



April 18, 2016

Wilmington University is submitting this application to participate in the Educational Quality through Innovative Partnerships (EQUIP) pilot program. Our Department of Education Office of Postsecondary Education Identification (OPEID) number is 00794800.

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Wilmington University

Wilmington University is a regionally accredited, private, nonprofit, non-sectarian university which offers both undergraduate and graduate degree programs in a wide range of career areas.

Wilmington University is committed to excellence in teaching, relevancy of the curriculum, and individual attention to students. As an institution with admissions policies that provide access for all, it offers opportunity for higher education to students of varying ages, interests, and aspirations.

The university provides a range of exemplary career-oriented undergraduate and graduate degree programs for a growing and diverse student population. It delivers these programs at locations and times convenient to students and at an affordable price. A highly qualified full-time faculty works closely with part-time faculty drawn from the workplace to ensure that the university's programs prepare students to begin or continue their career, improve their competitiveness in the job market, and engage in lifelong learning.

COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY

320 North DuPont Highway, New Castle, DE 19720-6491

Zip Code Wilmington

Zip Code Wilmington is a nonprofit software development organization located in the city of Wilmington, Delaware that offers a 12-week boot camp launched through a partnership with corporations, foundations, nonprofits, and state and local government. Their mission is to support the economic development in the state of Delaware by making software development education both accessible and affordable for high-potential individuals with the raw talent necessary to become proficient software developers.

By working directly with employers, Zip Code Wilmington has created a software development curriculum that matches the employer needs while providing students with the appropriate skills to pursue entry-level positions using the Java programming language. Zip Code Wilmington counts Bank of America, Barclays, Capital One, Comcast, JPMorgan Chase, and Wawa as its partners. They work directly with a Board of Advisors comprised of high-level executives from within these corporations to place graduates upon completion of the training portion of the boot camp program.

These employers are contributing their time and financial resources to Zip Code Wilmington because they face a very real shortage of software developers. According to a recent study by the State of Delaware, over 500 of these jobs sit vacant today. As the Honorable Governor Jack Markell said in his 2015 State of the State Address: "...many of our employers have told me that they can't find enough qualified IT workers and must resort to hiring them away from each other. We need a new pipeline of Delawareans trained to do these jobs."

To date, Zip Code Wilmington has had a 100 percent success rate at placing graduates of the classroom portion into either long-term apprenticeships or direct-hire employment. Currently, 84 percent of enrollees complete the program. The program participants had an average income of \$24,000 per year prior to the program and have exited into jobs that pay over \$55,000 per year, on average.

The program consists of 12 weeks of training, followed by a 26-week apprenticeship. Students receive 480 hours of instruction, Monday through Friday, and up to another 480 hours of practicum, including evenings and weekends, during the 12 weeks. They then work full-time as Java software developers for 26 weeks.

Quality Assurance

Wilmington University engages community and industry based advisory boards as a means of quality assurance. The advisory boards meet annually to review the program content, job marker and student learning outcomes. Additionally, Wilmington University is accredited by the Middle States Commission of Higher Education. On June 25, 2015, the Middle States Commission of Higher Education acted "To reaffirm accreditation and to commend the institution for the quality of the self-study process." Wilmington University was found to be in compliance and with no

recommendations on all fourteen standards. As the visiting team noted in the conclusion of its report: "WU is an exceptional institution, committed to its vision of open access for students. The faculty and staff are living their vision, as evidenced by their culture of enthusiasm, entrepreneurship and care for students."

Zip-Code Wilmington also has quality assurance measures in place. Zip Code Wilmington leverages a board of advisors that include area corporations that hire graduates and provide ongoing input into the curriculum. In addition, they utilize a third party quality assurance organization, Hacker Rank.

If awarded the opportunity to participate in the EQUIP pilot program and there is a need for other quality assurance measures, we will be happy to accommodate.

Student Aid Option

Through this pilot, we will allow students to be eligible for Pell Grants only.

In Conclusion

Wilmington University, Zip Code Wilmington, and Hacker Rank are committed to innovative leadership. We believe this collaboration is critical because there is an opportunity, right now, to turn Wilmington, DE into a technology hub for the world. What the city of Wilmington, in the state of Delaware lacks is a talent pool necessary to attract software development jobs to our region. Through this collaboration we seek to expand that talent pool to include more low-income candidates and make the city of Wilmington a destination for companies who are seeking to create tomorrow's technology. EQUIP will help our efforts by increasing the accessibility of this innovative educational endeavor to more low-income individuals.

Thank you for accepting our application. We are hopeful that we will be invited into the EQUIP pilot.

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Signature



Date

4/18/16

Nicole L. McDaniel
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Signature



Date

4/18/16

April 14, 2016

Federal Student Aid
830 First Street NE
Washington DC, 20202



RE: Experimental Site: Educational Quality through Innovative Partnerships (EQUIP)

To Whom It May Concern:

As a non-traditional education provider, Zip Code Wilmington is committed to offering content and instruction to our institutional partner, once required approvals and agreements are finalized.

Zip Code Wilmington is a 501c3 nonprofit organization founded to benefit the City of Wilmington. We aim to create a highly-skilled workforce and substantially grow the region's capacity to win technology jobs.

We are excited to participate in the EQUIP partnership because of the fantastic opportunity it affords to low income students who are seeking a career in software development.

The average income of an incoming Zip Code student is \$24,000 per year. While the program is not focused exclusively on the needs of low-income students, we accept many highly qualified candidates who are also low-income.

Zip Code students, on average, increase their income by 128% after the first 12 weeks of the program. Upon graduation, the majority of our students are earning \$56,000 per year or better. This is a life-changing salary for many of them.

