



Criteria for Approval of High Priority Occupation Programs

Act 46 of 2005 requires PDE to annually publish guidelines listing criteria and establishing the approval process for programs and courses eligible for approval for the Economic Development Stipend. The criteria for approval of for-credit occupational programs to be eligible as High Priority Occupation Programs and High-Priority and High-Instructional-Cost Occupation Programs for the 2014-2015 fiscal year are listed below.

Criteria:

Each program must meet **all** of the criteria listed in this section.

1. The program must be in compliance with Pennsylvania statutes, regulations and policies relating to community colleges.
2. Each occupational or technical program must prepare graduates for a High Priority Occupation identified by the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry on the annual High Priority Occupation list or be approved by the Department of Education through the PDE Regional Workforce Application.
3. Each program shall be a credit-based program and shall be identified with an accepted Classification of Instructional Program (CIP) – 2010 edition code.
4. Each program (minimum of 15 credit hours) shall involve a planned coherent sequence of courses that leads to a formal college award.
5. Each program description shall have a statement of objectives that will be printed in the college catalog. The statement must clearly indicate that the program is designed for job placement incorporating employment-related job skills and knowledge, and have an occupational objective that is consistent with gainful employment opportunities (as opposed to volunteer) available at the local, regional or state level.
6. Each program shall be designed in such a way that all college-level requirements, including college-level requirements for admission to the program or for courses within the program, can be completed in two calendar years (24 months) or less when pursued by a full-time student. The program may exceed two calendar years if the program is specifically designed to be completed only on a part-time basis. The catalog description must specifically state that the program is designed for completion on a part-time basis.

Definitions:

CIP-2010—The 2010 edition of the Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP), a taxonomic coding scheme of instructional programs published by the U.S. Department of Education. Information on the 2010 CIP codes can be found at: <http://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/cipcode/>

High Instructional Cost Program—A program that bears an instructional cost to the community college, per full-time-equivalent student, of at least 130% of the average cost per full-time-equivalent student enrolled in the community college's credit courses.

High Priority Occupations—Occupations annually identified by the Department of Labor and Industry through a three step process involving industry cluster analysis, occupational data analysis and expert input and regional factors to identify emerging occupations. Additional occupations may be added based on differences and dynamics in regional and local labor markets.

Occupation—Occupational title assigned under the Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) system for the given occupational code. In some instances, this may be abbreviated or changed slightly from the official U.S. Department of Labor's SOC title in order to better reflect nuances in state or regional occupational demand.

Occupational or Technical Program—Educational programs offering a sequence of courses, which are directly related to the preparation of individuals for paid employment in current or emerging occupations.

SOC Code—Six-digit numerical code assigned to the occupation under the Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) system. The SOC system classifies all occupations found in the economy, including private, public, and military, and allows data to be compared across all governmental agencies. Information on the 2010 SOC system can be found at: <http://www.bls.gov/soc/>.