

505-2-.36 RENEWAL REQUIREMENTS

(1) Purpose. Certificate renewal is an outcome of applying Georgia Professional Standards Commission (GaPSC)-accepted continuing professional learning activities toward the continued validity of a state certificate. While it is essential for individual educators to maintain valid certificates, the activities of professional learning should be focused toward school improvement leading to increased student learning. The goal of certificate renewal and professional learning is for educators within a Georgia local unit of administration (LUA) to work together to enhance established educational goals for the individual educator, the school and the LUA to assist students in meeting state standards for student achievement.

(2) Requirements. Georgia's renewable certificates are the Standard Professional, Performance-Based Professional, Advanced Professional, Lead Professional and Life certificates. These certificates are valid for a five (5)-year period (except for the Life certificate), during which time the following requirements must be met:

(a) Employment in a Georgia LUA at the time of renewal application, with the following exceptions:

1. Renewal applications submitted prior to July 1, 2015; and
2. Renewal of professional certificates held by educators who have at least one (1) year of acceptable educator experience in a Georgia LUA, as outlined in GaPSC Rule 505-2-.25 EXPERIENCE REQUIREMENTS, paragraph (3)(a)1. The educator must have held a valid Georgia renewable, professional certificate at the time the experience was earned;

(b) A criminal record check, as outlined in section (5) below;

(c) For the Performance-Based Professional, Advanced Professional and Lead Professional certificates, a minimum number of "Proficient" or "Exemplary" annual performance evaluations on the state annual summative performance evaluation; and

(d) Six (6) semester hours of college course work; or ten (10) credits of Georgia Professional Learning Units (PLUs) earned prior to January 1, 2016; or ten (10) credits of Continuing Education Units (CEUs):

1. College/university faculty may use other professional development completed within the five (5)-year validity period of the certificate in lieu of the coursework described above. Examples include, but are not limited to: evidence of job promotion; membership and active participation in professional organizations; formal presentations at state/national conferences; and publication of original work. These activities may be verified by a letter, on official letterhead, from the dean of the employing college or university. The teaching of college-level courses may not be applied toward certificate renewal;

2. A Professional certificate held by an educator who also holds a valid National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) certificate in the same field may be renewed based on the NBPTS certificate;

3. A Professional certificate held by an educator who also holds valid Georgia Master Teacher certification may be renewed based on the Master Teacher certificate;

4. Professional certificates in the service fields of Speech and Language Pathology, Audiology, Psychology, School Counselor and School Social Work may be renewed through optional requirements associated with GaPSC-accepted state or national credentials as outlined in the appropriate GaPSC field rules;

5. Renewal credit for Non-Instructional Aides is earned as clock hours of job-related training, rather than as Professional Learning Unit (PLU) credit that is applicable to other certified employees;

6. Renewal credit for Support Personnel License holders is determined by the Individual Development Plan requirements for renewal, as specified by the employing Georgia LUA;

7. Renewal requirements for the Adjunct License are determined by the employing Georgia LUA.

(3) Types and Timing of Renewal Requirements.

(a) To be acceptable for certificate renewal, requirements may be in any combination of the following:

1. College course work reflected on official transcripts from GaPSC-accepted accredited institutions (See GaPSC Rule 505-2-.31 GAPSC-ACCEPTED ACCREDITATION; VALIDATION OF NON-ACCREDITED DEGREES):

(i) Course work must be a grade of "C" or better;

(ii) Three (3) semester hours are equivalent to five (5) quarter hours; and

(iii) Developmental studies courses and course work that is audited and/or exempted without credit shall not be accepted;

2. PLUs awarded prior to January 1, 2016, by a State of Georgia education agency, a Regional Educational Services Agency (RESA), a Georgia LUA, a GaPSC-approved college or university, or a PLU provider approved by the Georgia Department of Education prior to January 1, 2015. Agencies, RESAs, and LUAs may contract with vendors provided a process is in place that assures the provider designs and implements professional learning that meets Learning Forward standards. Documentation must be maintained that the agency, RESA, or LUA uses an approval process to assure that all professional learning for certificate renewal is standards-based. Only those PLUs awarded prior to January 1, 2016, and within the timeframe outlined in section (3)(b) below, will be acceptable for certificate renewal; or

3. Continuing Education Units (CEUs) issued by a GaPSC-approved accredited college or university or a provider authorized by the International Association for Continuing Education and Training (IACET):

(i) GaPSC-approved accredited colleges or universities may award CEUs through their local Continuing Education Center;

(ii) Only International Association for Continuing Education Units (IACET)-authorized providers and approved license users may use the IACET CEU and logo. The list of authorized providers and the process required to become an authorized provider is available on the IACET web site at www.iacet.org;

(iii) Ten (10) contact hours are the equivalent of one (1) Continuing Education Unit. These credits must be reflected on CEU transcripts or “certificates of completion” which include the name of the organization issuing the credits, the name of the educator receiving the credits, the title of the course / training, the date the course began and date of completion, and the number of CEUs being authorized.

