meet one or more standards. Only the unmet standard(s) are addressed during a Focused review.

Probationary Review

A Probationary review may be required by the Commission after a review resulting in multiple unmet standards and pervasive problems limiting an EPP's capacity to meet standards. Probationary reviews are comprehensive, in that all standards are addressed and all preparation programs may be involved.

See the *GaPSC Approval Decision Options* document for the specific options available to Commissioners after each review type. The document is available on the EPP Resources webpage.

Rule References: Rule 505-3-.01, paragraphs (3) (c) 6. and 7., and paragraphs (3) (d) 6 and 7.

Approval Standards

GaPSC Standards for the Approval of Educator Preparation Providers and Programs are available on the GaPSC Educator Preparation Division webpage.

Guidance documents related to interpreting and implementing the standards, and preparing for approval reviews, are accessible on the EPP Resources webpage.

Scroll to the bottom of the webpage to the section titled, *Approval Review Information and Procedure Documents*.

CAEP Accreditation

Although Georgia no longer maintains a formal partnership with CAEP, EPPs may choose to seek and/or maintain CAEP accreditation.

- Georgia EPPs holding Developmental or Continuing Approval are eligible to seek CAEP Accreditation.

- GaPSC staff <u>do not</u> participate in CAEP evaluation review planning or meetings.

- CAEP Reviewers will have access to GaPSC approval decision documents.

- As approval reviews are no longer conducted jointly, scheduling should be coordinated such that the GaPSC approval review is completed and an approval decision has been rendered prior to the start of the CAEP visit.

Rule Reference: Rule 505-3-.01, paragraph (3) (c) 6.

Guidance: Rule 505-3-.01 Guidance and Implementation Timeline, Section 14

Candidate Assessment Requirements

State-approved assessments that must be attempted or passed prior to program admission or completion are specified in Educator Preparation Rule 505-3-.01.

- Ethics Assessment: Must <u>be passed</u> for program admission. See paragraph (3) (e) 1. (i) and paragraph (3) (e) 6. (iii).

- Content Assessment: Must <u>be attempted</u> prior to program completion. See paragraph (3) (e) 6. (i).

- Performance-based Assessments (for Teacher Leadership and Educational Leadership programs): Must be attempted prior to program completion. See paragraph (3) (e) 6. (ii).

Content and Performance-based Assessments must be passed to earn Certification. Requirements for Certification Assessments are described in Certification Rule 505-2-.26.

Candidate Notification Requirements

Candidates must be informed in writing and within 60 days if an EPP's approval status changes to Probation or is revoked by the GaPSC. Although GaPSC policies allow candidates to complete programs under these circumstances (see GaPSC Approval Decision Options-Revocation of Approval), this notification is necessary and important because EPP resources may be negatively impacted in ways that limit candidate access to courses and services necessary for timely program completion.

> GaPSC-approved EPPs shall notify all enrolled candidates when EPP and/or program approval is revoked or when approval status is changed to Probation. Notification must be made within sixty (60) days after such a GaPSC decision is granted, in written form via letter or e-mail, and a copy must be provided to GaPSC by the EPP head. This notification must clearly describe the impact of the approval status change on candidates and the options available to them. EPPs must maintain records of candidates' acknowledgement of receipt of the notification.

Rule Reference: Rule 505-3-.01, paragraph (3) (c) 9.

Guidance: Rule 505-3-.01 Guidance and Implementation Timeline, Section 15

Commission Decision Options

When making decisions related to the approval of EPPs and programs, Commissioners rely on a menu of options for each review type and situation (e.g., approval review, progress report, non-compliance). These options are described in the GaPSC Approval Decision Options document, which is posted on the EPP Resources webpage.

Deferral of Approval Reviews

Approval reviews are scheduled up to two years in advance and sometimes unforeseen circumstances create the need to defer, or delay, the review before it begins.

The following policies apply to approval review deferrals:

- The following review types are eligible for deferral: Developmental, First Continuing, or Continuing.

