

MEMORANDUM

Date: April 26, 2018

To: Margo Schwab, Desk Officer
Office of Management and Budget

From: John R. Gawalt, Division Director
National Center for Science & Engineering Statistics
National Science Foundation

Via: Suzanne Plimpton, Clearance Officer
National Science Foundation

Subject: Notification of data collection under generic clearance (3145-0174)

The purpose of this memorandum is to inform you that the National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics (NCSES) within the National Science Foundation (NSF) plans to conduct quantitative research for the Survey of Earned Doctorates (SED) under the generic clearance of survey improvement projects (OMB #3145-0174). This study will be conducted with an online survey; the details for the study are outlined below.

NCSES is considering expanding the content of the SED questionnaire to include information on the Graduate School Experiences (GSE) of doctorate recipients, in response to recommendations received from expert panels convened to provide input on current NCSES demographic surveys. The quantitative research described in this memorandum is the second part of a more expansive plan that includes a recently completed qualitative component, which involved focus groups and one-on-one interviews. The objective of this quantitative portion of the research is to collect data from the full population of SED graduate school deans to assess the value of adding a module of GSE items to the SED. The results of the quantitative research, in conjunction with the prior qualitative research, will inform NCSES decisions regarding potential content additions to the SED questionnaire. If, as a result of the present research, NCSES decides to add a GSE module to the SED, subsequent research (e.g., cognitive interviews) will be conducted to test and refine the particular questionnaire items that would appear in the module. The plan for this third research project is not described in this document, but would be detailed in a later OMB submission.

Background

The SED has been conducted annually since academic year 1958. The survey collects data on the number and characteristics of all individuals receiving research doctoral degrees from all accredited U.S. institutions. The results of this annual survey are used to assess characteristics and trends in doctorate education and degrees.

We know from previous research that many institutions already collect GSE-like data from their graduate students via so-called “exit surveys.” A study conducted for NCSES by the SED survey contractor (NORC at the University of Chicago) examined the use of exit surveys at SED institutions.¹ This examination focused on determining whether selected institutions conducted an exit survey for doctorate recipients, and the content of those surveys. We selected a sample of 50 SED institutions stratifying by number of doctorates granted, Carnegie classification, public-private sector, and minority-serving status (Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Hispanic-Serving Institutions). A web search of the 50 selected institutions suggests that at least two out of every five SED institutions currently conduct an exit survey, either at the institution or department level, to collect GSE information on doctorate recipients. A review of approximately 20 existing surveys and related materials describing the use of GSE information indicated that institutions vary in the depth in which GSE topics are explored. However, nearly all the surveys examined were alike in measuring, in one form or another, the perceptions of doctorate recipients on the overall quality of, or satisfaction with, their graduate program or graduate school experience.

The impetus for our present GSE research program derives from two meetings of the Human Resources Experts Panel (HREP), one focused entirely on issues pertaining to the SED (January 25, 2010), the other addressing the measurement of education and career “pathways” across multiple NCSES surveys (January 13, 2014). Exercises conducted at these HREP meetings elicited panelist suggestions for new concepts and topics that might be added to the SED. Panelists at both meetings suggested a wide range of GSE-related items, which they organized into several broad GSE topic areas. We initiated the GSE research program to help us identify the broad GSE topics that are highly valued by data users; these topics would then be further evaluated for inclusion in the GSE module.

The qualitative component of the research program, which was recently completed, collected information on the interest level among SED institutions of adding GSE items to the SED and the issues surrounding such an addition.² Focus groups and one-on-one interviews were held with graduate school deans, graduate department heads, and users of the SED data. The focus groups and interviews explored current data collections at SED institutions that incorporate items on graduate school experiences, topics that would be useful to include in a GSE module in the SED, and possible data products resulting from GSE items. The focus groups and interviews also examined the overall advantages and disadvantages of, as well as issues and concerns surrounding, the potential addition of a GSE module to the SED.

The focus groups and one-on-one interviews revealed that there is overall interest among SED stakeholders in including a GSE section in the SED. Some institutions already conduct their own exit surveys while others do not. Institutions were concerned about adding extra burden for students, who already are asked to complete a variety of surveys. Yet, many felt that the potential topics that could be covered in the GSE module would be useful and important information to

¹ Bartolone, J. 2015. *SED Institution Exit Interview Report*. Chicago, IL: NORC.

² NORC. 2017. *Assessing the Potential Value of Adding GSE Items to the SED: Focus Group Research*. Chicago, IL: NORC.

NORC. 2017. *Assessing the Potential Value of Adding GSE Items to the SED: One-on-one Interviews*. Chicago, IL: NORC.

have. Overall, stakeholders agreed that they prefer more detailed and granular data (such as at the individual or department level) over data aggregated at the institution level.

