

South Carolina Educator Preparation Guidelines: Standards, Policies, and Procedures *Professional Review Committee*

Committee Overview and Responsibilities

Authorized by the State Board of Education (SBE), the Professional Review Committee (PRC) is responsible for reviewing providers and programs and recommending policies regarding educator preparation. Responsibilities of the PRC include, but are not limited to:

- approval of new educator preparation providers,
- approval of new educator preparation programs leading to certification,
- review of modifications to approved preparation programs,
- review of preparation program reports for initial and continuing recognition,
- review of national accreditation decisions and provider status, and
- consideration of other educator preparation matters, as appropriate.

Additionally, for private institutions that choose to meet national provider standards through a state review process, the PRC serves as the accreditation council rendering recommendations for SBE approval.

Membership

Effective with the 2021-22 academic year, the PRC will be comprised of thirteen voting members and three non-voting, ex officio members appointed by the SBE. Members will serve staggered terms of three years.

Because of the PRC's role in the approval and accreditation of providers across the state and the programs they offer, its membership must be representative of diverse education communities and stakeholders in South Carolina.

The following positions are included among the members of the PRC:

- five representatives of public institutions of higher education,
- five representatives of private institutions of higher education,
- one representative from an alternative route preparation program,
- one representative from a South Carolina public school district, and
- one previous South Carolina Teacher of the Year or Honor Roll Teacher.

Ex officio, non-voting members include:

- one representative of the Educator Professions Committee (EPC) of the SBE,
- one representative of the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education, and
- one representative from the SCDE office that supports teacher evaluation and/or school leadership.

Ex officio, non-voting members of the PRC provide subject-matter expertise, serve in an advisory capacity, and participate in all meetings and discussions of the committee, except as noted in this policy.

In an effort to support the recruitment and preparation of a diverse educator workforce, the SCDE recognizes the significant work of historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) and will actively seek representatives of these institutions for PRC membership.

Staff in the SCDE office(s) that support educator preparation and certification coordinate and facilitate all meetings of the PRC.

Terms of Appointment

PRC members are appointed to staggered three-year terms that begin on January 1 and end on December 31 of the designated year. PRC members may be re-appointed to additional terms pending SBE approval.

Expectations of Service

The PRC supports, guides, and provides due diligence in the approval and review of educator preparation providers and programs. In all matters, PRC members are expected to:

- study and be familiar with agenda items, materials, and documents provided prior to each meeting;
- regularly attend meetings of the committee, enter into discussions, and participate in decision-making on items coming before the committee;
- notify the SCDE staff forty-eight hours in advance if unable to attend a meeting;
- adhere to prompt meeting start times;
- participate in and contribute to committee discussions;
- minimize or eliminate distractions and background interference during committee discussions;
- have access to technology to participate efficiently and effectively in virtual meeting formats;
- serve on special committees when requested to do so by the chair;
- refer problems brought to the attention of an individual member to the chair of the committee for review, action, or submission to the full committee;
- recognize that each individual member has no authority to act or speak on behalf of the full PRC except at the request of the committee chair;
- provide information on PRC activities to the chair and entities that are represented; and
- maintain confidentiality regarding all matters of the PRC.

Annual Member Assurances

To ensure deliberations and decisions are impartial, objective, and free of conflicts of interest, PRC members are expected to adhere to standards of conduct and to sign an annual assurances statement. In signing the annual assurances statement, PRC members agree to meet the responsibilities detailed above, maintain confidentiality, and adhere to standards of conduct and professional ethics.

As a member of the PRC, each individual must

- act as an ethical professional who demonstrates honesty, accuracy, and fairness in all committee matters;
- treat as confidential all elements of the approval and review processes including information and evidence documentation gathered as part of the process;
- discuss the recommendations, considerations, and decisions of the PRC only within the official proceedings of the committee;
- refute bias or prejudice regarding all matters considered by the committee including providers being reviewed or individuals involved in the approval process; and
- disclose potential conflicts or competing interests in the accreditation, review, and approval processes.

As a member of the PRC, each individual must not

- serve as an accreditation consultant, paid or unpaid, for an in-state provider during the term of service or for one year after;
- serve on any in-state accreditation review team during the term of service;
- participate in the deliberations or vote on the committee's recommendation for institutions where the individual is currently or has been recently employed, is seeking employment, or recently graduated; or
- accept gifts, compensation, or anything of value that may give the appearance of favor or partiality in decision-making.

