New EPPM Policy - Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) Code Assignment

32 Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) Code Assignment – Guidelines for Academic Unit Review and Modification

Overview

This policy contains general information regarding Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) codes, and it includes:

- An overview of CIP codes,
- The CIP code assignment process,
- CIP code 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.

1. *Overview of CIP codes*

Academic degree programs must be classified using the Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP), a taxonomy maintained by the U.S. Department of Education's (DOE) National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) for the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS). CIP Codes represent the curricular aspects of a major and are not intended for individual student or program funding purposes or to facilitate post-graduation employment opportunities for international students.

Given that this guideline addresses academic programs, the Office of the Provost is primarily accountable. Academic departments and deans' offices must provide accurate information regarding programs. The Office of Strategy, Planning, and Analysis: System Analytics and Reporting (OSPA) serves as the liaison for the Provost Office in a data governance capacity to ensure new or modified CIP code requests align with the stated purpose for the major or program, meet Federal CIP reporting standards, and do not unintentionally duplicate the CIP codes for other WSU degree or certificate programs at the same credential level The Registrar's Office and Graduate School are responsible for recording and submitting information related to CIP codes to relevant organizations. OSPA also submits information related to CIP codes to these organizations, and in the decennial CIP update process, provide units with updates related to new and retired CIP codes. The Admissions Office, Financial Aid Office, and International Programs are additional partners in this process.

While 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—this document is useful and relevant for departments and programs that wish to understand more about CIP codes in general or are asked to review and participate in their assignment.

The CIP code provides 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, visit: NCES CIP Code Listings.

OSPA uses CIP codes as a primary tool to consistently report institutional data to various educational and federal agencies and for non-federal survey responses. CIP codes impact several areas, and changes to a program's CIP code are significant:

- State and federal compliance reporting (including but not limited to IPEDS, student financial aid, Gainful Employment and Financial Value Transparency)
- 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 code assignments can also affect federal financial aid availability (e.g., graduate certificates and Gainful Employment) and the duration of time an international student who graduated from WSU can legally stay in the United States post-graduation.

It is necessary from time to time for programs to modify their CIP codes. These regularly include:

- At the time a new program (degree, plan, or certificate) is proposed at WSU.
- Every 10 years CIP codes are updated by the US Department of Education and a program may identify a new CIP code that best describes its curriculum. In addition, some CIP codes are phased out and no longer allowed, so programs may be required to update their CIP code.
- An academic program updates its curriculum and finds that a new CIP code better reflects the program outcomes.
- Changes in department and faculty disciplines that impact the data that need to be reported to federal and state agencies (e.g., annual NSF/NIH graduate and postdoctoral reporting, faculty salary reporting).
- If it is recognized that there are redundant CIPs in use across different degrees, plans, or certificates.

- When it is necessary to align the CIP codes of Academic Interest areas and degree programs

CIP Code changes that are not acceptable include:

- Changing a CIP code so that a student or group of students is eligible to enroll in the program.
- Changing a CIP code, without a concomitant change in curriculum, to make it STEM eligible for the US Department of Homeland Security.

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

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

For foreign students, CIP codes are crucial in determining the length of time they may remain in the United States post-graduation to work in their field. For some J-1 visa holders, CIP codes help determine if they are subject to the 2-year home residency requirement based on their academic field. F-1 visa students in certain STEM fields (identified by CIP codes at the discretion of Homeland Security) may be allowed to work in the U.S. longer than students in non-designated fields through the STEM OPT employment authorization benefit. STEM OPT eligibility criteria include having a qualifying job offer from a qualified employer. Note that only specific STEM fields qualify for the STEM OPT benefit, and the list is subject to change.

Please note: CIP codes will not be changed solely to qualify a program for a STEM-designated CIP. There must be a change to the curriculum or other documentation showing that a different code is a better fit. Students with questions about the STEM eligibility of their program should contact International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS) at ip.intlservices@wsu.edu, 335-4508, Bryan Hall 206.

3. *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 WSU's OBIEE data system. 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 its 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 how the program or curriculum fits in a STEM field, since WSU must 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. Note that the implications for STEM related benefits for F1 students are not relevant in making or approving such changes or updates.
4. Explain how the current (or future) curriculum supports the proposed new CIP code. This includes providing the former curriculum with specific examples of the curricular changes.
5. Provide the department/school chair/director or equivalent's agreement.
6. Provide the Dean's support for the request.
7. Provide the approval of academic leadership from all campuses where the degree program is offered.

Submit the request with all the above documentation to the University Registrar. (See section 5 for review and approval process.)

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. Additionally, CIP codes must be the same for an academic program and plan that is provided at all campuses. CIP codes for an academic program or plan may also be adjusted if there are significant changes in course subject matter.

4. Process to request a CIP Code for a new WSU degree program or certificate

At the time that a new degree program or certificate is proposed at WSU, the following documentation related to the proposed CIP code should be submitted with the new degree materials:

1. Provide justification for the CIP code being requested.
2. If the CIP code is a STEM code, please explain how the program or curriculum fits in a STEM field.
3. Provide the department/school chair/director or equivalent's approval.
4. Provide the Dean's support for the requested CIP code.
5. Provide the approval of academic leadership from all campuses where the degree program is offered.

5. Final review and approval process

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 (WSU Accreditation Liaison Officer to NWCCU, Associate Dean of the Graduate School, Faculty Senate Chair, Director of Assessment for Curricular Effectiveness, Executive Director of Institutional Research, and Vice Provost for Academic Engagement and Student Achievement) will be the CIP code review panel. Their recommendation will be submitted to the Provost by the Accreditation Liaison Officer.

A copy of all approvals will be sent from the Provost's Office to the University Registrar, the WSU Graduate School, the Vice Provost for Enrollment Management, International Programs, OSPA, the Program director, Academic Chair or Director, and the Dean.

Once approved, CIP Code changes are communicated to Faculty Senate as an information item, and changes will be communicated to Student Financial Services.

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

Questions on policy content should be directed to either Stephanie Kane, Assistant Vice President, OSPA; slkane@wsu.edu, or Bill Davis, Vice Provost, wbdavis@wsu.edu.

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