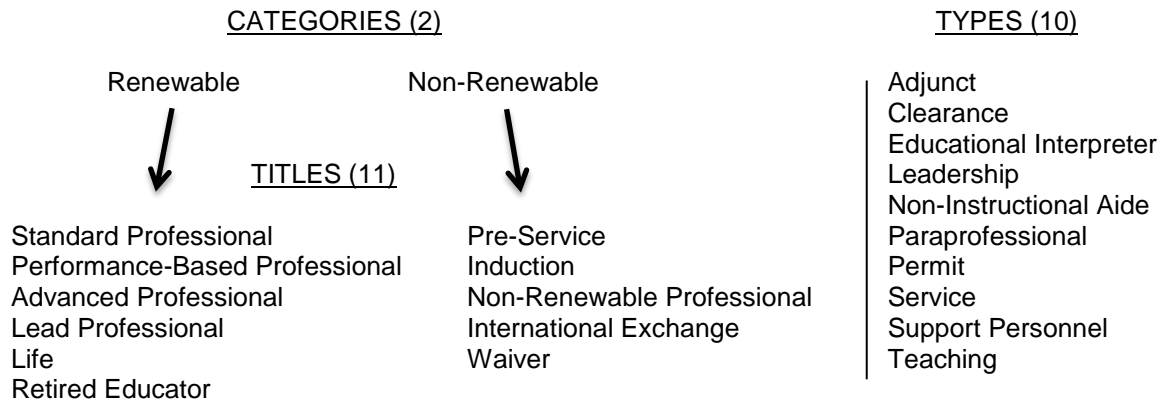


**505-2-.02 CLASSIFICATION**

**(1) Purpose.** Certification is classified according to category, title, type, field and level. The Georgia Professional Standards Commission (GaPSC) has authorized the issuance of certificates under the following classification system:



**(2) Categories.** Certificates are grouped under two (2) major categories based upon requirements needed for continued certification. The categories are: Renewable and Non-Renewable.

(a) Renewable certificate validity varies by title and type. During the validity period, the educator must satisfy renewal requirements outlined in GaPSC Rule [505-2-.36 RENEWAL REQUIREMENTS](#) and/or any additional requirements outlined in the rule appropriate to the certificate title and type.

(b) Non-Renewable certificates are valid from one (1) to five (5) years, depending on the title and outstanding requirements for certification. Two Non-Renewable licenses, for Educational Interpreters and Paraprofessionals, are also issued. During the validity period, the educator must satisfy specified requirements to convert the Non-Renewable to a Renewable certificate or license.

**(3) Titles.** Certificate titles identify the subcategories of certificates. There are eleven (11) titles.

(a) Standard Professional: The Standard Professional certificate is a Georgia professional certificate title issued to educators with teaching, service and leadership certificate types employed by a Georgia local unit of administration (LUA). Certificate issuance is based upon completion of all requirements for professional certification and applicable Special Georgia Requirements. Standard Professional certificates are identified by the code letters “SR” (See GaPSC Rule [505-2-.05 PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATE](#));

1. The Standard Professional teaching certificate title indicates that all requirements for professional teaching certification have been met, including applicable Special Georgia Requirements. The Standard Professional teaching certificate is issued to educators who are employed by a Georgia LUA but have not met performance evaluation requirements on the state annual summative performance evaluation or are not evaluated on the statewide evaluation system. Educators holding the Standard Professional teaching certificate who are not evaluated on the statewide evaluation system are evaluated by a school, district or agency approved evaluation system;

2. The Standard Professional leadership certificate title indicates that all requirements for professional leadership certification have been met, including applicable Special Georgia Requirements. The Standard Professional leadership certificate is issued to Georgia educators completing GaPSC-approved educator preparation programs prior to September 30, 2009. The certificate is also issued to educators applying by reciprocity who meet requirements outlined in GaPSC Rule [505-2-.153 EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP](#);

3. The Standard Professional service certificate title indicates that all requirements for professional certification in a service field have been met, including applicable Special Georgia Requirements;

(b) Performance-Based Professional: The Performance-Based Professional certificate is a Georgia professional certificate title issued to educators with teaching and leadership certificate types employed by a Georgia LUA. Certificate issuance is based upon completion of all requirements for professional certification, including applicable Special Georgia Requirements. Performance-Based Professional certificates are identified by the code letters "PR" (See GaPSC Rule [505-2-.05 PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATE](#));

1. The Performance-Based Professional teaching certificate is part of Georgia's tiered teacher certification system and issued to educators who are employed by a Georgia LUA and evaluated on the statewide evaluation system;

2. The Performance-Based Professional leadership certificate is issued to educators who have completed GaPSC-approved educator preparation performance-based leadership programs and met applicable Special Georgia Requirements;

