2026-2028 Survey of Graduate Students and Postdoctorates in Science and Engineering

OMB Supporting Statement

Section A

June 2026

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EXHIBITS

LIST OF ATTACHMENTS

A. JUSTIFICATION

This submission requests a three-year renewal of the previously approved Office of Management and Budget (OMB) clearance for the Survey of Graduate Students and Postdoctorates in Science and Engineering (GSS). The survey is sponsored by the National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics (NCSES) within the U.S. National Science Foundation (NSF) and by the National Institutes of Health (NIH). The GSS is an annual survey that was last conducted in fall 2025. The OMB clearance for the GSS will expire on September 30, 2026. NSF requests approval to collect data for the 2026, 2027, and 2028 survey cycles.

There are no statistical, methodological, or operational changes to the GSS since the previous request for OMB clearance.

A.1 Necessity for Information Collection

Established within NSF by the America COMPETES Reauthorization Act of 2010 § 505, codified in the National Science Foundation Act of 1950, as amended, NCSES serves as a central federal clearinghouse for the collection, interpretation, analysis, and dissemination of objective data on science, engineering, technology, and research and development for use by policymakers, practitioners, researchers, and the public.[1] Information obtained through the GSS is critically important to NCSES's ability to measure science and engineering resources in the United States. Furthermore, the GSS data serve as the nation's only source of comprehensive graduate enrollment information for specific science, engineering, and health (SEH) disciplines at the departmental level. These data are solicited under the authority of the NSF Act of 1950,[2] as amended, and are central to the analysis presented in a pair of congressionally mandated reports[3,4] the *Science and Engineering Indicators* and the *Characteristics of Scientists and Engineers*.

The GSS is the only annual national survey that collects information on the characteristics of master's and doctoral student enrollment for specific SEH disciplines at the departmental level. It also collects information on master's and doctoral student enrollment by degree level, race and ethnicity, citizenship, sex, source of support, and mechanism of support;

[1] Section 505, Pub. L. No. 111-358. See Attachment 1.
[2] See Attachment 2.
[3] 42 U.S. Code § 1863(j)(1)
[4] 42 U.S. Code § 1885(a), 1885(d)

information on postdoctorates (postdocs) by citizenship, sex, source of support, mechanism of support, and origin of doctoral degree; and information on other doctorate-holding nonfaculty researchers (NFRs) by sex and type of doctoral degree (see Attachment 3 for screenshots of the GSS web instrument). The GSS has been conducted by NCSES annually since 1972.

The GSS is a census of all organizational "units" (departments, programs, research centers, and health care facilities) in SEH fields within eligible academic institutions in the United States that grant research-based master's or doctoral degrees. The survey collects information on graduate students enrolled in these units, as well as postdocs and NFRs working within these institutions. As a part of the GSS, NCSES also biennially surveys Federally Funded Research and Development Centers (FFRDCs to collect information on postdocs. The FFRDC Postdoc Survey is an extension of the GSS targeted to the 41 federally funded research centers. Unlike the GSS, data for the FFRDC Postdoc Survey is collected at the center level as opposed to individual departments (in other words, each FFRDC constitutes a single organizational unit). Similar to the GSS, the FFRDC Postdoc Survey collects data on postdoctoral researcher race and ethnicity, sex, citizenship, source of support and area of research (see Attachment 4 for screenshots of the FFRDC Postdoc Survey web instrument). Historically, only approximately 50% of centers have postdocs to report.

A.2 Uses of Information

Data from the GSS and the FFRDC Postdoc Survey are available as public use files (https://ncses.nsf.gov/explore-data/microdata/graduate-students-postdoctorates-s-e), and the GSS data are also available through the NCSES Table Builder Application (https://ncsesdata.nsf.gov/builder/welcome?type=table). The Interactive Data Tool contains institutional and summary data from all of NCSES's academic sector surveys for all institutions offering graduate-level instruction and/or maintaining research and development (R&D) activity in SEH fields. In calendar year 2025 (the most recent year available), Google Analytics data showed a total of 6,0543 unique page views of GSS in the Interactive Data Tool by web users external to NCSES. Between 1 January 2023 and 31 December 2025, GSS public use data files were downloaded 3,451 times by users.

