YOUR PARTICIPATION COUNTS

SED
Survey of Earned Doctorates
WHY AM I BEING ASKED TO PARTICIPATE?

As a recipient of a research doctorate, your participation is essential to the federal agencies who sponsor this study to learn more about those who graduate with a research doctoral degree.

WHO IS SPONSORING THE STUDY?

The study is being conducted on behalf of the National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics of the National Science Foundation; the National Institutes of Health; the U.S. Department of Education; the National Endowment for the Humanities; the U.S. Department of Agriculture; and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

SED data are being collected under contract by RTI International, a nonprofit research organization based in North Carolina.

HOW WILL MY INFORMATION BE USED?

Your information will be combined with that of approximately 50,000 other research doctorate earners from your academic year. These combined data will be used by various entities (e.g., universities, federal and state agencies) to inform governmental policy, evaluate graduate education programs, and make labor force projections. Additionally, graduate deans may receive data on their own graduates, which they agree to use for statistical purposes only.

Any information you provide will be kept strictly confidential. Only data aggregated to levels that will not allow the identification of individual respondents are released for publication.

FOR EXAMPLE, RECENT SED RESULTS REVEALED:

- 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 and a more than doubling of the number of doctorates earned by Hispanic or Latino students in that period. 2

- Doctorate recipients in 2014 who had definite commitments for a postdoctorate (postdoc) or other employed position in the United States reported annual salaries ranging from $40,000 to $49,000 for postdoc positions, $50,000 to $81,350 for non-postdoc positions in academe, and $50,000 to $105,000 for positions in business and industry. Academic salaries lagged behind industry salaries in all broad fields except humanities. 3

- In 2013, academe was the most common employment sector for doctorate recipients reporting definite commitments for employment in the United States, with approximately half of doctoral graduates committing to academic positions following graduation. A larger share of doctorate recipients from very high research universities (34%) took positions in industry or business than did those from high research universities (22%) or doctoral research universities (18%). 4

1 RTI International is a registered trademark and a trade name of Research Triangle Institute.


3 See (NSF/NCSES 2015a, pp. 8–9).

HOW WILL MY INFORMATION BE PROTECTED?

The confidentiality of any information provided as part of the SED is safeguarded under the Privacy Act of 1974 and the National Science Foundation 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. In addition, the processing facilities and computer equipment used to store or access data are designed and maintained to ensure confidentiality.

WHY DOES THE SED NEED THE PARTIAL SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER (SSN)?

We use the last four digits of the SSN for two reasons:
- to identify duplicate records for doctorate recipients in historical SED data files; and
- to match SED data to information on federal funding support for graduate education.

We will safeguard your partial SSN with the utmost security, and it will not be used for any purpose other than those listed above.

HOW DO I PARTICIPATE?

You can complete the SED at:

https://sed-ncses.org

877-256-8167

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS, PLEASE CONTACT:

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