3. Performance-Based certificates issued to educators as a result of a classroom performance-based evaluation system known as the Teacher Performance Assessment Instrument (TPAI) discontinued in 1990 will have the certificate title converted to the Standard Professional certificate on the effective date of this rule. After meeting Performance-Based certificate requirements outlined in GaPSC Rule [505-2-.05 PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATE](#), these educators will qualify for a Performance-Based Professional certificate;

(c) Advanced Professional: The Advanced Professional certificate title is part of Georgia's tiered teacher certification system and recognizes teachers with expert classroom practice and professional growth resulting in higher levels of student learning. The Advanced Professional certificate is issued to educators employed by a Georgia LUA. Certificate issuance is based upon completion of all requirements for Advanced Professional certification and applicable Special Georgia Requirements. Advanced Professional certificates are identified by the code letters "AP" (See GaPSC Rule [505-2-.06 ADVANCED PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATE](#));

(d) Lead Professional: The Lead Professional certificate title is part of Georgia's tiered teacher certification system and recognizes qualified teachers who promote, support and expand opportunities for teacher leadership in grades P-12 to improve effective classroom practice resulting in higher levels of student learning. The Lead Professional certificate is issued to educators employed by a Georgia LUA. Certificate issuance is based upon completion of all requirements for Lead Professional certification and applicable Special Georgia Requirements. Lead Professional certificates are identified by the code letters "LP" (See GaPSC Rule [505-2-.07 LEAD PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATE](#));

(e) Life: The Life certificate title was issued prior to July 1, 1974, to educators eligible under requirements in place at that time. Once issued, the life status remains in effect for an unlimited time for the fields in which it was issued. Applications for higher certificate levels (upgrades) do not alter the life status for fields previously issued. No new life certificates shall be issued nor shall any new fields be added to life certificate holders with the life title. Life certificates are identified by the code letter "D" (See GaPSC Rule [505-2-.12 LIFE CERTIFICATE](#));

(f) Pre-Service: The Pre-Service certificate title is part of Georgia's tiered teacher certification system and recognizes candidates enrolled in GaPSC-approved educator preparation programs, and participating in field and clinical experiences in Georgia schools. Pre-Service certificates are identified by the code letters "PS" (See GaPSC Rule [505-2-.03 PRE-SERVICE TEACHING CERTIFICATE](#));

(g) Induction: The Induction certificate title is part of Georgia's tiered teacher certification system and provides a statewide structure for the professional development of early career educators and educators new to the state of Georgia and assures the effectiveness of these educators. Certificate issuance is based upon completion of all requirements for Induction certification and applicable Special Georgia Requirements. Induction certificates are identified by the code letter "IN" (See GaPSC Rule [505-2-.04 INDUCTION CERTIFICATE](#));

(h) Non-Renewable Professional: The Non-Renewable Professional certificate title is issued to educators at the request of a Georgia LUA under several different circumstances as outlined in the Non-Renewable Professional rule. Non-Renewable Professional certificates are identified by the code letter "N" (See GaPSC Rule [505-2-.09 NON-RENEWABLE PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATE](#));

(i) International Exchange: The International Exchange certificate title is issued at the request of an employing Georgia LUA to educators certified in other nations who wish to teach in Georgia schools for up to three (3) years. The certificate cannot be renewed or extended. International Exchange certificates are identified by the code letter "X" (See GaPSC Rule [505-2-.11 INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE CERTIFICATE](#));

(j) Waiver: The Waiver certificate title is issued at the request of an employing Georgia LUA and at the discretion of the GaPSC to educators who have not satisfied all certification requirements. Valid for a one (1)-year period, the Waiver certificate is non-renewable. Waiver certificates are identified by the code letter "W" (See GaPSC Rule [505-2-.13 WAIVER CERTIFICATE](#));

(k) Retired Educator: The Retired Educator certificate is issued to retired Georgia educators who have previously held renewable, professional educator certification. Retired Educator certificates are identified by the code letters "R" (See GaPSC Rule [505-2-.44 RETIRED EDUCATOR CERTIFICATE](#)).

**(4) Types.** Certification types identify ten (10) school personnel functions: adjunct, clearance, educational interpreter, leadership, non-instructional aide, paraprofessional, permit, service, support personnel, and teaching.

