

Attachment B.0 – Protocol for ECD Contact

Assignment to the two conditions primarily determines the type of communications the ECDs will received about the Web Survey. Under NSF treatment, ECDs will receive all notifications regarding participation to the Web survey from NSF. Under the HA treatment, two notifications – the initial pre-notification and final appeal – will be sent by an institutional HA figure instead of NSF. Therefore, with the exception of the first contact (pre-notification) and last contact (final appeal) the notifications are the same across the two conditions. The advantage to this approach is that it maximizes the power of test of institutional involvement in the initial contact with ECDs and the follow up of ECD nonresponse.

A summary of the contact materials and timing of the notifications are provided in Table 1 below.

Table 1. List of Notifications to ECD

	Contact #					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
ECD - NSF Group	Day 1	Day 5	Day 8	Day 15	Day 22	Day 29
Pre-notification						
Letter from NSF	x					
Support Letter from High Authority to ECDs	x					
ECD Brochure	x					
Login credential email		x				
Reminder email # 1			x			
Reminder postcard				x		
Reminder email # 2					x	
Final Appeal						x
ECD - High Authority Group	Day 1	Day 3	Day 6	Day 13	Day 20	Day 27
Pre-notification						
Email from High Authority (includes link to brochure)	x					
Login credential email		x				
Reminder email # 1			x			
Reminder postcard				x		
Reminder email # 2					x	
Final Appeal						x

*NSF group means NSF does all contacts with the ECD

*HA group means the institutional high authority does the first and last contact with the ECD

Attachment B.1 – Institutional High Authority Letter of Support – NSF Group

<Date>

Dear Colleague,

In a few days, you will be receiving a request from RTI International to participate in the Early Career Doctorates Study (ECDS). This study is being sponsored by the National Science Foundation (NSF) who has contracted with RTI International to conduct the ECDS. I am writing to urge you to take the time needed to complete this survey.

You are one of a relatively small number of people who have been selected to participate in the study. As a result, your participation is extremely important. The information gathered by the ECDS about your current career activities and future plans will provide data to the NSF that are not available from any other data source. By taking the time to respond to this survey, you will be providing a service to your peers nationwide, as well as the academic community in general.

For the study to be valid, it is essential that you respond to the survey and that your voice be heard, so that colleagues nationwide can be represented. It should only take about 30 minutes.

I encourage you to take part in this worthwhile study that will benefit both the government and the academic community.

Sincerely,

<Institutional High Authority Name>

<Institutional High Authority Title>

Attachment B.1 – Pre-Notification Letter from NSF – NSF Group

<Date>

Dear Dr. <<Respondent Last Name>>,

On behalf of the National Science Foundation (NSF), I am writing to let you know that you have been selected to participate in the Early Career Doctorate Study (ECDS). Uniquely focused on recent doctorates across all disciplines, this study will provide NSF and other agencies with key information regarding the career paths and research opportunities open to doctorates early in their careers and will inform future decisions regarding the best ways to support the work done by this important segment of the scientific workforce.

The research enterprise in the U.S. is continually evolving: postdoctoral training has become more prevalent, the global labor markets for scientists and engineers have expanded, and interdisciplinary research continues to grow. In this survey, you will be asked to provide information on your current and past work experiences, the research and training you have completed, and your future career plans. Please know that your responses are confidential – no one at <<institution name>> will ever know how you answered the questions.

NSF has retained RTI International to collect and protect these data. In a few days, we will be sending you an e-mail with unique login credentials (username and password) as well as a link to the survey.

Your participation is completely voluntary, but extremely important. Only a small number of doctorate recipients have been selected to participate in the study, so your participation is critical to ensure the validity of this study. Enclosed please find a letter of support from <<HA name & title>> as well as the study brochure that provides more information about the study.

Responding to this survey is a service to your peers, to NSF, and to the academic community. If you have questions about participation, please contact the ECDS data collection team at 1-800-334-8571, ext. XXXX or ECDS@rti.org.

