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## *Survey of Earned Doctorates*

### **PURPOSE & USE**

Assessing the availability of highly educated personnel is important in evaluating the nation's work force. For this purpose the *Survey of Earned Doctorates* is conducted each year.

The survey gathers data from all research doctorate graduates each year on their educational history, sources of support, and postgraduation plans. The completed survey responses become part of the Doctorate Records File (DRF), a virtually complete data bank on doctorate recipients from 1920 to the present and the major source of doctoral data at the national level. The profiles of doctorate recipients that emerge from these data serve policymakers at the federal, state, local, and university levels.

National data are presented annually in the *Doctorate Recipients from United States Universities: Summary Report* (see back cover for information).

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### **A NOTE ON PRIVACY**

The information provided on the survey questionnaire remains confidential and is safeguarded in accordance with the Privacy Act of 1974 and the NSF Act of 1950, as amended. The survey data are reported only in aggregate form or in a manner that does not identify information about any individual.

USE  
&  
PURPOSES

Questions are often asked about how these data are used. The data from this survey are widely used by universities as well as federal and state governments to make policy decisions that affect graduate education throughout the United States.

*Following are some of these uses:*

- The Committee for the Assessment of Research-Doctorate Programs in the U.S. (National Research Council, 2006)
- Congressional hearings on the Higher Education Act
- Committee on Equal Opportunities in Science and Engineering (National Science Foundation)
- The study on *Biomedical and Behavioral Research Scientists: Their Training and Supply* (National Research Council, 2005)
- *Reshaping the Graduate Education of Scientists and Engineers* (National Academy Press, 1995)

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**These data are used in the evaluation of graduate education programs, strategic planning at the state level, labor force projections, and equal opportunity employment plans at all levels.**

*The following list illustrates the range of organizations that have used the data for these purposes:*

- Graduate Deans
- Council of Graduate Schools
- Educational Testing Service
- American Association for the Advancement of Science
- McNair Program in the U.S. Department of Education
- American Historical Association
- Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs
- *Bridge to Doctorate* Program at the National Science Foundation
- U.S. International Trade Commission
- Equal Opportunity offices throughout the U.S.
- University of California State System
- Institutional research offices at doctorate-granting universities
- Science & Engineering Resource Center, Puerto Rico
- American Council on Education
- National Bureau of Economic Research
- Modern Language Association
- Affirmative Action Associations

The data from this survey are widely used by Federal agencies to inform Congress and to make decisions about financial commitments that affect graduate education throughout the United States.

*Listed below are a few of the sources of educational support that are influenced by the survey results:*

- National Science Foundation (NSF) Graduate Fellowship, Traineeship and undergraduate programs
- U.S. Department of Education (USED) graduate aid and fellowship programs
- U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Fellowships
- National Institutes of Health (NIH) Traineeships and Fellowships
- NSF, NIH, and USDA federal research assistantships
- NASA fellowship and scholarship program evaluation
- National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) Dissertation Grants

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**A variety of publications have used these data in formats ranging from full-length books to articles in newspapers and magazines.**

*For example:*

- Role of HBCUs as Baccalaureate-Origin Institutions of Black S&E Doctorate Recipients (NSF InfoBrief, 2008)
- Women, Minorities, and Persons with Disabilities in Science and Engineering (NSF, 2009)
- Trends in New Ph.D.s Entering Academe, 1970-2005, Council of Graduate Schools (March, 2007)
- Three Magic Letters: Getting to Ph.D. Michael T. Nettles and Catherine M. Millet (2006)
- Time to Degree of U.S. Research Doctorate Recipients (NSF InfoBrief, 2006)
- The World is Flat: A Brief History of the Twenty-first Century, Thomas L. Friedman (2006)
- Plans for Postdoctoral Research Appointments Among Recent U.S. Doctorate Recipients (NSF InfoBrief, 2004)
- U.S. Doctorates in the 20th Century (NSF Special Report 06-310, 2006)
- American Women Surpass Men in Earning Doctorates, in *Chronicle of Higher Education*, December 12, 2003
- Science and Engineering Doctorate Awards (NSF, annually)
- Science and Engineering Indicators (National Science Board, biennially)
- Do Babies Matter?: The Effect of Family Formation on the Lifelong Careers of Academic Men and Women, in *Academe*, November-December, 2002

The *Survey of Earned Doctorates* is sponsored  
by six Federal agencies:



The National Science Foundation  
Division of Science Resources Statistics (SRS)



The National Institutes of Health



The U.S. Department of Education



The U.S. Department of Agriculture



The National Endowment for the Humanities



The National Aeronautics and Space Administration

The survey is conducted by:

The National Opinion Research Center (NORC)  
at the University of Chicago

The National Science Foundation (NSF), as the lead Federal agency, monitors the contract with NORC. Data from the survey are available from the NSF website [www.nsf.gov/statistics/doctorates](http://www.nsf.gov/statistics/doctorates) and in printed reports, such as **Science and Engineering Doctorate Awards** and **Science and Engineering Indicators**.

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A detailed presentation of the survey results can be found in the annual *Doctorate Recipients from United States Universities: Summary Report* at [www.norc.uchicago.edu/sed](http://www.norc.uchicago.edu/sed)

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