

# An Invitation from the Survey of Earned Doctorates

The National Science Foundation's Survey of Earned Doctorates (SED) is announcing an initiative to promote the use of the online version of the SED. Moving to the online survey is incredibly easy and provides many advantages over the paper and PDF versions. Unlike the paper/PDF version of the survey, with the online SED students will submit their surveys electronically to NORC, the survey contractor, instead of returning their completed survey forms to the graduate office. The online SED will be the perfect complement to the Electronic Thesis and Dissertation submission process that most institutions are now using.

## There are several advantages to using the online SED:

- **It reduces the administrative burden on the graduate office** by eliminating the need to retrieve, store, and mail paper survey forms. *"The web-based Survey of Earned Doctorates was a welcome development. As the lone employee of an office responsible for reviewing and depositing nearly 800 doctoral dissertations each year, I found the collecting, logging and sending of the paper Surveys to be a time-consuming chore. Now that we've moved to the web-based Survey, my end-of-term reporting is greatly streamlined, which means I'm able to begin helping the next round of soon-to-graduate students more quickly. Even better, the students themselves have found the online Survey to be easy to access and complete, which has improved our response rate."*  
— Mark E. Zulauf, Thesis Coordinator, Graduate College, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
- **It's green!** Using the web survey greatly reduces the volume of paper used to conduct the SED.
- **It increases data security** by eliminating the possibility of surveys being misplaced or lost in the mail.
- It allows students who have left the immediate area to **complete and submit the SED from any location.**

An additional advantage of the online SED to an institution is that it will allow the return of institutional data much faster than in the past. For participating schools, the raw data collected through the online SED will be returned to the institution (at no charge!) within 2 weeks of finalizing their list of graduates.

**Using the web survey is simple. Instead of distributing the paper version or posting the PDF version to your website, you can distribute or post the link for the registration page:**  
<https://sed.norc.org/doctorate>

## Your students will then follow these quick and easy steps:

1. Register for the online SED at the survey registration page.  
At the survey website, the student will be asked to provide their name, institution, department, graduation month and year, and an e-mail address. Upon submitting this information they can link directly into the survey, complete and submit it in one step.
2. Retrieve the e-mail with login information (optional).  
An e-mail with login information to access the online SED (URL of the online survey, plus unique PIN and password) will also be sent to the student after completing the registration. If the student prefers to complete the survey at a later date, or stops in the middle, they will be able to re-access their survey with the information provided in the e-mail. If they have suspended part way through, their previous responses will be saved and they will be started up at the point at which they left off.
3. Present evidence of survey completion to their graduate school.

### Note:

Step 3 is crucial to maintaining a high response rate after implementing the online SED. Schools that do not require any evidence of survey completion from their students after switching to the online SED typically experience a dramatic drop in their SED response rate. Consequently, the SED has developed several methods for monitoring completions, including:

#### Automated E-mail Confirmation

An e-mail notification system has been built into the online SED. Upon completing the survey, an e-mail with the student's name, institution, and date of completion will be sent to the e-mail address of your choosing. Students are also given the opportunity to enter up to two e-mail addresses to which a confirmation e-mail will be sent so they will also have a copy for their records.

#### Certificate of Completion

The web-page immediately following the e-mail confirmation page displays the certificate of SED completion. This certificate includes the same information as in the confirmation e-mail, and can be printed out by the student and submitted to the graduate school.

*Convenient, accessible, secure  
and eco-friendly!*



**If you are interested in moving forward with the online SED survey or would like additional information, please contact NORC, the NSF survey contractor for the SED, at 1-800-248-8649 or [4800-sed@norc.org](mailto:4800-sed@norc.org).**