After each survey round, major findings from the GSS and the FFRDC Postdoc Survey are published in an InfoBrief. The most recent GSS InfoBrief, *2024 Postdoctoral Appointments*

Rise While Graduate Enrollment Slows, and the most recent FFRDC Postdoc Survey InfoBrief, *Ongoing Changes in the Demographic Composition of Postdoctoral Researchers at Federally Funded Research and Development Centers: 2023*, are both available on the NCSES website (GSS: https://ncses.nsf.gov/pubs/nsf26308#; FFRDC Postdoc Survey: https://ncses.nsf.gov/pubs/nsf24339) and are also included in this document as Attachment 5.

A.2.1 Federal

Data derived from the GSS and the FFRDC Postdoc Survey are routinely used by various agencies of the Executive and Legislative Branches and by Congress. For example, in 2023 NCSES presented GSS data on postdoctorate employment trends (demographics, funding sources, and funding mechanisms) in biological and biomedical sciences and health to the National Institutes of Health Working Committee on Postdocs. Additionally, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) used GSS data extensively in their report on graduate researcher and postdoctoral scholar compensation.

Special tabulations from the GSS data constitute a key resource in meeting policy and program information needs of the federal government.

NCSES and the NIH extensively use the information on the number and characteristics of students currently enrolled in graduate SEH programs and of persons engaged in postdoctoral programs to assess the future stock of trained SEH personnel. A variety of more general information needs are met through the annual release of data in electronic format. NCSES publishes a short InfoBrief and a set of statistical tables, *Survey of Graduate Students and Postdoctorates in Science and Engineering Data Tables*, available on the NCSES website.

A.2.2 NSF Uses

The GSS is one of four NCSES surveys whose microdata are combined into an integrated database to produce the *Academic Institution Profiles* published on the NCSES website (https://ncsesdata.nsf.gov/profiles/). The other three surveys are (1) the Survey of Earned Doctorates (SED); (2) the Higher Education Research and Development (HERD) Survey; and (3) the Survey of Science and Engineering Research Facilities. As explained in the next section, these data are further integrated with institutional data from other NCSES surveys and with surveys conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). Together, these data provide policymakers with information on the role of higher education in the context of the national R&D effort.

Special tabulations from the GSS data constitute a key resource in meeting policy and program information needs of NSF. Primary uses of the GSS data also include reviewing changing enrollment levels to assess the effects of NSF initiatives; tracking student support patterns; and analyzing participation in SEH fields by targeted groups for all disciplines or for selected disciplines and for selected groups of institutions. NSF Program Officers check departmental and institutional records, including data from the GSS and NCES's Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), to determine department eligibility for NSF programs targeted to special populations or instructional programs.

A.2.3 Use by Academic Institutions

The surveyed institutions themselves are major users of GSS data. Institutions use NCSES's GSS data reports or the Table Builder Application to study selected groups of peer institutions for planning and comparative purposes. They combine the NCSES data with information from state and local governments on institutions in their geographic areas. Institutions also use the comparative data to review the strength of their own programs on the basis of factors such as support of students by various federal agencies and progress in reaching special target populations.

A.2.4 Use by the Professional Societies

Data users include the American Association of Colleges of Nursing, American Association of Universities, American Chemical Society, American Council of Education,

American Geological Society, American Institute of Physics, American Physical Society, American Society for Engineering Education, Association of American Medical Colleges, Association of International Educators, Commission on Professionals in Science and Technology, Computing Research Association, Council of Graduate Schools, Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology, and the National Postdoctoral Association. Generally, associations use GSS data to monitor trends in enrollment by field of study, and many are also interested in tracking the numbers of postdocs and NFRs.

A.2.5 Use in Research

Researchers studying a diverse range of policy issues relating to the SEH labor pipeline have used GSS data. From 2023 to 2025, at least 44 journal articles, 12 dissertations, eight reports, five conference papers, 12 monographs, four book chapters, and three working papers using GSS data were published (see Attachment 6). Topics included visa policies for international students wanting to work in the United States, work-life balance for postdoctoral researchers, discipline-specific pipeline issues, and mentorship in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM).

A.2.6 Media Uses

Enrollment of graduate students in science and engineering fields is reported by the press, including *Forbes, Inside Higher Ed, Statnews,* and *Science* (see Attachment 6).