Much of the cost of Zip Code's program is reimbursed by companies who hire our students. Those companies include Bank of America, Barclays, Capital One, and JPMorgan Chase, among others. As a consequence, the most any student has paid to attend is \$2,000.

We believe that an affordable education, which moves a student quickly into a job, is the best form of economic development. We also believe that affordability plays an important role in increasing the diversity of students who can attain software development careers. 45% of Zip Code students are minorities and are under-represented in the software development field.

Thank you for the opportunity to apply to EQUIP. We are committed to working through this process with you, and our partners.

Sincerely,


Jim Stewart
Board President



2300 Geng Rd. Suite 250
Palo Alto, CA 94303

April 15, 2016

EQUIP Program Administration

Re: Participation in EQUIP Pilot by Zip Code Wilmington

Dear Sir or Madam:

I am writing at the request of Zip Code Wilmington to confirm that HackerRank is an assessment partner of Zip Code Wilmington. Zip Code Wilmington currently uses HackerRank's hosted software platform to both:

1. Assess the ability of new recruits entering their software development training school and apprentice program; and
2. Assess the learning of those who are taking part in their program.

The HackerRank hosted software platform enables customers and partners to invite individuals to access the platform and take software coding challenges. The platform ranks the performance of each individual and provides an objective assessment of software programming skills. HackerRank is driving a new paradigm shift by eliminating resumes and creating opportunities for hundreds of thousands of programmers worldwide. Over 1,000 companies use HackerRank to build strong engineering teams.

Zip Code Wilmington uses the HackerRank platform to help ensure that their students and program participants are job-ready upon graduation. HackerRank plans to continue to partner with Zip Code Wilmington as their assessment provider.

Sincerely,



David Park
VP of Products and Growth



Middle States Commission on Higher Education

3624 Market Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104-2680. Tel: 267-284-5000. Fax: 215-662-5501
www.msche.org

May 26, 2016

Dr. Jack P. Varsalona, President
Wilmington University
320 DuPont Highway
New Castle, DE 19720

Dear President Varsalona,

This will document agreement by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education to consider including, within the scope of accreditation for Wilmington University, your institution's proposed work with the non-traditional provider and quality assurance agency listed below. This work, which is being developed as part of the U. S. Department of Education Experimental Sites Initiative, Educational Quality through Innovative Partnerships (EQUIP), will require Commission review and approval through the process of complex substantive change.

Name of Non-Traditional Provider

Zip Code Wilmington

Quality Assurance Entity

Hacker Rank and Code to Work

We wish you every success with these projects.

Sincerely,



Ellie A. Fogarty, Ed.D.
Vice President

c: Dr. Angela C. Suchanic, Assistant Vice President

Full Application Information

I. Program Focus and Description

A. Description of the program(s) of study

I. A.

Zip Code Wilmington (Zip Code), is a nonprofit software development training bootcamp that was launched through a partnership with corporations, foundations, nonprofits, and government in Wilmington, Delaware. Its mission is to support the economic development of Delaware by making a software development education both accessible and affordable for high-potential individuals who have the raw talent necessary to become proficient software developers. By working directly with employers, Zip Code has created a software development curriculum that matches employers' needs and provides the student appropriate skills to pursue entry-level positions in the Java programming language. The school counts Bank of America, Barclaycard, Capital One, Comcast, Corporation Service Company (CSC), JPMorgan Chase, and Chatham Financial as its partners, among others. Zip Code works directly with a Board of Advisors comprised of high-level executives from within these corporations to place graduates upon completion of the training portion of the program.

The training portion of the program is three months in length. Over half of Zip Code's graduates are placed into full-time software development positions upon graduation, with the remaining placed students working in six-month paid apprenticeships at area corporations. Throughout the program, students are prepared to excel in their positions as entry-level software developers.

Zip Code has a commitment to making education affordable and attainable for low-income individuals. Paid apprenticeships and tuition remission are available. Through Zip Code's partner, Tech Impact, need-based scholarships are also available for participants entering the program who earn less than 200% of the national poverty line.

To date, the most any student has paid is \$7,000, and 32 percent of students received scholarships, making the program free. To date, Zip Code has trained 29 low-income individuals. 100 percent of those individuals have been placed within three months of graduation into jobs paying, on average, over \$62,000 per year. The salary gain, for many program participants, is life-changing. The salary gain, for low-income individuals, has launched them into a new socioeconomic class.

1. What certificate, degree, or recognized credential will the program award to graduates? If a certificate or other non-degree credential, will it count as credit toward a degree at the institution?

I. A. 1.

The ultimate goal of Zip Code is employment. Specifically, the program seeks to employ students within one of its many corporate partners. These include Bank of America, Barclaycard, Capital One, Comcast, CSC, JPMorgan Chase, TD Bank, Chatham Financial, Diamond Technologies, Marlette Funding, and WSFS Bank.

Students sit for corporation-specific assessments, which are designed by the corporations. Students must pass these assessments to qualify for apprenticeships.

The Zip Code curriculum teaches concepts covered in the Oracle Certified Professional, Java SE 7 Programmer certification. All graduates of Zip Code are prepared to sit for, and pass, this certification.

Students completing the Zip Code software development curriculum will be eligible for academic credits that apply toward undergraduate degrees at Wilmington University. If accepted into the EQUIP pilot program, Wilmington University's 15-credit Web Applications Development certificate will function as the model for meeting the requirements of the EQUIP pilot. The Web Applications Development certificate is a program currently offered at Wilmington University that focuses on open source technologies and will be a model for creating a new certificate program focusing on the requirements of the Zip Code Wilmington Java software development curriculum. This new offering will fit the University's mission and will increase graduate competitiveness in the job market, while also seamlessly transitioning students into degree programs at Wilmington University.

