



**U.S. Citizenship  
and Immigration  
Services**

**Non-Precedent Decision of the  
Administrative Appeals Office**

MATTER OF A-A-O-

DATE: APR. 22, 2016

APPEAL OF TEXAS SERVICE CENTER DECISION

PETITION: FORM I-140, IMMIGRANT PETITION FOR ALIEN WORKER

The Petitioner, a researcher and scholar in the field of complexity leadership, seeks classification as a member of the professions holding an advanced degree. *See* Immigration and Nationality Act (the Act) § 203(b)(2), 8 U.S.C. § 1153(b)(2). The Petitioner also seeks a national interest waiver of the job offer requirement that is normally attached to this immigrant classification. *See* § 203(b)(2)(B)(i) of the Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1153(b)(2)(B)(i). U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) may grant this discretionary waiver of the required job offer, and thus of a labor certification, when it is in the national interest to do so.

The Director, Texas Service Center, denied the petition. The Director found that the Petitioner qualified for classification as a member of the professions holding an advanced degree, but that he had not established that a waiver of a job offer would be in the national interest. The matter is now before us on appeal. On appeal, the Petitioner contends that he satisfies the national interest waiver requirements. Upon *de novo* review, we will dismiss the appeal.

### I. LAW

To establish eligibility for a national interest waiver, a petitioner must first demonstrate his or her qualification for the underlying visa classification, as either an advanced degree professional or an individual of exceptional ability in the sciences arts or business. Because this classification normally requires that the individual's services be sought by a U.S. employer, a separate showing is required to establish that a waiver of the job offer requirement is in the national interest.

Section 203(b) of the Act states, in pertinent part:

(2) Aliens who are members of the professions holding advanced degrees or aliens of exceptional ability. –

(A) In general. – Visas shall be made available . . . to qualified immigrants who are members of the professions holding advanced degrees or their equivalent or who because of their exceptional ability in the sciences, arts, or business, will substantially benefit prospectively the national economy, cultural or educational

(b)(6)

*Matter of A-A-O-*

interests, or welfare of the United States, and whose services in the sciences, arts, professions, or business are sought by an employer in the United States.

(B) Waiver of job offer –

(i) National interest waiver. . . . the Attorney General<sup>1</sup> may, when the Attorney General deems it to be in the national interest, waive the requirements of subparagraph (A) that an alien’s services in the sciences, arts, professions, or business be sought by an employer in the United States.

Neither the statute nor the pertinent regulations define the term “national interest.” Additionally, Congress did not provide a specific definition of “in the national interest.” The Committee on the Judiciary merely noted in its report to the Senate that the committee had “focused on national interest by increasing the number and proportion of visas for immigrants who would benefit the United States economically and otherwise. . . .” S. Rep. No. 55, 101st Cong., 1st Sess., 11 (1989).

*Matter of New York State Department of Transportation*, 22 I&N Dec. 215, 217-18 (Act. Assoc. Comm’r 1998) (*NYSDOT*), set forth several factors which must be considered when evaluating a request for a national interest waiver. First, a petitioner must demonstrate that he or she seeks employment in an area of substantial intrinsic merit. *Id.* at 217. Next, a petitioner must show that the proposed benefit will be national in scope. *Id.* Finally, the petitioner seeking the waiver must establish that he or she will serve the national interest to a substantially greater degree than would an available U.S. worker having the same minimum qualifications. *Id.* at 217-18.

While the national interest waiver hinges on prospective national benefit, a petitioner’s assurance that he or she will, in the future, serve the national interest cannot suffice to establish prospective national benefit. *Id.* at 219. Rather, a petitioner must justify projections of future benefit to the national interest by establishing a history of demonstrable achievement with some degree of influence on the field as a whole. *Id.* at 219, n.6.