A.3 Consideration of Using Improved Technology

NCSES has engaged in a process of continuous improvement for the GSS, involving technical innovations to increase the utility of the data collected and reduce respondent burden. In 2017, NCSES leveraged these technical innovations to implement Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) as the primary method of reporting GSS data. Since 2017, all schools are asked to use one of the three following data reporting options:

- Upload a file containing deidentified individual records that the web system automatically aggregates to the unit-level format and then populates the appropriate cells in the GSS web survey questionnaire.

- Upload a file resulting from an Excel macro program that aggregates individual-level data into unit-level data directly on the respondent's computer. This option is available for respondents who do not wish to provide individual-level data over the internet.
- Manually enter unit-level counts directly into the GSS web instrument.

Based on analyses of respondent behavior in the 2017 survey and subsequent data collections, the expansion of available upload options has led to a large increase in the number of respondents that supply GSS data through file uploads and has led to a reduction in the overall burden of completing the survey through the web instrument.

Because FFRDC respondents only report on a single organizational unit, there is little efficiency to be gained from EDI. Consequently, the FFRDC Postdoc Survey continues to rely on manual data entry on a web-based survey instrument.

A.4 Efforts to Identify Duplication

NCSES staff consult regularly with other federal agencies and private organizations to prevent duplication of data collection activities and to stay abreast of changes in other surveys Such consultations take place with NIH, the Council of Graduate Schools (CGS), and others. Specific surveys conducted by these groups will be discussed below. The routine data uses of the federal agencies described in Section A.2.1 have largely determined the content of the GSS questionnaire.

Only the GSS collects the following information at the level of detailed SEH fields of study:

- For full-time master's and doctorate students, aggregate counts by
  - sources of major financial support (federal agencies, institutions, self-support, etc.)
  - mechanisms of major financial support (fellowships, teaching assistantships, etc.)
  - sex
  - citizenship
  - enrollment status (full-time or part-time; first-time)
  - race and ethnicity background of U.S. citizens
- For part-time master's and doctorate students, aggregate counts by
  - sex
  - citizenship

  - race and ethnicity background of U.S. citizens
- For postdocs, aggregate counts by
  - sources of major financial support
  - mechanism of major financial support
  - sex
  - citizenship
  - type of doctoral degree
  - doctoral degree origin
- For NFRs, aggregate counts by
  - sex
  - type of doctoral degree

Because the data are collected from all eligible institutions with graduate SEH departments, data are available at the detailed field of study by institutional characteristics, such as highest degree granted, geographical location, type of control (public or private), or any other special grouping (medical schools, historically black colleges and universities, land-grant institutions, etc.) as well as by rankings on various characteristics (foreign enrollment, minority enrollment, field-specific enrollment, etc.).

Some graduate enrollment data are collected by other organizations, either federal or private, but none of the other data collection efforts both contain the detailed field distribution that is required for analyses and provide the necessary data for NCSES and the NIH. IPEDS, for example, collects race and ethnicity data every two years for only nine select fields of study (of which four are within the NCSES definition of science and engineering but are at a more general level than is collected for the GSS). The IPEDS annual fall enrollment data collected by race and ethnicity category are not reported by the field, and hence, they do not provide a viable substitute for the race and ethnicity data collected in the GSS. No data are collected elsewhere on source of support for postdocs.

CGS conducts an annual survey of graduate enrollment in cooperation with the Graduate Record Examinations (GRE) Board, most recently surveying 760 institutions in 2024 that were members of the CGS or one of the four regional graduate school associations, the Conference of Southern Graduate Schools, the Midwestern Association of Graduate Schools, the Northeastern Association of Graduate Schools, and the Western Association of Graduate Schools. The survey had a response rate of 71%, with 536 schools responding. The survey collects data by 11 broad

fields and 51 fine fields of study using the GRE discipline codes as its taxonomy, type of institutional control, and highest level of degree offered, but has no data on source of financial support. CGS also collects information on postbaccalaureate and post-master's certificates and applications to graduate schools. Only the GSS maintains detailed data grouped into 21 broad and 108 fine fields of study on all SEH degree fields at all eligible institutions and institution-provided data on source of financial support. Additionally, GSS utilizes imputation to address missing data from respondents, while CGS does not employ these techniques.