Findings from this qualitative research guided the development of broad GSE topics to be covered in the web survey of all SED graduate school deans.

Purpose

Although the qualitative research offered valuable information, that research included a relatively small number of participants whose views may not fully reflect the perspectives of the broader population of SED institutions. This quantitative study will include the full population of graduate school deans in the universe of SED institutions, and will be conducted via web survey. Results from the web survey will be used to help guide the decision on whether or not a GSE module should be added to the SED. The web survey will address the following topics:

- Description of the GSE module
- Most useful topics to include in the module
- Data products that would be available from the module
- Other surveys the institution conducts that include GSE items
- Interest in the GSE module

Research Plan

General approach. A web survey will be fielded with graduate deans at all SED institutions. The draft web survey instrument is in Attachment 1. Deans will receive an advance letter (Attachment 2) followed by an email invitation (Attachment 3) that includes a link to the web survey and a link to a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document (Attachment 4). During a five-week data collection period, nonrespondents will receive up to four reminders to complete the survey (Attachment 5).

Recruitment. Graduate school deans will be identified using the most recent list of deans that is maintained by the current SED data collection contractor. The list includes approximately 550 deans, representing all the institutions currently participating in the SED. All individuals who are on the most recent list of deans will be invited to participate in the survey.

Contacting Sample Members. All sample members will be contacted one week prior to survey launch through an advance letter sent via postal mail. The letter will alert deans to the study, explain the purpose and importance of the survey, and encourage them to participate. The letters will be sent under the signature of NCSES's SED Project Officer on SED letterhead.

When the survey is launched, we will send an email invitation to each dean that includes a link to the web survey and to the FAQs. Up to four reminder emails will be sent to nonrespondents to encourage completion of the survey. The first reminder will be sent two weeks after the initial invitation to participate (during Week 3 of data collection). Additional reminders will be sent weekly for the next two weeks (during Weeks 4 and 5). The final reminder will be sent a few

days before the close of data collection (end of Week 5). The web survey will include a consent statement at the beginning, which respondents will read prior to beginning the survey (see Attachment 1, first screen of questionnaire).

Schedule

Preparation for data collection activities will begin immediately after obtaining OMB clearance. The web survey instrument will be programmed and tested in March 2018. Advance letters to sample members are expected to be mailed in April 2018. Fielding of the web survey is expected to continue through June 2018. Data file preparation, analysis of the data, and the preparation of a report summarizing the results will continue through August 2018.

Burden Information

The total estimated burden associated with this study is anticipated to be 185 hours. Exhibit 1 provides details about the burden estimates by study activity.

Exhibit 1: Estimated burden

Activity	Number of Respondents	Average Time (minutes)	Total Burden (minutes)
1. An estimated 550 deans will receive an advance letter in postal mail to inform them of the upcoming web survey.			
Advance letter	550	5	2,750
2. At the beginning of Week 1 of data collection, 550 deans will receive an email invitation to complete the web survey, with a link to the survey.			
Email invitation	550	2	1,100
3. Of 550 respondents receiving an invitation to complete the web survey, 165 are expected to complete the survey. The remaining 385 will receive an email at the beginning of Week 3 of data collection, reminding them to complete the web survey.			
Reminder email #1	385	2	770
4. Of 385 respondents receiving a reminder email to complete the web survey, 110 are expected to complete the survey. The remaining 275 will receive an email at the beginning of Week 4 of data collection, reminding them to complete the web survey.			
Reminder email #2	275	2	550
5. Of 275 respondents receiving a second reminder email to complete the web survey, 27 are expected to complete the survey. The remaining 248 will receive an email at the beginning of Week 5 of data collection, reminding them to complete the web survey.			
Reminder email #3	248	2	496
6. Of 248 respondents receiving a third reminder email to complete the web survey, 17 are expected to complete the survey. The remaining 231 will receive an email at the end of Week 5 of data collection, informing them of the close of data collection and reminding them to complete the survey.			
Reminder email #4	231	2	462
7. Of the 231 receiving a fourth email reminder, 11 are expected to complete the survey. In total, 330 of the 550 deans are expected to complete the web survey. It is estimated that the web survey will require 15			

minutes to complete.			
Web survey	330	15	4,950
Total burden			11,078 minutes (185 hours)

Confidentiality

Research participants will be informed that their participation is voluntary and their responses will be used for research purposes only. A consent statement will be included at the beginning of the web survey (see Attachment 1). Further, participants will be advised that selected quotes in any open-ended responses may be used in papers and presentations, but that researchers will not identify participants by name or institution.

Contact Information

The contact persons for questions regarding this research are:

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Attachments

- 1: Web Survey Questionnaire
- 2: Advance Letter
- 3: Email Invitation to Complete Web Survey
- 4: Frequently Asked Questions
- 5: Reminder Emails
- 6: Participant Consent Form

Attachment 1: Web Survey Questionnaire

Separate screen:

[NSF and SED logos at top of screen.]