2. What types of measurable student outcomes will the program strive to achieve (e.g., specific learning outcomes, academic transfer credit, job placement)?

I. A. 2.

Zip Code seeks to place every one of its students in a job or apprenticeship as a software developer. To date, Zip Code has placed 93 percent of those who have completed the curriculum into software development roles within three months of graduation. Graduates' annualized salaries average over \$62,000 per year.

Zip Code graduates achieve the following learning outcomes:

1. Technical Acumen – Upon program completion, students will be able to understand, read and write Java code at a basic level.
2. Mentoring – Students will be provided opportunities to work closely with experienced software engineers.
3. Building Community and Network – Team-building exercises will allow students to create a strong support system.
4. Technology Focus – Students will be prepared for success and longevity in the technology workforce.
5. Project-Based – Students will complete tangible projects that reflect their newly attained skill set.

Zip Code students are assessed for competency every two weeks using a tool developed by QAE HackerRank, referred to as HackerRank for Work. This tool is used to evaluate skills and map each student's progress against the curriculum. HackerRank for Work scores are made available to employers upon request and are meaningful to employers. One employer, Capital One, uses HackerRank for Work to evaluate their incoming developers.

3. What is the program's academic structure?
 - How will the curriculum be structured? For example: Will the program be offered in courses or in modules? Will the program start at the beginning of the term, monthly, or individualized by student?
 - What will be the program's duration (e.g., semester(s), quarter(s), academic year(s), weeks)? Will the program track credit hours or clock hours, and how will it calculate

those hours? How will the federal satisfactory academic progress requirement be calculated and tracked?

- What will be the instructional method and approach (e.g., face-to-face, online, or hybrid; competency based; self-paced)? Will it include experiential requirements such as internships or other components?
- How will the components be integrated into a coherent and meaningful credential?

I. A. 3.

The classroom portion of the Zip Code program is 12 weeks long. Students are required to be in the classroom from 9am to 5pm, 5 days a week, for 12 weeks. The program is tracked in scheduled class time, and also accounts for student preparation and lab work for the total effective clock hours. Student attendance in scheduled classes is tracked by their instructors, and a student may not have more than five excused absences. All students complete additional hours outside of the classroom to complete the program. The facility is open to the students 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Every student spends 32.5 scheduled contact hours in class each week, with an additional 57.5 hours on average outside of class each week, including Saturdays. The average student spends a total of 90 effective clock hours each week throughout the 12-week intensive bootcamp program engaged in academic work, including a combination of classroom lecture, lab work, and student preparation.

Zip Code cohorts begin approximately every 4 months. In these cohorts, students begin together and graduate together. Every week is themed according to learning outcomes, and students complete at least one project each week. Students are assessed on their progress every two weeks, using HackerRank for Work, and for the duration of the classroom portion of the program. Near the conclusion of the program, students complete additional HackerRank assessments created by and for Zip Code's employer partners.

Since the entire program that we propose is less than one year in length, we will release the Title IV Aid in two disbursements.

- The first disbursement will be released towards the beginning of the program.
- The second disbursement will be released at the midpoint of the program (around week 7 or 8).
- Student satisfactory academic progress in the program will be evaluated prior to the release of the second disbursement using the assessment measures (i.e. HackerRank to Work assessments) built into that program.
 - Note that the second disbursement will not be released if it is determined that the student will not be able to complete the program or if the student has already been released from the program.

Zip Code is a face-to-face program. The entire cohort moves at the same fast pace through the 12-week curriculum. Three instructors are assigned to teach no more than a total of 32 students in each cohort. The 6-month apprenticeship is an experiential requirement, but is not required; however, to date, 100 percent of students receiving apprenticeships have chosen to complete the apprenticeship. Zip Code tracks student progress throughout the 6-month apprenticeship and completes regular check-ins with their supervisors.

Zip Code's curriculum is based on the requirements of an entry-level software developer, as defined by its corporate partners. Students are required to meet, or exceed, the

competency level of Computer Science graduates who are competing for the same positions. Zip Code built its curriculum with the aid of a committee of Chief Information Officers, Chief Technology Officers, senior software developers, and hiring managers. As industry knowledge leaders, those individuals provide regular input into the content and the effectiveness of the curriculum, and suggest changes based on the performance of Zip Code graduates. At week 10, students are required to complete, and pass, assessments that are designed by and for corporations who partner with the Zip Code program. Those assessments are reviewed to ensure that Zip Code students are meeting the expected competencies of the program.

4. How will the program be designed to offer better value or outcomes than other programs that currently exist (e.g., lower cost, more flexibility/personalization, increased labor market value and/or transfer value)? Please provide quantifiable goals where applicable (e.g., how much of a lower cost or higher value?).

I. A. 4.

As a nonprofit, Zip Code is able to offer students a very affordable education. Most students pay \$2,000 or less to attend Zip Code. The most any student has personally paid to attend Zip Code is \$7,000. Zip Code is affordable because of its design. The cost of the education is offset by contributions from corporate partners, and job placement fees paid to Zip Code by hiring companies. Costs are exceptionally low for Zip Code students because corporations assume the bulk of the program cost. Zip Code believes that creating a low-cost program increases the diversity of students who can access this form of education. Approximately 38 percent of Zip Code students have not completed a college degree. Approximately 50 percent of participants represent racial or ethnic minority groups.

On average, a Zip Code student earns less than \$30,000 per year prior to entering the program, an indication that they are under-employed. These are not individuals who can afford a \$12,000 bootcamp paid out-of-pocket. Zip Code has demonstrated that these individuals are highly capable in the software development field and should be provided an opportunity to advance. By reducing the cost of the program, Zip Code focuses on finding high quality candidates, regardless of their current situation or prior experience. On average, Zip Code placed graduates have more than doubled their prior income in just 12 weeks. Graduates' annualized salaries in their jobs and apprenticeships post-program, have exceeded, on average, \$62,000 per year.

