

Georgia Professional Standards Commission

Substantive Change Guidance Document

The Georgia Professional Standards Commission (GaPSC) recognizes the educator preparation provider (EPP) as having the capacity to respond to changes affecting the educational environment and to initiate changes between approval reviews in order to improve the performance of programs and program completers. This capacity includes dealing with changes in standards or rules, the delivery of the curriculum, resources, and the marketplace. All changes to approved EPPs and programs must comply with GaPSC rules and standards. Because substantive changes may impact the EPP's ability to continue to meet standards, it is necessary for the EPP to notify the GaPSC of these changes and possibly provide additional information to describe them in further detail. The information provided in this guidance document is intended to define substantive changes and explain the level of notification necessary. In circumstances where a Substantive Change Report is required by NCATE/CAEP the report submitted to NCATE/CAEP will also be submitted to GaPSC to avoid duplication of effort.

Section I: Definitions and Examples

What is a substantive change?

Substantive changes are defined as significant changes impacting the following aspects of EPP or program operations. While this list is intended to be a complete list, if you are unsure as to what constitutes a substantive change consult your education specialist.

1. Changes in personnel such as the dean/department head, President, certification official, assessment coordinator, PAAR or Title II Coordinator or review coordinator
2. Program of study changes necessitated by changes in GaPSC preparation rules or content standards, or for University System of Georgia institutions changes necessitated by system rule changes
3. Changes deemed substantive by a regional accrediting agency, such as changes in program degree level (e.g., baccalaureate to M.A.T.) or loss of potential loss of accreditation.
4. Major changes in or discontinuance of the key assessments (applicable only to initial preparation programs)
5. Deletion of programs (initial or advanced preparation), or addition of advanced preparation programs
6. Significant change in budget which is defined as a 25% decrease in the overall EPP budget from the previous reporting year
7. Significant reductions or additions in the number of hours required for field experiences or clinical practice (applicable only to initial preparation programs)
8. Changes in education program provider organizational structure or administration of programs, i.e. EPP changed from school to college
9. Significant changes resulting from unforeseen changes such as a natural disaster
10. Changes in the outcomes/competencies or themes of the conceptual framework (CF) (Changes in CF may impact the need for changes in key assessments. Two administrations of key assessments are required for approval reviews.)

11. Changes in program completion requirements, admission requirements, or exit requirements (applicable only to initial preparation programs)
12. Changes in program delivery mode (e.g., face-to-face delivery changed to hybrid or online delivery; applicable only to initial preparation programs)
13. Changes in names of programs (both initial and advanced)

What types of changes are not considered substantive?

According to the Georgia Standards (2014), changes should be made to programs and EPP operations based on regular and systematic evaluation procedures. A few examples of changes which are a normal part of effective operations are described below. These types of changes are not considered substantive and need not be reported to the GaPSC outside of the normal approval review process.

“Tweaks”, improvements, or enhancements to...

- course activities, assignments, or requirements
- course sequences
- field experiences or clinical practice
- key assessments or assessment procedures
- research studies or theories supporting the conceptual framework
- changes associated with required progress reports or the approval decision-making process
- EPP operations related to the management of candidate and program performance data (examples may include a change in database systems or EPP assessment calendar)
- EPP operations related to advisement or supervision of candidates
- EPP operations related to processes surrounding collaboration with school partners

Section II: Procedures for Reporting Substantive Changes to the GaPSC

The first step in reporting any type of substantive change is to send the appropriate document(s) indicated in the chart below to the GaPSC describing the changes you are planning. If possible, it is best to notify us before you make substantive changes, rather than after they have been made. Documents should come from the head of the education program provider, addressed to the GaPSC Director of Program Approval, and copied to the education specialist assigned to the EPP. If the change is only a change in personnel or name changes, a letter, as indicated in the chart below, will suffice. If you are planning to make major changes, the accompanying template should be used to outline those changes. Sending the program of study or new admissions/exit requirements with the template will help to accelerate the process. The GaPSC will accept one Substantive Change Request per semester from each program provider; multiple changes should be included in one request. Upon receipt of your letter or template, GaPSC staff will determine the appropriate level of reporting required (no additional action, PAAR, or additional documentation). Reporting options are described in the chart below for each substantive change listed above in Section I.