- Scope/limitations: EPPs may request only one deferral per scheduled review. If an EPP is granted a deferral, initial preparation programs may not be added prior to the rescheduled review date.

- Format: Deferral requests may be submitted in a letter from the EPP head emailed to the assigned Education Specialist or liaison and the appropriate GaPSC Director (Non-Traditional Preparation or Program Approval/Traditional Preparation).

- Timeline: The deferral request should be submitted to GaPSC in the form of a letter and at the point when an Intent to Seek Approval Form is expected. Ideally, the deferral request should be submitted to GaPSC no less than twelve (12) months before the formative review is scheduled to begin.

- Content: The request should include the reason(s) for the requested deferral with relevant details related to the context or circumstances.

Process:

- The deferral request is reviewed by the recipients.

- The Education Specialist or Liaison prepares a written analysis to accompany the request.

- The request and the accompanying staff analysis are reviewed by the Evaluation Review Panel (ERP), which makes a recommendation to either grant or deny the deferral to the Educator Preparation and Certification Committee (EPCC) of the Commission.

- The EPCC considers the ERP recommendation and either agrees with it or makes a different recommendation to the Commission.

- All members of the Commission consider the EPCC recommendation and vote to grant or deny the request. Decisions of the Commission are final.

Deactivation of Approved Programs

In terms of GaPSC approval, deactivating an approved program involves three steps: Intent to Deactivate, Program Phase-Out, and Deactivation Finalized. Each step is described below. It is important to note that once a program is deactivated, it must be approved again to be reinstated.

Step 1: Intent to Deactivate. GaPSC must be informed when an EPP decides to stop offering a program. This notification occurs through the Intent to Deactivate a Program (IDAP) application in gapsc.org. If candidates are enrolled in the program, the EPP must complete Step 2. If no candidates are enrolled, the EPP proceeds to Step 3.

Step 2: Program Phase-Out. First, as prospective candidates must be notified of the EPP's decision to stop offering a program and GaPSC is responsible for informing the public of approved programs, when an EPP opts to cease enrollment in an approved program, a note to that effect will be added to the program listing on the GaPSC website list of approved programs. Second, the EPP must inform currently enrolled candidates of the planned deactivation and provide a timeline for allowing them to complete the program. Step 2 documentation to GaPSC will include the phase-out timeline, including the schedule of remaining courses for currently enrolled candidates, and for each enrolled candidate, the EPP will indicate the expected completion date; this documentation should be submitted in the Intent to Deactivate a Program (IDAP) application, described in Step 1. An important implication for EPPs with programs in the phase-out process is that the EPP must continue to meet all requirements, such as reporting in NTRS or TPMS, submitting progress reports, and/or undergoing any scheduled approval reviews.

Step 3: Deactivation Finalized. The final stage of the deactivation process occurs only when no candidates are enrolled and engaged in program coursework. In other words, an EPP may decide to stop enrolling candidates at any point; however, the program will not be deactivated by GaPSC until all candidates have completed or exited the program. If no candidates are enrolled upon receipt of the Intent to Deactivate a Program in gapsc.org, GaPSC verifies no enrollment via TPMS and deactivates the program. If Step 2 was needed to phase out the program, the EPP notifies GaPSC when all candidates have completed or exited the program through the Intent to Deactivate a Program (IDAP) application in gapsc.org. Upon GaPSC verification of no enrollment, the deactivation process will be finalized. Deactivated programs are no longer approved and will therefore be removed from the GaPSC website list of approved programs.

To be reinstated, deactivated initial preparation programs must be developmentally reviewed, and endorsement programs must be administratively approved.

Educator Preparation Program Rules

GaPSC Educator Preparation rules describe requirements for EPPs and preparation programs, as well as content standards for each field of certification. During approval reviews, EPPs must provide evidence of meeting the requirements and applicable standards set forth in these rules.

