Carnegie Mellon University   **University Registrar's Office**

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

Document Purpose
This document provides general information regarding Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) codes:
- the CIP code assignment process,
- their various uses,
- details related to foreign students on F-1 & J-1 visas who are studying at CMU,
- the CMU request process for a review and possible re-assignment of a CIP code for an existing program, including limitations and parameters.

CIP Code Overview
Every academic degree program 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). At CMU, CIP codes are routinely assigned by the University Registrar's Office to all fields of study at the major or program level and CIP codes are stored in the S3 as the system of record.

Although these guidelines do not address the CIP code assignment to a new academic plan, since the CIP Code assignment is part of the New Academic Program Planning (NAPP) proposal, departments and programs who wish to understand more about CIP codes in general or 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, the code 14.0802 translates to Engineering (14), Civil Engineering (14.08), and Geotechnical Engineering (14.0802). 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 and Analysis (IRandA) to report consistently on institutional data to various educational and federal agencies as well as for reporting institutional information on non-federal survey responses.

Implications for F-1 and J-1 Foreign Students
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 determining 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 select STEM fields (identified by CIP codes and at the discretion of Homeland Security) may be permitted 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, not all STEM fields, and the list of qualifying STEM fields is subject to change.

Requesting a CIP Code Modification for a CMU Major Process and Timing
It is good practice for academic programs to regularly review and assess their curricula and program outcomes and to assure the accuracy of their CIP Code designations; academic units may request a list of majors with assigned CIP codes from the University Registrar's Office. If an academic unit determines that an alternate CIP code may be better aligned to their current academic major/field of study, the process outlined below would be required. Programs should be aware that retroactive CIP code changes are not applied to prior year graduates.

In order to make a request for a CIP code change, the CMU Program Director and Department Head should share the review of their program's major/field of study current CIP classification with the University Registrar and compare to their academic program's curricula.

If the program/department believes that the CIP code should be modified to improve accuracy or alignment, they will follow this process:

1. Provide justification as to why the change is being requested at this time.
    - Typical reasons would include a curricular change in an existing program or awareness of a new CIP Code designation as a result of a US Department of Education (DOE) update.
2. Include both the current CIP code and proposed CIP Code.
    - If changing from non-STEM to STEM code, explain why the program or curriculum fits in a STEM field, as we need to document the change for auditing purposes.
3. CIP code changes are made only for purposes of academic accuracy and curricular alignment.
    - 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.
    - Provide the former curriculum with specific examples of the curricular changes.
5. Provide their program director's and department head's agreement.
6. Provide their Dean's support for the request.
7. Submit the request with all the above documentation to the [University Registrar](#).

Requests for review should be submitted between April through June so that they can be reviewed, approved and, if approved, made effective for the upcoming fall semester. Any CIP code change will not be retroactively applied, as all decisions are being made for students in the upcoming fall and future semesters.

As related to implications for F-1 students, this practice is affirmed by guidance received from the Unit Chief, SEVP Policy and Response, in an email dated June 10, 2020, sent to the Director of the Office of International Education (OIE). *"As a matter of practice, we concur and agree with practices that:*

- *Do not retroactively change CIP codes unless it involves incorrect reporting and*

- *Do not change CIP codes post-graduation, even if the curriculum followed by alumni was very similar to the curriculum of current students."*

For the purpose of this process change document, CIP code assignments and/or changes will be made at the academic major level only. The CIP code is applied to the entire major and not to any subset or to any individual student.

CIP Code Change Review & Final 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 NAPP team including the University Registrar, the Vice Provost for Education, Associate Vice President and Director of Enrollment Services & International Programs, and the Director of the Office of International Education, will be the CIP code modification review panel. Their recommendation will be submitted to the Provost by the Vice Provost for Education.

A copy of the approval will be sent from the University Registrar to the Vice Provost for Education, Associate Vice President and Director of Enrollment Services & International Programs, Institutional Research & Analysis, Office of International Education, Program Director, Department Head and the Dean of School.

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

Guidelines and contributions from The Office of the Vice Provost for Education, Enrollment Services and the Office of International Education.

Questions on policy content should be directed to the University Registrar's Office at 412-268-7404, cmuregistrar@andrew.cmu.edu.