

GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS



Standard Operating Procedures

Policy Name: Post-Secondary Education

Policy Number: 108.05

Effective Date: 08/01/2024

Page Number: 1 of 4

Authority:
Commissioner

Originating Division:
Inmate Services Division
(Career Technical and Higher
Education)

Access Listing:
Level II: Required Offender
Access

I. Introduction and Summary:

Post-secondary education may be available to offenders who qualify and who voluntarily seek enrollment in approved courses.

II. Authority:

A. Ga. Comp. R. & Regs. 125-4-2-.04.

B. ACA Standards: 5-ACI-7B-01, 5-ACI-7B-09, and 5-ACI-7B-10; and

C. Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990: 42 U.S.C. §12102, § 12131-34, and 28 C.F.R. §35.101 et seq.

III. Definitions:

As used in this SOP, these terms are defined as follows.

A. **Correspondence Course** - A course of study offered by an organization which the offender initiates and completes independently with approval of the Georgia Department of Corrections (GDC) facility.

B. **Institution of Higher Learning** - A college or university offering post-secondary level academic instruction that leads to credit towards or completion of an associate or higher degree.

C. **Prison Education Program (PEP)** - A post-secondary education program that has been through the application process, and is approved by Georgia Department of Correction, the Board of Education, and their accrediting body. Programming is funded through federal Pell Grant funds.

D. **The State Repository of Information System (SCRIBE)** - GDC's official offender records management system.

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IV. Statement of Policy and Applicable Procedures:

A. Correspondence Courses:

1. Prior to enrolling in a Post-Secondary, or any other, Correspondence Course, the offender must have approval from the Deputy Warden of Care and Treatment (DWCT), or designee. The approval, or disapproval, will be documented in SCRIBE.
2. The offender wanting to take a post-secondary Correspondence Courses, or the offender's family on his or her behalf, must contact the post-secondary Correspondence Course provider/institution, and make arrangements for enrollment, payment, study, testing, and all other requirements.
3. An offender enrolled in a post-secondary Correspondence Course may request assistance from facility staff to proctor and/or tutor – although facility staff are not required to do so. The offender must obtain approval from the DWCT, or designee, prior to beginning any Post-Secondary Correspondence Course, and must notify the DWCT upon completion of any post-secondary Correspondence Course so the completion may be documented in SCRIBE.

B. Approval of Post-Secondary Education Programs:

1. All Institutions of Higher Learning must be approved prior to beginning a post-secondary education program at any facility, regardless of PEP status.
2. Prison Education Programs (PEP) applications are available on the Georgia Department of Corrections website, or by contacting the Director of Career, Technical, and Higher Education (CTHE).
3. Upon PEP approval each Institution of Higher Learning will be required to enter into a Services Agreement (MOU) with GDC.

GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS



Standard Operating Procedures

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C. Management of Post-Secondary Education Programs:

1. GDC facility leadership will make reasonable accommodations to create a positive and productive learning environment for post-secondary education programs. This includes but is not limited to allowing offenders to have access to educational materials during periods of lockdown.
2. Offenders must meet the specific program entry requirements as established by the Institution of Higher Learning.
3. Priority for enrollment may be given according to sentence length, the number and level/type of Disciplinary Reports, and prior academic/career technical education performance.
4. Upon post-secondary enrollment, SCRIBE data entry related to the offender's program is required.
 - a. The appropriate program should be opened in SCRIBE to reflect program enrollment.
 - b. The offender should be scheduled in SCRIBE correctly.
 - c. A scrolling alert note, which indicates that an offender should only be transferred to other facilities with the same program or a Transition Center, should be entered in SCRIBE.
 - d. Upon completion of the program or if a student withdrawal/is removed, the program should be closed, the appropriate reason should be reflected, and the SCRIBE alert note should be removed.

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D. Transfer Process:

1. Once it has been determined that an offender is a good candidate for a post-secondary education program located at another GDC facility and meets the basic requirements for facility transfer, it is the referring facilities responsibility to contact the Director of CTHE who will assist with coordination with the Institution of Higher Learning to ensure the offender is or will be enrolled in the post-secondary education program prior to transfer.
2. GDC will make a good faith effort to not transfer offenders while enrolled in post-secondary education programs.
 - a. If a transfer is deemed necessary, the Director of CTHE shall be contacted immediately, if making contact does not cause an immediate security concern. For offenders enrolled in PEP, transfers during an enrollment period will have a negative impact on the offenders Pell funding upon their release. As such, GDC will make a good faith effort to transfer the offender to another institution that offers the same program, or allow the offender to complete the semester, or related coursework, if possible while maintaining facility security.
 - b. Post-secondary education enrollment will not inhibit transfers to Transition Centers, but, when possible, should occur at the end of a semester, or the offender should be allowed to complete their coursework after transfer

V. Attachments:

Attachment 1: Prison Education Program Application

VI. Record Retention of Forms Relevant to this Policy:

Upon completion, Attachment 1 shall be maintained for three (3) years from PEP approval, or as long as the PEP is active.