The National Center of Science and Engineering Statistics (NCSES) within the National Science Foundation (NSF) is considering adding a section on graduate school experiences to the Survey of Earned Doctorates (SED). To obtain input on issues related to the potential addition of this new section to the SED, NCSES is seeking feedback on your level of interest in a graduate school experiences section, topics that could be included in the section, and areas of concern.

Participation in this study is voluntary and your responses will be used for research purposes only. The questionnaire will take no more than 15 minutes to complete.

Please be assured that your data will be kept strictly confidential and safeguarded in accordance with the National Science Foundation Act of 1950, as amended, and the Privacy Act of 1974. Any information publicly released will be in a form that does not personally identify you or your institution. This study is authorized by law (42 U.S.C. 1862 Section 3.a.6.). The OMB control number for this study is 3145-0174.

If you agree to participate in this study, please click Start to begin the questionnaire.

[START THE QUESTIONNAIRE button]

[PROGRAMMING NOTE: The following information will be available via a “Need help?” button on each screen.

Need help? You can view the instructions on this page at any time by clicking the “Help” button in the upper right corner of the questionnaire. If you require further assistance, you may call us at NUMBER or email us at EMAIL.]

Separate screen:

Description of the GSE Section

NCSES is considering adding a section on graduate school experiences (GSE) to the Survey of Earned Doctorates (SED). Highlighted on this screen are the key features of a potential section on GSE for the SED. Please consider these features as you respond to the questions on the screens that follow.

- ❖ **Expected completion time for the potential GSE section:** 5-10 minutes; Average completion time for the SED (without the GSE section) is 19 minutes.
- ❖ **Content:** The content to be developed would cover GSE topics that a majority of deans at SED institutions consider useful. Selection of topics to be included in the GSE section would be informed by the results of this study.
- ❖ **Response rate:** Expected to be >90% based on the SED survey response rates since 1976.
- ❖ **Potential Results and Data Products:**
 - Results of the GSE section may be included in the annual “Doctorate Recipients from U.S. Universities” report, which highlights major trends in doctoral education.
 - Results of the GSE section may be included in SED Profile reports showing “your institution” compared to others in your Carnegie classification and to the entire set of SED institutions.
 - The individual-level data file that currently includes SED survey responses for every student at your institution (and is available free of charge upon request) may or may not include some GSE items, depending on whether they are considered to be sensitive.

Separate screen:

Potential Topics for the GSE Section

In the following screens we will present a series of potential topics that could be included if a graduate school experiences (GSE) section were added to the Survey of Earned Doctorates (SED). We will first present eight broad topic areas that could be included in the section. **Please note that the questions that would be included under each topic have not yet been determined.** For some of the broad topics that you find very useful, we would like to gather additional information on the types of questions you think should be included on that topic.

For each broad topic, please indicate whether you think it would be *very useful*, *somewhat useful*, *not very useful*, or *not useful at all* to include it in the GSE section.

Separate screen:

If a GSE section were added to the SED, how useful would it be to include questions on Program and Campus Climate? This topic would cover perceptions of the social and intellectual climate and campus community.

- Very useful
- Somewhat useful
- Not very useful
- Not useful at all

If you would like to provide additional comments about this topic, please enter them here:

[textbox]

Separate screen:

If a GSE section were added to the SED, how useful would it be to include questions on Professional Development Experiences? This topic would cover experiences intended to enhance development of professional skills and prepare students for academic and non-academic careers.

- Very useful
- Somewhat useful
- Not very useful
- Not useful at all

If you would like to provide additional comments about this topic, please enter them here:
[textbox]

Separate screen:

If a GSE section were added to the SED, how useful would it be to include questions on Curriculum and Instruction? This topic would cover issues such as availability, quality, and diversity of courses and other instructional offerings.

- Very useful
- Somewhat useful
- Not very useful
- Not useful at all

If you would like to provide additional comments about this topic, please enter them here:
[textbox]

Separate screen:

If a GSE section were added to the SED, how useful would it be to include questions on Experiences with Faculty and Staff? This topic would cover issues such as experiences with the advisor, dissertation committee, and other faculty members, as well as support and advice throughout graduate career.

- Very useful
- Somewhat useful
- Not very useful
- Not useful at all

If you would like to provide additional comments about this topic, please enter them here:
[textbox]

Separate screen:

If a GSE section were added to the SED, how useful would it be to include questions on Scholarly Products and Presentations? This topic would cover issues such as opportunities and experiences presenting at conferences and elsewhere, submitting publications and other scholarly work to journals, and filing patents.