The National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) collects enrollment data on undergraduate and graduate students, including demographics and field of study. However, the data collection was originally intended to assist institutions of higher education for compliance with federal financial aid requirements (ensuring that students receiving federal financial aid were appropriately enrolled in higher education degree programs) and to verify when students were no longer enrolled so they could be placed into loan repayment plans. NSC does not produce a public-use data file, nor does it release enrollment data by institution. NCSES undertook a methodological study to compare the nature and quality of NSC data to GSS. The 2025 report (Attachment 6a and 6b) noted that while NSC and GSS coverage of institutions of higher education are similar, NSC data had more missingness among demographic variables, included many non-research doctorates (e.g. Doctor of Education or other practitioner-oriented degrees), and appeared to miss a portion of the foreign doctoral population.

A number of surveys are conducted by other professional societies or by groups of institutions and are limited to a single field or group of related fields or to institutions that are members of the organization. These surveys may collect far more detailed data on the fields of interest to the organization conducting the survey and may even collect data on topics not covered by the GSS (e.g., on undergraduate enrollment), but they do not provide compatible data on all SEH fields, nor do they often address the issue of sources and mechanisms of financial support for graduate students.

NCSES is unaware of any other survey efforts similar to the FFRDC Postdoc Survey.

A.5 Efforts to Minimize Burden on Small Business

The GSS and FFRDC Postdoc Survey do not collect information from small businesses.

A.6 Consequences of Less Frequent Data Collection

A less frequent survey cycle for the GSS would have several serious consequences. First, there would be the loss of information. Because of the data uses described previously, biennial or less frequent collection means that data users would be unable to access current information. Collecting the GSS annually also increases the value of the data for monitoring trends, particularly the effects of dramatic changes in the larger context. Minor shifts in enrollment trends are monitored as early indicators of likely future changes in the supply of SEH professionals.

Other examples of trend monitoring are changes in the foreign graduate student enrollment and postdoc employment counts that correspond to the events such as September 11, 2001; the 2007-2009 Great Recession; the Covid pandemic; immigration policy changes; and changes in federal funding priorities. Less-than-annual data collection may not capture such changes or reveal the inflection point of a changing trend. Following the Covid outbreak in 2020, the release of the GSS fall enrollment data was used to examine trends in SEH graduate enrollment of U.S. citizens, permanent residents, and foreign visa holders. Foreign full-time master's student enrollment dropped 24% from 2019 to 2020 and then rebounded in 2021 with a 42% increase. The impacts on graduate student enrollment and funding patterns of support for graduate students and postdoctoral researchers resulting from changes in federal research policies or societal changes would be much more difficult to discern if the data are not collected every year.

Annual collection of the GSS also helps reduce respondent burden. Most colleges and universities have automated recordkeeping systems, facilitating their ability to respond to the GSS on an annual cycle. These automated record systems considerably reduce the time required to assemble and report information needed for the GSS related to graduate enrollment by field, demographics, postdoctoral appointments, and sources and mechanisms of support, etc. Thus, because the database and software are retained, kept current, and easily accessed, collecting consistent data annually considerably reduces respondent burden for academic institutions with automated data systems.

Annual collection (or biennially for the FFRDC Postdoc Survey) also helps to maintain contacts with the coordinators within institutions and FFRDCs. Having this continuity helps the coordinators maintain their databases and thereby maintain the quality of the data.

A.7 Special Circumstances

These data collections do not require any of the reporting requirements listed.

A.8 *Federal Register* Announcement and Consultations Outside the Agency

The *Federal Register* notice was published on 9 March 2026 (91 FR 11340) (see Attachment 7). NCSES received no comments.

As described in the next sections, in the past three years, several consultations with the respondents have taken place to examine different aspects of the GSS data collection and to inform the changes introduced in 2017.

A.8.1 GSS Institution Site Visits

NCSES routinely conducts site visits to better understand the reporting experiences of institutions that participate in the GSS. From 2023 to 2025, NCSES conducted eight face-to-face meetings with institutions of various sizes and reporting capacities. The meetings focused on data availability, quality, and barriers to using EDI and on assisting coordinators in making the transition from manual entry to EDI. Coordinators using manual data entry expressed an interest in uploading but did not fully understand the benefits, work required, or potential to reduce burden in the subsequent years. The information gathered in these meetings also inform data collection procedures to better help other coordinators complete the survey.

