

SUPPORTING STATEMENT
U.S. Department of Commerce
National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration
Office of Education, Higher Education Scholarship, Fellowship and Internship Programs
OMB Control No. 0648-0568

B. COLLECTIONS OF INFORMATION EMPLOYING STATISTICAL METHODS

1. Describe (including a numerical estimate) the potential respondent universe and any sampling or other respondent selection method to be used. Data on the number of entities (e.g., establishments, State and local government units, households, or persons) in the universe covered by the collection and in the corresponding sample are to be provided in tabular form for the universe as a whole and for each of the strata in the proposed sample. Indicate expected response rates for the collection as a whole. If the collection had been conducted previously, include the actual response rate achieved during the last collection.

The potential respondent universe for this collection includes: 1) applicants to and students supported by NOAA grant, scholarship and internship programs, and 2) scientists, professors, or other professionals who mentor students supported by NOAA Office of Education (OEd) grant, scholarship and internship programs. These respondents were selected because they applied for grants, scholarships, or fellowships from programs within the NOAA Office of Education. Surveys will be distributed uniformly to all applicants or supported individuals in accordance with the program that they are associated with. All data collected will be used in our reports; there will be no sampling of the respondent universe. Alumni of NOAA OEd scholarship programs are also included in the respondent universe; however, the alumni population includes individuals who voluntarily provide new information to our online system and is not intended to represent all alumni of each program covered by this information collection.

Response rates to voluntary surveys of Hollings and EPP Undergraduate active scholars yielded participation rates of 59 to 65% in 2025. Response rates are attributed to the timing of survey distribution (i.e., immediately following student events) and reminder emails to respondents. Response rates from mentors ranged from 85-95% previously, and it is anticipated that these rates will persist.

The alumni form was deployed online as the Voluntary Alumni Update System (VAUS) in 2014, at which time a response rate of 60% was targeted. The VAUS provides for at-will entry of information by alumni on the Office of Education website. Response rates from alumni since 2014 have averaged between 1 to 2%. In 2024, the Office of Education hired a contractor to reach out to alumni to gather information using VAUS. The contractor was able to achieve 30% response rate from scholarship program alumni (648 responses from 2,165 alumni). New efforts

to increase alumni tracking throughout the NOAA Office of Education are currently underway, until then the expected number of updates is 50 or more per year and the expected response rate at 2%.

In previous collections, the respondent universe only accounted for information collected through voluntary updates. In this collection, that population of the respondent universe will be approximately 3,650. Once data is collected, the following data points will be assessed:

**Educational Partnership Program with Minority Serving Institutions (EPP)
Undergraduate Scholarship Program (USP)**

- Number of undergraduate scholarship students attending MSIs who pursue graduate work in NOAA-related sciences; and
- Number of undergraduate scholarship students attending MSIs who are hired by NOAA, NOAA Contractors and other natural resources and science agencies at the Federal, State, local and tribal levels.
- Qualitative feedback from students to assess experience in the program and program impact.
- Qualitative feedback from mentors to assess student performance during internships.

Ernest Hollings Scholarship Program

- Number of Hollings scholarship students who are hired by NOAA and other natural resource and science agencies at the Federal, State, and local levels;
- The number of students from the Hollings Program who teach and become educators in NOAA-related sciences; and,
- The number of Hollings students who pursue graduate work in NOAA-related sciences.
- Qualitative feedback from students to assess experience in the program and program impact.
- Qualitative feedback from mentors to assess student performance during internships.

