



*How the SED
Keeps Your
Information
Strictly
Confidential*

Sponsored by:

NSF, NIH, USED
NEH, USDA, NASA



Privacy Policy

The information provided on the Survey of Earned Doctorates (SED) 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 an individual.

The federal agencies and the data collection contractor for the SED take the strongest measures to safeguard respondent confidentiality. All staff members sign binding confidentiality pledges. All processing facilities and computer systems are carefully designed and continuously tested to safeguard the information provided by institutions and respondents.

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Security Safeguard Procedures

Only two groups can receive individual-identifiable data from the SED project:

- The SED Federal Sponsors
(for program evaluation)
- Graduate School Deans
(for their own graduates only)

Confidentiality safeguards prohibit the use of data for commercial purposes or for investigating an individual respondent or institution. Any independent researcher or contractor for the Federal agencies that performs analyses of the data must sign legally binding organizational and individual Data Use Agreements certifying that the institution will

only use their data for statistical purposes and that the security of the data will be protected. Penalties for breaching these agreements range upward from \$250,000, and audits of licensed users are regularly conducted by the Federal government.

Similarly, Graduate Deans must sign an agreement that they will only use the data for statistical purposes, and will safeguard the confidentiality of the responses.

SED staff not only secures the survey materials and data, but also removes identifying information from any data and analyses provided to outside sources. **Only data aggregated to levels that will not allow the identification of individual respondents are released for publication.**

Your data are used for statistical purposes only.

Social Security Number

In response to privacy concerns, only the last four digits of your Social Security Number are requested. Additionally, we would like to reassure you that even your partial SSN information is kept strictly confidential and is not used outside the project under ANY conditions. The purpose of the partial Social Security Number is for survey quality control by the contractor (NORC) and for statistical purposes in program evaluation by the SED Federal sponsors.

We ask for your partial SSN for three specific purposes:

1. The major Federal agencies that sponsor the SED use the partial SSN to match the SED data to information on Federal funding support for graduate education. Congress and the Federal agencies require that information on the effectiveness of Federal programs be used in the funding process for these programs. Federal programs conduct program evaluations by using the SED to determine, for example, the percent of participants in a program such as the NSF Graduate Fellowship Program who have completed the doctorate. The U.S. Department of Education has used the SED to evaluate several graduate student aid programs,

and the National Institutes of Health has used it to evaluate its graduate trainee programs.

2. The National Science Foundation conducts a follow-up survey of a sample of doctorate recipients, the Survey of Doctorate Recipients (SDR), and the partial SSN may be used to find the mailing addresses of sampled individuals two or more years after they completed their doctoral programs. This follow-up survey is completely voluntary.
3. We use the partial SSN number to make sure that we do not have duplicate records for any doctorate recipient in the historical data file. Each year we receive several questionnaires from individuals who had completed the SED in an earlier year, when they had expected to graduate. The partial SSN is the best way to locate such matching records across survey rounds, as well as to cross-reference individuals completing a second research doctorate.

Legally, your Social Security Number is solicited under the National Science Foundation Act of 1950, as amended; provision of it is voluntary.

The *Survey of Earned Doctorates* is conducted by
The National Opinion Research Center (NORC)
at the University of Chicago for
these federal agencies:



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



The National Institutes of Health



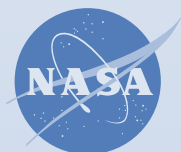
The U.S. Department of Education



The National Endowment for the Humanities



The U.S. Department of Agriculture



The National Aeronautics and Space
Administration

More Information Available

*Publications from the
Survey of Earned Doctorates
use aggregated data in which a person cannot
be identified.*

*If you have any questions or concerns about
the survey, please contact:*

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