

## National Center for Education Statistics

### Introduction to the Classification of Instructional Programs: 2020 Edition (CIP-2020)

#### I. What the CIP is and how it is used?

The Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) is a taxonomic coding scheme of instructional programs. Its purpose is to facilitate the organization, collection, and reporting of fields of study and program completions. The CIP was originally developed in 1980 by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) in the U.S. Department of Education, with revisions occurring in 1985, 1990, 2000, and 2010. The 2020 edition of the CIP (CIP-2020) is the sixth version of the CIP and presents an updated taxonomy of instructional program classifications and descriptions. Like the previous edition of the CIP, the 2020 CIP will only be published electronically. Users, however, will be able to download a text version of the CIP from the CIP User Website.

The CIP titles and program descriptions are intended to be general categories into which program completions data can be placed, not exact duplicates of a specific major or field of study titles used by individual institutions. CIP codes are standard statistical coding tools that reflect current practice and are not a prescriptive list of officially recognized or permitted programs. The CIP is not intended to be a regulatory device. CIP codes, for the most part, are not intended to correspond exclusively to any specific degree or program level. In most cases, any given instructional program may be offered at various levels, and CIP codes are intended to capture all such data.

The vast majority of CIP titles correspond to academic and occupational instructional programs offered for credit at the postsecondary level. These programs result in recognized completion points and awards, including degrees, certificates, and other formal awards.

The CIP also includes other types of instructional programs, such as residency programs in various health professions that may lead to advanced professional certification; personal improvement and leisure programs; and programs taught in schools of continuing education and professional development. The vast majority of these programs are non-credit and include the following in their description “**This CIP code is not valid for IPEDS reporting.**” Even though these programs may not be offered for credit, they represent an important and increasing portion of all programs of study and NCES recognizes that postsecondary institutions may want to be able to track them through in-house data systems. Therefore they continue to remain an important part of the CIP and will remain in the CIP for the foreseeable future.

The CIP is the accepted federal government standard on instructional program classifications and is used in a variety of education information surveys and databases. Since it was first published in 1980, the CIP has been used by NCES in the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) and its predecessor, the Higher Education General Information Survey (HEGIS), to code degree and certificate completions. It is also used by other Department of Education offices, such as the Office for Civil Rights (OCR), the Office of Career, Technical and Adult Education (OCTAE), and the Office of Special Education (OSE), and serves as the standard on 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), Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and others. The CIP is used by state agencies, national associations, academic institutions, and employment counseling services for collecting, reporting, and analyzing instructional program data.

Based on the comprehensiveness and detail of the CIP and the potential for enhanced comparability with U.S. education data, Statistics Canada adopted the CIP as the standard field of study taxonomy in 2000, replacing previous Canadian classifications. However, due to several specific differences in the educational systems of each country, there are a few minor differences between each country’s version of the CIP.

Instructional programs included in the CIP must meet all of the following operational criteria:

- An instructional program must be offered by, through, or under the auspices of a Title IV postsecondary education institution or other recognized provider.

- To qualify under Title IV, the institution must be licensed or otherwise legally authorized to operate in the state in which it is physically located, accredited or pre-accredited by an agency recognized for that purpose by the Department of Education (ED), and certified by ED as eligible to participate in Title IV.
- The program must consist of more than one isolated course or learning experience and cannot be a haphazard collection of unrelated courses or experiences.
- There must be a set of structured learning experiences, defined by an institution or other provider, leading to a completion point that is formally certified by a degree, another formal award, or some other form of recognition.

The following programs are, therefore, not included in the CIP:

- In-house, professional, or on-the-job training activities that are not recognized by an educational institution or provider and that do not lead to any kind of formal award, credit, or certification.
- Subject matter specializations or individual courses within a program that are not treated as a major and are generally not recognized by the education institution as a formal program offering.

## **II. Organization of the CIP**

The CIP taxonomy is organized on three levels: 1) the two-digit series, 2) the four-digit series, and 3) the six-digit series. The two-digit series represent the most general groupings of related programs. The four-digit series represent intermediate groupings of programs that have comparable content and objectives. The six-digit series, also referred to as six-digit CIP Codes, represent specific instructional programs and are used by Title IV institutions when filling out the IPEDS Completions Survey.

