

**NCSES Response to OMB Comments on the
2015 Survey of Doctorate Recipients Supporting Statement**

August 18, 2015

On August 17th, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) sent an email to the National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics (NCSES) to convey comments from their review of the 2015 Survey of Doctorate Recipients (SDR) Supporting Statement.

OMB had two comments.

Comment 1: "In SS A9.1, page 1, the text seems to suggest that the early stage incentives will be provided only to 3 specific subsets of the new cohort. However, the other two places these incentives are mentioned it appears that all new sample cases will be incentivized. Please clarify/make consistent."

NCSES Response:

Early incentives will not be offered to all new sample cases; early incentives will be offered to all members of the "new cohort" who do not respond to the initial request to participate in the SDR. However, to clarify, the new cohort does not include all of the sample cases new-to-the-SDR, but is one of three primary sample components in 2015:

- (1) Panel: Individuals included in the 2013 SDR sample and selected for the 2015.
- (2) Expansion sample: Individuals who were not in the 2013 SDR sample and who received their doctorate in the academic years 1961-2011 (new-to-the SDR).
- (3) New cohort: Individuals who received their doctorate in the academic years 2012 and 2013 (new-to-the-SDR).

Early incentives will be offered to each sample component as described below:

1. Panel:

Two subgroups of the panel will be eligible for an early incentive offer:

- a. Those who only participated in the prior survey rounds after receiving an incentive will receive an incentive with their initial request to participate.
 - b. Underrepresented minorities (URM) who do not respond to the initial request to participate in the survey will receive an incentive offer with the second request.
2. Expansion component: URM who do not respond to the initial request will receive an incentive offer with the second request.

3. New cohort: Any new cohort sample member who does not respond to the initial request will receive an incentive offer with the second request.

After the 2015 SDR, an analysis of the effectiveness of incentives, particularly on the expansion cohort, will be conducted. This analysis will be the basis for determining whether to keep the incentives in future rounds, modify the incentive plan, or eliminate incentives from the SDR.

Comment 2: “Both SSA and ROCIS call this a reinstatement without change and yet other places, eg SSB1, say just the opposite (big sample boost and expanded analytical objectives). The latter is undoubtedly more accurate.”

NCSES Response:

OMB is correct. While the data collection instruments for the 2015 SDR are largely unchanged from the prior round, the sample has been greatly enlarged from 47,000 to 120,000 individuals to support new and expanded analytical objectives. Additionally, data collection procedures have been modified to accommodate the change in sample composition.