



In Focus: CIP Codes in program submissions

The [Classification of Instructional Programs \(CIP\) Canada](#) code is a standardized system used to classify instructional programs by field of study.

This system helps organize and report educational data consistently across Canada. Each instructional program is assigned a CIP code, which consists of six digits.

CIP codes have become increasingly important in our program submissions as they inform applicants whether programs are eligible for Post-Graduation Work Permits (PGWP).

Where do CIP Codes come from?

The Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) code is a hierarchical classification system for organizing instructional programs according to field of study. It was developed by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) in the United States and adapted for use in Canada by Statistics Canada.

It is Statistics Canada's official standard for the organizing, collecting, processing, disseminating, and analyzing field of study statistics.

A little history:

Since the fall of 2024, CIP codes have significantly impacted colleges in Ontario. New regulations were implemented on November 1, 2024, to align academic programs with specific fields of study deemed essential for Canada's workforce needs. These regulations require new study permit applicants to enroll in programs within these priority fields to qualify for a Post-Graduation Work Permit (PGWP). This change aims to ensure that international graduates are equipped with skills that are in high demand in the Canadian job market.

Moving forward:

- **Alignment:** Aligning to one CIP code will now be required for each new submission. The CVS Team will review and confirm the CIP code within the program validation to ensure that programs are accurately categorized and meet the necessary standards. To ensure CIP alignment, colleges can approach OCQAS before the informal review commences to discuss the expectations for the CIP code assignment.
- **Updated Templates:** The informal review template has been updated to request CIP codes.
- **CVS AA Tool:** In the CVS AA Tool, users will need to identify the CIP code and title in the Occupational Areas section, along with the NOC codes for a new program submission and in the final comment section for a title modification.

Why CIP Code alignment matters:

CIP code alignment is crucial for identifying programs eligible for the Post-Graduation Work Permit (PGWP). By ensuring accurate CIP code alignment, we can better support our students' career prospects and maintain the integrity of our programs.

The alignment process is very specific and considers several factors, including:

- **Program Title:** Align the title with the CIP code identified titles or other titles that would reasonably align with them
- **Program Purpose:** Select intentional wording for the program purpose using information that is identified in the CIP code description, being mindful not to use words that may align better with a different CIP code.
- **Labor Market Information:** Each CIP code identifies employment fields with which the program's labour market information and employment outlook should easily align. It is important to be mindful not to align to CIP codes that use the employment fields of the program in development in the exclusion section.
- **Courses Offered:** Most CIP descriptions identify program content, and courses should align to these details. It is crucial to be clear with the course titles and descriptions that precisely identify any specific skills and learning that could impact the alignment.
- **Admission Requirements:** This component is not always impacted but on occasion, it could push an alignment to one with a higher credential or an area-specific CIP code.
- **Program Standard Alignment:** If the program being submitted is associated with a Program Standard, it must align with the pre-established CIP code to maintain consistency with the sector. A different CIP code may be used when a program has a title modifier.
- **Historical Precedent:** It is important to examine and consider other similar college programs to maintain consistency with CIP code alignment.

What do I use to align CIP Codes?

- **CIP Search Tool:** Statistics Canada Tool to search the description, illustrative examples and exclusions of all the CIP Codes.
- **CIP Table:** Ministry log of all the CIP Code alignments in the College System, updated monthly.
- **CIP Eligibility Tool:** Statistics Canada Tool to search CIP Codes for their Eligibility for a Post Graduation Work Permit (PGWP).