The rules may be accessed on the [GaPSC Educator Preparation Rules webpage](#).

Eligibility for GaPSC Approval

Educator Preparation Rule 505-3-.01, paragraph (3) (a) specifies the criteria organizations must meet to be eligible for GaPSC approval. Effective January 1, 2024, in addition to Georgia-based organizations meeting the criteria described in paragraph (3) (a) 1., out-of-state organizations meeting specified criteria are eligible to seek approval to offer non-traditional teacher preparation programs.

Rule Reference: [Rule 505-3-.01](#), paragraph (3) (a)

Guidance: [Rule 505-3-.01 Guidance and Implementation Timeline](#), Section 19

EPP Reporting Requirements

GaPSC-approved EPPs are required to maintain current and accurate data on enrolled candidates in the appropriate GaPSC reporting system, Non-Traditional Reporting System (NTRS) or Traditional Program Management System (TPMS).

Rule 505-3-.01 specifies deadlines for reporting enrollments, clinical practice beginning date and cooperating teacher GA Cert ID, as well as completions and withdrawals for all candidates in initial preparation Teaching (T), Leadership (L), Service (S), and endorsement programs, as well as dual-field initial preparation programs resulting in two types (e.g., L and S) and two fields of certification. These requirements also apply to out-of-state EPPs enrolling candidates who are seeking Georgia certification in Teaching (T) or Service (S) fields and completing field and clinical experiences in Georgia schools.

Also included in Rule 505-3-.01 is the October 7th federal reporting (Title II) deadline for entering data on initial teaching candidates who were enrolled, withdrawn, or completed during the prior reporting year (September 1 – August 31).

Rule Reference: [Rule 505-3-.01](#), paragraph (3) (c) 8.

Guidance: [Rule 505-3-.01 Guidance and Implementation Timeline](#), Section 38

National Recognition or Accreditation of Programs

GaPSC-approved EPPs seeking to obtain and/or maintain national recognition or accreditation of programs through Specialized Professional Associations (SPAs) or specialty area accreditors are encouraged to review the list of GaPSC-accepted SPAs and accrediting agencies, as well as the related implications for state program approval review. This information may be found in Section 16 of the [Rule 505-3-.01 Guidance and Implementation Timeline](#).

Rule Reference: [Rule 505-3-.01](#), paragraph (3) (d) 5.

Non Compliance with GaPSC Rules or Procedures

Should GaPSC staff become aware of non-compliance with GaPSC procedures, rules, or Commission decisions, on the part of a GaPSC-approved EPP or an out-of-state EPP with candidates enrolled in programs seeking Georgia certification, the process described in the Non-Compliance section of the GaPSC Approval Decision Options document will be followed.

Staff actions will begin with a warning letter and will be followed by actions appropriate for the severity of the violation, such as requiring the submission of a report describing corrective actions, a progress report, or a presentation to the Educator Preparation and Certification Committee (EPCC) of the Commission. Continued failure to meet GaPSC expectations may result in a change in approval status, or for out-of-state EPPs a cessation of acceptance of the EPP's programs for Georgia certification.

For details, see GaPSC Approval Decision Options, Non-Compliance.

Out-of-State Students in Online Initial Preparation Programs

Students enrolled in GaPSC-approved online initial preparation programs in Teaching (T), Leadership (L), or Service (S) fields who do not reside in Georgia and who are not seeking Georgia certification <u>are</u> required to attempt the applicable GACE Assessment; however, such teaching field candidates <u>are not</u> required to obtain the Pre-Service Certificate. Out-of-state candidates must be entered in TPMS according to the reporting deadlines specified in Rule 505-3-.01, paragraph (3) (c) 8.

For any out-of-state completer not previously included in TPMS who later decides to seek Georgia certification, the EPP can determine if any additional coursework is needed to assure current standards are met, particularly if the program was completed more than five years prior [see Rule 505-3-.01, paragraph (3) (f) 4]. In cases such as this, the EPP will add the candidate's historical data in TPMS, leaving blank the *Completion Date* field until the GACE Content Assessment is attempted and any additional required coursework is completed, after which the candidate will be marked as a completer and, upon passing the GACE, will become eligible for GA certification.