Thank you in advance for your time and for your help with this study.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

John G. Gawalt
Acting Director
National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics
National Science Foundation

Enclosures

**Attachment B.1 – ECD Contact
Early Career Doctorate Brochure**

See separate pdf file for Early Career Doctorate Brochure.

**Attachment B.1 – ECD Contact
Pre-Notification E-mail to ECDs – HA Group**

TO: <<ECD>>
FROM: <<Institution High Authority Figure>>
SUBJECT: <<TBD via cognitive interviews>>

Dear Dr. <<Respondent Last Name>>,

In the next few days, you will be receiving a request from the National Science Foundation (NSF) to participate in the Early Career Doctorates Study. On behalf of <<Institution Name>>, I am writing to urge you to complete this survey at your earliest convenience.

In this survey, you will be asked to provide information on your current and past work experiences, the research and training you have completed, and your future career plans. Please know that your responses are confidential and neither I nor any other employee of this university will know how you answered the questions. NSF has retained RTI International, a highly reputable non-profit research institute located in North Carolina, to collect and protect these data. RTI will be sending you an e-mail with unique login credentials (username and password) as well as a link to the survey.

The research enterprise in the U.S. is continually evolving: postdoctoral training has become more prevalent, the global labor markets for scientists and engineers have expanded, and interdisciplinary research continues to grow. The Early Career Doctorate Study is unique in scope as it includes doctorates from a wide variety of disciplines and includes those who earned their degrees both in and outside of the United States. This survey will provide NSF and other agencies with key information regarding the career paths and research opportunities open to recent doctorates and will inform future decisions regarding the best ways to support this important segment of the scientific workforce. Responding to this survey is a service to your peers and to the academic community in general.

Your participation is completely voluntary and extremely important. Only a small number of doctorate recipients have been selected to participate in the study, so your participation is critical to ensure the validity of the study. If you have any questions about participation, please contact the survey contractor RTI International at 1-800-334-8571, ext. XXXX or ECDS@rti.org.

Thank you in advance for your participation.

Sincerely,

<<Institution High Authority Name>>
<<Title>>
<<Institution>>

**Attachment B.2 – ECD Contact
Login Credentials E-mail – NSF Group**

Dear Dr. <<ECD respondent>>,

A few days ago, I sent you a letter notifying you that you were randomly selected to participate in the Early Career Doctorate Study. This study is sponsored by the National Science Foundation (NSF) and endorsed by your university president. Only a few individuals at your university are being asked to participate in this study, so your response is very important. Findings from the study will inform the federal government about employment, career opportunities, and the availability of research funding for doctoral degree holders in your field who received their degrees within the last 10 years. Please know that your answers are confidential and no one at <<Institution Name>> will ever know how you answered the questions.

To access the survey, you can click on the following link that has your username and password embedded within it

[.<<hyperlink with embedded username/password>>](mailto:mailto:username@password)

or you can go to the study URL and enter the username and password provided below.

Study URL: www.earlycareerdoctoratestudy.org

Username: <<username>>

Password: <<password>>

To keep your responses private, these credentials are unique and will only provide access to the survey while you are working on the survey. Once you have completed the survey, these credentials will no longer provide access to your responses. You are the only person who has access to these credentials.

This survey should take 20-30 minutes to complete. If necessary, you can complete the survey in multiple sessions. Clicking on the hyperlink above or re-logging in will bring you to back to the survey wherever you left off.

Once again, thank you for your time and assistance with this study. If you have any questions, please e-mail me and the ECDS data collection team at ECDS@rti.org or call us toll-free at [800 number].

Sincerely,

<Signature>

Kelly S. Phou
Project Officer
National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics
National Science Foundation

**Attachment B.3 – ECD Contact
Reminder E-mail #1 – HA Group**

Dear Dr. <<ECD respondent>>,

Approximately one week ago <<Institutional HA Name & Title>> sent you an e-mail requesting your participation in the Early Career Doctorate Study. If you already completed the survey, thank you very much and please ignore this reminder.