## II. ANALYSIS

The Petitioner holds a Ph.D. in Educational Leadership from [REDACTED], a Master of Business Administration from [REDACTED] and a Master of Science in Political Science from [REDACTED]. The Director determined that the Petitioner qualifies as a member of the professions holding an advanced degree. The sole issue in contention is whether the Petitioner has established that a waiver

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<sup>1</sup> Pursuant to section 1517 of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (“HSA”), Pub. L. No. 107-296, 116 Stat. 2135, 2311 (codified at 6 U.S.C. § 557 (2012)), any reference to the Attorney General in a provision of the Act describing functions that were transferred from the Attorney General or other Department of Justice official to the Department of Homeland Security by the HSA “shall be deemed to refer to the Secretary” of Homeland Security. *See also* 6 U.S.C. § 542 note (2012); 8 U.S.C. § 1551 note (2012).

(b)(6)

*Matter of A-A-O-*

of the job offer requirement, and thus a labor certification, is in the national interest according to the three-pronged analysis set forth in *NYSDOT*.

#### A. Substantial Intrinsic Merit

The Petitioner filed the Form I-140, Immigrant Petition for Alien Worker, on June 5, 2014, proposing to work as a teacher and researcher at a college or university. At the time of filing, the Petitioner was working as an “Office Manager” for [REDACTED] a financial services company in South Carolina. In response to the Director’s request for evidence (RFE), the Petitioner stated that he “will carry out research on [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] He indicated that his research responsibilities will include conducting independent and original research; writing and reviewing research proposals for conference events; disseminating research findings via publications in peer reviewed journals and presentations at professional meetings; and collating, analyzing, and evaluating research data. According to the Petitioner’s curriculum vitae, however, his duties as an officer manager for [REDACTED] did not involve complexity leadership research.

The Director’s decision noted that although the Petitioner seeks to serve the national interest through his employment as a complexity leadership researcher, he was working 40 hours per week as an office manager for [REDACTED]. Accordingly, the Director found that the Petitioner had not demonstrated that he seeks employment in an area of substantial intrinsic merit. The Director also concluded that the Petitioner’s work as a researcher for [REDACTED] was beneficial only to the university; however, the scope of the benefit resulting from his work relates to the second prong of the *NYSDOT* analysis and will be addressed there.

On appeal, the Petitioner submits a September 2015 letter from [REDACTED] an assistant professor of education administration at [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] states that she is co-principal investigator with the Petitioner on a grant proposal for the [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] for a project entitled “[REDACTED]”. In addition, [REDACTED] mentions that the Petitioner is part of a team of academics proposing “a series of research projects and workshops to investigate and implement enhancements in the Nigerian educational context” and that his “research under the grant would compare faculty forms of creativity and productivity in research endeavors in Nigeria and the U.S.” Furthermore, [REDACTED] maintains that the Petitioner “is engaged in helping the U.S. to understand Africa better, while at the same time contributing to the development of African institutions, both of which are in the U.S. national interest.” [REDACTED] also points to the Petitioner’s invited conference presentations on African education, politics, ethics, and corruption.

The Petitioner’s appellate submission includes a copy of the [REDACTED] research proposal and a “Statement of Research Interest” explaining his intent to continue educational leadership research examining the role of teams and their interactions to explicate creativity in organizations. The aforementioned documents and information provided by [REDACTED] adequately demonstrate that the

(b)(6)

*Matter of A-A-O-*

Petitioner's proposed research endeavors have substantial intrinsic merit. Accordingly, we find that the Petitioner meets the first prong of the *NYSDOT* national interest analysis, and the Director's determination on this issue is withdrawn.

#### B. National in Scope

The Petitioner stated that his research in the field of complexity leadership "will drastically impact Americans' safety, and ability to pioneer new leadership technologies on a global scale" and, therefore, that his work is in the national interest of the United States. The second prong of the *NYSDOT* national interest analysis requires that the benefit arising from the Petitioner's work will be national in scope. As noted previously, the Director determined that the Petitioner had not met this requirement because the benefit of his research was limited to [REDACTED] in Nigeria.

