CIP Code Change Request Policy

What is a CIP code?

The [Classification of Instructional Programs](#), commonly referred to as CIP, is a taxonomy of instructional programs providing a subject classification system for the thousands of different programs offered by postsecondary institutions. The CIP coding framework starts at the broadest distinctions between academic disciplines then drills down into subfields within those general groupings. This is represented in the CIP code, a six-digit number (xx.xxxx) comprised of three pairs of digits. The first two digits represent the most general grouping of related programs and are meant to encompass all instructional programs offered by institutions of higher education in the United States. The next two digits represent a more specific program within the general grouping, and the last two digits narrow down to a very specific instructional field of study.

CIP titles and program descriptions are intended to be general categories into which program completion data can be placed, not exact duplicates of specific majors or field of study titles used by individual institutions.

Why is a CIP code important?

The CIP is used in a variety of education information surveys and databases. Since it was first published in 1980, the CIP has been used by National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) in the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) and its predecessor, the Higher Education General Information Survey (HEGIS) to code degree completions. It is also used by other Department of Education offices, such as the Office for Civil Rights, the Office of Vocational and Adult Education, and the Office of Special Education, and serves as the standard for instructional programs for other federal agencies, including the National Science Foundation (NSF), the Department of Commerce (Bureau of the Census), the Department of Labor (Bureau of Labor Statistics), Homeland Security/U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), and others. In addition, the CIP is used by state agencies, national associations, academic institutions, and employment counseling services for collecting, reporting, and analyzing instructional program data. Some example applications include: economists studying emerging labor pools to identify people with specific training and skills; the business community using IPEDS Completions Survey data to help recruit minority and female candidates in specialized fields by identifying the numbers of these students graduating from specific institutions; and prospective college students looking for institutions offering specific programs of postsecondary study at all levels, from certificates to doctoral degrees.

Can we change our current CIP designation?

Occasionally, a department or college might determine it beneficial to adjust the CIP code assigned to a course or program. This modification could be due to many factors, but most often is related to the natural evolution of disciplinary content within a program, the specialties of available faculty, changes in the CIP classification scheme, reorganization of a program, department, or college, advancements in post-graduation employment or certification requirements, updates to programmatic accreditation requirements, and/or corrections to the currently assigned code.

CIP code changes have an impact far beyond departmental recordkeeping. They can influence the availability of resources to the university, college, program, and/or department. Changes in CIP designation influence peer comparisons (such as faculty salaries, GA stipends, enrollment, degrees granted, etc.) as well as qualification for international student visas related to STEM fields and eligibility for participation in special programs or grant funding (e.g., NSF grants).

To ensure a CIP code change does not result in unintended negative consequences to students or the university, each request requires OSVPP approval via an official process. To request a CIP code change, complete these steps (in order):

1. Determine whether there are any compliance or accreditation implications within the program area by checking with the program accreditor (if applicable), peer institutions, and/or disciplinary bodies such as national associations. It's important to note that CIP codes are assigned at the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education (OSRHE) Program Code level, and sometimes more than one major code is included in a single OSRHE Program Code. Consult the Norman Campus [Degree Program Inventory](#) to verify the program(s) that will be impacted by the request.

2. Complete the [CIP Change Request](#) form. This form requires a list of what code(s) would change (including OSRHE Program Code, current and proposed CIP Code, and OU Major Code as listed on the [Degree Program Inventory](#)), why the change is being requested, any anticipated consequences of the change, and a copy of approval from the dean of the college. The form will be used both as a basis for approval and as a record of the change, so it should provide sufficient detail while still being succinct.

3. Once submitted, the CIP Change Request form will be reviewed by the Associate Provost for Institutional Research & Reporting. Depending on the proposed change, more information and/or a meeting may be needed.

4. After final review, the Associate Provost for Institutional Research & Reporting will present the completed form to the Office of the Senior Vice President and Provost (OSVPP) for final review and approval.

5. Once approved, the OSVPP will file the appropriate forms with the OSRHE and notify the Registrar's Office, Academic Records, Academic Publications, and International Student Services that system updates are needed. CIP code changes with no associated curricular changes are submitted to OSRHE for informational purposes only; requests involving curricular modifications will also need to complete the appropriate OSRHE paperwork for substantive or non-substantive changes.