

MEMORANDUM

Date: May 10, 2011

To: Shelly Wilkie Martinez, Desk Officer
Office of Management and Budget

From: Lynda T. Carlson, Director
National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics

Via: Suzanne Plimpton, Clearance Officer
National Science Foundation (NSF)

Subject: Notification of data collection under generic clearance

The purpose of this memorandum is to inform you of NSF's plan to conduct interviews under the generic clearance for survey improvement projects (OMB #3145-0174). This activity is associated with the NSF Higher Education Research and Development Survey.

Background

The Higher Education Research and Development Survey, formerly known as the Survey of R&D Expenditures at Universities and Colleges, has been conducted annually since 1972. The survey collects information on separately budgeted organized research and development projects and currently excludes departmental research that is not separately budgeted.

However, from 1972 through 1977 NSF did collect expenditures for science and engineering instruction and departmental research by field (Engineering, Physical Sciences, Environmental Sciences, etc.). This item was discontinued because universities reported major issues in estimating the portion of departmental research. This topic hasn't been revisited since the late 70s although it has often been discussed as an area of incomparability with the higher education R&D (HERD) statistics provided by other countries. The majority of other countries reporting HERD statistics include the equivalent of departmental research, known internationally as general university funds, in their estimates.

NSF would now like to learn more about how departmental research is currently defined by institutions, how large a component of faculty research time it represents, and whether we should attempt to estimate it going forward.

NSF will conduct 25 in-person and telephone interviews with deans at approximately 12 academic institutions across the country. The institutions will be selected to represent both large and small universities as well as public and private institutions.

Data Collection Instrument

The protocol for the interviews is provided in Appendix A.

Data Collection Procedures

We will schedule one-hour interviews with two deans at each university selected. NSF will interview deans in science and engineering as well as those in arts and humanities in order to obtain a range of views on the definition and treatment of departmental research.

Burden Information

Interviews: We expect to conduct 25 one-hour interviews with university deans. NSF expects up to 3 people (i.e. the Dean, the HERD survey respondent, and an assistant) may attend each meeting on behalf of the institution. Therefore, we estimate a total of 75 hours of respondent burden.

Incentive Payments

There are no incentive payments.

Contact Information

The contact person for questions regarding this data collection is:

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Attachments

cc: Fran Featherston