

Survey of Earned Doctorates

Purpose and 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 policy-makers 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).

A NOTE ON PRIVACY

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

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:

- Congressional hearings on the Higher Education Act
- Committee on Equal Opportunities in Science and Engineering (National Science Foundation)
- The Committee for the Assessment of Research-Doctorate Programs in the U.S. (National Research Council)
- The study on *Biomedical and Behavioral Research Scientists: Their Training and Supply*, by the Office of Scientific and Engineering Personnel (National Research Council, 2000)
- Reshaping the Graduate Education of Scientists and Engineers (National Academy Press, 1995)

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
- Educational Testing Service
- Florida Endowment Fund for Higher Education
- McNair Program in the U.S. Department of Education
- New Jersey Department of Higher Education
- Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs
- Tennessee Board of Regents
- 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

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 programs
- U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Fellowships
- National Institutes of Health (NIH) Traineeships and Fellowships
- NSF, NIH, and USDA federal research assistantships
- National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) Dissertation Grants for faculty working in Historically Black Colleges and Universities

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

- Plans for Postdoctoral Research Appointments among Recent U.S. Doctorate Recipients (NSF InfoBrief, 2004)
- Academic Employment of Recent Science and Engineering Doctorate Holders (NSF Issue Brief, 2002)
- Enhancing the Postdoctoral Experience National Academy of Sciences (2000).
- American Women Surpass Men in Earning Doctorates, in *Chronicle of Higher Education*, December 12, 2003
- In Pursuit of the PhD, by W.G. Bowen and N. L. Rudenstine, 1992.
- Do Babies Matter?: The Effect of Family Formation on the Lifelong Careers of Academic Men and Women, in *Academe*, Nov.-Dec., 2002.
- Women, Minorities, and Persons with Disabilities in Science and Engineering (NSF, 2005)
- Science and Engineering Doctorate Awards (NSF, annually)
- What is the Debt Burden of New Science and Engineering Ph.D.s? (NSF Issue Brief, 1999)
- Science and Engineering Indicators (National Science Board, biennially)
- Interstate Migration Patterns of Recent Science and Engineering Doctorate Recipients (NSF InfoBrief, 2002)

The Survey of Earned Doctorates is sponsored by six Federal agencies: 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. 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/sbe/srs/ssed/start.htm) and in printed reports, such as **Science and Engineering Doctorate Awards** and **Science and Engineering Indicators**. For more information contact:

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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 <http://www.norc.uchicago.edu/issues/docdata.htm>. Copies are also available without charge. For a copy of the report or additional information, please contact:

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