4. One (1) year of acceptable, successful educator experience, as outlined in GaPSC Rule 505-2-.25 EXPERIENCE REQUIREMENTS, while working in another state on a valid certificate issued by that state may be accepted in place of course work toward the renewal of an expired Georgia certificate, as long as the experience was completed within five (5) years of the date of application for renewal.

(b) Renewal requirements for certificates that are currently valid must have been completed during the validity period established on the certificate. Renewal requirements for expired certificates (See paragraph (6)(b), below) must have been completed within the five (5)-year period preceding the date of renewal application.

(4) Focus of Renewal Credit.

(a) Certificate holders who are employed by a Georgia public school must have an individual professional development plan coordinated with their employing LUA. These individual plans are developed and maintained locally, and must be aligned with the learning opportunities outlined in the system’s Comprehensive School Improvement Plan (CSIP). To be acceptable for certificate renewal, credit must be included in the individual plan and be directly associated with at least one of the following:

1. Field(s) of certification held;
2. School/District Improvement Plan;
3. Annual personnel evaluation; or
4. State/federal requirements.

(b) Georgia LUAs may, at their discretion, measure educator renewal requirements against standards other than “seat time” or specific numbers of hours and credits. With a focus on school improvement and student achievement, the LUA may establish local standards within the individual professional development plan that will satisfy renewal requirements. The LUA shall renew the educator’s certificate using the GaPSC-approved electronic process. If the renewal requirements are based on local standards, the system shall maintain renewal documentation in the educator’s local personnel records that aligns renewal credit and the school improvement plan.

(c) The Special Georgia Requirement in Special Education as outlined in GaPSC Rule 505-2-.24 SPECIAL GEORGIA REQUIREMENTS may be required as part of renewal requirements and must be completed prior to renewal.

(d) The GaPSC may periodically conduct an on-site visit to review and verify renewal documentation maintained by the LUA.

(5) Criminal Record Check:

(a) A criminal record check shall be required for renewal of all certificates held by educators employed in a Georgia LUA including state chartered special schools and commission charter schools. This requirement does not apply to employees of state agencies.

(b) If the educator has not had an FBI background check (fingerprint) while employed in the present public school system, the FBI background check (fingerprint) is required for renewal. If the educator has satisfactorily completed an FBI background check (fingerprint) at the present public school system of employment, then a Georgia criminal history check will satisfy the renewal requirement. The Georgia criminal history check will satisfy the renewal requirement for private school, chartered special school, and commission charter school employees.

(c) The criminal record check must be done during the school year in which the certificate expires. The employer may apply for renewal after the criminal record check or FBI background check has been completed from appropriate agencies.

(d) If the educator is not employed in a Georgia public school, private school, chartered special school, or commission charter school at the time of renewal, the educator is exempt from this requirement until such time as Georgia public or private school employment is resumed and the certificate is eligible for renewal.

(6) Renewal Cycle.

(a) Georgia certificates usually have a beginning date of July 1 and an ending date of June 30. Valid certificates may be renewed from October 1 in the year preceding the ending validity date to September 30 of the calendar year in which the validity date expires. The grace period between July 1 and September 30 allows completion of acceptable course work during the summer period. When renewed within this cycle, the validity period continues with no break in dates.

(b) After October 1 of the calendar year in which the validity date ends, the certificate is considered expired.

1. To renew an expired certificate, the educator must be employed by a Georgia LUA, except for those educators meeting (2) (a) 1 and 2 above, have completed all standard renewal requirements including any remaining Special Georgia Requirements, and submit an application packet with appropriate documentation to the GaPSC. Specific renewal application procedures for educators may be found on the GaPSC web site at www.gapsc.com;

2. At the request of the LUA, the educator may:

(i) Be issued a Professional certificate if all standard renewal requirements have been met within five (5) years of the date of application; or

(ii) Be issued a one (1)-year Non-Renewable Professional Certificate to allow the educator time to complete all remaining standard renewal requirements.

(7) Renewal Application Process.

(a) Renewal of certificates held by educators employed by a Georgia public school must be submitted by the employing LUA through the Automatic Certificate Renewal Entry System (ACRES). Information about the online procedures is available to authorized school system personnel on the GaPSC web site at www.gapsc.org.

(b) Renewal of certificates held by educators not employed by a Georgia public school must be submitted by the individual educator. Specific renewal application procedures for educators may be found on the PSC web site at www.gapsc.com.

(8) Exceptions to Five (5)-Year Renewal.

(a) An educator who receives any combination of two (2) unsatisfactory, ineffective or needs development annual performance evaluations during the previous five (5)-year validity cycle that have not been satisfactorily remediated by the employing Georgia LUA shall not be entitled to a renewable certificate in any field (See GaPSC Rule 505-2-.43 ANNUAL PERFORMANCE EVALUATION).

Authority O.C.G.A. 20-2-200