Rule Reference: Rule 505-3-.01, paragraph (3) (f) 4.

Postponement of an In-process Approval Review

After PRS has been finalized, an approval review can be postponed only under the following circumstances.

- Due to severe weather or a catastrophic event, rendering GaPSC staff, EPP staff, and/or Review Team members unable to access review materials (PRS, evidence) for one week or longer, or unable to conduct interviews during the summative portion of the review process.

- Due to a life-altering illness, hospitalization or death of either the GaPSC consultant, a key member of the EPP staff (e.g., EPP head, review coordinator, department head or lead faculty), and/or one or more Review Team members who cannot be replaced within a reasonable time prior to the formative or summative portions of the review process.

- Due to a loss of data and/or evidence submitted in PRS as a result of malware, data breach, or other malicious system attack occurring within a week of the formative review or within a week of the first day of the summative review.

Postponement will be determined on a case-by-case basis and in collaboration with the EPP Head, Approval Review Chair, and GaPSC staff. The final decision will be made by GaPSC staff; decisions resulting in a postponement of a semester or more will be subject to final approval by the Educator Preparation and Certification Committee (EPCC) of the Commission.

Program Content Standards

For each field of certification, program content standards describe what candidates are expected to know and be able to do upon completion. For most certification fields, these standards are either adopted or adapted from standards published by national Specialized Professional Associations (SPAs) or specialty area accreditors. For fields without a GaPSC-accepted SPA or specialty area accreditor, program content standards are developed by a task force comprised of subject-matter experts in the field.

Program content standards are delineated in GaPSC Educator Preparation Rules, accessible on the GaPSC Educator Preparation Rules webpage.

For more information about GaPSC policy development and task forces, see the Educator Preparation Policy Development webpage.

Review Procedures for Approved Programs with No Enrollment

EPPs may wish to maintain approval for programs with no candidates enrolled since the prior approval review. In such cases, due to the lack of candidate performance data, program classification will remain Developmental and the program will be developmentally reviewed in conjunction with the EPP's next Continuing Review.

Three (3) to four (4) years after candidates are enrolled in the program, a First Continuing Review will be conducted (depending upon the timing, this review may be conducted via the Program Only Group Review or in conjunction with the EPP's next Continuing Review). If after the First Continuing Review, Continuing Approval is granted for the program, the review schedule for the program will be aligned with the EPP's seven (7) year Continuing Approval Review cycle.

Semi-annual EPP Review and Confirmation of Approved Programs

Twice annually, EPPs are asked to confirm the accuracy of their list of approved programs on the GaPSC list of approved programs webpage. At the same time, EPPs should also verify that links from the GaPSC list of approved programs to EPP webpages are accurate, as these links help prospective candidates learn about program options and make decisions about applying for admission.

This verification process is necessary to assure accurate information is available to prospective educators. Your GaPSC Education Specialist will remind you when it is time to review your list of programs and will be available to answer any questions you may have regarding program listings.

Substantive Change Policies and Procedures

GaPSC-approved EPPs are expected to engage in continuous improvement processes, which may result in the need to change programs. In addition, EPPs may wish to change or adjust program offerings to better meet the needs of P-12 partners. For these and other reasons, an EPP's program offerings and programs certainly can and often do change. Although GaPSC does not need to be notified of all program changes, some changes have approval implications and should therefore be reported. To learn which changes need to be reported to GaPSC and what documentation is required, see the Substantive Change Policies and Procedures document available on the EPP Resources webpage.

Starting January 16, 2025, Substantive Changes will be submitted online via the Substantive Change Request Form. Instructions are provided in the Form and any questions should be directed to the EPP's GaPSC Education Specialist.