In an effort to increase education affordability and lifelong learning, Zip Code and Wilmington University have developed a partnership including the award of academic credit. Zip Code graduates will have the opportunity to leverage their learning from the program as academic credits into undergraduate degree programs at Wilmington University at no additional cost to the student.

5. What is the market demand for this program (e.g., students or employers willing to pay full tuition and fees)? How was this market demand determined?

I. A. 5.

Prior to starting the Zip Code program, Jack Markell, Governor of Delaware, surveyed local companies to measure the demand for software developers in the State of Delaware. The survey found that there was over 500 open positions in Java and .NET programming available in Wilmington, DE. Most of these positions could not be filled because of a declining talent pipeline. Zip Code was started as a response to this measurable shortage of talent.

Eleven companies in the greater Delaware metro area have hired Zip Code graduates. All companies hiring Zip Code graduates willingly pay placement fees or hourly apprenticeship fees thereby covering the full cost of tuition for the program. Zip Code's corporate partners pay between \$12,000 - \$14,000 per student, depending on the hiring structure.

Since opening, Zip Code has placed 59 students into paid apprenticeships and/or full-time jobs. Market demand for the program is strong. Zip Code graduates have been placed quickly into jobs. Overall, 93 percent of Zip Code students are working in paid software developer positions within 3 months of completing the 12-week classroom portion of the program. Some, Zip Code students receive multiple full-time offers. Applicant demand for the Zip Code program is also strong. To date, 893 student applicants have applied for 107 openings in the Zip Code program. Approximately 25 percent of the accepted students into the Zip Code program have relocated to Wilmington, DE to take part in the program.

6. Please provide information about the costs of the program:
 - What is the total tuition and fee amount that will be charged per student for the entire program?
 - What is the expected net price for the student after grants and other gift aid are subtracted?

I. A. 6.

The Zip Code program tuition and fees are \$12,000 per student, however, the majority of Zip Code students do not pay that amount directly. Typically, a student will pay \$2,000 upon acceptance into the Zip Code program. The balance is paid by Zip Code corporate partners once Zip Code places a student into a job or an apprenticeship. Zip Code's partner, Tech Impact, also offers needs-based scholarships to entering students that earn less than 200% of the national poverty line.

Zip Code students that do not to participate in the apprenticeship program, or turn down a placement opportunity at a Zip Code partner organization, owe the full \$12,000 at the completion of the 12-week classroom portion of the program. This results in an expected net price of the Zip Code program, for the overwhelming majority of students, as \$2,000.

If Zip Code graduates are not employed in a paid position within 6 months after graduation, Zip Code reduces the total amount owed to \$7,000, which is payable only when a student retains paid employment.

In addition, through the partnership between Zip Code and Wilmington University, Zip Code graduates will be eligible for academic credits that will apply toward a 15 credit certificate focused on the Zip Code Wilmington Java software development curriculum. Credits from the certificate can also be leveraged toward undergraduate degrees at Wilmington University without incurring any additional tuition or fees.

7. Is the non-traditional provider in this partnership a for-profit entity?

I. A. 7.

No, Zip Code is a 501c3 nonprofit entity.

8. If an existing program will be adapted for the proposed program, provide answers to the following questions about the existing program:

- Is the existing program provided by the institution or by the non-traditional provider?
- Will that version of the program continue to be offered while an alternative version participating in the experiment is also offered?
- Will the institution or the non-traditional provider also be offering a version of the program that is not Title-IV eligible while participating in the experiment?
- What is the total tuition and fee amount that is charged a student for the existing program?
- How many students were enrolled in the existing program in the most recent year?
- To the extent that information is available, provide the percentage of students who relied on private loans to cover all or some of the tuition and fees charged for the existing program
- To the extent that this is applicable and there are publicly available documents that provide this information, what were the total profits generated by this program or service in the most recent year?

I. A. 8.

The existing Zip Code program is provided by the non-traditional provider Zip Code. And the existing version of the program will be offered to the Title-IV eligible students to participate alongside the non-Title-IV eligible students.

The Zip Code program tuition and fees are \$12,000 per student, however, the majority of Zip Code students do not pay that amount directly. Typically, a student will pay \$2,000 upon acceptance into the Zip Code program. The balance is paid by Zip Code corporate partners once Zip Code places a student into a job or an apprenticeship. Zip Code's partner, Tech Impact, also offers needs-based scholarships to entering students that earn less than 200% of the national poverty level.

Zip Code students that do not participate in the apprenticeship, or turn down a placement opportunity at a Zip Code partner organization, owe the full \$12,000 at the completion of the 12-week classroom portion of the program.

If Zip Code graduates are not employed in a paid position within 6 months after graduation, Zip Code reduces the amount owed to \$5,000, which is payable only when a student retains paid employment.

In addition, through the partnership between Zip Code and Wilmington University, Zip Code graduates will be eligible for a 15 credit certificate focused on the Zip Code Wilmington Java software development curriculum. Credits from the certificate can also be leveraged toward undergraduate degrees at Wilmington University without incurring any additional tuition or fees.

During 2015, 19 students were enrolled in the Zip Code program. Thus far in 2016, 88 students were enrolled in the Zip Code program. Zip Code's goal is to graduate approximately 75 students each year.

To our knowledge, none of the Zip Code students have relied on private loans to cover the tuition for the program.

Zip Code is a nonprofit, and has not yet generated a profit. Significant philanthropic contributions helped the organization launch. While Zip Code earns revenue, its goal is to

make the organization sustainable on revenue, not necessarily profitable. Zip Code strives for a break-even budget.

