

GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS



**Standard Operating Procedures**

**Policy Name:** Education Programs Administration

**Policy Number:** 108.01

**Effective Date:** 7/27/2023

**Page Number:** 1 of 15

**Authority:**  
Commissioner

**Originating Division:**  
Inmate Services Division  
(Education)

**Access Listing:**  
Level I: All Access

**I. Introduction and Summary:**

Uniform administrative practices and procedures are followed for the organization, management, and delivery of education programs.

**II. Authority:**

A. O.C.G.A. §§ 20-2-200, 42-5-57, 42-2-5.2, 42-5-1, 42-5-64, 42-8-35.1, and 42-9-42.

B. Ga. Comp. R. & Regs. 125-4-2-.01, 125-4-2-.04, and 125-4-2-.02.

C. GDC Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs): 101.04 Records Management, 107.04 Risk and Needs Assessment, 107.01 Purpose & Objectives - Access to Counseling Services and Programs, 206.01 Offender Personal Property Standards, 210.04 Inmate/Probation Boot Camp - Rights and Standards, and 402.01 Property Determinations and Control; and

D. ACA Standards: 2-CO-5B-01, 5-ACI-7B-01, 5-ACI-7B-05, 5-ACI-7B-06, 5-ACI-7B-07, 5-ACI-7B-09, 5-ACI-7B-11, 5-ACI-7B-12, 5-ACI-7B-14, 5-ACI-7B-15, 4-ALDF-5A-02, and 4-ACRS-7D-26.

**III. Definitions:**

A. **Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)** - The federal law which provides for a free, public education to individuals with disabilities under the age of 21.

B. **Classification Committee** - A committee organized by the chief counselor designed to place offenders in appropriate programming. See SOP 220.03 for details.

C. **Next Generation Assessment (NGA)** - GDC's assessment tool to identify programming for the offender population.

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**IV. Statement of Policy and Applicable Procedures:**

A. Supervision of Education:

1. Education staff is informed about SOPs upon entry into the system and have easy access to updated policies and procedures throughout their period of employment.
2. Field and central office staff refer to the philosophy and goal statements provided below when making decisions regarding:
  - a. Planning.
  - b. Scheduling.
  - c. Staffing.
  - d. Evaluating.
  - e. Budgeting.
  - f. Purchasing.
  - g. Motivating students.
  - h. Providing instruction.
  - i. Coordinating Academic and Career, Technical, and Higher Education programs; and
  - j. Similar concerns.

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B. Philosophy:

1. The correctional education program adheres to a holistic philosophy of education.
2. Education is a necessary component that augments other programmatic activities provided throughout an offender's incarceration.
3. Correctional educators believe that helping individuals develop their cognitive abilities and life skills while providing meaningful employment skills will help offenders have the ability and desire to choose socially acceptable behaviors as alternatives to their current lifestyles; and
4. The public will benefit in that better educated, well adjusted, and productive citizens are less likely to recidivate and more likely to make positive contributions to society.

C. Goals:

1. To provide an individual program plan for each student.
2. To provide a comprehensive education program and an interdisciplinary link between:
  - a. Academic Education.
  - b. Career.
  - c. Technical.
  - d. Higher Education.
  - e. Special Education.

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- f. OJT programs; and
  - g. Other programmatic activities identified in the Next Generation Assessment as input for the Classification Committee.
3. The implementation of this comprehensive education program includes the specific objectives listed below:
- a. To identify educational deficiencies and provide instruction that will enable offenders to raise their reading levels to a minimum of 5th grade competency (or to the highest-grade level attainable) based on standardized test results.
  - b. To provide academic instruction leading to attainment of a High School Equivalency (HSE).
  - c. To collect and report data, including offender achievement, in SCRIBE.
  - d. To provide opportunities to improve communication and social skills.
  - e. To provide career, technical, higher education and certified on-the-job-training (OJT) programs that lead to the acquisition of at least entry-level job skills and attitudes.
  - f. To provide appropriate educational services for all offenders with disabilities in compliance with Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.
  - g. To provide seamless services to offenders who reside in tier, segregation, or extended segregation.
  - h. To conduct regular systematic evaluations of student progress and achievement and to share results with offenders' counselors and Classification Committee as required.

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- i. To provide special recognition for offenders who complete education programs.
- j. To develop and maintain cooperative working relationships with public and private sector representatives to supplement and complement education programs, including a plan for the identification and use of available community resources.
- k. To provide staff training activities to enhance and further professional skills of employees; and
- l. To provide technical assistance on education related matters, as available, to:
  - i. Transitional Centers.
  - ii. Integrated Treatment Facilities (ITF).
  - iii. Residential Substance Abuse Treatment (RSAT) Centers.
  - iv. Detention Centers.
  - v. Boot Camp facilities.
  - vi. County Correctional Institutions; and
  - vii. Maintain and foster a cooperative relationship with other GDC work units and outside partners, and to work with all staff in achieving educational goals.

