

Attachment 7: Cover Letter

Dear <First Name> <Last Name>:

Thank you again for agreeing to participate in an online [focus group/one-on-one interview]. As I mentioned during our conversation, NORC is assisting the National Science Foundation (NSF) in conducting research on the potential addition of a module on graduate school experiences (GSE) to the Survey of Earned Doctorates (SED). Your participation in [a focus group/an interview] would be very valuable in helping NSF understand the uses and value GSE data might have for institutions/organizations such as yours.

The [focus group/interview] will take place on [date] at [time].

The discussion will cover a range of topics, such as the following:

- What topics would be useful to include in a GSE module? Please see the enclosed document titled “Discussion Topics Guide” for a list of some potential GSE topics.
- What issues do you see with the potential identifiability of the GSE data? *
- If data were presented in aggregate form, how useful would that be to your institution/organization?
- What do you envision would be potential uses of GSE data at your institution/organization?
- If your institution already fields a GSE exist survey, would it be useful to have SED GSE data from NSF available to you? What would the SED GSE need to include in order for it to be of utility? *

To aid in the discussion, I have included example graphs that show how the GSE data could be summarized and presented (see “Example Visuals”). I have also included a list of some potential GSE topics (see “Discussion Topics Guide”). Please have these documents available for reference during the [focus group/interview].

I have also included a copy of the consent form, informing you of your rights as a study participant and the purpose of the research. During the [focus group/one-on-one interview], you will be asked to verbally confirm that you agree to participate in the study.

If you have any further questions, I can be contacted at the study email here [study email] or at the study phone number here [study phone number]

Thank you,

NAME

*These topics will only be listed in letters sent to representatives of SED institutions.