If you have not completed the survey, we hope you will take a few minutes over the next few days to complete this study. From the time you click on the below link, it should take 20-30 minutes to complete and can be completed over multiple sessions.

Your answers to this survey are critical to NSF's understanding of the opportunities and challenges facing early career doctorates.

For your convenience, we are providing a hyperlink to the survey. Clicking it will open your internet browser and log you in to the survey. You are the only person who has access to this hyperlink. Please retain this e-mail. You can use the hyperlink below to start where you left off should you need to complete the survey in more than one session.

[.<<hyperlink with embedded username/password>>](mailto:mailto:username@password)

You can also type the study URL into your internet browser and then enter the username and PIN provided below. This option will allow you to complete the survey from any computer that will allow you to connect to the internet.

Study URL: www.earlycareerdoctoratestudy.org

Username: <<username>>

PIN: <<PIN>>

Once again, we thank you for your time and greatly appreciate all the information you provide. If you have any questions, please e-mail us at ECDS@rti.org or call us toll-free at [800 number].

Thank you for your assistance with this survey,

Sincerely,

<Signature>

Kelly S. Phou
Project Officer
National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics
National Science Foundation

**Attachment B.3 – ECD Contact
Reminder E-mail #1 – NSF Group**

Dear Dr. <<ECD respondent>>,

A few days ago, I sent you an e-mail requesting your participation in the Early Career Doctorate Study. This study is sponsored by the National Science Foundation (NSF) and endorsed by your university president. If you already completed the survey, thank you very much and please ignore this reminder.

If you have not completed the survey, we hope you will take a few minutes over the next few days to complete this study. From the time you click on the below link, it should take 20-30 minutes to complete and can be completed over multiple sessions.

Your answers to this survey are critical to NSF's understanding of the opportunities and challenges facing early career doctorates.

For your convenience, we are providing a hyperlink to the survey. Clicking it will open your internet browser and log you into the survey. You are the only person who has access to this hyperlink. Please retain this e-mail. You can use the hyperlink below to start where you left off should you need to complete the survey in more than one session.

[.<<hyperlink with embedded username/password>>](mailto:mailto:username@password)

You can also access the survey by going to the study URL and logging in using the username and PIN provided below.

Study URL: www.earlycareerdoctoratestudy.org

Username: <<username>>

PIN: <<PIN>>

Once again, we thank you for your time and greatly appreciate all the information you provide. If you have any questions, please e-mail me and the ECDS data collection team at ECDS@rti.org or call us toll-free at [800 number].

Thank you for your assistance with this survey,

Sincerely,

<Signature>

Kelly S. Phou
Project Officer
National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics
National Science Foundation

**Attachment B.4 – ECD Contact
Post card reminder – NSF & HA Groups**

Dear Dr. <<ECD respondent>>,</p></div>

Two weeks ago, I sent an e-mail to <<respondent e-mail address>> inviting you to participate in the Early Career Doctorate Study, a National Science Foundation (NSF) survey. A week ago, we sent a reminder e-mail to the same e-mail address. If you have already completed this survey, thank you for providing this critical information.

If you have not yet completed this survey, please take time today to do so. The answers you provide on this survey will help NSF and other funding agencies better understand the opportunities and obstacles faced by doctorate recipients early in their careers and will inform future decisions regarding the best ways to support the work done by this important segment of the scientific workforce.

If you have not received these e-mail communications or if you have any questions, please e-mail the data collection team at ECDS@rti.org or call us toll-free at [800 number].

Thank you for your help,

Sincerely,

<Signature>

Kelly S. Phou
Project Officer
National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics
National Science Foundation

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**Attachment B.5 – ECD Contact
Reminder E-mail #2 to ECDs – NSF & HA Groups**

Dear Dr. <<ECD respondent>>,

About three weeks ago, I sent you an invitation to participate in the Early Career Doctorate Study – an NSF sponsored study about the work experiences of individual who earned their doctorate degree within the past 10 years. Our records indicate that you have not completed the survey. Please try to complete this survey as soon as possible. If you are currently working on the survey, thank you for taking the time to provide us with this critical information!