- € Very useful
- € Somewhat useful
- € Not very useful
- € Not useful at all

If you would like to provide additional comments about this topic, please enter them here:

[textbox]

Separate screen:

If a GSE section were added to the SED, how useful would it be to include questions on Student Support Services? This topic would cover satisfaction with services such as academic support, financial support, health and wellness, counseling services, disability services, and career guidance and placement services.

- € Very useful
- € Somewhat useful
- € Not very useful
- € Not useful at all

If you would like to provide additional comments about this topic, please enter them here:

[textbox]

Separate screen:

If a GSE section were added to the SED, how useful would it be to include questions on Factors that Affect Academic Progress? This topic would cover issues such as the financial, familial, housing, and other factors that positively or negatively affect academic progress and student well-being.

- € Very useful
- € Somewhat useful
- € Not very useful
- € Not useful at all

If you would like to provide additional comments about this topic, please enter them here:

[textbox]

Separate screen:

If a GSE section were added to the SED, how useful would it be to include questions on Overall Satisfaction? This topic would cover issues such as satisfaction with the program and university, and with the graduate student experience.

- € Very useful
- € Somewhat useful
- € Not very useful
- € Not useful at all

If you would like to provide additional comments about this topic, please enter them here:

[textbox]

[PROGRAMMING NOTE:

- If a respondent answers “very useful” to three or fewer of the main topics, they will proceed to rate the usefulness of the subtopics within each of those topics.
- If they selected “very useful” for more than three main topics, they will be asked to choose their top three most important topics on a separate screen. They will then be shown the subtopics for those three topics.
- If they did not select “very useful” for any topics, they will rate the usefulness of up to three topics that they rate as “somewhat useful.” If they rate more than three topics as “somewhat useful” they will be asked to choose their top three “somewhat useful” topics on a separate screen. They will then be shown the subtopics for those three topics.
- If respondents do not rate any topics as “very useful” or “somewhat useful” then skip to the next section, Data Products.]

Separate screen:

Listed below are the topics that you indicated were *very useful* [IF NO TOPICS RATED AS VERY USEFUL: *somewhat useful*] to include in a GSE section. For three of these topics, we would like to gather additional information on the types of questions you think should be included in the section.

For which of these topics would you like to provide additional information?
Please select three topics from the list below.

[PROGRAMMING NOTE: Present all topics the respondent rated as very useful [IF NO TOPICS RATED AS VERY USEFUL: somewhat useful]. Allow for selection of three of the topics.]

[PROGRAMMING NOTE FOR THE FOLLOWING QUESTION GRIDS: For mobile device users, the questions on a given topic will be presented as a series of questions on one screen (rather than in a grid). For respondents on a desktop, the questions on each topic will be presented in grid format.]

Separate screen:

Topic: Program and Campus Climate
Perceptions of social and intellectual climate and community.

Please indicate how useful it would be to include questions on each of the following aspects of Program and Campus Climate in the GSE section.

How useful would it be to have data on students' perceptions of...?	Very useful	Somewhat useful	Not very useful	Not useful at all
The social climate	€	€	€	€
The intellectual climate	€	€	€	€
The campus community (e.g., how safe, welcoming, competitive, diverse)	€	€	€	€
Their satisfaction with the climate/culture	€	€	€	€

If you have additional suggestions for questions on Program and Campus Climate please list them here:
 [textbox]

Separate screen:

Topic: Professional Development Experiences
Experiences intended to enhance development of professional skills and prepare students for academic and non-academic careers.

Please indicate how useful it would be to include questions on each of the following aspects of Professional Development Experiences in the GSE section.

How useful would it be to have data on students' experiences with ...?	Very useful	Somewhat useful	Not very useful	Not useful at all
Research assistantships	€	€	€	€
Teaching assistantships	€	€	€	€

Internships	€	€	€	€
Attending or presenting at professional conferences	€	€	€	€
Grant writing	€	€	€	€
Working in teams	€	€	€	€
Collaboration with students and/or faculty	€	€	€	€
Project management	€	€	€	€

If you have additional suggestions for questions on Professional Development Experiences please list them here:
[textbox]

Separate screen:

Topic: Curriculum and Instruction
Availability, quality, and diversity of courses and other instructional offerings.

Please indicate how useful it would be to include questions on each of the following aspects of Curriculum and Instruction in the GSE section.

How useful would it be to have data on students' perceptions on...?	Very useful	Somewhat useful	Not very useful	Not useful at all
The availability of online courses, evening courses, and summer courses	€	€	€	€
The frequency and variety of course offerings	€	€	€	€
The overall quality of instruction	€	€	€	€
The inclusion of diverse perspectives	€	€	€	€
The difficulty of the curriculum	€	€	€	€
The contribution of courses to professional development experiences	€	€	€	€

If you have additional suggestions for questions on Curriculum and Instruction please list them here:
[textbox]

Separate screen:

Topic: Experiences with Faculty and Staff

Experiences with advisor, dissertation committee, other faculty members. Support and advice throughout graduate career.

