

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

### **FAQ for Georgia's Pre-K Teachers**

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

#### **I have completed an educator preparation program and would like to become certified in Georgia. What steps should I take?**

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

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

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

#### **I have not completed an educator preparation program. I hold a Bachelor's degree but not in the field of early childhood education. What steps should I take to become certified?**

- If you have not completed an educator preparation program and you hold a non-early childhood education degree or higher, you may qualify for the Induction Pathway 4 certificate. Individuals with an Induction Pathway 4 can work as a lead teacher in a Georgia's Pre-K class 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 Georgia Local Unit of Administration (LUA) may request the Induction Pathway 4 certificate at their discretion after you have 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

**I have a Certificate of Eligibility. What is it and what should I do with it?**

- The Certificate of Eligibility verifies that you are qualified for employment as a Pre-K lead teacher at the certified level. When seeking employment, you should provide the Certificate of Eligibility to the Georgia Local Unit of Administration (LUA). An early learning childcare center offering Georgia's Pre-K is considered a LUA.

**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.

**I provided the LUA the Certificate of Eligibility and now I'm employed as a lead teacher in Georgia's Pre-K. What is the next step to become certified?**

- Now that you are employed by a Georgia LUA, your Certificate of Eligibility may be converted to a corresponding educator certificate. The LUA must submit the application for conversion to the GaPSC.

**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. Contact the GaPSC for additional information.

**What is the next step after I am issued an Induction certificate?**

- After you are issued an Induction certificate, the next step is obtaining 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.

**I am pursuing a Professional certificate. Is participation in field experiences and clinical experiences in a Georgia's Pre-K class located in an early learning childcare center acceptable?**

- Yes, field experiences and clinical experiences in a Georgia's Pre-K class located in a childcare center is acceptable as long as there is a supervising/mentor teacher on staff professionally

certified in the same teaching field as the education student that is completing field or clinical experience. For example, an Early Childhood Education (ECE) certified supervisor with a student seeking ECE certification or a Birth through Kindergarten supervisor with a student seeking Birth through Kindergarten certification.

**I hold a teaching certificate from another state. Can I work as a lead teacher in Georgia's Pre-K Program at the certified level?**

- If you have an out-of-state, valid, and current official teaching certificates in Early Childhood, you may work as a lead teacher at the certified level during your first Georgia's Pre-K school year only. After your first year, your out-of-state certificate will no longer be recognized at the certified level.

To apply for Georgia certification, you must submit the following to the GaPSC:

- 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;
- \$20 transaction fee or Employer Assurance form completed by the Pre-K project director.

**I have passed the Program Admission Assessment (PAA) and the Georgia Assessments for the Certification of Educators (GACE) content assessment. Am I considered certified?**

- No, you are not considered certified. However, you may qualify for the Induction Pathway 4 certificate at the request of a Georgia LUA. Once the Induction Pathway 4 certificate is issued, you will have 3 years during the validity period of the certificate to complete a state approved teacher preparation program. The Induction Pathway 4 certificate can only be issued at the request of an employing Georgia LUA.

**I completed an approved teacher preparation program and recently submitted an application package. How will I be notified that I have met all of the requirements for certification?**

- Once you have submitted the application package, you may monitor receipt of materials and the status of your certification through your MyPSC account at [myspc.org](http://myspc.org). All certificates, certificates of eligibility and correspondences are issued electronically via MyPSC.

**How can I renew my Professional Certificate prior to expiration or after it expires?**

You can submit an application packet to the GaPSC to renew as early as October 1<sup>st</sup> of the calendar year prior to the year that the certificate expires.

If employed, the application packet must include the following:

- Georgia PSC Application for Certification
- Verification of Lawful Presence
- Georgia PSC Employer Assurance Form
- Official transcripts reflecting the completion of 10 PLU hours or 6 semester hours during the validity date of your certificate

If not employed,

- Submit all documents listed above with the exception of the Georgia PSC Employer Assurance Form
- Submit the \$20 application processing fee

#### *Employment Requirement*

*As of July 1, 2015, employment by a Georgia LUA is required for renewal of any professional Georgia certificate. Teachers who are not employed at the time of renewal will receive a Certificate of Eligibility that may be converted to a professional certificate upon employment.*

*The employment requirement does not apply to renewal of professional certificates held by teachers who have worked for at least one year on a renewable professional Georgia certificate at any time in their career.*

*Professional certificates holders with certificates expiring between 2011 and 2017 are not required to submit renewal credits.*

#### **How can I access GaPSC forms?**

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