

Georgia Professional Standards Commission Frequently Asked Questions for Georgia's Pre-K Program

FAQ for Project Directors

This document is designed to help Pre-K Project Directors understand the Georgia Professional Standards Commission (GaPSC) certification process.

How do teachers that are not certified become eligible for Georgia certification?

- To become eligible for Georgia certification, teachers must have completed an educator preparation program. Teachers that completed an educator preparation program in the state of Georgia should submit a *GaPSC Initial Certification Application* to the Georgia Professional Standards Commission. Once the teacher has submitted all required documents for initial certification, a **Certificate of Eligibility** will be issued if the teacher is not employed. The Certificate of Eligibility verifies that the teacher is qualified for employment by a Local Unit of Administration (LUA). The Certificate of Eligibility is valid for five years from date of issuance. Once the teacher is employed as a lead teacher in Georgia's Pre-K, the teacher should apply for the Induction Pathway 1 Certificate. The Induction Pathway 1 Certificate is valid for three years.

Teachers that completed an educator preparation program in another state and completed student teaching in Georgia should submit a *GaPSC Initial Certification Application* to the Georgia Professional Standards Commission. Once the teacher has submitted all required documents for initial certification, a **Certificate of Eligibility** will be issued if the teacher is not employed. The Certificate of Eligibility verifies that the teacher is qualified for employment by a Local Unit of Administration (LUA). The Certificate of Eligibility is valid for five years from date of issuance. Once the teacher is employed as a lead teacher in Georgia's Pre-K, the teacher should apply for the Induction Pathway 2 Certificate. The Induction Pathway 2 Certificate is valid for three years.

Teachers that hold a professional certification in another state and have less than 3 years of professional experience should submit a *GaPSC Initial Certification Application* to the Georgia Professional Standards Commission. Once the teacher has submitted all required documents for initial certification, a **Certificate of Eligibility** will be issued if the teacher is not employed. The Certificate of Eligibility verifies that the teacher is qualified for employment by a Local Unit of Administration (LUA). The Certificate of Eligibility is valid for five years from date of issuance. Once the teacher is employed as a lead teacher in Georgia's Pre-K, the teacher should apply for the Induction Pathway 3 Certificate. The Induction Pathway 3 Certificate is valid for three years.

What about individuals that haven't completed an educator preparation program and hold a non-early childhood education degree. Can they work as a lead teacher in Georgia's Pre-K?

- Individuals that hold a non-early childhood education degree or higher and have not completed an educator preparation program may be eligible for the Induction Pathway 4 certificate after securing a position as lead teacher in Georgia's Pre-K. Those with an Induction Pathway 4 can work as a lead teacher in Pre-K while they are completing an educator preparation program. Prospective teachers who have met the requirements for the Induction Pathway 4 certificate will not receive a Certificate of Eligibility. Upon employment, the Pre-K project director must request the Induction Pathway 4 certificate from the GaPSC after the teacher has met the following:
 - Hold a Bachelor's degree in any subject area with a 2.5 GPA
 - Post a passing score on the appropriate GACE specialty area assessment for the field
 - Post a passing score or exempt the GACE Program Admissions Assessment
 - Post a passing score on the Georgia Educator Ethics Assessment Program Entry Exam

What is a Georgia Local Unit of Administration (LUA)?

- A Georgia LUA is a local education agency or a regional educational service agency, including but not limited to public, waiver, Investing in Educational Excellence (IE2), charter schools, and private schools (i.e., faith-based schools, early learning centers, hospitals, juvenile detention centers, etc.). State agencies and public and private institutions of higher education requiring certification for employment purposes are included in this definition. An early learning childcare center offering Georgia's Pre-K is also considered a LUA.

A prospective teacher just provided me a Certificate of Eligibility. What is it and what should I do with it?

- The Certificate of Eligibility (COE) verifies that the person is qualified for employment as a Pre-K lead teacher at the certified level. You may hire the teacher at your discretion. Once the teacher is hired, you must submit an application packet to the GaPSC so that the Certificate of Eligibility can be converted to a certificate. To submit the application for conversion, the following must be submitted:
 - A Georgia PSC Application for Certification (3 pages) signed and dated within the past 90 days
 - The Georgia PSC Employer Assurance Form completed by Pre-K project director

Applications and forms are located at <http://www.gapsc.com/Certification/FormsAndApplications.aspx>

How long is the Induction certificate valid and can it be renewed?

