

NAFSA: Association of International Educators
Last reviewed October 2023

U.S. Department of Commerce (DOC)

Below are specific recommendations for advancing international education:

Bureau of Industry and Security

- **Protect Sensitive Research While Remaining Open to Global Academic Engagement.**
DOC must balance efforts to protect sensitive research and technology developed at U.S. higher education institutions without implementing policies that target wide swaths of international students, scholars, and researchers based on their nationality. Treating international students and scholars broadly as a threat and imposing progressively restrictive and unnecessary requirements without any demonstrable national security benefit makes our nation weaker and less secure. The government should work in close partnership with U.S. higher education to ensure both an open and secure environment for internationally collaborative study and research.

International Trade Administration

- **Develop a National International Student Recruitment Strategy in Partnership with the U.S. Departments of State, Education, and Homeland Security.**
To ensure that the U.S. government's policies and messages create a welcoming environment for international students, scholars and researchers, a whole-of government national recruitment strategy is necessary. DOC should work in partnership with the named agencies above on an international student recruitment strategy, to include a streamlined, one-government, marketing campaign designed to attract a diverse group of international students from all regions of the world to study in the United States.

UPDATES:

- *In early October 2023, ITA's Industry and Analysis recently released the [Market Diversification Tool for International Education](#), an interactive dashboard that brings together six sector-specific datasets to help education exporters identify and compare new markets for recruiting international students.*
- *On June 29, 2023, the U.S. Department of Commerce released its [2023 National Export Strategy](#), which includes international education as a key export sector for the first time. The report, which references NAFSA's International Student Economic Value Tool data, lists several approaches being undertaken to promote the United States as a leading study destination.*
- *On July 26, 2021, the U.S. Departments of State and Education, with support from the U.S. Departments of Commerce and Homeland Security, released a "[Joint Statement of Principles in Support of International Education](#)", outlining their shared commitment to promoting international education, and to undertaking actions to support a renewed focus on international education.*

Adopted Recommendations

Bureau of Economic Analysis

- **Provide Detailed Methodology for Calculating U.S. Trade in Services, Education-Related Personal Travel.**

DOC's Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) calculates the economic contributions of international students, through the tuition and living expenses they pay, as a trade in services export, defined as "Education-related Personal Travel". In 2020, DOC calculated the contribution of international students [at \\$39 billion](#). NAFSA also calculates the economic contributions of international students; for the 2020-2021 academic year, [we calculated a contribution of \\$28.4 billion to the U.S. economy](#). Given the gap between our respective calculations, we urge DOC to provide a detailed methodology on the process used to arrive at their calculation. DOC also calculates the economic impact of study abroad on the U.S. economy; a detailed methodology on this calculation is also requested.

ADOPTED: On August 12, 2021, BEA shared the following detailed methodology with NAFSA: "[U.S. International Economic Accounts: Concepts and Methods \(July 2021\)](#)". Discussion of methodology for calculating the economic contributions of international students is included in Chapter 12, pages 98-100.