

Understanding Program Data:

Unique Identifiers vs Non-Identifier Required Fields

Program's Unique Identifier Fields*	Program's Non-Identifier Required Fields
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OPEID • CIP Code • CIP Year • Credential Level • Program Length and Measurement • Weeks in Title IV Academic Year** 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program Begin Date • Program Enrollment Status • Program Status Effective Date • Special Program Indicator

* If one or more changes are made to a reported program's unique set of identifiers, NSLDS interprets this as a new/different program (change in program).

* Even seemingly minor changes to unique program identifiers (e.g., changing program length or credential level) will create and be interpreted by NSLDS as a new unique program.

** Title IV Weeks In Academic year is only a required field if the Program Length Measurement is in Weeks or Months.

Program Begin Date

PBD reflects the student's first-ever enrollment date in a program.

- Is a static date and does not change if the student withdraws and later re-enrolls in the same unique program.
- The only time to revise PBD is when the originally reported date is incorrect for the unique program.

Program Status Effective Date (PSED)

- Certifies when the program enrollment status became effective.
- Does not change if a student is continuously enrolled in the same unique program with no status increase or decrease.

Changes only when the program enrollment status increases or decreases, e.g.:

Full Time → Withdrawn

Three Quarter Time → Half Time

Program Enrollment Status

Program enrollment status changes only when the student's status in the program increases or decreases.

- The student is withdrawn or graduated from a unique program but remains continuously enrolled at the campus level.
- The student graduates from one unique program and is withdrawn from other unique program(s) in the same term.
- Special circumstances, such as: Correcting incorrect unique program identifiers, where the incorrect version of the program is "X" (never attended)

See [FSA Dear Colleague Letter, GEN-14-17 NSLDS Program-Level Enrollment Reporting on "active enrollment status" compliance reporting requirements.](#)



Common Program Level Errors And How to Avoid Them

Incorrectly Changing Program Begin Date (PBD)

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<p>PBD updated when a student re-enrolls in the same program after withdrawing and re-enrolls later</p> <p>Why it's a problem:</p> <p>PBD must remain static for the same unique program</p> <p>Changing PBD for a unique program can disrupt program history and create enrollment file errors</p>	<p>Best practice:</p> <p>Only change PBD if the reported date is incorrect for a unique program</p> <p>If a high volume of errors/warnings are occurring, reach out to schoolops@studentclearinghouse.org for additional support</p>

Program Length Changes Not Treated as New Programs

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<p>Published Program Length updated for an existing program that the student is enrolled</p> <p>Why it's a problem:</p> <p>Program length is a unique program identifier</p> <p>A change creates an unintended new unique program when no program change occurred and can prompt additional enrollment file error flags</p>	<p>Best practice:</p> <p>If the student changed unique programs, report withdrawn (W) for the student's separated program and the active enrollment status with current PBD for the new program of study</p> <p>Special circumstance – if the student did not change unique programs but the reported length is incorrect, during the term, there may be opportunity to leverage program linkage to correct an existing unique program's incorrect identifier(s), and the incorrect version of the program is 'X' never attended. This avoids inadvertently losing enrollment history for the reported program.</p>

CIP code or CIP Year Inconsistencies

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<p>For a student who changes unique programs and a CIP Code change is reported for an existing program instead of reporting withdrawn (W) for the separated program or CIP Year is updated for an existing program</p> <p>Why it's a problem:</p> <p>CIP Code (field of study) changes are considered a new program</p> <p>Incorrect handling can create inaccurate program histories</p>	<p>Best practice:</p> <p>Treat field of study (major) changes as program changes if any unique program identifier changes</p> <p>Allow NSLDS auto-conversion when only the CIP Year changes</p>

For additional resources on program level errors/warnings please visit our [Compliance Central Knowledge Base](#) or email schoolops@studentclearinghouse.org