

Guidelines for Academic Unit Requests for Modification of a Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) Code Assignment

General information regarding Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) codes:

- ✓ the CIP code assignment process,
- ✓ their uses,
- ✓ details related to foreign students on F-1 & J-1 visas who are studying at WSU,
- ✓ the WSU request process for a review and possible re-assignment of a CIP code for an existing program, including limitations and parameters.

Overview of CIP codes

Academic degree programs must be classified using the Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP), which is a taxonomy that is maintained by U.S. Department of Education's (DOE) National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) for their data collection system: the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS).

CIP Codes are meant to represent the curricular aspects of a major and are not intended to serve an individual student or program for funding purposes or to facilitate post-graduation employment opportunities for international students.

Given the guideline addresses academic programs, the Office of the Provost is the primary accountable party. Academic departments and dean offices are accountable for providing accurate information regarding programs. Institutional Research acts as the liaison for the Provost Office in a data governance capacity to ensure requests for new or modified CIP code meets the stated purpose for curricular aspects of the major and/or program.

The Registrar Office and Graduate School are accountable for recording and submitting information related to CIP codes to relevant organizations. Institutional Research is also accountable for submitting information related to CIP codes to relevant organizations. The Admissions Office, Financial Aid Office, and International Programs are partners in the process.

Although these guidelines do not address the CIP code assigned to a new academic plan, since the CIP Code assignment is part of the degree approval process departments and programs who wish to understand more about CIP codes in general or are asked to review and participate in their assignment, will find this document to be useful and relevant.

The purpose of the CIP code is to provide a systematic way to identify programs nationwide by discipline. There are three levels of CIP codes: 2-digit, 4-digit, and 6-digit. The 2-digit prefix represents the broadest scope of the discipline, and the 6-digit code represents the most specific. For example, code 40.0502 translates to Physical Sciences (40), Chemistry (40.05), and Analytical Chemistry (40.0502). For a full listing of CIP codes see: <https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/cipcode/default.aspx?y=56>

CIP codes are used as a primary tool by Institutional Research to report consistently on institutional data to various educational and federal agencies as well as for reporting institutional information on non-federal survey responses. CIP codes impact all the following areas and a change to a program's CIP code is an important and consequential decision.

- State and federal compliance reporting
- Any new or revised academic program or certificate
- Enrollment verifications (National Student Clearinghouse)
- Faculty salary comparator studies
- Instructional cost and productivity studies (Delaware)
- STEM degree analysis
- Curricular designators

CIP assignment can also impact federal financial aid availability (e.g., graduate certificates and Gainful Employment) and how long an international student who graduated from WSU can legally stay in the (United States Department of Homeland Security STEM Designated Degree Program qualifying fields).

International students on F-1 and J-1 visas studying at WSU

CIP codes also appear on the Certificates of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant Student and Exchange Visitor Statuses, commonly known as I-20 or DS-2019 forms, issued by SEVP-certified schools and Exchange Visitor programs (colleges, universities, and vocational schools) that provides supporting information on a student's F, M or J immigration status.

For foreign students, CIP codes may become important to determine the length of time they may remain in the United States after graduation to work in their field, or for some J-1 visa-holders, determining if they are subject to the 2-year home residency requirement based on their academic field. F-1 visa students in some STEM fields (identified by CIP codes and at the discretion of Homeland Security) may be permitted to work in the U.S. longer than students in non-designated fields using the STEM OPT employment authorization benefit. STEM OPT eligibility has several criteria, including the requirement for the student to have a qualifying job offer from a qualifying employer. It is important to note that the US government has only designated certain STEM fields to qualify for the STEM OPT benefit, and the list of qualifying STEM fields is subject to change.

Please note: CIP codes are not changed just to qualify a program for a [STEM-designated CIP](#). Rather, there needs to be a change to the curriculum or other documentation to show that a different code is a better fit. Students with questions about the STEM eligibility of their program should be referred to International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS) jp.intlservices@wsu.edu, 335-4508, Bryan Hall 206.

Process to request a CIP Code modification for a WSU degree program

It is good practice for academic units to regularly review and assess their curricula and program outcomes to assure the accuracy of their CIP code designations. Academic units may access a list of majors with assigned CIP codes in OBIEE (include URL). If an academic unit determines that an alternative CIP code is better aligned to their current academic program/major, the process outlined here will be required. Units should be aware that retroactive CIP codes are not applied to prior year graduates. ***Units should also be aware that the Registrar's office or Graduate School can only make changes prior to the beginning of an academic term to stay compliant with submissions to the National Student Clearinghouse.***

If an academic unit or program believes the CIP code should be changed to improve accuracy or alignment to the curricula of the program, they will follow this process:

1. Provide justification for the change being requested. Typically, the reason would include curricular changes in the current program or an awareness of a new code because of a DOE update.
2. Include both the current and the proposed CIP code. If the change is from non-STEM to STEM, please explain why the program or curriculum fits in a STEM field, since WSU has to document the change for auditing purposes and to answer any questions that may be posed by DHS or the DOE.
3. CIP code changes are made only for purposes of academic accuracy and curricular alignment.
 - a. Implications for STEM related benefits for F1 students are not relevant in making or approving such changes or updates because the CIP designations are tied to curricular offerings and foci
4. Explain how the current (or future) curriculum supports the proposed new CIP code.
 - a. Provide the former curriculum with specific examples of the curricular changes.
5. Provide the program director's and department or school chair/director's agreement.
6. Provide the Dean's support for the request.

Submit the request with all the above documentation to the University Registrar at curriculum.submit@wsu.edu

For this process change document, CIP code assignments and/or changes will be made at the academic program and plan only. The CIP code is applied to the entire plan and not to any subset of students or to any individual student. The sub-plan should inherit the plan CIP code. Additionally, CIP codes for an academic program and plan at all campuses must be the same. CIP codes are also adjusted on course subject.

Final review and approval process

Review of the change request information submitted to the University Registrar will be used in the final approval process. The decision to approve a request to modify the CIP code will be based on the following criteria:

- Program curriculum supports a more accurate or precisely aligned CIP code match.
- The academic basis has been clearly documented in writing.

The Committee on Institutional Accreditation and Program Assessment (Vice Provost for System Innovation and Policy, Associate Dean of the Graduate School, Faculty Senate Chair, Director of Assessment for Curricular Effectiveness, Executive Director of Institutional Research, and Interim Assistant Vice Provost for Academic Engagement and Student Achievement) will be the CIP code modification review panel. Their recommendation will be submitted to the Provost by the Vice Provost for System Innovation and Policy.

A copy of the approval will be sent from the Vice Provost for System Innovation and Policy to the University Registrar or Graduate School, the Vice Provost for Enrollment Management, International Programs, Institutional Research, the Program director, Academic Chair or Director, and the Dean.

Documentation will be retained by the University Registrar's Office in the academic offering program files.

Guidelines and contributions from The Office of the Provost, Office of the Registrar, the Office of International Education, and Institutional Research.

Questions on policy content should be directed to Fran Hermanson, executive director, institutional research, at franherm@wsu.edu or 509-335-3942.