Please indicate how useful it would be to include questions on each of the following aspects of Experiences with Faculty and Staff in the GSE section.

How useful would it be to have data on students' experiences with...?	Very useful	Somewhat useful	Not very useful	Not useful at all
Support from faculty during the dissertation process	€	€	€	€
Advice, guidance, and encouragement to publish from department faculty	€	€	€	€
Support from faculty in finding professional employment	€	€	€	€
The extent to which the faculty/program have kept pace with recent developments and trends in the field	€	€	€	€
Support from department administrative staff	€	€	€	€
Satisfaction with support from advisors, dissertation committee members, and other faculty	€	€	€	€

If you have additional suggestions for questions on Experiences with Faculty and Staff please list them here:

[textbox]

Separate screen:

Topic: Scholarly Products and Presentations

Opportunities and experiences presenting at conferences and elsewhere, submitting publications and other scholarly work to journals, and filing patents.

Please indicate how useful it would be to include questions on each of the following aspects of Scholarly Products and Presentations in the GSE section.

How useful would it be to have data on students' experiences with...?	Very useful	Somewhat useful	Not very useful	Not useful at all
Opportunities to present papers and	€	€	€	€

posters at conferences, department seminars, colloquia, etc.				
Financial support for attending conferences	€	€	€	€
Number and types of publications	€	€	€	€
Number and description of patents	€	€	€	€

If you have additional suggestions for questions on Scholarly Products and Presentations please list them here:

[textbox]

Separate screen:

Topic: Student Support Services

Satisfaction with services such as academic support, financial support, health and wellness, counseling services, disability services, and career guidance and placement services.

Please indicate how useful it would be to include questions on each of the following aspects of Student Support Services in the GSE section.

How useful would it be to have data on students' experiences with...?	Very useful	Somewhat useful	Not very useful	Not useful at all
The Office of Financial Aid	€	€	€	€
Health services	€	€	€	€
Services for students with disabilities	€	€	€	€
Services for English Language Learners/English as a Second Language students	€	€	€	€
Counseling services	€	€	€	€
Housing support (on and off campus)	€	€	€	€
Services for international students (e.g., visa and documentation)	€	€	€	€
Career guidance and placement services (other than advice from faculty members)	€	€	€	€

If you have additional suggestions for questions on Student Support Services please list them here:

[textbox]

Separate screen:

Topic: Factors that Affect Academic Progress

Financial, familial, housing, and other factors that positively or negatively affect academic progress and student well-being.

Please indicate how useful it would be to include questions on each of the following aspects of Factors that Affect Academic Progress in the GSE section.

How useful would it be to have data on students' experiences with...?	Very useful	Somewhat useful	Not very useful	Not useful at all
Financial problems / financial support	€	€	€	€
Family obligations or issues / help from family	€	€	€	€
Access to quality housing	€	€	€	€
Degree requirements	€	€	€	€
Quality of mentoring and advising	€	€	€	€
Social environment/peer group support	€	€	€	€
Physical or mental health	€	€	€	€
Feelings of academic or social isolation	€	€	€	€

If you have additional suggestions for questions on Factors that Affect Academic Progress please list them here:

[textbox]

Separate screen:

Topic: Overall Satisfaction

Satisfaction with the program and university, and with the graduate student experience.

Please indicate how useful it would be to include questions on each of the following aspects of Overall Satisfaction in the GSE section.

How useful would it be to have data on students' perceptions of...?	Very useful	Somewhat useful	Not very useful	Not useful at all
Their academic/educational experience	€	€	€	€
Student life experience	€	€	€	€

Professional development opportunities	€	€	€	€
Personal development opportunities	€	€	€	€
Overall experience at university	€	€	€	€
Overall experience in program	€	€	€	€
Whether they would select the same university, department/field of specialization, and advisor again	€	€	€	€
Whether they would recommend the university/program to a friend	€	€	€	€

If you have additional suggestions for questions on Overall Satisfaction please list them here:
[textbox]

Separate screen:

Data Products Available from the SED GSE Section

The results of the graduate school experiences (GSE) section in the Survey of Earned Doctorates (SED) would be made available to your institution in several formats. In the following screens we present some of the standard reports you would receive as well as data products that are available to you upon request.

[NOTE: The web survey will include alt text for all visuals in this section to meet requirements for 508 compliance. The alt text will provide a written explanation of each visual.]

[PROGRAMMING NOTE: for the following screens, record the number of respondents who click to view the linked documents.]

Separate screen:

ANNUAL SED REPORT

Findings on graduate school experiences could be included in the annual SED report “Doctorate Recipients from U.S. Universities” issued by NSF.