There are 48 two-digit series. The standard format for the two-digit series consists of a two-digit number followed by a period (##.). Codes and program titles at this level appear in bold type and in capital letters. Program descriptions at the two-digit series level begin with the standard phrase "Instructional programs" followed by a general description of the content areas and topics associated with the instructional programs within that series.

The numbering sequence for the four-digit series consists of a two-digit series code followed by a period and a second set of two digits. The standard format for four-digit CIP codes is ##.##. Codes and program titles at the four-digit level appear in bold type. Within a four-digit series, undifferentiated instructional programs with a general focus appear at the beginning of the series, while an "other" program entry appears as the final category within a series. The rest of the programs are listed in numerical order. This convention of including an "other" program code was established to provide a category for reporting on programs that fall within a four-digit series but do not have a separate program code listed. Program descriptions are not provided at the four-digit summary level; instead, the user is informed of the range of code numbers where the instructional content for the series is contained.

Six-digit codes are the most detailed program classifications within the CIP. They are the basic unit of analysis used by NCES and institutions in tracking and reporting program completions and fields of study data. There is at least one six-digit code within every four-digit series. The numbering sequence is similar to the four-digit series sequence, with four more digits added after the two-digit series number; the standard format for the six-digit codes is ##.####.

Each six-digit program appears with a description that generally identifies the objectives and content of the instructional programs. Program descriptions for academic or general programs typically begin with the phrase "A program that focuses on ..." Program descriptions for programs that are designed to prepare individuals for specific occupations begin with the phrase "A program that prepares individuals for..." The program description also indicates the instructional content of the program. Courses included in the instructional content of the program are intended as a general guide to the content areas addressed by the instructional program. Programs offered at different levels may include more or fewer courses than those listed.

### **III. The process used to update the CIP**

To develop the 2020 CIP, NCES completed a comprehensive, multi-stage process over one year. This process included extensive background (unobtrusive) research and analysis; solicitation of suggestions from IPEDS keyholders and coordinators; input from a Technical Review Panel and a 90 day public comment period.

#### **Background research**

The first phase of the revision process consisted of research aimed at developing a set of preliminary recommendations for revisions to the CIP. This included a detailed examination of readily available data sources. These data sources included:

##### Scan of institutional web sites (“catalog scan”)

NCES undertook lengthy and systematic web research to identify new and emerging instructional programs that exist at institutions but were not included in the 2010 CIP. The first step was the selection of institutions to be studied. Using data from the IPEDS Completions Survey, for each two-digit series, NCES calculated the total number of program completions reported under six-digit CIP Codes ending in 99. For each two-digit series, NCES identified the five institutions with the highest total number of completions reported under any six-digit CIP code ending in “99”. For each of these institutions, NCES went their websites and downloaded their programs of study. The programs of study were mapped against the 2010 CIP. Programs of study which could not be mapped to an existing six-digit CIP Code were identified as possible new programs of study.

In addition to the catalog scan, NCES conducted additional research to assure adequate exploration of programs that might not have been covered by the catalog scan. NCES researched 25 community college websites and 25 liberal arts college websites to ensure that the types of programs typically offered at these types of institutions were adequately examined.

##### Review of “other” titles provided in 2014, 2015, and 2016 IPEDS Completions Surveys

When responding to the IPEDS Completions Survey, postsecondary education institutions have an opportunity to specify the titles of programs that they report under a six-digit CIP Code ending in “99”. NCES reviewed all titles specified for any six-digit CIP Code ending in “99” in the 2014, 2015, 2016 IPEDS Completions Survey. Any title which could not be mapped to a six-digit code in the 2010 CIP was identified as a possible new code for inclusion in the 2020 CIP. Upon completion of all background research and identification of potential new six digit codes for the 2020 CIP, NCES did internet research to identify a minimum of 5 and a maximum of 10 Title IV institutions where the program existed. By comparing program descriptions and required courses across the different institutions where the program of study was offered, NCES developed draft descriptions for the new programs of study.

##### Survey of IPEDS keyholders and TRP members

The second phase of the revision process consisted of a voluntary, online survey IPEDS keyholders and Coordinators conducted by Ursidae Analytics LLC on behalf of NCES. Survey recipients were invited to identify instructional program titles that they would like to add to the CIP, provide a rationale for inclusion, suggest a program description and a location for the program (two-digit and four-digit). The purpose of this effort was to engage a wide range of CIP users in the process and to cast a wide net to capture additional new program titles not identified by NCES background research. This approach ensured that direct stakeholders had an opportunity to make a case for adding new titles to the CIP.