**D. Accreditation Affiliations and Community Development:**

1. GDC affiliates with other state agencies and groups interested and involved in assisting in the provision of education for offenders.

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2. GDC affiliates with the Georgia Department of Education in the provision of:
    - a. Educational grant-related services.
    - b. Federally mandated education programs for certain age groups; and
    - c. Other education services.
  3. Local Regional Education Service Agencies (RESA) are consulted by local staff for educational assistance as needed.
  4. Academic and vocational education personnel are certified by a state department of education or other comparable authority.
    - a. Academic and vocational staff possess appropriate degree or certificate.
    - b. Academic and vocational staff are required to attend mandatory trainings.
  5. GDC enters into written agreements with the appropriate local area technical colleges and other post-secondary partners for certifying:
    - a. Career.
    - b. Technical.
    - c. Higher Education; and
    - d. OJT programs and graduates from such programs operated in correctional institutions.
- E. Evaluation:
1. Academic and Career, Technical, and Higher Education programs are evaluated system-wide on an on-going basis.

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2. Elements of programs that are evaluated include but are not limited to:
  - a. The process for identifying appropriate offenders for placement in a program.
  - b. The number of students identified who need educational services.
  - c. The method for assigning and scheduling students to appropriate classes within the master schedule education time blocks.
  - d. The number of students assigned to each class.
  - e. The number of students attending each class as noted on the master schedule.
  - f. The quantity of students served in relation to capacity and need.
  - g. The progress or achievement of students, including completion rates for courses and HES Test completions as determined by GDC's Central Office.
  - h. Educator performance such as:
    - i. Adherence to policy.
    - ii. Increase in performance level of students.
    - iii. Completion rates of students.
    - iv. Communication with offender's counselor and Classification Committee regarding offender needs and performance, and the effective use of resources, staff, space, budget, etc.

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3. On-site program reviews by regional and Central Office staff are conducted as assigned.

F. Record Keeping:

1. The Deputy Warden of Care and Treatment or Chief Counselor, if designated, is responsible for:
  - a. Education on-site supervision.
  - b. Maintains monthly records.
  - c. Cumulative records.
  - d. Financial records; and
  - e. Staff-related records in cooperation with education personnel.
2. The student's permanent record (major documents related to each student's involvement in education programs at the institution) is maintained in the designated location or education office files at the institution:
  - a. This file is separate from the student's daily class file kept by the educator in the school.
  - b. Information in these files is secured and is accessible only to GDC employees.
3. All test scores and any performance notes should be recorded in SCRIBE within five (5) days.



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4. When an offender is transferred to another institution, the offender's education file shall be mailed or transported to the designated education office at the receiving institution within ten (10) days of notification of transfer.
  - a. Permanent education records are submitted to the respective facility's records clerk after parole or discharge.
  - b. School financial records are maintained by on-site supervisors, and the Education Department maintains budget Documentation.
5. Each Deputy Warden of Care and Treatment or designated Chief Counselor maintains or has readily accessible copies of the following reports and provides copies to academic instructors for their records:
  - a. Budget allocations.
  - b. Expenditures.
  - c. Receiving reports; and
  - d. Inventories related to all sources of funds used for education services at the respective institution.
6. Supply and materials files are maintained for one (1) year, and equipment files are maintained for the life of the equipment, including records of equipment purchased with federal funds.
7. Education programs will send budget and other required reports to regional education staff.
8. The designated on-site supervisor is responsible for conducting monthly meetings with education staff.

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- a. Records of meetings (i.e., sign in sheet, minutes, etc.) are kept and stored in education and sent via email to regional education staff.
9. For those instructors who are certified or who are required to hold a valid current certificate, copies of teaching certificates are kept in the Personnel Office.
    - a. Instructors are responsible for obtaining and maintaining certification through Central Office requirements, including all associated fees and courses involved with certification programs.
  10. Copies of contracts and cooperative agreements that pertain to education services are maintained by the education staff (Examples are local agreements with technical colleges and state universities); and
  11. Regional academic education staff provides input on GDC performance for educators to Deputy Wardens of Care and Treatment for annual evaluation through the Professional Development Plan.

G. Procurement Procedures:

1. All expenditures involving federal funds must have prior approval from Director of Academic Education.
2. Inventories are maintained per relevant state and federal guidelines; and
3. Equipment left at a site after termination of a federally funded education program is transferred as directed by regional and Central Office to sites that continue the same program.