On appeal, the Petitioner submits a letter from [REDACTED] associate professor of management, [REDACTED] explaining that the proposed benefit arising from the Petitioner's work with [REDACTED] has national scope. [REDACTED] indicated that the Petitioner's "research with [REDACTED] is a U.S.-Nigerian collaborative effort that will not just benefit Africa, but also the U.S., as this is just one of many projects directed to the understanding of complexity leadership." [REDACTED] further stated:

Educational Leadership work by [the Petitioner] will include comparative studies that will be used to further explore the connection between complexity and faculty creativity in higher education; the influence of school leadership styles on students' academic achievements; the influence of collectivist dynamics on faculty creativity in higher education; and the impact of complexity theory models in changing the role of analysis in law enforcement and national security.

In addition, [REDACTED] indicated that the Petitioner's journal articles and conference presentations demonstrate that the scope of his research has expanded beyond the U.S. education system. The submitted documentation shows that the proposed benefit from the Petitioner's complexity leadership research has national and international breadth, as the results from his work are disseminated to others in the field through conferences and journals. Accordingly, we find that the prospective benefit of the Petitioner's work is national in scope, and the Director's determination on this issue is withdrawn.

#### C. Serving the National Interest

It remains, then, to determine whether the Petitioner will benefit the national interest to a greater extent than an available U.S. worker with the same minimum qualifications. The Director determined that the Petitioner's impact and influence on his field did not satisfy the third prong of the *NYSDOT* national interest analysis.

(b)(6)

*Matter of A-A-O-*

The Petitioner initially submitted documentation pertaining to his exceptional ability in the educational leadership field. For example, the Petitioner provided his university degrees and transcripts, job experience letters, professional memberships, and academic awards. Academic records, occupational experience, membership in professional associations, and recognition for achievements are elements that can contribute toward a finding of exceptional ability. *See* 8 C.F.R. § 204.5(k)(3)(ii)(A), (B), (E), and (F) respectively. However, in this matter, the Petitioner must also demonstrate eligibility for the additional benefit of the national interest waiver.

We note that the regulation at 8 C.F.R. § 204.5(k)(2) defines “exceptional ability” as “a degree of expertise significantly above that ordinarily encountered” in a given area of endeavor. Pursuant to section 203(b)(2)(A) of the Act, aliens of exceptional ability are generally subject to the job offer/labor certification requirement; they are not exempt by virtue of their exceptional ability. *NYS DOT*, 22 I&N Dec. at 218, 222. Therefore, whether a given individual seeks classification as an alien of exceptional ability or as a member of the professions holding an advanced degree, that individual cannot qualify for a waiver just by demonstrating a degree of expertise significantly above that ordinarily encountered in his field of expertise. The national interest waiver is an additional benefit, separate from the classification sought, and therefore eligibility for the underlying classification does not demonstrate eligibility for the additional benefit of the waiver. Without evidence showing that the Petitioner’s work has influenced the field as a whole, we cannot conclude that he has demonstrated eligibility for the national interest waiver. *See id.* at 219, n. 6.

In addition to documentation of his published work, conference presentations, and peer review activities, the Petitioner submitted various reference letters discussing his work in the field. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] associate professor and graduate programs coordinator for the [REDACTED] [REDACTED] identified himself as the principal investigator for the [REDACTED] project, “a partnership between [REDACTED]” [REDACTED] indicated that the Petitioner’s contributions to the project as a graduate student “have been instrumental to the success of the program especially in the area of program evaluation and assessment.” Furthermore, [REDACTED] stated that “[t]he program has positively impacted over 600 elementary students in rural South Carolina over the last six years” and that the Petitioner’s “work in emerging methodologies including [REDACTED] has led to contribution of complex leadership.” [REDACTED] did not explain how the Petitioner’s work for the [REDACTED] project has affected the field beyond the [REDACTED] or provide any specific examples of how the Petitioner’s modeling and analysis methodologies have influenced the field of complexity leadership as a whole.