While no in-person site visits or virtual meetings with FFRDCs occurred during the previous clearance cycle, NCSES will on occasion visit FFRDCs to explore issues of data availability and quality. The last such site visit was in January 2020. As we experienced no major data collection issues with FFRDCs in 2021 or 2023, we have not conducted any in-person site visits recently.

A.8.2 Other Consultations

NCSES regularly consults with the Department of Education’s NCES and other federal agencies such as the NIH, professional societies, and institutions. NCSES staff members

maintain frequent contact with members of the data-using community as well as with major academic data providers through attendance at professional society meetings and consultation with institutional and agency officials. GSS sessions are typically held at the Association for Institutional Researcher (AIR) Annual Forum and the CGS Annual Meeting each year to obtain respondent input. In 2024, NCSES presented a session at the AIR Forum on how to use GSS data to identify trends in postdoctoral employment and funding support. The presentation included opportunities for institutions to suggest ways that GSS data could be improved to provide more utility to researchers.

A.9 Payment or Gifts to Respondents

There are no payments or gifts to GSS or FFRDC Postdoc Survey respondents.

A.10 Assurance of Confidentiality

No pledge of confidentiality is given to institutions providing data to the GSS or the FFRDC Postdoc Survey because all data collected are aggregate counts of students, postdocs, and NFRs. Data are published only at the departmental summary level.

A.11 Justification for Sensitive Questions

The survey does not contain any questions of a sensitive nature.

A.12 Estimate of Respondent Burden

During each survey cycle, when respondents reach the end of the GSS web instrument, they are asked to report how long it took them to complete the data collection. Reported burden to complete the GSS varies considerably across respondents. Factors impacting burden include the number of organizational units at the institution; the degree to which requested data can be queried from centralized institutional databases or whether the GSS survey coordinator relies on the unit respondents (URs) in various organizational units (e.g., academic departments or research centers) for some of the requested data; and whether the respondent uploads their data electronically or manually enters it into the GSS web instrument. When those factors are considered, the average reported burden per coordinator over the past three cycles (2022-2024), was 18.7 hours, based on the 60% of coordinators and 51% of URs who provided burden estimates. Because this 18.7 hour value is based on a limited number of respondents, we use the

reported data to estimate the missingness based on institutional reporting characteristics. Our process for estimation is described below.

The use of URs has the largest impact on respondent burden, as this practice requires the use of multiple individuals at the department level to assist with the data collection. Exhibit 1 and Exhibit 2 demonstrate the variance in reported burden when coordinators that utilize URs and those who do not are separated. The average reported burden per year to complete the GSS at a school without URs was 18.6 hours. For 2022, 2023, and 2024, the average reported burden for individual URs was 2.5 hours, 3.1 hours, and 2.9 hours, respectively. The average reported burden for institutions that that used URs was 25.4 hours.

Exhibit 1. GSS 2022-2024 Reported Coordinator Burden, by Institutional Reporting Size and Data Provision Method

	2022		2023		2024		2022-2024	
	n	Average Burden (hours)	n	Average Burden (hours)	n	Average Burden (hours)	n	Weighted Average Burden (hours)
More than 15 units, EDI	194	32.5	211	34.8	201	29.2	606	32.2
More than 15 units, manual data entry	12	31.6	11	25.6	9	16.4	32	25.3
15 or fewer units, EDI	216	7.9	227	8.7	184	7.8	627	8.1
15 or fewer units, manual data entry	62	5.8	55	7.3	46	7.6	163	6.8
Estimated total	*484*	*18.1*	*504*	*19.8*	*440*	*17.7*	*1,428*	*18.6*

Exhibit 2. GSS 2022-2024 Reported Burden for Institutions Using Unit Respondents, by Institutional Reporting Size and Data Provision Method

	2022		2023		2024		2022-2024	
	n	Average Burden (hours)	N	Average Burden (hours)	N	Average Burden (hours)	n	Weighted Average Burden (hours)
More than 15 units, EDI	2	62.5	4	31.3	3	40.0	9	41.1

Exhibit 3.