H. Student Identification and Assignment, Enrollment and Scheduling, Attendance and Performance:

1. Identification and Assignment:

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- a. All offenders’ educational needs should be identified through regional and Central Office staff-approved testing, and appropriate course assignments based on those identified needs.
- b. It is the responsibility of the offender’s counselor to review the file during intake as well as to make recommendations to the Classification Committee for testing.
- c. Facility education staff will designate appropriate placement after testing has been completed.
- d. For diagnostic facilities, diagnostic offenders may be assigned directly to education and do not require classification action.
- e. All students entering the academic program with educational testing scores obtained within six (6) months of entering the academic program should be automatically placed in the appropriate class.
- f. Once needs are specifically identified they should be entered into the SCRIBE database to capture all educational needs for the facility.
  - i. It is from this database that appropriate offender assignments will be made to testing and/or to specific educational placements.
  - ii. Offenders arriving from Diagnostics should be referred to educational testing to determine placement.
  - iii. Offenders arriving from transferring facilities should be rescheduled to their most current and active course within ten (10) days or placed on a waiting list for such course.
  - iv. A waiting list must be maintained and reviewed by the educational staff to meet the program capacity; and

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- g. The Classification Committee will make the assignment to testing/class based on:
  - i. The offender release date.
  - ii. Facility education staff.
  - iii. Counselor recommendations.
  - iv. Educational waiting list; and
  - v. Current resources.
- 2. Academic Enrollment and Scheduling:
  - a. The Deputy Warden of Care and Treatment, in conjunction with the regional education staff, determines the number of classes and master schedule education time blocks in which classes are provided.
  - b. Facilities must maintain a minimum enrollment of ninety-five (95%) percent of determined program capacity.
    - i. The number and times of classes scheduled is based on the following:
      - 1) The facility level of need determined by educational testing results.
      - 2) The waiting list; and
      - 3) Current resource allocations such as space availability and staffing levels.
    - ii. Expected enrollment is determined by facility space, and availability of resources in conjunction with regional education staff.

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- iii. If space permits, classes should house between fifteen (15) and twenty-five (25) students as determined in conjunction with regional education staff.
  - iv. Enrollment in classes is reviewed and modified on a quarterly basis with the Master Calendar.
  - v. Modifications are made based on changing offender needs and resources at the facility.
  - vi. Every attempt should be made by the Classification Committee to have a full enrollment in each class for each quarter.
  - vii. GDC resource allocations will be made based on facility needs and enrollment levels; and
  - viii. When offenders have full day work assignments, flexible scheduling and alternative learning opportunities will be made available.
3. Attendance and Performance:
- a. Offenders are enrolled per established priorities including consideration given to:
    - i. The length of sentence.
    - ii. The Release date; and
    - iii. Pardons and Paroles' Education Pre-Release stipulations.
  - b. All offender students enrolled in any class or educational activity are expected to attend all assigned activities as if they were work detail assignments.

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- c. Absence from any educational activity is reported to designated staff no later than ten (10) minutes after program start time.
- d. Each facility must maintain a minimum of eighty-five (85%) percent attendance of the enrolled students to meet the daily attendance requirement.
  - i. Only medical and court appointments are considered excused absences.
  - ii. All other absences will be considered unexcused and count against the offender's attendance and the facility's average daily attendance.
  - iii. Documented lockdowns and medical quarantines will not count against average daily attendance; Weekly attendance reports contain real numbers without inclusion of excused absences as this report tracks actual students served.
- e. Designated educational staff monitors student performance with an emphasis placed on student progress towards established goals.
- f. It is the responsibility of educational staff to facilitate student performance improvement and program completions.
- g. Progress or problems in these areas are to be noted on a Work Activity Progress Report (WAPR), no later than after sixty (60) hours of classroom instruction and forwarded to the Warden's designee for follow-up support or action, according to counseling classification policy; and
- h. All education WAPRs are to be submitted to the Warden's designee for entry into SCRIBE.

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4. Program Completion:

- a. Facilities must maintain a minimum program completion rate as specified by regional and Central Office education staff and submit this information monthly.
- b. Each annual completion rate will be determined by regional and Central Office education staff and reviewed annually; and
- c. Assignment and instructional modifications may be made based on completion rate.

V. **Attachments:** None.

VI. **Record Retention of Forms Relevant to this Policy:**

Documents relating to recording academic or vocational training of individual students in state correctional institutions shall be retained for five (5) years. (See Georgia Archives - State Agency Specific Retention Schedules).