



December 17, 2021

Student and Exchange Visitor Program
U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement
Department of Homeland Security
Washington, D.C.

Via E-mail: SEVP@ice.dhs.gov

Dear SEVP Administrators:

We are writing to request that sociology be categorized as a STEM discipline for the purposes of Optional Practical Training (OPT). Currently, graduates of sociology programs are eligible for only one year of OPT, while graduates of similar social science disciplines (e.g., econometrics and quantitative economics, personality psychology, and social psychology) are eligible for three years. This inequity must be addressed. Doing so will not only expand opportunities for graduates, but also strengthen the nation's scientific workforce by allowing excellent social scientists to begin to build their careers here.

The National Science Foundation (NSF) recognizes sociology as a STEM discipline and includes Sociology in its [Directorate for Social, Behavioral, and Economic Sciences](#), in the same division as its programs in Economics, Science and Technology Studies, and Secure and Trustworthy Cyberspace. NSF's inclusion of sociology in its programming and funding demonstrates that this is a rigorous and important area of scientific study for the nation's progress and continued well-being.

We make this request, that DHS/ICE bring the STEM discipline of sociology in line with other social science and STEM disciplines, on behalf of hundreds of international students pursuing degrees in our field, who seek an equal opportunity to put their skills to work in the U.S. upon graduation.

The Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) codes that we are requesting receive the STEM designation and three years allowable OPT are:

45.1101 Sociology, General
45.1102 Applied/Public Sociology
45.1103 Rural Sociology
45.1199 Sociology, Other

Sociologists analyze some of the most pertinent challenges facing the United States today, including health and health care, policing, culture, families, power and governance, inequality, and globalization. Many research topics in sociology overlap with currently-eligible fields; these include computational social science, terrorism, labor market analyses, and public health. International students who are

trained as sociologists in our educational institutions should receive the same allowance as those from other social science backgrounds: three years to put their STEM knowledge to work through OPT, which will give them a chance to secure employment in the field.

Thank you in advance for considering our request. Please notify us if we need to submit any additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Nancy Kidd".

Nancy Kidd, Ph.D.
Executive Director
American Sociological Association
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