

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

August 19, 2015

On August 18th, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) sent an email to the National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics (NCSES) to convey a second set of comments from their review of the 2015 Survey of Doctorate Recipients (SDR) Supporting Statement.

OMB had two comments.

Comment 1: "A13 -- Should the "non-U.S. government" option precede the "Other" option?"

NCSES Response:

The "non-U.S. government" response option was placed under the "Other" option in order to make a clear distinction between it and the responses for "U.S. Government employee". Because the SDR includes respondents who live abroad, as well as non-U.S. citizens working in the U.S., it is important to ensure this delineation. The "non-U.S. government" response option was initially added only to the international version of the survey (ISDR) in 2010, since many sample members residing abroad work for non-U.S. governments. (In 2013, approximately 30% of ISDR respondents not in academe worked for foreign governments, compared with 17% in the national component.)

The placement is consistent with the format of the 2013 and 2010 ISDR questionnaires. Because the 2015 ISDR and national SDR are fully integrated rather than two separate components of one survey, there is now a single questionnaire.

Through means such as the Human Resources Experts Panel, as well as cognitive research and testing, NCSES continues to review, revise, and enhance the content of its survey instruments. NCSES will review the data after the 2015 round, and will propose and test changes for the 2017 questionnaire.

Comment 2: "A32 -- The note says to exclude students from the count of workers supervised. Does that mean faculty researchers should exclude their grad students from their count of workers supervised?"

NCSES Response:

Historically, NCSES has referred to "teachers" as precollege, and "professors" as postsecondary, although this is not clear from the instructions, and may not be the interpretation made by all respondents. The intent of the question is to exclude graduate students if they are not also paid workers. Graduate students who conduct research or writing or other activities on behalf of a professor for no pay should be excluded. The CATI instrument has additional verbiage which makes clear the intent of the question: "If you were a teacher or trainer, please do not count students unless they were paid as teaching assistants or research assistants."

The instruction has been in place either as “Teachers: Do not count students” or “Teachers should not count students” since 1995 not only in the SDR, but also in the National Survey of College Graduates (NSCG) and the now-defunct National Survey of Recent College Graduates. We ask that it remain as-is for the 2015 round in order to facilitate integration with the NSCG into the Scientists and Engineers Statistical Data System. After the 2015 SDR and NSCG are complete, we propose to examine possible effects of this instruction among modes over the last two decades. Any changes to the question will be implemented in the 2017 surveys.

As noted above in the response to Comment 1, NCSSES plans to evaluate the questionnaire for changes to be implemented in the 2017 survey.