B. Anticipated student population

1. What is the estimated number of students in the program in its first year?

I. B. 1.

Zip Code estimates that 90 students will participate in the program over the next year.

2. Describe the target student demographics (e.g., race/ethnicity, age range, prior academic credit or credentials, work experience, family income). Please specify the expected number and percent of Pell-eligible students.

I. B. 2.

Zip Code demographics are approximately represented as follows:

- 38 percent of students have not earned a college degree
- 50 percent represent racial and ethnic minority groups
- 25 percent are female
- 29 is the average age
- 5-8 years of work experience on average
- Students, on average, earn less than \$30,000 per year at entry into the program

Zip Code estimates that approximately 15 percent of the program attendees are Pell-eligible. Given the current size of Zip Code, approximately 12 students per year would qualify for Pell under the EQUIP program.

Zip Code targets candidates with strong abilities in logic, problem-solving, and math. The Zip Code program is highly selective, accepting only 11 percent of applicants.

3. What are the estimated proportion of students in the program who would receive title IV aid, estimated proportion of students in the program who would receive Veteran's educational benefits, and the estimated total proportion of students in the program receiving one or the other or both?

I. B. 3.

Zip Code anticipates 15 percent of participating students will be eligible to receive Title IV aid, 0 percent will receive Veterans benefits, and 0 percent will receive both.

- C. Will the program allow otherwise eligible students in the ex-site to receive 1) only Federal Pell Grant funds, or 2) Pell Grants as well as undergraduate Direct Subsidized Loan, undergraduate Direct Unsubsidized Loans, and aid from the Campus-Based Programs?

I. C.

At this time, Zip Code and Wilmington University plan to offer Federal Pell Grant funds only.

- D. What are the expected benefits to the students for completing the program (e.g., transfer credit, certifications earned, completion of licensure exams, externally validated skills and knowledge, employment, salary increase)? Please cite specific data or studies, where they exist, to demonstrate that the program leads to the expected benefits.

I. D.

The expected benefit of the Zip Code program is that participants will be job-ready for a career in software development. On average, Zip Code graduates in paid positions double their income. Zip Code graduates have been placed quickly into jobs. Some students have had multiple full-time offers. Zip Code places students in jobs quickly, in part because of its exceptional employer partnerships. 93 percent of students are placed within 3 months of completing the 12-week classroom portion of the program. Students completing the Zip Code software development curriculum will be eligible for academic credits that apply toward undergraduate degree programs at Wilmington University.

- E. What will be the roles and responsibilities of the institution and the non-traditional provider(s)? For example, who will develop content; market the program; advise students; provide instruction; provide support services; develop and administer assessments for students; and collect and validate information on student outcomes?

I. E.

Zip Code is responsible for developing content, marketing the program, advising students, providing instruction, providing support services, developing and administering assessments, and collecting information on student outcomes.

Zip Code and Wilmington University will utilize HackerRank as the QAE provider. HackerRank helps ensure that Zip Code students are assessed fairly and accurately. Its assessments can be used as an indicator of whether students are retaining the learning material that is presented by benchmarking Zip Code's performance against other entry-level developers.

HackerRank is completely independent of Zip Code and Wilmington University.

Wilmington University will advise Title IV Pell-eligible students in the Zip Code program on relevant federal financial aid topics, along with all interested Zip Code students on the application of academic credits into degree programs at Wilmington University.

- F. If the institution will provide payment to the non-traditional provider, on what basis will the amount of the payment be determined?

I. F.

Not applicable

- G. What is the track record (e.g., measurable student outcomes such as academic or employment outcomes) of the non-traditional provider(s) with respect to serving low-income students? If the provider has not served low-income students in the past, please provide: 1) measurable student outcomes for all students served by the provider, and 2) a detailed description of how the program would be tailored to help low-income students succeed.

I. G.

Zip Code does have significant experience serving low-income students. 29 of Zip Code graduates have proven income levels below \$24,000 per year upon entry into the program. \$24,000 per year is less than 80 percent of the median income for a single family household in New Castle County, Delaware.

100 percent of Zip Code's low-income students have been placed into paid employment within 3 months of the completion of the classroom portion of the program into jobs paying, on average, over \$62,000 per year.

By reducing the cost of the Zip Code program, through a corporate payment structure, Zip Code can focus on finding high-quality candidates, regardless of a student's current financial situation or prior experience. Zip Code believes this model improves access to its program for low-income individuals.

- H. What is the track record of the institution with respect to serving low-income students? In the response, please include the Pell completion rate that the institution is required to disclose to enrolled and prospective students per 34 C.F.R. § 668.45.

I. H.

Wilmington University Pell recipients had the following cohort completion rates for fall 2007 (63.9 percent), fall 2008 (66.1 percent), and fall 2009 (60.1 percent).

- I. What support services does the institution already have in place for low-income students? Do these supports and services need to be adapted for this program?

I. I.

Wilmington University provides low-income students support services at no cost including academic advising, tutoring, library resources, computer labs, financial aid support, amongst other resources and services available to all students. Title IV applicants that are participating students in the Zip Code program will have access to all of the referenced Wilmington University support services.

- J. For institutions choosing to allow access to Pell Grants and other title IV aid (as listed above), how will the institution award Campus-Based aid in a way that will remain consistent with the experiment's focus on access for low-income students?

I. J.

At this time, Zip Code and Wilmington University plan to offer Federal Pell Grant funds only.

II. Quality Assurance Process

A. Description of the quality assurance entity (QAE)

- I. What entity will be the QAE and what experience, expertise, and skills will it bring to this role? What information gives the institution confidence that the QAE will meet all the requirements of this experiment, including the capacity to address the "Quality Assurance Questions" (listed below)?