The report and accompanying tables highlight major trends in doctoral education.

Please click here to see a copy of the report: [LINK TO

https://www.nsf.gov/statistics/2017/nsf17306/report/about-this-report.cfm]

Are you familiar with the SED report titled “Doctorate Recipients from U.S. Universities”?

- Yes
- No

[IF YES] Overall, how useful do you think this report is?

- Very useful
- Somewhat useful
- Not very useful
- Not useful at all

Separate screen:

INSTITUTION PROFILE

Findings on graduate school experiences could be included in the annual Institution Profile that NCSES prepares for your institution.

Please click here to see an example Institution Profile: [LINK TO INSTITUTION PROFILE]

Are you familiar with the SED Institution Profile that NCSES prepares for your institution?

- Yes
- No

[IF YES] Overall, how useful do you think the Institution Profile is?

- Very useful
- Somewhat useful
- Not very useful
- Not useful at all

Separate screen:

INSTITUTIONAL DATA FILE

You can request the Survey of Earned Doctorates (SED) data file for your institution. This file would include individual survey responses from the SED, including the GSE items, from each doctorate recipient at your institution. The file includes records from 1920 onward. Note that data for a sensitive item on graduate school experiences would not be included at the individual level:

[EXAMPLE AND ALT TEXT: Example institutional data file should show individual data for a GSE item and suppressed data for a sensitive GSE item.]

Have you seen the SED data file for your institution in the past?

- Yes
- No

[IF YES] How useful do you think the SED data file for your institution is?

- Very useful
- Somewhat useful
- Not very useful
- Not useful at all

Separate screen:

CUSTOM DATA PRODUCTS: COMPARISON DATA BY CUSTOMIZED PEER GROUPS

It may be possible for you to receive custom reports including a peer group that you specify. A sufficient number of institutions and doctorate recipients would need to be included in this peer group due to NCSES confidentiality rules.

Would a custom data tabulation that presents data for a peer group that you specify be useful to you?

- Yes
- No

[IF YES] Please describe the custom peer group(s) that you would consider most useful:
Please choose all that apply.

- Institutions in the same Carnegie classification as my institution
- Institutions in the same state or geographic region as my institution
- Institutions under the same institutional control (that is public vs. private)
- A group of institutions that I determine
- Other (Please specify)

[textbox]

Separate screen:

If there are specific data products or reports using the GSE data that you would find useful, please describe:

[textbox]

- No suggestions for additional data products or reports.

Separate screen:

Current Surveys at Your Institution

To understand the impact of adding a graduate school experiences (GSE) section to the Survey of Earned Doctorates (SED), we would like to gather some information about surveys your institution fields. Does your institution currently field a survey of graduate students that collects data on graduate school experiences?

- Yes
- No

Separate screen:

[IF YES] Which of the following groups of students are surveyed on graduate school experiences?

Please choose all that apply.

- Master's degree students (*e.g., MA, MS, MBA, MSW, etc.*)
- Professional doctoral degree students (*e.g., MD, DDS, DVM, JD, DPharm, DMin, PsyD., etc., and most EdD degrees*)
- Research doctoral degree students (*e.g., PhD; these students are eligible to complete the SED*)
- Other (specify)

Separate screen:

[IF YES TO RESEARCH DOCTORAL] Does your institution administer a survey to research doctoral students at the time they *graduate* with their research doctoral degree?

- Yes
- No

Separate screen:

[IF YES TO SURVEY OF GRADUATING STUDENTS] Does your institution share any graduate school experiences data from graduating research doctoral students with other institutions?

- Yes
- No

Separate screen:

Overall Interest in the GSE Section

On average, the SED currently takes 19 minutes to complete, without a graduate school experiences (GSE) section. The proposed section on GSE may take an additional 5 to 10 minutes to complete, depending on the number of broad topic areas and questions included in the module. Which of the following statements do you agree with most?

- The GSE section should be shorter than 5 to 10 minutes
- 5 to 10 minutes is about right for the GSE section
- The GSE section should be longer than 5 to 10 minutes

[IF THE SECTION SHOULD BE SHORTER OR LONGER] What length do you consider appropriate for the GSE section?
[box for two-digit number] minutes

Separate screen:

If developed, NCSES is considering making the GSE section an optional part of the SED. That is, each institution would decide whether to ask their students to complete the section. Do you agree or disagree with this idea?

- Agree (I think the GSE section should be optional)
- Disagree (I think the GSE section should be required)
- Not sure

[IF AGREE] Why do you think the section should be optional?
[textbox]

[IF DISAGREE] Why do you think the section should be required?
[textbox]

Separate screen:

The next questions are about your overall interest in a graduate school experiences section for the SED.

How interested are you in having a section on graduate school experiences added to the SED?