More than 15 units, manual data entry	3	36.2	2	39.0	3	36.7	8	37.1
15 or fewer units, EDI	3	12.3	1	36.0	3	10.0	7	14.7
15 or fewer units, manual data entry	2	9.0	4	4.9	2	2.8	8	5.4
Estimated total	*10*	*28.9*	*11*	*23.5*	*11*	*24.1*	*32*	*25.4*

As mentioned above, the response rates for coordinator and UR burden were only 60% and 51%, respectively, over the three-year period. To address low response rates, the following technique was used to impute the burden for nonresponding coordinators. First, for both groups, outliers defined as three standard deviations above the mean were removed. Next, missing data were replaced with the mean of the analysis group. Finally, UR burden was calculated and included with the coordinator's burden. This calculation is necessary because, when a school utilizes URs, the coordinators' burden is minimal, while the response burden falls to individual URs. Average UR burden was applied to all units at schools utilizing URs and was then added to the coordinator's burden. Burden estimates were weighted by use of URs, size of institution, and data provision method over the three-year period and are presented in Exhibit 3. The weighted average burden hours in Exhibit 3 represent the total effort required to complete the survey and are the basis for the 2026, 2027, and 2028 burden estimates.

	Do Not Use URs		**Uses URs**		**All Coordinators**	
	Avg.	**Year-Weighted**	**Avg.**	**Year-Weighted**	**Avg.**	**Year-Weighted**

	n	Avg. Burden (hours)	n	Avg. Burden (hours)	n	Avg. Burden (hours)
More than 15 units, EDI	332	32.2	10	171.1	342	36.1
More than 15 units, manual data entry	20	25.8	8	78.5	28	40.3
15 or fewer units, EDI	320	8.2	3	30.2	322	8.3
15 or fewer units, manual data entry	125	6.8	8	16.1	133	7.4
Average estimated total	*797*	*18.4*	*29*	*88.9*	*825*	*20.8*

*All Coordinators column may not add up to "Do Not Use URs" and "Uses URs" columns due to rounding.

Having taken into account the number of institutions utilizing URs in the above calculations, to estimate burden for the next three data collection cycles, the GSS frame is split by response method (EDI or manual entry) and the number of organizational units reported by the institution (more than 15 units are large reporters and 15 or fewer units are small reporters). Based on the 2024 GSS, 43.7% of schools were large uploaders, 3.4% were large manual-entry reporters, 36.2% were small uploaders, and 16.8% were small manual-entry reporters.

The expected frame for the 2025 GSS includes 640 institutions comprising 720 schools with 788 total respondents. The estimates provided below assume a steady state in the use of URs and the data reporting method (EDI or manual entry). We are estimating an additional five small institutions reporting data manually in each data cycle (2026, 2027, and 2028), based on organic growth in the census frame, resulting in 344 large uploaders, 27 large manual-entry reporters, 285 small uploaders, and 132 small manual-entry reporters expected in the 2025 GSS (Exhibit 4). Given the historically high levels of participation, a 100% school response rate is used in these estimates. This methodology is the same as that used to project burden for the GSS 2022-2025 OMB submission.

Exhibit 4. Expected Composition of the 2025 GSS Frame, by Institution Size and Reporting Method

Institution Size and Reporting Method	# of Respondents	Percent
More than 15 units, EDI	344	43.7%
More than 15 units, manual data entry	27	3.4%
15 or fewer units, EDI	285	36.2%
15 or fewer units, manual data entry	132	16.8%

Total	*788*	*100.0%*

In addition to the regular GSS data collection, the 2027 survey cycle will include a biennial FFRDC Postdoc Survey. Response burden for the FFRDCs is estimated based on the 2023 data collection in which FFRDCs reported an average of 2.1 hours per center to complete the information request. Of the 43 FFRDC coordinators that participated in the 2023 FFRDC Postdocs Survey, 33 provided burden estimates, resulting in a response rate of 76.7%. Burden estimates for the 2026-28 GSS cycles are presented in Exhibits 5-7 below.