Conflicts of Interest and Member Recusal

Committee members with a conflict of interest regarding a matter to be considered and voted on by the PRC must disclose the potential concern and recuse themselves from discussion, deliberation, and voting. In the event individual members do not recuse themselves and a conflict of interest is known, the chair may request a member's recusal.

For the purposes of the PRC, a conflict of interest will be defined as any situation in which financial or other personal considerations may unduly influence a committee vote. Examples of conflicts of interest and circumstances in which recusal is appropriate include, but are not limited to, the following situations.

- The member is or has recently been employed by the provider or is under consideration for employment by the provider.
- The member has served in a special capacity with the provider (e.g., commencement speaker, consortium member, consultant, board member, etc.), received an honorary degree from the institution, or otherwise profited or appeared to benefit from service to the institution or the provider.
- The member has recently graduated from the provider.
- The member has served on the site visit team for the provider's accreditation review or has served as a consultant during the accreditation process.
- The member has a personal interest in the outcome of the decision.

Election of Officers

Leadership positions on the PRC are the chair and chair-elect, and these roles begin annually in August with the first committee meeting of the academic year. Upon the conclusion of the chair's term of service, the chair-elect assumes the role of committee chair. Once elected to a leadership role, the individual will serve for the full academic year. As a result, serving as the committee chair may extend the member's term on the PRC beyond three years.

In the event of a vacancy in the role of chair, the chair-elect will automatically assume the role. Should there be a vacancy in the position of chair-elect, the PRC will elect a replacement at the next scheduled meeting following the announcement of the vacancy. The positions of chair and chair-elect must alternate annually between voting committee members representing public and private institutions or entities.

Member Resignation

If a member resigns from the PRC for any reason, the SBE must approve a new member to fill the vacancy for the remainder of the term. The resigning member is expected to continue serving until a replacement is approved by the SBE unless extenuating circumstances prevent the individual from doing so. After serving the remainder of a vacated term, the new member may be appointed for a full term if recommended by the committee and approved by the SBE.

Member Removal from the PRC

Upon recommendation of the SCDE and PRC, the SBE may remove and replace a committee member who misses two or more consecutive meetings, fails to fulfill responsibilities and deadlines for completing program reviews and committee assignments, or violates the terms of the signed member assurances statement.

Meetings and Voting

Meetings of the PRC may include regular meetings, special meetings, or emergency meetings as determined by SCDE staff and the committee chair. Meetings may be conducted in face-to-face, virtual, or hybrid formats.

A majority of the PRC voting members will constitute a quorum for transacting the business of the committee.

The rules contained in the current edition of *Robert's Rules of Order* shall govern all transactions of the committee to which they are applicable and when not inconsistent with committee governance policies or by-laws of the SBE.

Votes of the committee may be voice votes, electronic votes, or written votes. The chair may call for a show of hands, an electronic vote, or a written vote where it cannot be determined if a motion has carried by voice vote. Votes may be cast only by PRC members in attendance and not by proxy.

The May meeting will be considered an annual meeting for the purpose of electing officers.

Operation of the PRC as the State Accreditation Council

Consistent with procedures of national accreditation organizations, the PRC will function as an accreditation council during reviews of providers eligible to meet national standards through a state process. In this capacity, the PRC renders highly consequential decisions regarding the accreditation status of a provider.

Acting as an accreditation council, the PRC is charged with reviewing the report and recommendation of a site review team's report during a regularly scheduled meeting to which the representatives of the provider and the lead visitor are invited to attend. The invited guests will have up to twenty minutes to respond to questions from the PRC regarding the report, the team's findings, and the evidence submitted as part of the review process. At the next scheduled meeting, the PRC will continue the deliberation of the provider's status and render an accreditation recommendation for subsequent consideration by the SBE, which has authority to determine the provider's final accreditation status.

Members of the PRC who participated on the site review team, are affiliated with the institution, or have a vested interest in the outcome of the deliberation must recuse themselves during all accreditation deliberations.

During deliberation of the PRC in its capacity as a state accreditation council, recused members must leave the meeting during this proceeding. Recused members may return to the meeting following the deliberation and may be present for, but not participate in, the committee's vote.