- Very interested
- Somewhat interested
- Not very interested

€ Not interested at all

Separate screen:

Do you think NCSES should proceed with the design of a GSE section to be included in the SED?

€ Yes

€ No

[IF YES] What are the reasons why you think NCSES should proceed with the design of the GSE section?

[textbox]

[IF NO] What are the reasons why you do not think NCSES should proceed with the design of the GSE section?

[textbox]

Separate screen:

What concerns, if any, do you have about adding a GSE section to the SED?

[textbox]

€ I do not have concerns about adding a GSE section to the SED.

Separate screen:

Do you have any recommendations for NCSES to consider in developing a GSE section for the SED?

If yes, please explain below.

[textbox]

€ I do not have recommendations at this time.

Separate screen:

Thank you for participating in this study!

Attachment 2: Advance Letter

«suid»
«fname» «lname»
«street»
«unit»
«city» «state» «zip»-«zip4»

<<Date>>

Dear Dr. <<lname>>:

As you may know, the National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics (NCSES) within the National Science Foundation conducts the Survey of Earned Doctorates (SED), the nation’s primary source of information on the educational history, demographic characteristics, and postgraduation plans of doctorate recipients. NCSES is exploring the possibility of adding a new section to the SED that would cover topics pertaining to doctorate recipients’ experiences during graduate school.

I am writing to invite you to participate in a brief online questionnaire. As the [title/position at institution], your voice would add an important perspective as we consider the issues related to adding a section on graduate school experiences to the SED. In the questionnaire we will ask about your interest in a graduate school experiences section for the SED, topics that could be included in the section, potential utility of the data, and areas of concern.

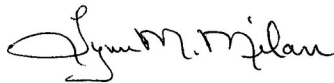
In about one week, you will receive an email with a link to the online questionnaire. Please click on the link provided in that email to access and complete the questionnaire. We would greatly appreciate your participation.

The data collection activities for this study are contracted to NORC at the University of Chicago. **Please be assured that your data will be kept strictly confidential and safeguarded in accordance with the Privacy Act of 1974. Any information publicly released will be in a form that does not personally identify you or your institution.**

If you have any questions about the study, please contact us at 1-800-248-8649 or send an email to sed@norc.org.

Thank you again for your assistance as we explore the possibility of adding a graduate school experiences section to the SED.

Sincerely,



Lynn M. Milan, Ph.D.
Project Officer
National Science Foundation
\$su_id



Attachment 3: Email Invitation to Complete Web Survey

Subject line: NSF Study: Graduate School Experiences Research

Dear <NAME OF GRADUATE SCHOOL DEAN>:

I am contacting you on behalf of the National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics (NCSES) with the National Science Foundation (NSF) to follow up on a letter that NCSES sent you last week. As you may know, NCSES conducts the Survey of Earned Doctorates (SED), the nation's primary source of information on the educational history, demographic characteristics, and postgraduation plans of doctorate recipients. NORC is assisting NCSES in exploring the possibility of adding a Graduate School Experiences (GSE) section to the SED. A GSE module would cover topics such as campus climate, professional development experiences, and overall satisfaction with the graduate program.

I would like to invite you to participate in an online questionnaire to explore issues related to the addition of a GSE section to the SED. Your input would add an important perspective to this process. Please click on the link below to access the questionnaire. It should take no more than 15 minutes to complete.

<PERSONALIZED LINK>

If you have any questions about the questionnaire, please contact me at latter-maryann@norc.org or 312-759-4216. For more information, please click here to see the Frequently Asked Questions [INCLUDE LINK TO FAQs].

Thank you,



Mary Ann Latter
Senior Research Director
NORC at the University of Chicago

Attachment 4: Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Survey of Earned Doctorates?

The Survey of Earned Doctorates (SED) is the nation's primary source of information on the educational history, demographic characteristics, and postgraduation plans of doctorate recipients. It is sponsored by the National Science Foundation, the National Institutes of Health, the U.S. Department of Education, and the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Who is the National Science Foundation (NSF)?

The National Science Foundation (NSF), <http://www.nsf.gov>, is an independent federal agency whose mission is to support all fields of fundamental science and engineering. If you would like to contact NSF directly, please contact the study's Project Officer, Dr. Lynn Milan, at lmilan@nsf.gov or 703-292-2275.

Who is the National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics (NCSES)?

The National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics (NCSES) is located within NSF and serves as one of the nation's Principal Statistical Agencies. NCSES's mission is to collect, interpret, analyze, and disseminate objective data on the science and engineering enterprise in the U.S. Learn more about NCSES at its website, <https://www.nsf.gov/statistics>.

Who is NORC?

NORC is a not-for-profit social science research organization affiliated with the University of Chicago. NCSES has contracted the data collection activities for this study to NORC. You can learn more about NORC at its website, www.norc.org, or by contacting the Study Director, Mary Ann Latter, at Latter-MaryAnn@norc.org, or by calling the project's toll-free number at 1-800-248-8649.

