

**SURVEY SPONSORS**



**SURVEY DATA COLLECTION**

SED data are being collected under contract by RTI International,<sup>4</sup> a nonprofit research organization based in North Carolina. NSF monitors the contract with RTI. Data from the survey are available on the NSF website and in annual reports published online (<http://www.nsf.gov/statistics/srvydoctorates/>).

<sup>4</sup>RTI International is a registered trademark and a trade name of Research Triangle Institute.

**YOUR INSTITUTION'S PARTICIPATION IS CRITICAL**

To maintain statistical integrity of the SED dataset and ensure that analyses performed on data are representative of the graduating class of research doctorates, we maintain a very high response rate. Your participation ensures that policy decisions based on SED data are representative of your institution's graduates.

**FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION, CONTACT:**

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*National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics (NCSES)*  
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**RTI International**  
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*Project: SED*  
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**INFORMATION FOR INSTITUTIONS ABOUT THE SURVEY OF EARNED DOCTORATES**



**A NOTE ABOUT PRIVACY**

Confidentiality of any information provided as part of the SED is safeguarded under the Privacy Act of 1974 and the NSF Act of 1950, as amended. Staff working with data are required to sign binding confidentiality affidavits with fines up to \$250,000 or imprisonment as punishment for disclosure. The processing facilities and computer equipment used to store or access the data are designed and maintained to ensure confidentiality.

*The Survey of Earned Doctorates (SED) is an annual census of students who were awarded a research doctorate from an accredited U.S. institution during the academic year.*

## PURPOSES INCLUDE:

- Measuring the incremental investment in human resources devoted to science, engineering, research, and scholarship through annual counts of doctorate recipients, which serve as leading indicators of the capacity for knowledge, creation and innovation
- Analyzing the changing characteristics of doctorate recipients over time—including increased representation of women, minorities, and foreign nationals; the emergence of new fields of study; and postdoctoral employment opportunities
- Using the numbers and characteristics of doctorate recipients to make informed improvements in this country's doctoral education system

## TYPE OF INFORMATION:

Doctoral graduates provide information on their educational history, sources of financial support during graduate school, plans after graduation, and demographic information.

## WHO USES THE DATA?

- Federal agencies, including SED's sponsors
- Federal and state governments
- University administrators and faculty engaged in researching higher education
- Equal Opportunity offices
- National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine
- Professional associations (e.g., Modern Language Association, American Sociological Association, American Psychological Association)
- Research organizations (e.g., Educational Testing Service, American Council on Education, National Bureau of Economic Research)

## HOW ARE THE DATA USED?

- To assess the availability of doctorate recipients entering the nation's workforce
- To provide an objective basis for policy decisions on doctoral education (e.g., allocate resources to current programs; develop new programs)
- To make decisions about financial commitments that affect graduate education (e.g., fellowship programs, research assistantships)<sup>1</sup>



## HOW CAN THE DATA HELP MY INSTITUTION?

*Data from the SED can be used by institutions to compare their graduates with national statistics. Using recent data, researchers have learned:*

**1** Over the past 20 years, the rate of underrepresented minority groups earning doctorates has grown significantly, with a 70% increase in the number of doctorates awarded to black or African American students while the number of doctorates earned by Hispanic or Latino students more than doubled.<sup>2</sup>

**2** Debt load varies by field of study; in 2014, 68% of doctorate recipients in life sciences and 76%–78% of those in engineering and physical sciences reported graduating with no graduate debt. In social sciences, humanities, and education, the proportion with no debt was less than 50%.<sup>3</sup>

**3** In 2014, about 61% of doctoral recipients reported commitments for employment or postdoctoral study when they completed the SED. Post-graduation commitment rates for humanities, engineering, and life sciences graduates were 54%–58%, while about two-thirds of physical sciences, education, and social sciences graduates reported similar commitments.<sup>4</sup>



## WHY IS MY INSTITUTION'S PARTICIPATION IMPORTANT?

A high response rate among institutions and graduates is essential to the statistical integrity of the data. High-quality data ensure that analyses and policy decisions are based on all research doctorate recipients. Further, participation in the SED ensures your institution's doctorate recipients are represented in the Doctorate Records File, a data bank on U.S. doctorate recipients reaching back to 1920. In addition to contributing to an accurate and complete data resource, participation in the SED gains your institution access to an institution profile (containing summary information) and an institution dataset.

<sup>1</sup> National Science Foundation, National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics. 2015. Doctorate recipients from U.S. universities: 2014. Page ii. Special Report NSF 16-300. Arlington, VA. Available at

<http://www.nsf.gov/statistics/2016/nsf16300/>

<sup>2</sup> See (NSF/NCSES 2015, p. 2; p. 3, fig. F).

<sup>3</sup> See (NSF/NCSES 2015, table 38).

<sup>4</sup> See (NSF/NCSES 2015, table 42).