II. A. 1.

Zip Code leverages HackerRank as a QAE provider to assess the quality of Zip Code graduates and their level of educational attainment.

HackerRank has completed assessments of over 1.5 million coders worldwide. Zip Code students complete secure assessments inside HackerRank's online tool called HackerRank for Work. These assessments are then benchmarked against other coders in the field. Zip Code's partner Capital One utilizes HackerRank's tools and assessments in order to vet candidates for positions across the entire company.

HackerRank is an independent entity and provides independently scored assessments.

2. By what process has the QAE developed (or will develop) clear, specific, and measurable standards by which to review, approve, and monitor programs based on the “Quality Assurance Questions,” establish consequences, and enforce the standards?

II. A. 2.

HackerRank designs its assessments according to employer specifications to measure work-readiness and student skill and abilities on multiple programming domains.

In the Zip Code model, Zip Code is financially penalized if a graduate does not obtain employment as a software developer. Since students do not owe Zip Code the balance of tuition unless the Zip Code graduates receive employment, it is in its best interest to use the QAE assessment for input to improve its overall program.

3. How will the QAE review programs based on the “Quality Assurance Questions”? Has it already reviewed the program based on those questions? If so, attach specific answers. If not, when will it do so? (Please note: these questions will need to be answered by the QAE before the Program Participation Agreement for the participating institution is amended.

II. A. 3.

HackerRank has assessed the Zip Code students in the past.

4. How will the institution, QAE, and/or accreditor monitor and report on the performance of the program, providers, and students? How will the QAE be linked with the institution’s and accreditor’s existing complaint processes? If the QAE identifies program quality concerns or determines that the program is at risk of or subject to any adverse action by any party, how will the QAE notify the institution and affiliated non-traditional providers?

II. A. 4.

Performance of the program’s students will be assessed by HackerRank using its existing hosted software developer skill assessment tool, HackerRank for Work. HackerRank for Work is used to assess student performance every two weeks. Around week 10, students are required to take assessments that are designed for and by the corporations who partner with the Zip Code program. Those assessments are rigorous in order to ensure that Zip Code students are meeting a minimum level of competency.

Student placement with employers is a primary goal of the Zip Code program, and is considered an outcome that will be monitored. Participating students in the Title IV Pell program through Wilmington University will follow the complaint process outlined in the Student Handbook for non-academic complaints related to financial aid. Scheduled site visits to Zip Code will occur by Wilmington University faculty to ensure adequate monitoring of the learning environment and consistency of instruction.

5. What actions will the institution and/or QAE take, and under what circumstances, to hold the institution and the non-traditional providers accountable, and help them improve as necessary?

II. A. 5.

The students' scores on the HackerRank assessments will be provided to employers, thus inhibiting the ability of Zip Code graduates to get placed if their scores fail to meet acceptable standards. Without placement, Zip Code will not be reimbursed the full cost of tuition. It is in Zip Code's best interest to meet the employers' requirements.

Wilmington University will complete an annual outcomes assessment of student learning for participating students in the Title IV Pell program. Expectations of student learning will be analyzed for this program based on employment placement and completion of the Zip Code program.

- B. If the program is suspended, terminated, or otherwise limited in its participation in the experiment by the Department, the QAE, the accreditor, the institution, or the non-traditional provider(s), what academic options will be provided to students by the institution (e.g., full transfer of credits into another program at the institution, a title IV teach out plan, and/or other options)? For institutions allowing access to federal student loans as part of the experiment, what actions will the institution take, and under what conditions, to protect students from debt or other financial liabilities resulting from their enrollment in a program that is suspended, terminated, or otherwise limited (e.g., repayment of student loans, transfer of credit to another institution, free access to credit-bearing courses, etc.)?

II. B.

Wilmington University and Zip Code only seek eligibility for Pell Grants. Students that complete the Zip Code program will be eligible for undergraduate credit at Wilmington University after successful completion of the program. In the event that the program was suspended or terminated, prior to the successful completion of the 12-week program, applicants eligible for Federal Student Aid would be provided options for earning academic credit through Wilmington University's prior learning assessment process.

- C. What policies and procedures will be in place to assure the independence and absence of conflicts of interest among the non-traditional providers, QAE, and the institution? Please address independence in terms of ownership, funding, and staffing.

II. C.

HackerRank is a completely independent organization from Zip Code and Wilmington University. HackerRank is a for-profit, venture capital backed, company.

- D. What due diligence has the institution done, or will it do, to determine if the QAE, non-traditional providers, and their employees are in good legal standing and have no past history of fraud, commission of a felony, disbarment or liability for negligence or misrepresentation?

II. D.

Zip Code has checked references and Better Business Bureau records for HackerRank.

III. Information Related to Specific Title IV Provisions

1. Will the program use the minimum program length waiver?

III. 1.

Yes

2. Will the program use the satisfactory academic progress waiver?

III. 2.
Yes

3. If the program is a distance-education program, how will it address the "regular and substantive interaction" requirements, or qualify as a degree-granting correspondence program?

III. 3.
Not applicable, the Zip Code program is entirely face-to-face instruction.

IV. Provider and Accreditor Commitments

Please include letters from the non-traditional provider(s) and from the institution's institutional accreditor confirming the following:

1. Non-Traditional Provider(s): Commitment to offer content and instruction once required approvals are secured.

IV. 1.
See attachment: Zip Code Wilmington non-traditional provider commitment letter

2. Accreditation Agency: Agreement to consider including the proposed program in the institution's accreditation. NOTE: A proposed program does not need to have been reviewed and included in accreditation at the time of this application; statement simply needs to express agency's willingness to undertake that review.