- The Induction certificate period usually lasts 3 years. In general, Induction certificates are not renewable. However, there are exceptions. Teachers should contact the GaPSC for additional information.

What is the next step after teachers are issued an Induction certificate?

- After a teacher is issued an Induction certificate, the next step is for the teacher to obtain a Georgia Professional certificate. There are two types of Professional certificates, Performance-Based Professional and Standard Professional. Both types of Professional certificates require at least 3 years of experience within the last 5 years and a Professional level passing score on the GACE content exam.

What is the difference between the Performance-Based Professional and the Standard Professional certificates?

- Performance-Based Professional certificates are issued to teachers who have been evaluated for at least two years on the statewide Teacher Keys Effectiveness System (TKES). Pre-K teachers in public schools will be issued the Performance-Based Professional certificate because they are evaluated on the TKES.
- Standard Professional certificates are issued to teachers who are not evaluated on the TKES. Pre-K teachers working in early learning childcare centers will be issued a Standard Professional certificate because they are not evaluated on the TKES.
- Both the Performance-Based Professional and the Standard Professional certificates are classified as Professional.

Can a teacher holding a valid, and current teaching certificate in Early Childhood or Elementary Education from another state work as a lead teacher in Georgia's Pre-K Program at the certified level?

- Yes, a teacher holding a teaching certificate from another state can work as a lead teacher in Pre-K at the certified level. Out-of-state, valid, and current official teaching certificates in Early

Childhood or Elementary Education are acceptable during the teacher's first Georgia's Pre-K school year only. If the teacher is new to your program, it is important to ask the teacher if this is his or her first year as a Georgia's Pre-K teacher. If the teacher already worked their first year at another Pre-K program, the out-of-state certificate is no longer recognized at the certified level. To apply for Georgia certification, the teacher must submit the following to the Georgia Professional Standards Commission (PSC):

- A Georgia PSC Application for Certification (3 pages) signed and dated within the past 90 days;
- Verification of Lawful Presence;
- A copy of all out-of-state educator certificates (valid or expired);
- Copies of any content-based assessments required to obtain the professional certificate(s). If no exams were taken, the teacher should write that no exams were taken on the application;
- Official transcripts from all colleges and universities attended showing graduation dates and degrees awarded if applicable;
- Georgia PSC Experience Verification Form. Experience gained by out-of-state educators may now be used to exempt all special Georgia requirements except the Standards of Conduct. An applicant must have earned a minimum of three full years of successful education experience within five years of the date of application. The out-of-state experience must be in the same field (subject area) as the certificate being requested. If the teacher qualifies for this exemption, he/she must submit a PSC Experience Verification Form completed by their previous out-of-state employing school system. The Georgia PSC Experience Verification Form is not required in the application package if the teacher does not have experience;
- A \$20 transaction fee or the Employer Assurance form completed by the Pre-K project director.

A prospective teacher told me she passed the Program Admission Assessment (PAA) and the Georgia Assessments for the Certification of Educators (GACE) content assessment. Is she considered certified?

- No, she is not considered certified. However, she may qualify for the Induction Pathway 4 certificate at your request.

What steps should I follow to obtain a Paraprofessional Certificate for a prospective Pre-K assistant teacher?

- You must first verify that the assistant teacher holds a High School Diploma and has passed the Paraprofessional GACE or holds an Associate's degree or higher. Once this information is verified, you should email pdr@gapsc.com and request access to the database used to issue Paraprofessional certificates. After access is approved, you will receive an email with login credentials to www.gapsc.org and instructions on how to issue the Paraprofessional certificate. Once the certificate is issued, you can print it by going to www.gapsc.com and creating a MyPSC account.

Can the Paraprofessional certificate for Pre-K assistant teachers be renewed? If so, what is the process?

- Yes, the Paraprofessional certificate can be renewed, but only at the request of the Pre-K project director. To renew the Paraprofessional certificate, the project director must email pdr@gapsc.com and request the GaPSC required forms for Paraprofessional certificate renewal.
- **How can directors and teachers access GaPSC forms?**

All forms except the Paraprofessional application are located at <http://www.gapsc.com/Certification/FormsAndApplications.aspx>

Paraprofessional applications are available only at the request of Pre-K project directors with access to www.gapsc.org. To obtain access to www.gapsc.org, the project director must email a request to pdr@gapsc.com with his or her full name, mailing address of the center, phone and fax numbers.