[REDACTED] also mentioned the Petitioner’s published and presented work. For example, the Petitioner has published an article in [REDACTED] and presented his work at the International Leadership Association Annual Conference. There is no presumption that every published article or conference presentation demonstrates influence on the field as a whole; rather, the Petitioner must document the actual impact of his article or presentation. A substantial number of favorable independent citations for an article or presentation is an indicator that other researchers

(b)(6)

*Matter of A-A-O-*

are familiar with the work and have been influenced by it. A lack of citations, on the other hand, is generally not probative of the work's impact in the field. In this instance, there is no evidence showing that once disseminated through publication or presentation, the Petitioner's research has garnered a significant number of independent citations or that his findings have otherwise influenced the field as a whole.

The Petitioner submitted additional letters of support from [REDACTED] assistant professor of educational leadership at [REDACTED] associate professor of educational leadership at [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] owner and director of [REDACTED] in South Carolina. They each stated that the Petitioner is "a valuable asset to this country" and that he "has been invited to speak and present at national conferences." We note that many professional fields regularly hold meetings and conferences to present new work, discuss new findings, and to network with other professionals. Professional associations, educational institutions, employers, and government agencies promote and sponsor these meetings and conferences. Although presentation of the Petitioner's work demonstrates that he shared his original findings with others, there is no documentary evidence showing, for instance, frequent independent citation of his work, or that his findings have otherwise influenced the educational leadership field at a level sufficient to waive the job offer requirement.

In addition, while [REDACTED] each stated that the Petitioner's "work has private sector implications as well as national security uses," they did not offer any specific examples of how the Petitioner's complexity leadership findings are being utilized in the private sector or for national security purposes. [REDACTED] also noted that the Petitioner worked with her "afterschool program on a consultancy basis by providing support to at-risk children," but did not explain how his work has affected practices at other educational centers or has otherwise influenced the complexity leadership field as a whole. Lastly, the aforementioned references indicated that the Petitioner's expertise, qualifications, credentials, and "unique and original" work are not amenable to the labor certification process. The inapplicability or unavailability of a labor certification, however, cannot be viewed as sufficient cause for a national interest waiver; a petitioner still must demonstrate that he will serve the national interest to a substantially greater degree than do others in his field. *NYS DOT*, 22 I&N Dec. at 218, n.5.

As noted by the Director, the multiple identical statements in the aforementioned letters suggest that their language was not written independently. While it is acknowledged that the authors have provided their support for this petition, it is unclear whether the letters reflect their independent observations and thus an informed and unbiased opinion of the Petitioner's work. In evaluating the evidence, the truth is to be determined not by the quantity of evidence alone but by its quality. See *Matter of Chawathe*, 25 I&N Dec. 369, 376 (AAO 2010). In addition, USCIS may, in its discretion, use as advisory opinions statements submitted as expert testimony. See *Matter of Caron International*, 19 I&N Dec. 791, 795 (Comm'r 1988). However, USCIS is ultimately responsible for making the final determination regarding an individual's eligibility for the benefit sought. *Id.* Based on the identical paragraphs in [REDACTED] letters, USCIS may accord them less weight. Regardless, their letters do not provide specific examples of how the Petitioner's work has affected the field as a whole.

(b)(6)

*Matter of A-A-O-*

On appeal, [REDACTED] describes the Petitioner's graduate work at [REDACTED] as "original and ground-breaking." He also states that the Petitioner "has provided a major new thrust" regarding complexity theory's "application to creativity in educational organizational networks by subjecting it to rigorous statistical analysis," but there is no documentary evidence showing that the Petitioner's work has been frequently cited by independent scholars, has affected practices at a substantial number of educational organizations, or has otherwise influenced the field as a whole.