IV. 2.
See attachment: Middle States Commission on Higher Education commitment letter to undertake the review.

Quality Assurance Questions

As part of this experiment, the Department is interested in understanding how a QAE will determine the quality of a program of study through a set of largely outcome-based questions, rigorous and timely monitoring, and accountability processes. Participating institutions must ensure that the QAE has established a thorough quality assurance process that defines and monitors outcome-based standards for each of the numbered questions below.

A. Claims for learning

1. What measurable claims is the institution making about the learning outcomes of students enrolled in the program? For example:
 - What is the evidence that the learning claims are commensurate with postsecondary- or post-baccalaureate-level work?
 - Do the institution's statements about student outcomes capture requisite knowledge and skills? How? Employers, who accept Zip Code graduates into apprenticeships and full-time employment were large contributors to the requisite knowledge and skills identified in these learning outcomes.

A. 1.

The Zip Code coding program teaches the concepts covered in the Oracle Certified Professional, Java SE 7 Programmer certification. The Java SE 7 Programmer certification, and additional learning outcomes expected of Zip Code graduates, are consistent with learning outcomes from college-level courses offered at many higher education institutions including Wilmington University.

Zip Code students achieve the following learning outcomes:

1. Technical Acumen – Upon program completion, students will be able to understand, read and write Java code at a basic level.
2. Mentoring – Students will be provided opportunities to work closely with experienced software engineers.
3. Building Community and Network – Team-building exercises will allow students to create a strong support system.
4. Technology Focus – Students will be prepared for success and longevity in the technology workforce.
5. Project-Based – Students will complete tangible projects that reflect their newly attained skill set.

The learning outcomes, established by Zip Code, represent the knowledge, skills, and abilities that employers seek in entry-level programmers.

2. How are the value and relevance of those claims established? For example, what external stakeholders have been consulted to verify the value and relevance of the claims?

A. 2.

Employers are the primary external stakeholders who have validated the relevance of the Zip Code program. Zip Code has created a software development curriculum that matches the employers' needs and provides the student appropriate skills to pursue entry-level positions in the Java programming language. Zip Code has partnered with employers including: Bank of America, Barclaycard, Capital One, Comcast, CSC, JPMorgan Chase, and Chatham Financial, among others.

In addition, Zip Code students are assessed for competency every two weeks using a tool called HackerRank to Work. This tool is used to evaluate skills and map each student's progress against the Zip Code curriculum.

3. How will the claims be measured?

A. 3.

Outcomes for learning will be assessed for Title IV Pell eligible participants in the same way that non-eligible Title IV Pell participants are measured. Outcomes will be analyzed through the assessments provided by HackerRank. In addition, successful placement with employers and program completion are other measures.

4. How will institutions be held accountable for meeting those claims?

A. 4.

Without placement, Zip Code will not be reimbursed the full cost of tuition. Zip Code is held accountable for the validity and value of any claims of learning by ensuring Zip Code graduates

meet the employers' requirements, as assessed by HackerRank. Wilmington University is accountable for ensuring the integrity and consistency of the program for Title IV Pell participants and the alignment of transfer credit.

5. How do all the claims for learning come together into a meaningful and coherent set of overall program outcomes and goals?

A. 5.

Zip Code's curriculum is based on the requirements of an entry-level software developer, as defined by its corporate partners. Zip Code students are required to meet, or exceed, the bar met by Computer Science graduates who are competing for these same jobs.

Zip Code built its curriculum with the aid of a committee of Chief Information Officers, Chief Technology Officers, senior software developers, and hiring managers. Those individuals provide regular input into the content and effectiveness of the curriculum, and suggest changes based on the performance of Zip Code graduates.

Around week 10, Zip Code students are required to take assessments that are designed by and for the corporations who partner with the program. Those assessments are judged rigorously in order to ensure that Zip Code students are meeting a minimum level of competency.

B. Assessments and Student Work

1. How does the institution assess whether students enrolled in the program can meet the claims outlined in Section A? For example:
 - How are assessments aligned with the specific tasks, expectations, and contexts for which programs claim to be preparing students?
 - Beyond one-time assessments, is student work reviewed as part of the assessment of student learning and program outcomes? Do external stakeholders review students' work? How are examples of student work made available to outside parties (with appropriate privacy and other protections)?

B. 1.

The assessments used by HackerRank are based on industry-standards. The question sets reflect the level of problem solving ability, and grasp of technology concepts, necessary to complete tasks as an entry-level developer inside a corporation such as JPMorgan Chase and Capital One.

Zip Code student work is made public via GitHub and is shared with potential employers. External parties review the work as part of their hiring process. Students are required to make their work public as part of their participation in the Zip Code program.

2. How has the reliability of these assessments been established?

B. 2.

HackerRank's assessments have been utilized by well-established companies across the industry.

3. How has the validity of these assessments been established, for example in terms of the following?
 - Face validity: Does the assessment appear to measure what it says it measures?
 - Content validity: Does the assessment accurately measure the knowledge and skills covered by the program?

- Predictive validity: Does the assessment accurately predict the student's ability to demonstrate a given competency in the future?
- Concurrent validity: Does the assessment correlate with other measures of the desired performance meant to be assessed?

B. 3.

Because Zip Code tests for performance in a specific job (entry-level software developer), performance measures can be crafted in order to encompass tasks expected of an entry-level software developer. The assessment questions are the same questions that an entry-level software developer should be able to answer competently.

The Zip Code program was crafted for and by its partner corporations. The Zip Code curriculum encompasses all of the knowledge, skills, and abilities that the partner corporations deemed as important to the roles for which they are seeking workers. The HackerRank assessments similarly test the knowledge, skills, and abilities that the partner organizations evaluated as important in adequately executing the role.