What is the study about?

This study is being conducted to assess the potential utility of adding a section on graduate school experiences to the Survey of Earned Doctorates (SED). It is also intended to solicit opinions about what kinds of questions graduate school deans would be interested in seeing in this new section.

How is the study being conducted?

NCSES is conducting a study with graduate school deans at SED institutions to collect information on level of interest in adding a graduate school experiences section to the SED, topics that could be included in the section, potential utility of the data, and areas of concern. Your email invitation includes a link to the study questionnaire.

How long will the study take?

The online questionnaire will take about 15 minutes to complete.

Who do I contact if I have questions about my rights as a respondent?

If you have any questions regarding your rights as a study participant, you may call NORC's Institutional Review Board (IRB) Manager toll-free at 1-866-309-0542.

How is my privacy protected?

Your answers will always be kept private, and none of the information that you provide will be used for any purpose other than research. Your responses are protected under the National Science Foundation Act of 1950, as amended, and the Privacy Act of 1974. Any information publicly released to summarize the findings from this study will be in a form that does not personally identify you or your institution.

What does NCSES hope to learn from this study?

- How institutions might use graduate school experiences (GSE) data.
- Whether receiving aggregated data on peer institutions would enhance an institution's interest in a GSE module.
- How useful various GSE topics are that could be included in the SED.
- How views on a GSE module vary across institutions.
- Whether data for sensitive items, such as satisfaction with the dissertation committee, would still be useful to institutions if it were aggregated.
- The impact an SED GSE module would have on institutions that already conduct their own exit survey.

Attachment 5: Reminder Emails

Email Reminder #1

Subject line: Graduate School Experiences Research—NSF would appreciate your input

Dear <NAME OF GRADUATE SCHOOL DEAN>,

We recently invited you to participate in a study sponsored by the National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics within the National Science Foundation (NSF). NCSES is exploring the possibility of adding a Graduate School Experiences section to the Survey of Earned Doctorates (SED). The study's online questionnaire is an opportunity for graduate deans to provide input on their level of interest in adding a graduate school experiences section to the SED, topics that could be included in the section, potential utility of the data, and areas of concern.

Please take a moment to click on the link below to access the questionnaire. It will take approximately 15 minutes to complete.

<PERSONALIZED LINK>

If you have any questions about the study, please contact me at EMAIL or PHONE NUMBER. For more information, please click here to see the Frequently Asked Questions [INCLUDE LINK TO FAQs].

Thank you.

Email Reminder #2

Subject line: NSF Graduate School Experiences Study – Reminder to participate

Dear <NAME OF GRADUATE SCHOOL DEAN>,

The National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics within the National Science Foundation (NSF) is exploring the possibility of adding a Graduate School Experiences section to the Survey of Earned Doctorates (SED). Your input would be greatly appreciated.

Please take a moment to click on the link below to access the questionnaire. It will take approximately 15 minutes to complete.

<PERSONALIZED LINK>

If you have any questions about the study, please contact me at EMAIL or PHONE NUMBER. For more information, please click here to see the Frequently Asked Questions [INCLUDE LINK TO FAQs].

Thank you.

Email Reminder #3

Subject line: Graduate School Experiences Research –Reminder

Dear <NAME OF GRADUATE SCHOOL DEAN>,

The National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics (NCSES) within the National Science Foundation (NSF) is seeking your input on the possibility of adding a Graduate School Experiences section to the Survey of Earned Doctorates (SED). NCSES is conducting this study to explore level of interest in adding a graduate school experiences section to the SED, topics that could be included in the section, potential utility of the data, and areas of concern.

Please take a moment to click on the link below to access the questionnaire. It will take approximately 15 minutes to complete. This study will be ending soon and your feedback would be greatly appreciated.

<PERSONALIZED LINK>

If you have any questions about the study, please contact me at EMAIL or PHONE NUMBER. For more information, please click here to see the Frequently Asked Questions [INCLUDE LINK TO FAQs].

Thank you.

Email Reminder #4

Subject line: NSF Graduate School Experiences Research—Study ending soon

Dear <NAME OF GRADUATE SCHOOL DEAN>,

The National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics within the National Science Foundation (NSF) is seeking your input on the possibility of adding a Graduate School Experiences section to the Survey of Earned Doctorates (SED).

The study is ending in a few days and we hope you will take 15 minutes to participate. Please access the questionnaire by clicking the link below.

<PERSONALIZED LINK>

If you have any questions about the study, please contact me at EMAIL or PHONE NUMBER. For more information, please click here to see the Frequently Asked Questions [INCLUDE LINK TO FAQs].

Thank you.