In addition, [REDACTED] indicates that the Petitioner's Ph.D. dissertation combined "complexity theory and KEYS model constructs to investigate how mechanisms for intellectual productivity and creativity foster intellectual and disciplinary interactions among faculty members in higher education." He further notes that the Petitioner presented "a novel use of evaluation tools in combining the approach known as the PLS-SEM with the PLS algorithm, bootstrapping, and Q2 predicted relevance." Although the Petitioner's Ph.D. work has value, any graduate research must be original and likely to present some benefit if it is to receive funding and attention from the academic community. In order for a university, publisher or grantor to accept any research for graduation, publication or funding, the research must offer new and useful information to the pool of knowledge. Not every scholar who performs original research that adds to the general pool of knowledge in the field inherently serves the national interest to an extent that is sufficient to waive the job offer requirement.

[REDACTED] editor of [REDACTED] states that the Petitioner "served the journal . . . as a reviewer and submitted his review on a timely basis," which enabled "an appropriate determination about the manuscript he reviewed." With regard to the Petitioner's services as a peer reviewer, it is common for a publication to ask multiple reviewers to review a manuscript and to offer comments. The publication's editorial staff may accept or reject any reviewer's comments in determining whether to publish or reject submitted papers. Thus, peer review is routine in the field, and there is no evidence demonstrating that the Petitioner's occasional participation in the widespread peer review process is evidence that he will serve the national interest to a substantially greater degree than would an available U.S. worker having the same minimum qualifications. In addition, the Petitioner previously submitted documentation reflecting that he reviewed conference proposals for the [REDACTED] (2012 and 2013) and performed Leadership Scholarship Member Interest Group reviews for the [REDACTED] (2013), but there is no indication that serving as a peer reviewer for the conferences demonstrates influence on the field as a whole. We note that the Petitioner provided a program booklet for the 2012 [REDACTED] reflecting that more than 400 volunteers performed proposal reviews.

The appellate submission includes a September 2015 letter from [REDACTED] mentioning the Petitioner's use of mathematical models. [REDACTED] states that the Petitioner "has developed an approach which has broad applicability to multiple areas," but does not offer any specific examples of its utilization or impact on the field. In addition, [REDACTED] indicates that "further elaboration of the theory and statistical analysis could have important insights to offer in contexts involving

(b)(6)

*Matter of A-A-O-*

leadership across society.” There is no documentary evidence showing, however, that the Petitioner’s work has already had this effect and influenced the field as a whole. Eligibility must be established at the time of filing. 8 C.F.R. § 103.2(b)(1), (12); *Matter of Katighak*, 14 I&N Dec. 45, 49 (Reg’l Comm’r 1971). [REDACTED] expectation regarding the possible future impact of the Petitioner’s work is not evidence of his eligibility at the time of filing.

[REDACTED] associate professor of educational leadership, [REDACTED] at [REDACTED] stated:

[The Petitioner’s] field of expertise is Educational Leadership, but he brings a unique and highly significant set of secondary qualifications to his work. He has a [REDACTED] Master’s in Business Administration, and a M.Sc. in Political Science. He has a deep knowledge of African politics and Nigerian society and is able to conduct research in [REDACTED]. It is extremely rare for an American researcher in Educational Leadership to have a background like this, and this combination offers him entrance into areas of research that very few scholars have access to.

[REDACTED] mentions the Petitioner’s combination of mathematical-analytic, political, social science research, and African language skills. Any statement that a petitioner possesses useful skills or a “unique background,” however, relates to whether similarly trained workers are available in the United States and is an issue under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Department of Labor through the labor certification process. *See NYSDOT*, 22 I&N Dec. at 221. [REDACTED] did not provide any specific examples of how the Petitioner’s work has affected other scholars’ complexity leadership analytical methodologies or has otherwise had an impact on the field of educational leadership as a whole.