The knowledge, skills, and abilities outlined in the Zip Code curriculum, once learned, will be reinforced throughout a 6-month apprenticeship. One of the reasons Zip Code works diligently to ensure 6 months of work experience, immediately following the classroom portion of the program, is to reinforce the concepts covered in the Zip Code curriculum.

Zip Code utilizes assessments throughout its program to track progress. Each of the assessments correlates to job-readiness. Job-readiness is tested through both the assessments and also in face-to-face white-board interviews. Zip Code has found that performance on the assessments correlates to how well a candidate will perform in these interviews.

4. How and how often does the QAE review these assessments?

B. 4.

HackerRank is continuously reviewing its own assessments and performing regular updates.

C. Outputs, which, where applicable, must be disaggregated to show outcomes specifically for low-income students.

Note: At the time of application for this experiment, the application should include a description of how the QAE will track these outcomes (specific measures and process) and what level would meet the quality standard for each outcome. If the non-traditional provider(s) have gathered this data for an existing version of the program to be implemented, the application should also include those data. For all measures that reflect existing data, appropriate privacy protections should be applied.

1. How are students performing on program assessments?

C. 1.

100 percent of Zip Code graduates receive passing scores on their HackerRank assessments. Zip Code students have performed well on these assessments. Zip Code does ask students who are not meeting the assessment's minimum level of competency to leave the program, without financial penalty.

2. How are students progressing through the program? For example:

- Retention rate?

- Withdrawal rate?
- Average time to completion?
- Completion rate (within 100 percent and 150 percent of expected time)?

C. 2.

The retention rate of Zip Code students is around 85 percent, that is who begin the program and finish the program. For the first Zip Code cohort of students, there were 3 percent that had to withdraw before attending their first class. The average time to completion for the Zip Code program is 12 weeks. Time to completion of the in-classroom portion is 12 weeks.

3. What are the actual program outcomes for students (e.g., entry into subsequent phase of study, career, etc.)? For example:
 - Employment outcomes, for all programs that have a stated mission focused on employment (include method for how these outcomes are measured):
 - Job placement rates in field of study?
 - Average length of time between completion of program and employment in field of study?
 - Job retention rates?
 - Median starting salaries?
 - Transfer rates to other academic or vocational programs, where applicable
 - Certifications and licensure exam passage rates, where applicable

C. 3.

Zip Code students that have graduated the program have had 93 percent job placement in their field of study within 3 months of graduation. The average length of time between the completion of the Zip Code program and employment in their field of study has been 2 weeks. Occupational retention rates have been 98 percent for Zip Code graduates. The median starting salary for Zip Code graduates is \$62,000 per year.

4. What are the following ratios for the program, where relevant?
 - Published tuition and fees versus earnings:
 - Average net price versus earnings
 - Median student debt versus earnings

C. 4.

Published tuition and fees for the Zip Code program is \$12,000 if the Zip Code student is not participating in the apprenticeship program. The tuition and fees in this scenario come out to be 19 percent of average annualized earnings following completion of the classroom portion of the program. The average net price versus earnings for the Zip Code student in this scenario is negative (-) \$50,000 due to their expected earnings.

However, the Zip Code tuition and fees are \$2,000 if the Zip Code student is participating in the apprenticeship program. The tuition and fees in this situation come out to be 3.2 percent of annualized earnings following completion of the classroom portion of the program.. The average net price versus earnings for the Zip Code student in this scenario is negative (-) \$60,000 due to their expected earnings.

Median student debt (\$0.00) versus earnings of \$62,000 per year.

5. How does the program rate on measures of student satisfaction? For example, how does the program rate in the following:
 - Comments from students about what made them successful or unsuccessful in the program?
 - A rigorous and transparent methodology for gathering and synthesizing customer satisfaction measures?

C. 5.

At the end of each class, Zip Code requests feedback from students regarding which parts of the program were successful, which parts were not successful, and how it can improve. At the end of each cohort, Zip Code will also solicit student comments anonymously and privately through an online survey. Zip Code is currently evaluating online student survey options.

D. Management

1. How has the stability of the non-traditional provider(s) been evaluated (e.g., longevity and past outcomes, leadership/board, etc.)?

D. 1.

As Zip Code got off the ground, it was managed by Tech Impact, a nonprofit organization with 12 years of experience in delivering services to nonprofits and 7 years of experience in delivering education programs of this type to low-income individuals. Through its programs, Tech Impact has lifted over 250 individuals out of poverty.

Zip Code is now self-managed by a board of directors comprised of leaders in the Wilmington, Delaware community.

2. How are privacy, security, and student authentication managed?

D. 2.

Privacy related to personal information provided to Wilmington University by participating students in the Title IV Pell program will be protected by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) as a Wilmington University student.

3. Are activities related to student recruitment appropriate and transparent?

D. 3.

Zip Code's marketing makes no false promises and offers no guarantees. Zip Code is transparent in its marketing approaches and all promotional materials are publicly available.

4. How is pricing made transparent?

D. 4.

Pricing is transparent both on Zip Code's website and in its student contract. The student contract complies with all laws and regulations, as defined by the Delaware Department of Education.

5. Are all materials accessible to learners with disabilities?

D. 5.

All Zip Code materials are accessible to learners with disabilities.

6. What is the process for continuous improvement of all aspects of the learning experience (content, platform, student support, faculty engagement, etc.)?

D. 6.

Zip Code is a learning organization and organizes several committees in order to maintain accountability for continuous improvement. The organization's Steering Committee and Advisory Board play an important role in ensuring the forward progress of the organization. Regular staff meetings, curriculum reviews, and process reviews ensure that steps are taken to improve. In addition, contractors are brought in to help instructors learn how to teach and improve upon the curriculum.

PRA Burden Statement

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