Substantive Changes	Notification Methods			Prior Approval Required?	Prior Notification Required?	Time Frame for Notifying GaPSC
	Letter	PAAR	Additional Documents Required Including Template			
Changes in personnel such as the dean/department head, certification official, assessment coordinator, or review coordinator	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			No	No	Immediately
Program of study changes necessitated by changes in GaPSC preparation rules or content standards, or for University System of Georgia institutions changes necessitated by system rule changes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		No	No	Annually
Changes deemed substantive by a regional accrediting agency, such as changes in program degree level (e.g., baccalaureate to M.A.T.)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Yes	Yes	Before changes are publicized and implemented

	Notification Methods			Prior Approval Required?	Prior Notification Required?	Time Frame for Notifying GaPSC
	Letter	PAAR	Additional Documents Required Including Template			
Substantive Changes						
Major changes in the key assessments (applicable only to initial preparation programs)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	No	Immediately
Deletion of programs (initial or advanced preparation), or addition of advanced preparation programs	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		No	Yes	Immediately upon decision
Significant change in budget which is defined as a 25% decrease in the overall EPP budget from the previous reporting year	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	No	As soon as possible to allow for technical assistance but not later than 30 days after implementation
Significant reductions or additions in the number of hours required for field experiences or clinical practice (applicable only to initial preparation programs)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Yes	Yes	Before changes are publicized and implemented
Changes in education program provider organizational structure or administration of programs, i.e. EPP changed from school to college	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		No	No	Immediately upon decision
Significant changes resulting from unforeseen changes such as a natural disaster	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	No	As soon as possible

	Notification Methods			Prior Approval Required?	Prior Notification Required?	Time Frame for Notifying GaPSC
	Letter	PAAR	Additional Documents Required Including Template			
Substantive Changes						
Changes in the outcomes/competencies or themes of the conceptual framework (Changes in Conceptual Framework may impact the need for changes in key assessments. Two administrations of key assessments are required for approval reviews.)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	No	A minimum of one year before the next EPP approval review
Changes in program completion requirements, admission requirements, or exit requirements (applicable only to initial preparation programs)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Yes	Yes	Before changes are publicized and implemented
Changes in program delivery mode (e.g., face-to-face delivery changed to hybrid or online delivery; applicable only to initial preparation programs)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Yes	Yes	Before changes are publicized and implemented
Changes in names of programs	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			No	No	Immediately

Changes reported in the Preparation Approval Annual Report (PAAR) will be entered in the Professional Education Unit Information section, text box with instructions: Narrative about significant changes made during the reporting year, innovative programs, and other important information not submitted in prior years, or in other applicable report sections. Any requests for additional documentation will be customized according to the nature of the changes you are making.

Section III: GaPSC Response to Substantive Change Notification

While most substantive changes do not require GaPSC approval they should be reported according to the information provided in the chart in Section II. The information below may assist in understanding how the request will be processed.

After you...	you can expect from GaPSC	within
submit a letter identifying simple changes and no approval is necessary	Acknowledgement from your Education Specialist that your report has been received and a response that no further action is necessary	10 business days
submit a letter and the template and additional documentation	Acknowledgement from your Education Specialist additional documentation has been received and a staff analysis of changes will be completed	10 business days
	a response to the substantive change request (approval or next steps) from GaPSC Program Approval Director	45 business days after the staff analysis document is completed
submit any additional documentation requested	a response to your letter indicating no additional action is necessary, OR describing any necessary additional actions to include a report submission due and a timeframe from GaPSC Program Approval Director	45 business days after staff analysis of new information is completed
describe substantive changes in PAAR	No response	N/A

Failure to report substantive changes may result in changes in the approval status of the educator preparation provider and preparation programs.

GaPSC Program Approval Contact Information

Education Specialists:

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Georgia Professional Standards Commission

Substantive Change Template

EPP:
Date Submitted :
Date of Staff Analysis:

Current Program	Proposed Program	Supporting Documents	Rationale for Changes	Staff Analysis