The Petitioner submitted letters of varying probative value. We have addressed the specific contentions above. Generalized conclusory statements that do not identify specific contributions or their impact in the field have little probative value. *See 1756, Inc. v. U.S. Att’y Gen.*, 745 F. Supp. 9, 15 (D.D.C. 1990) (holding that an agency need not credit conclusory assertions in immigration benefits adjudications). In addition, uncorroborated statements are insufficient. *See Visinscaia v. Beers*, 4 F.Supp.3d 126, 134-35 (D.D.C. 2013) (upholding USCIS’ decision to give limited weight to uncorroborated assertions from practitioners in the field); *See also Matter of Caron Int’l, Inc.*, 19 I&N Dec. at 795 (holding that an agency “may, in its discretion, use as advisory opinions statements . . . submitted in evidence as expert testimony,” but is ultimately responsible for making the final determination regarding an alien’s eligibility for the benefit sought and “is not required to accept or may give less weight” to evidence that is “in any way questionable”). The submission of reference letters supporting the petition is not presumptive evidence of eligibility; USCIS may evaluate the content of those letters as to whether they support the petitioner’s eligibility. *Id.*; *See also Matter of V-K-*, 24 I&N Dec. 500, n.2 (BIA 2008) (noting that expert opinion testimony does not purport to be evidence as to “fact”). As the submitted reference letters did not establish that the Petitioner’s work



(b)(6)

*Matter of A-A-O-*

has influenced the field as a whole, they do not demonstrate his eligibility for the national interest waiver.

The Petitioner's appeal brief lists various awards that he received as a graduate student at [REDACTED] but there is no documentary evidence showing that any of his academic scholarships, graduate assistantships, and travel awards are reflective of influence on the field of educational leadership as a whole. For example, the Petitioner received an Outstanding Graduate Student Award from the [REDACTED] in 2012. The Petitioner previously submitted the award's criteria indicating that recipients must demonstrate "strength in at least two of the following areas":

- Academic excellence as judged by the strength of their curriculum and GPA;
- Contributions to their profession and local or international community through paid or volunteer activities;
- Research and scholarship including publications, presentations, exhibitions, and/or performances; or
- Perseverance in the face of barriers to higher education.

While particularly significant awards may serve as evidence of impact and influence on the field, the Petitioner has not demonstrated that the awards he received have more than institutional or academic significance. Academic performance, measured by such criteria as grade point average, cannot alone satisfy the national interest threshold or assure substantial prospective national benefit. In all instances, a petitioner must demonstrate specific prior achievements that establish the individual's ability to benefit the national interest. *NYS DOT*, 22 I&N Dec. at 219, n.6.

The Petitioner's appellate submission includes an April 2013 news release from the [REDACTED] Media Relations office entitled [REDACTED]. The news release states that "[t]he honor roll is the highest recognition given by the federal government to a college or university for its dedication to volunteerism and service-learning" and that [REDACTED] joined "a large list of recipients from across the United States." In addition, the news release indicates that the university "was recognized for such programs as [REDACTED] football game-day, the English Department's Client-Based Writing program and [REDACTED] an after-school program coordinated by faculty and students in the [REDACTED] School of Education."

The Petitioner contends that the Media Relations office's news release "reports on the national award for the [REDACTED] program, and attests to the national significance of the Petitioner's work in the program." We note that the [REDACTED] recognized [REDACTED] for its dedication to volunteerism and service learning, and not the Petitioner for his graduate research activities. The news release, which is not indicative of independent journalistic coverage, does not mention the Petitioner or his modeling and analysis work in the field of complexity leadership. Accordingly, the news release does not show the national significance of the Petitioner's work in the complexity leadership field.

(b)(6)

*Matter of A-A-O-*

In addition, the Petitioner provides printouts of webpages dated in 2015 reflecting his positions as membership development director and secretary for the [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Again, eligibility must be established at the time of filing. 8 C.F.R. § 103.2(b)(1), (12); *Matter of Katigbak*, 14 I&N Dec. at 49. Accordingly, we cannot consider any leadership appointments after June 5, 2014, the date the petition was filed, as evidence to establish the Petitioner's eligibility at the time of filing. Regardless, the record does not include evidence that the Petitioner's work for the association has influenced the field.