Exhibit 5. Burden Estimates for the 2026 GSS

Institution Type	Respondents (# of schools)	Average Burden (hours)	Total Burden (hours)
More than 15 units, uploading	344	36.1	12,418
More than 15 units, manually enter	27	40.3	1,088
15 or fewer units, uploading	285	8.3	2,366
15 or fewer units, manually enter	137	7.4	1,014
Estimated total	793		16,886

Exhibit 6. Burden Estimates for the 2027 GSS

Institution Type	Respondents (# of schools)	Average Burden (hours)	Total Burden (hours)
More than 15 units, uploading	344	36.1	12,418
More than 15 units, manually enter	27	40.3	1,088
15 or fewer units, uploading	285	8.3	2,366
15 or fewer units, manually enter	142	7.4	1,051
FFRDCs	41	2.1	86
Estimated total	839		17,009

Exhibit 7. Burden Estimates for the 2028 GSS

Institution Type	Respondents (# of schools)	Average Burden (hours)	Total Burden (hours)
More than 15 units, uploading	344	36.1	12,418
More than 15 units, manually enter	27	40.3	1,088
15 or fewer units, uploading	285	8.3	2,366
15 or fewer units, manually enter	147	7.4	1,088
Estimated total	803		16,960

The annual burden estimates are presented in Exhibit 8, along with the cost burden estimate for respondents. At an estimated cost of $39.83 per hour (based on the Bureau of Labor Statistics May 2024 median hourly wages for "Management Analysts," within NAICS 611300 - Colleges, Universities, and Professional Schools, accessed on February 4, 2026, at http://data.bls.gov/oes/), the average annual cost to respondent institutions is $690,807 ($851 per respondent). In addition, the burden estimate includes 2,000 hours for conducting GSS site visits, methodological testing, and other survey improvements.

Exhibit 8. Total Burden Estimates for 2026-2028 GSS

Survey Cycle	Respondents (# of coordinators)	Total Burden (hours)	Total Annual Cost to Coordinators	Annual Cost per Coordinator
2026 GSS	793	16,886	$672,569	$848
2027 GSS	839	17,009	$677,468	$807
GSS coordinators	798	16,923	$674,043	$845
FFRDC coordinators	41	86	$3,425	$84
2028 GSS	803	16,960	$675,517	$841
Future methodological testing (all three years)	--	2,000	$79,660	NA
Total estimated burden	2,435	52,855	$2,105,214	$865
Estimated average annual burden	812	17,618	$701,327	$864

A.13 Cost Burden to Respondents

This survey does not require the purchase of equipment, software, or services beyond those normally used in universities as part of customary and usual business. See Exhibit 8 for annual respondent personnel costs.

A.14 Cost to the Federal Government

The average cost per cycle of conducting the GSS is $1.94M based on the total estimated value of the current contract ($7.76M) to conduct four cycles, 2022-25. The estimated total cost of the GSS to the federal government is approximately $2.3M per cycle. Exhibit 9 presents more detailed information on this estimate.

Exhibit 9. Annual GSS Survey Federal Government Estimated Costs **GSS Resources and Activities**	**Total ($)**
Data collection and processing contract	1,940,000
GSS survey manager (1.0-person year)	155,000

Other NCSES staff (program manager, statistician, editor, etc.)	200,000
Publication web posting, printing and mailing costs	1,050
Estimated total	2,296,050

For the 2025 GSS, the NIH contributed $440,337 (22%) of the annual contract costs. It is assumed that the NIH will continue that level of support. NCSES funds the remainder of the annual costs to the federal government.

A.15 Program Changes or Adjustments in Burden

Burden estimates have been lowered from the previous clearance. This reflects increases in the number of institutions using EDI, and lower reported response burdens for all types of respondents.

A.16 Publication Plan and Project Schedule

The GSS and FFRDC Postdoc Survey project schedules (Attachment 8) for the entire project from design to final publication are similar each year. For the GSS, institutions are contacted to confirm the survey coordinators in September, and the survey is launched in October, with a final closeout date in April of the following year. The most recent InfoBrief was published in February 2026 along with the detailed data tables and a description of the survey methodology (see Attachment 5).

The biennial FFRDC Postdoc Survey is conducted over a three-month period spanning February to April of a given survey year. Coordinator confirmation activities begin in early January, data collection begins in mid-February, and the survey deadline is the end of March. The 2023 FFRDC Postdoc Survey InfoBrief was published October 2024.

A.17 Exceptions to Displaying of OMB Expiration Date

Not applicable. The OMB control number and expiration date will be displayed on the GSS and FFRDC web survey login pages and on GSS and FFRDC Postdoc Survey worksheets provided to respondents for reference purposes (worksheets are no longer used for actual data submission).

A.18 Exceptions to the Certification Statement

No exceptions to the certification statement are being sought.