

Appendix B

User Guidance on Field of Study Reporting, Survey of Doctorate Recipients

Section I. Field of Study Reporting

Field of study reporting for the 2017 Survey of Doctorate Recipients (SDR) was revised and updated to align with the National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics (NCSES) Taxonomy of Disciplines (ToD). The NCSES ToD is based on the 2010 Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) issued by the National Center for Education Statistics. The updated field of study reporting is designed to improve the quality of information reported in NCSES statistical reports on the science and engineering (S&E) enterprise related to S&E fields of study and S&E fields of research.

The fine field of study information reported in the Survey of Earned Doctorates (SED) and included in the SDR data files was aggregated at broad, minor, and fine levels of the ToD for inclusion in statistical tabulations. Forthcoming SDR data products will use the NCSES ToD when reporting fields of study and fields of research. These reports include the following:

- [*Women, Minorities, and Persons with Disabilities in Science and Engineering*](#)
- [*Science and Engineering Indicators*](#)
- [*Science and Engineering State Profiles*](#)
- [*Data tables*](#)
- [*InfoBriefs*](#)

Overall, the changes are minimal, but users should be aware of the minor differences in aggregations, especially at broad and minor fields of study. These differences are detailed in the [appendix tables](#), which map the fine fields of study from the SED to the various SDR reporting levels. The complete crosswalk mapping the SED fine field of study to the traditional and ToD SDR field of study aggregations are in technical tables [A-2](#) and [A-3](#) in the [technical notes](#).

Section II. Reporting Differences in Field of Study Aggregations

The remainder of this user guide documents the field of study reporting differences between the traditional field of study aggregations for the SDR through 2015 and new field of study aggregations based on the ToD beginning with the 2017 SDR.

Broad Field of Study

Since the 1999 SDR, NCSES has consistently reported broad field of study at an 8-level aggregation. The 8-level broad field aggregations remain the same with the transition to the ToD with only one notable label change: “Physical sciences” was relabeled “Physical sciences, geosciences, atmospheric, and ocean sciences.” However, 12 fine fields of study from the SED were reclassified under the ToD. [Appendix table 1](#) shows the reclassification and includes the size of the population involved.

[Appendix table 2](#) shows the differences in population estimates between the traditional taxonomy and the new ToD for the 2017 SDR at the broad field.

Minor Field of Study

The SDR minor field of study aggregation is at a 26-level aggregation under the traditional taxonomy and the new ToD. However, with the transition to the ToD, at the minor level there were several notable label changes to the 26 categories, as shown in [appendix table 3](#). In addition, a total of 25 fine fields of study from the SED were reclassified at the level of the minor field of study—the 12 fine fields shown in [appendix table 1](#), plus an additional 13 fine fields that change minor field classification, but not broad field. [Appendix table 4](#) shows all 25 fine fields of study from the SED that were reclassified under the ToD at minor field level.

Fine Field of Study

The SDR data series has historically included a fine field of study code. However, the fine field of study aggregation is generally not used in NCSSES statistical reports and publication products.

Beginning with the refreshed 2015 SDR sample that more than doubled in size to 120,000 individuals, from approximately 47,000 individuals in the 2013 cycle, the SDR can now produce reliable estimates of employment outcomes for a large number of fine fields of study. The SDR fine field of study aggregation under the ToD includes 77 separate categories within 8 broad categories as shown in [appendix table 5](#). The 77 fine fields of study are included in 15 of the 2017 SDR data tables, listed by table number and title in [appendix table 6](#).

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