The Petitioner mentions a USCIS directive to clarify the standard by which a national interest waiver may be granted to foreign inventors, researchers, and founders of start-up enterprises. On November 20, 2014, Jeh Johnson, Secretary of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, issued a memorandum to León Rodríguez, Director of USCIS, entitled "Policies Supporting U.S. High-Skilled Businesses and Workers."<sup>2</sup> With respect to the national interest waiver, the memorandum states: "This waiver is underutilized and there is limited guidance with respect to its invocation. I hereby direct USCIS to issue guidance or regulations to clarify the standard by which a national interest waiver can be granted, with the aim of promoting its greater use for the benefit of the U.S. economy."

The Petitioner requests approval of his petition in light of the directive to USCIS to improve its guidance and "to become more modern, flexible, and supportive of independent research and entrepreneurial efforts." USCIS, however, has not yet issued any new guidance or regulations clarifying the national interest waiver eligibility standards in response to the Secretary's memorandum, and the memorandum does not itself set forth any specific guidance. A concern about underutilization of the national interest waiver benefit in general is not indicative that any particular decision USCIS has previously issued constituted an error of law or policy. The existing *NYSDOT* guidelines require the Petitioner to establish that he will serve the national interest to a substantially greater degree than would an available U.S. worker having the same minimum qualifications, and he has not done so in this matter. *See NYSDOT*, 22 I&N Dec. at 217-18. With regard to following the guidelines set forth in *NYSDOT*, USCIS, by law, does not have the discretion to ignore binding precedent. *See* 8 C.F.R. § 103.3(c). In the present matter, the record does not show that the Petitioner's past research has influenced the field of complexity leadership as a whole. For example, there is no documentary evidence indicating that his published and presented findings have been frequently cited by independent scholars, that his proposals have been widely implemented in the field, or that his work has otherwise affected the field as a whole.

### III. CONCLUSION

Considering the letters and other evidence in the aggregate, the record does not establish that the Petitioner's work has influenced the field as a whole or that he will otherwise serve the national interest to a substantially greater degree than would an available U.S. worker having the same minimum

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<sup>2</sup> Memorandum from Jeh Charles Johnson, Secretary, DHS, *Policies Supporting U.S. High-Skilled Businesses and Workers* (Nov. 20, 2014), [https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/14\\_1120\\_memo\\_business\\_actions.pdf](https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/14_1120_memo_business_actions.pdf).

*Matter of A-A-O-*

qualifications. The Petitioner has not shown that his past record of achievement is at a level sufficient to waive the job offer requirement which, by law, normally attaches to the visa classification he seeks.

A plain reading of the statute indicates that it was not the intent of Congress that every advanced degree professional or alien of exceptional ability should be exempt from the requirement of a job offer based on national interest. Although a petitioner need not demonstrate notoriety on the scale of national acclaim, he must have “a past history of demonstrable achievement with some degree of influence on the field as a whole.” *NYS DOT*, 22 I&N Dec. at 219, n.6. On the basis of the evidence submitted, the Petitioner has not established that a waiver of the requirement of an approved labor certification will be in the national interest of the United States.

The appeal will be dismissed for the above stated reasons, with each considered as an independent and alternate basis for the decision. In visa petition proceedings, it is the Petitioner’s burden to establish eligibility for the immigration benefit sought. Section 291 of the Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1361: *Matter of Otiende*, 26 I&N Dec. 127, 128 (BIA 2013). Here, the Petitioner has not met that burden.

**ORDER:** The appeal is dismissed.

Cite as *Matter of A-A-O-*, ID# 16482 (AAO Apr. 22, 2016)