Many early career doctorates have already participated in the survey and have provided very valuable information regarding their careers, research activities, and current and future goals and opportunities. This study will provide extremely important information to NSF as long as we obtain the cooperation of just a few more doctorates such as you. But time is running out and we will have to terminate the study period very soon.

It is extremely important that you respond to the survey as soon as you can. Below you will find, highlighted in blue, a hyperlink that will connect you directly to the survey. For confidentiality purposes, you are the only person who has access to this hyperlink. Please retain this e-mail so that you can use the link again in case you need to leave the survey before it is completed and wish return to it later to finish it.

[<<hyperlink with embedded username/password>>](mailto:ECDS@rti.org)

Thank you for your time and cooperation. Please e-mail us at ECDS@rti.org or call us toll-free at [800 number] if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

<Signature>

Kelly S. Phou
Project Officer
National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics
National Science Foundation

**Attachment B.6 – ECD Contact
Final Appeal E-mail – HA Group**

Dear Dr. <<Respondent Name>>,

About one month ago I sent you an e-mail notifying you of an important study being sponsored by the National Science Foundation (NSF). If you have already responded to this survey, thank you. If you have not responded, I urge you to do so now.

The purpose of the study is to help the NSF answer questions about the work experiences, career paths, and career plans of doctorate recipients in the first decade of their career. This study will also help NSF and other funding agencies make decisions about how to best support the work and development of these early career doctorates.

The study is coming to an end, and this will be the final request you will receive to complete the survey. You are one of a few early career doctorates who were randomly selected from a representative sample of universities in the United States. Participation of everyone in the sample helps ensure that the survey results are representative of the target population.

I want to again inform you that the survey is voluntary. Furthermore, I want to assure you that should you decide to participate, your answers are completely confidential. The data collected through this survey will only be available to NSF and the survey data collection contractor, RTI.

If you have misplaced your login credentials you may request they be sent to you again. To request them, contact RTI by either e-mail or phone. To request the login credentials by e-mail send an e-mail to ECDS@rti.org. To request the credentials by phone call 1-800-XXX-XXXX.

In closing, let me again express my support for this important study, as well as my appreciation for your willingness to consider participation. This effort to better understand the opportunities and experiences of early career doctorates is part of an ongoing effort at the NSF and will help us in providing critical data to policymakers. Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

<Signature>

< Institutional High Authority name>

< Institutional High Authority title>

**Attachment B.6 – ECD Contact
Final Appeal FedEx Reminder Letter – NSF Group**

Dear Dr. <<Respondent Name>>,

During the last month, we have sent you several e-mails and mailings about the Early Career Doctorate Study (ECDS) – an important study RTI International is conducting for the National Science Foundation (NSF). You are one of just a few people who have not yet responded to the survey. In order for our study results to be valid, the voice of everyone who was selected to participate in the study must be heard. But the time to do so is running out. This is your final opportunity to log on to the ECDS Website and complete the questionnaire.

The purpose of the study is to help the NSF answer questions about the experiences of doctorate recipients who are early in their careers. The ECDS is a web survey and should take 20 to 30 minutes of your time and your responses will be kept strictly confidential.

To participate, please go to the survey website – www.earlycareerdoctoratestudy.org – and log in using the username and PIN provided below. You are the only person who has access to these login credentials. Please keep this letter in a secure place to ensure your privacy.

Username: <<username>>

PIN: <<PIN>>

If you have any questions about participation, please contact us. You can call toll-free at 1-800-XXX-XXXX or e-mail us at ECDS@rti.org.

In closing, we want to express our sincere appreciation for your willingness to consider this request. This effort to better understand the opportunities and experiences of early career doctorates is part of an ongoing effort at the NSF and will help in providing critical data to policymakers. Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

John R. Gawalt
Acting Director
National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics
National Science Foundation