EPP Cooperative Science Centers (CSCs)

- Number of EPP-funded students who are hired by NOAA, NOAA contractors and other environmental, natural resource, and science agencies at the Federal, State, local and tribal levels, in academia and the private sector;

Table 1: Potential respondent universe and expected response rates

Population	Survey Type	Respondent Universe per Year	Expected Response Rate	Expected Number of Respondents per Year
Voluntary Alumni Update Form	Census	3650	2%	73
Hollings and EPP Scholar Surveys	Census	160	60%	96
Hollings and EPP Mentor Surveys	Census	160	90%	144
Total				313

2. Describe the procedures for the collection of information including:

As there will be censuses of the respective populations, there will be no sampling. The goal of the data collection is to get an account of the number of individuals applying to and supported by NOAA Office of Education grant, scholarship, and internship programs. Qualitative data collected to understand student experiences and performance will be used to improve the program and provide feedback to students.

- Statistical methodology for stratification and sample selection,

The entire respondent universe is considered in this information collection. Collection of information from alumni is at will, and though the entire population of alumni have the opportunity to respond, only those who voluntarily encounter the website and update their information will be considered.

- Estimation procedure

The estimation for respondent totals and response rates are based on historical information collections by the NOAA Office of Education. These efforts have been ongoing and will continue for the foreseeable future. The collection of optional demographic information represents an addition to the NOAA Office of Education collection and our estimation for response rates here is a conservative estimate based on response rates reported by Mackety (2007).

- Degree of accuracy needed for the purpose described in the justification

All data collected will be used in reports for these programs. Because of the nature of the information we are collecting, we make the assumption that respondents are providing truthful information that is mostly accurate. We are unable to computationally determine a minimal sample size or specified confidence level for that sample size since the entire respondent universe is considered.

- Unusual problems requiring specialized sampling procedures,

There are no unusual problems that may require a specialized sampling procedure. We are

unable to computationally determine a minimal sample size or specified confidence level for that sample size since the entire respondent universe is considered.

- Any use of periodic (less frequent than annual) data collection cycles to reduce burden.

For student and mentor surveys, information is collected periodically to reduce burden. Students complete surveys when they apply for financial support, after being selected by programs and during their summer internship periods. Mentors are surveyed during and after the summer internship period.

3. Describe the methods used to maximize response rates and to deal with nonresponse. The accuracy and reliability of the information collected must be shown to be adequate for the intended uses. For collections based on sampling, a special justification must be provided if they will not yield “reliable” data that can be generalized to the universe studied.

Response rates for student and mentor surveys have been historically high. Students are informed, upon acceptance to the program, of the importance of feedback through surveys and are encouraged through verbal communication and email to complete surveys. Providing feedback on student performance is an expectation communicated to mentors prior to them being approved to work with students. Mentors are reminded via email to submit feedback in a timely manner.

In an effort to increase the response rate of alumni updates, OEd will conduct an active campaign through email reminders to non-respondents being sent periodically (e.g., for up to a month after the end of the campaign). The surveys have been designed to reduce burden (eliminated questions where appropriate) and to be respondent-friendly (e.g., almost all questions are closed-ended, worded in a clear, easy to understand manner, and skip logic has been incorporated).

4. Describe any tests of procedures or methods to be undertaken. Testing is encouraged as an effective means of refining collections of information to minimize burden and improve utility. Tests must be approved if they call for answers to identical questions from 10 or more respondents. A proposed test or set of tests may be submitted for approval separately or in combination with the main collection of information.

No tests have been or will be undertaken. The evaluation system is designed to collect data through online survey systems. For Hollings and EPP, this is the Voluntary Alumni Update System. The online application system is designed to collect student application data.

5. Provide the name and telephone number of individuals consulted on the statistical aspects of the design, and the name of the agency unit, contractor(s), grantee(s), or other person(s) who will actually collect and/or analyze the information for the agency.

Individual consulted on statistical design:

- Dr. John Baek, NOAA Office of Education (john.baek@noaa.gov, 202-743-0332) developed the statistical design for this project.

Individuals who will oversee data collection and analysis:

- Dr. John Baek, NOAA Office of Education (john.baek@noaa.gov, 202-743-0332) will be responsible for overseeing the automated data collection process and for overseeing the functioning and maintenance of the evaluation system for EPP and Hollings.