



OFFICE OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

MISSION

The Georgia Department of Corrections protects the public by operating safe and secure facilities through the development of professional staff and effective offender management.

Timothy C. Ward, Commissioner
Terry Edge, Director, Office of Professional Development

The Office of Professional Development (OPD) with the Georgia Department of Corrections (GDC) consists of employee education, care and custody, and campus operations for GDC Headquarters. Employee training, to include professional training, development, and educational opportunities, is offered to all employees at GDC. All staff training opportunities are developed through the Georgia Corrections Academy, Leadership Development Unit, Special Operations Training Unit, and the Field Training Unit.

OVERVIEW

HISTORY

Professional Development was started in response to a change in Georgia law that required correctional officers to be certified as law enforcement officers. Basic training was originally conducted at the University of Georgia in Athens, but in 1986, the Georgia Public Safety Training Center was opened in Forsyth, and the Corrections Academy relocated.

- Provides legally mandated training to all sworn staff
- Advanced and specialized training to sworn and non-sworn employees
- Develops professional development topics and programs in support of the department's mission and vision
- Headquartered at the Georgia Corrections Academy at GDC Headquarters in Forsyth

BASIC PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

BASIC CORRECTIONAL OFFICER TRAINING (BCOT)

- Largest basic law enforcement training program in the state
- Five-week course taught at the academy
- Paramilitary structure
- Cadets reside on campus during their training and only return home on weekends

ADVANCED & SPECIALIZED DEVELOPMENT

SPECIAL OPERATIONS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT UNIT

- Responsible for providing training to various GDC Special Operations units
- Specialized areas include: Corrections Emergency Response Teams (CERT), Tactical (TACT) Squads, Canine Units, Fugitive Squad
- Offered to advance an officer's skill level in a particular area, i.e., firearms, drill and ceremony, drug detection, chemical munitions, taser, mobile field force, defensive tactics, auto-pistol and cell extraction skills
- Provides training based on current events, and acts as a quick response unit for training issues

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT UNIT

INSTRUCTIONAL

- Teaches and coordinates with adjunct instructors, subject matter experts or university instructors to deliver management, leadership, and education courses
- Courses include Sergeants Academy, Lieutenants Academy, Supervision, Management, Deputy Wardens Academy, and Pre-Command College.
- More than 90 different areas of study focus on care and treatment, health and business-related courses such as mental health, basic counseling, food services, advanced purchasing, and team building.
- Teaches courses and coordinates with adjunct instructors and subject matter experts to offer basic, advanced, and specialized training to the department's sworn and non-sworn staff
- Teaches POST Instructor Training for the agency
- Provides Pre-Service and In-Service Training to Headquarters staff

EDUCATION & E-LEARNING

- Partners with public and private post-secondary education providers to develop various options for non-traditional students to achieve their educational goals
- Georgia Corrections Automated Learning Systems (GCALS) is an online training option designed to provide staff with the opportunity to receive training conveniently without traveling, resulting in a reduction in travel costs. Additionally, GCALS allows staff the convenience of being able to receive training based on their work and personal schedule.
- Classes offered via the Georgia Public Safety Training Center
- Classes offered may change periodically and include: CPR/AED/First Aid, PREA, Use of Force and Elder Abuse Prevention, Ethics and Professionalism, Right to Know, Drug Identification, and Use of Deadly Force

FIELD TRAINING UNIT

- Develops and delivers annual in-service training program to the agencies facility operations employees
- Conducts semi-monthly new employee training for all staff
- Certifies all sworn staff with firearms annually
- Offers additional specialized training to support their facility's mission

INFORMATIONAL HIGHLIGHTS