To evaluate the merits of these suggestions, NCES conducted detailed research on each suggested title to determine whether it met the criteria for inclusion. Upon completion of this phase, NCES produced a complete draft of the revised CIP.

##### Technical Review Panel (TRP) Meetings

RTI Inc, the contractor which provides support to NCES as part of the IPEDS contract, hosted a technical review panel which met on June 25-26, 2018, to provide feedback on a list of suggested new six-digit CIP Codes, which NCES compiled from background research and the results of the Survey of IPEDS Keyholders and Coordinators. The technical review panel was broadly representative of CIP users and stakeholders and included representatives from federal and state agencies and members from each of sectors (public, private nonprofit, private for-profit) and levels of postsecondary institutions (4-year, 2-year, and less than 2-year).

#### Federal Register Notice

To solicit feedback from the public, NCES posted 60-day and 30-day notices in the Federal Register. The public was asked to provide feedback on a draft of the 2020 Classification of Instructional Programs that reflected the results of the background research, results from the Survey of IPEDS Keyholders and Coordinators and feedback from the Technical Review Panel. In its final notice, NCES posted a summary of relevant public comments and responses to these comments and a final draft of the 2020 CIP.

#### **IV. Guidelines for adding or deleting a CIP Code**

New codes were added to the CIP when specific procedural criteria and numerical guidelines were met. NCES also established provisions for making exceptions to the numerical guidelines.

Procedurally, for a program code to be added, it needed to meet one of the following criteria:

- Identification by NCES research
- Identification by a member of the Technical Review Panel
- Identified from the results of the Survey IPEDS Keyholders and Coordinators
- Identified by members of the public in response to Federal Register Notice

Additionally, any institutional representative could make a request through an IPEDS keyholder. Numerically, the general guideline was that a minimum of 5 Title IV institutions must offer a program to add it to the CIP. NCES researched each recommendation to assure that at least 5 Title IV institutions offered these programs. NCES did make general exceptions to the numerical guideline if a federal or state agency had a policy reason to track a particular program title. Frequently federal agencies will need to collect statistics to demonstrate the need for additional educational programs to provide training in a high need area, such as a foreign language, military science and technology, and homeland security.

#### **V. Overview of changes to the CIP**

The CIP-2020 contains nearly 70 new four-digit series and more than 300 new six-digit codes. In addition, several significant changes were made as part of the revised CIP.

##### Increased number of examples

As CIP users are aware, there is a great deal of variability in how institutions title their instructional programs. To help minimize user uncertainty and facilitate more accurate reporting of program completions, whenever possible NCES included examples of programs names at the 6 digit level.

Examples should be thought of as some of the common titles that fit under a specific CIP Code and were identified as a result of NCES's extensive research and collaborative efforts. They give users more information and assistance when trying to match an instructional program title that does not exactly match the title of a CIP code. It is important to remember that examples are not intended to be an exact or exhaustive list of program names. CIP users may decide to report an instructional program under a specific code, even though the exact title does not appear in the list of examples. It is ultimately up to the individual user to select the particular CIP Code that best describes their instructional program.

### Re-organization and expansion of Series 60. RESIDENCY PROGRAMS

Since CIP-2010, the number and variety of residency and fellowship programs for nurse practitioners, physician assistants, pharmacists, and other health professions have increased. Series 60 now includes residency and fellowship programs for these professions, instead of focusing predominantly on medical residencies typically completed by physicians.

### Addition of Series 61. MEDICAL RESIDENCY/FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMS

Prior to the 2020 CIP, all medical residency programs were divided into two separate four-digit series: **60.04 Medical Residency Programs - General Certificates** and **60.05 Medical Residency Programs - Subspecialty Certificates**. CIP-2020 moves these programs into a new two-digit series, **61. MEDICAL RESIDENCY/FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMS**, with four-digit groupings based on medical specialty instead of level (e.g., internal medicine, emergency medicine, surgery). The list of residency and fellowship programs is based on information from the website for the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education, which is responsible for accrediting the majority of graduate medical education programs.