

**Request for Approval under the “Generic Clearance for the Collection of Routine Customer Feedback” (OMB Control Number: 3145-0215)**

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**TITLE OF INFORMATION COLLECTION:**

Retrospective Survey of Participants in the National Science Foundation (NSF) International Research Experiences for Students (IRES) Program

**PURPOSE:**

The purpose of the retrospective survey is to learn about former IRES participants’ characteristics, experiences and satisfaction with program, and educational and employment outcomes. The survey will be designed, developed, and administered by Mathematica. It will be administered once with one cohort of former program participants and results will be used to inform program improvement and report to OMB. Mathematica will analyze the survey data and share results with NSF in a report.

**DESCRIPTION OF RESPONDENTS:**

Respondents are young adults who participated in the IRES program as undergraduates or graduate students through awards made by NSF in 2013.

**TYPE OF COLLECTION: (Check one)**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Customer Comment Card/Complaint Form          | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Customer Satisfaction Survey |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Usability Testing (e.g., Website or Software) | <input type="checkbox"/> Small Discussion Group                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Focus Group                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____                            |

**CERTIFICATION:**

I certify the following to be true:

1. The collection is voluntary.
2. The collection is low-burden for respondents and low-cost for the Federal Government.
3. The collection is non-controversial and does not raise issues of concern to other federal agencies.
4. The results are not intended to be disseminated to the public.
5. Information gathered will not be used for the purpose of substantially informing influential policy decisions.
6. The collection is targeted to the solicitation of opinions from respondents who have experience with the program or may have experience with the program in the future.

Name: Suzanne H. Plimpton, NSF Reports Clearance Officer

To assist review, please provide answers to the following question:

**Personally Identifiable Information:**

1. Is personally identifiable information (PII) collected?  Yes  No
2. If Yes, is the information that will be collected included in records that are subject to the Privacy Act of 1974?  Yes  No
3. If Applicable, has a System or Records Notice been published?  Yes  No

**Gifts or Payments:**

Is an incentive (e.g., money or reimbursement of expenses, token of appreciation) provided to participants?  Yes  No

We expect difficulties in obtaining an adequate response rate among IRES participants about 5.5 years after participation. A review of similar surveys—focused on participants in programs offering research experiences to undergraduate and/or graduate students—suggests that response rates range from 40 to nearly 80 percent, with only those that administered the survey immediately after or within a year of participation reaching response rates above 70 percent (Lopatto 2004, 2007; Russell et al. 2006). Instead, surveys administered several years after participation, and not offering incentives, reach much lower response rates. For example, Martinez et al. (2015) surveyed participants in the NSF Partnerships for International Research and Education (PIRE) program up to 10 years of participation and had a response rate of 40 percent among those who participated as undergraduates and 54 percent among graduate-level participants. Similarly, Fitzsimmons (1990) surveyed participants in the NSF Research Experiences for Undergraduates (REU) program after 3 years of participation and obtained a response rate of 53 percent.

To encourage participation, IRES participants who complete the survey will be offered a \$20 gift card as a token of appreciation. The proposed incentive is modeled on previous incentives used in this study. In developing a survey for NSF participants in IRES’s sister program—REU—students participating in roughly one-hour sessions of usability testing received a \$40 gift card. Expecting the IRES survey to take less than half of that time, we propose to offer \$20 as a thank you.

## BURDEN HOURS

Category of Respondent	No. of Respondents	Participation Time	Burden
Participants	243	0.3 hours	73 hours
Principal Investigators	14	1.5 hours	21 hours
<b>Totals</b>	<b>257</b>		<b>94 hours</b>

### Explanation:

**Participants:** Respondents are former IRES participants in the 2013 cohort of awards—defined as the 243 students supported through 14 awards made by IRES in 2013. (Two additional awards were made by IRES in 2013, but the projects supported through these awards did not report supporting students.). The survey will contain a total of 46 items (including screening questions), most of which are multi-choice or dropdown menu questions. Based on preliminary testing, we expect that the survey will take 15 to 20 minutes to complete. We will confirm through further testing once the survey is programmed and adjust as needed to stay within the target time limit.

**Principal Investigators:** Respondents are principal investigators (PIs) who led the IRES award for the 2013 IRES cohort of participants. We will be contacting PIs to provide the most recent email address or other contact information they might have for former participants. Because contact information reported in the NSF annual reports is likely outdated, engaging PIs in the location effort will be critical. We assume PIs will spend about 5 minutes per student searching their own emails or social media accounts to find more updated information. There are 14 awards in the 2013 cohort and, on average, each supported 17.4 student participants. Therefore, we expect PIs to spend a total of 1.5 hours on this task.

### FEDERAL COST:

The estimated annual cost to the Federal government is \$127,509

**Explanation:**

This estimate includes the cost to develop the survey instrument; program the survey in Conformat—a secured online survey platform; locate participants, and administer the survey (including follow-up calls, incentive payments, and technical help-desk support).

**If you are conducting a focus group, survey, or plan to employ statistical methods, please provide answers to the following questions:**

**The selection of your targeted respondents**

1. Do you have a customer list or something similar that defines the universe of potential respondents and do you have a sampling plan for selecting from this universe?  
[X] Yes      [] No

If the answer is yes, please provide a description of both below (or attach the sampling plan)? If the answer is no, please provide a description of how you plan to identify your potential group of respondents and how you will select them?

**Explanation:**

We obtained information on all former participants in the 2013 cohort from NSF (through the annual reports submitted by PIs). Given the small cohort size (N=243), we will survey the universe of participants to ensure we obtain responses from students of different background characteristics and can produce valid estimates.

We selected the 2013 cohort of awards for two reasons. The first is that program guidance changes as of 2012 resulted in better reporting of information about student participants in annual and final reports. This enhances our ability to identify participants to survey. The second reason is that selecting this year (2013) ensures that enough time elapsed since program participation (5.5 years) for key outcomes to occur, such as graduation from undergraduate or graduate school and entry into further education or employment.

**Administration of the Instrument**

1. How will you collect the information? (Check all that apply)  
[X] Web-based or other forms of Social Media  
[ ] Telephone  
[ ] In-person  
[ ] Mail  
[ ] Other, Explain
2. Will interviewers or facilitators be used? [ ] Yes [X] No