(a) Adjunct License: The Adjunct license is issued at the request of an employing Georgia LUA to individuals with specific knowledge, skills and experience in an engineering, medical, dental, pharmaceutical, veterinarian, legal, accounting or arts profession, or any other professional position approved by the GaPSC or who have instructional experience in a branch of the U.S. military (except for JROTC), or in a GaPSC-accepted accredited college or university. Holders of this certificate are eligible to provide instruction for up to but no more than fifty (50) percent of the school day in specific subjects in grades 6-12 only. These licenses are issued for one (1) year and are renewable. These licenses are identified by the letter "J" (See GaPSC Rule [505-2-.15 ADJUNCT LICENSE](#));

(b) Clearance Certificate: The Clearance certificate is issued at the request of the employing Georgia LUA to educators who satisfactorily complete fingerprint and criminal background check requirements and do not have a certificate that is currently revoked or suspended in Georgia or any other state. All educators employed by a Georgia LUA must hold a Clearance Certificate. See GaPSC Rule [505-2-.42 CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE](#), for the definition of educator as it applies to this certificate. There are no academic requirements necessary to qualify for this certificate. All holders of this certificate are subject to the Georgia Code of Ethics for Educators. These certificates are identified by the letter "C" (See GaPSC Rule [505-2-.42 CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE](#));

(c) Educational Interpreter License: The Educational Interpreter license is issued to individuals who serve as sign language interpreters in schools. It is the responsibility of the Georgia LUA to assure that personnel who provide educational interpreting services, regardless of job title, hold the Educational Interpreter License. The Educational Interpreter License has no assigned level. These licenses are identified by the letters "EI" (See GaPSC Rule [505-2-16 EDUCATIONAL INTERPRETER LICENSE](#));

(d) Leadership Certificate: The Leadership certificate is issued in fields that prepare an educator to administer or supervise a Georgia LUA, school, or school program. These certificates are identified by the letter "L" (See GaPSC Rule [505-2-153 EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP](#)).

(e) Non-Instructional Aide license: The Non-Instructional Aide license is issued to eligible individuals hired to perform routine non-instructional tasks. The Non-Instructional Aide license has no assigned level. These licenses are identified by the letters "AIDE" (See Rule GaPSC Rule [505-2-17 NON-INSTRUCTIONAL AIDE LICENSE](#));

(f) Paraprofessional license: The Paraprofessional license is issued to eligible individuals hired as Paraprofessionals. The Paraprofessional license has no assigned level. These licenses are identified by the letters "PARA" (See GaPSC Rule [505-2-18 PARAPROFESSIONAL LICENSE](#));

(g) Permit: The Permit is issued at the request of an employing Georgia LUA to individuals with specific experience in the teaching fields of performing arts (art, music, dance, and drama), foreign language, JROTC, CTAE Specializations, Engineering and Technology, Healthcare Science, and the position of superintendent. These certificates are identified by the letter "P" (See GaPSC Rule [505-2-10 PERMIT](#));

(h) Service certificate: The Service certificate is issued in fields that prepare an individual to provide support services to students, school personnel, and school operations. These certificates are identified by the letter "S" (See GaPSC Rules [505-2-140 AUDIOLOGY](#) to [505-2-149 TEACHER LEADERSHIP](#));

(i) Support Personnel license: The Support Personnel license is issued at the request of an employing Georgia LUA to individuals who serve in positions of leadership over support functions in the LUA. Such positions include but are not limited to: finance, transportation, public relations, personnel, staff development, facilities, planning, evaluation, research, assessment, and technology coordination. The Support Personnel license has no assigned level. These licenses are identified by the letters "SP" (See GaPSC Rule [505-2-19 SUPPORT PERSONNEL LICENSE](#));

(j) Teaching certificate: The teaching certificate is issued in fields that prepare an educator to teach the subject matter offered as a part of the school curriculum. These certificates are identified by the letter "T";

1. Technical Specialist teaching certificates were issued to eligible educators in the Career, Technical and Agricultural Education (CTAE) areas of Trade and Industrial Education and Healthcare Science Technology Education prior to the effective date of this rule. These certificates were identified by the letters "TS" but were converted to "T" certificates on the effective date of this rule.

**(5) Fields.** Fields identify the specific teaching subject, service function or leadership function authorized by the certificate. Georgia certificate fields are listed on the GaPSC web site at [www.gapsc.com](http://www.gapsc.com).

**(6) Level.** Levels are assigned to Georgia educator certificates based on the degree(s) an educator holds. Certificates may be assigned one or both of the following types of levels:

(a) General Level: The general level assigned to a certificate applies to all fields on that certificate, with the possible exception of Educational Leadership fields, as described in part (b) below.

1. The general level is determined upon initial issuance of a certificate based on the highest degree an educator has been awarded by a GaPSC-accepted accredited institution, with the following exception:

(i) A leadership degree that meets the criteria outlined in part (b) below shall not be used to determine the general level of a certificate.

2. Once an educator has been issued a certificate that may be upgraded as outlined in GaPSC Rule [505-2-.33 CERTIFICATE UPGRADE](#), the general level may only be increased according to the procedures outlined in that rule.

3. Unless otherwise noted, all references to the “level” of a certificate in GaPSC rules refer to the general level.

4. College hours beyond a degree are not used to assign the level, except as specifically noted in section (c) below.

(b) Leader Level: A certificate may be assigned a leader level in addition to a general level. The leader level only applies to any Educational Leadership fields on that certificate. If the general level of a certificate is higher than the leader level, the general level supersedes the leader level for all fields, including any Educational Leadership fields held.

1. A leader level is assigned to the certificate of any educator who completed a leadership degree, defined in O.C.G.A. 20-2-212 as “a degree earned in conjunction with completion of an educator leadership preparation program approved by the Professional Standards Commission,” unless the leadership degree earned meets one of the following exemption criteria:

(i) The leadership degree was awarded prior to July 1, 2010; or

(ii) The educator enrolled in the leadership preparation program on or before April 1, 2009, and was awarded one of the following leadership degrees by the dates indicated:

(I) A master’s level [level five (5)] leadership degree prior to July 1, 2012;

(II) An education specialist level [level six (6)] leadership degree prior to July 1, 2013; or

(III) A doctoral level [level seven (7)] leadership degree prior to July 1, 2014;

(iii) The leadership degree was not recognized as GaPSC-accepted preparation for Educational Leadership certification at the time that the educator initially received the General certificate level.

2. Once a leader level has been assigned to a certificate, it may only be increased according to the procedures outlined in GaPSC Rule [505-2-.33 CERTIFICATE UPGRADE](#).

(c) General requirements for recognizing certificate levels of education below the bachelor’s degree level are:

1. Level One (1) (Selected Career, Technical and Agricultural Education fields only) - completion of a high school diploma or the GED equivalent;

2. Level Two (2) (Selected Career, Technical and Agricultural Education fields only) - completion of an associate’s degree or one of the following options:

(i) Sixty (60) semester hours of acceptable college credit. Note: For certification purposes, the phrase “acceptable college credit” is defined as credits earned at an institution of higher education that

holds GaPSC-accepted accreditation with a grade of “C” or higher for each course. Remedial courses, course work taken below the freshman level, and audited courses are not acceptable;

(ii) A two (2)-year program consisting of a minimum of two thousand (2,000) clock hours earned through a GaPSC-accepted accredited post-secondary vocational/technical school in the field in which certification is requested; or

(iii) A minimum of twenty-seven (27) semester hours of acceptable college or university credit and a minimum of one thousand (1,000) clock hours earned through a GaPSC-accepted accredited vocational/technical school in the field in which certification is requested.

(d) General requirements for recognizing initial certificate levels of education at the bachelor's degree level or higher are:

1. Level Four (4) - completion of a bachelor's degree or the GaPSC's determined degree equivalent. A bachelor's degree is the minimum degree requirement for teaching certification except for selected Career, Technical and Agricultural Education fields;

2. Level Five (5) - completion of a master's degree or the GaPSC's determined degree equivalent. A master's degree is the minimum degree requirement for service fields and non-performance based leadership certification;

3. Level Six (6) - completion of an education specialist degree or the GaPSC's determined degree equivalent as found on the GaPSC website at [www.gapsc.com](http://www.gapsc.com) or completion of a minimum of thirty-six (36) semester hours of course work required for a level seven (7) doctoral degree and successful completion of the oral and/or written comprehensive examinations or the institution's determined equivalent. A specialist degree is the minimum degree requirement for performance-based leadership certification; and

4. Level Seven (7) - completion of a Ph.D., Ed.D. or the GaPSC's determined degree equivalent;

(e) Educators holding a valid level one (1) or two (2) certificate may qualify for a certificate level change to the bachelor's degree level – level four (4) – by earning a bachelor's degree that meets the requirements of GaPSC Rule [505-2-.31 GAPSC-ACCEPTED ACCREDITATION; VALIDATION OF NON-ACCREDITED DEGREES](#). The procedures outlined in GaPSC Rule [505-2-.33 CERTIFICATE UPGRADE](#) do not apply to educators holding level one (1) or two (2) certificates;

(f) The assignment of a certification level to various degrees is contingent on a valid certificate field being held and the degree being awarded on an official transcript from a GaPSC-accepted accredited institution (See GaPSC Rule [505-2-.31 GAPSC-ACCEPTED ACCREDITATION; VALIDATION OF NON-ACCREDITED DEGREES](#)). Certificate levels that are assigned to various degrees and majors may be found on the GaPSC website at [www.gapsc.com](http://www.gapsc.com);

(g) Degrees with “doctoral,” “doctorate” or “master's” in the degree title are not automatically equivalent to a specific degree level and may result in a determination ranging from level four (4) to level seven (7). The GaPSC is responsible for determining what level is assigned to a specific degree; and

(h) The certificate level, as defined in Georgia, is not a part of the National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification (NASDTEC) Interstate Agreement and, therefore, does not transfer from state to state.