



2026 Survey of Earned Doctorates Institution Contact Job Aid

Welcome!

Welcome to the 2026 cycle of the Survey of Earned Doctorates (SED). The SED is an annual census of all research doctorate recipients from accredited institutions in the United States. The goal of the SED is to gather objective data about doctoral graduates to improve graduate education by providing governmental and private agencies with the information necessary to make program and policy decisions. In addition, participating institutions receive data about their own doctorate recipients which can be used for institutional program evaluation and improvement.

The survey is conducted by the National Science Foundation (NSF) in collaboration with the National Institutes of Health, the U.S. Department of Education, and the National Endowment for the Humanities. The SED data collection activities are currently contracted to RTI International.

Each institution awarding research doctorates appoints an institution contact (IC) who helps facilitate the administration and completion of the SED. Over the past few decades, ICs have successfully ensured extremely high response rates—above 90%—for the more than 50,000 research doctorate recipients who graduate each year. This commitment to data quality is critical to ensuring the integrity of these comprehensive data on U.S. research doctorate recipients.

Webinar Recordings

We are excited to provide recordings of recent webinars. To access, please visit the [SED Web page](#).

Recordings for the below topics will be accessible by the end of 2026.

- ✓ Overview of the Survey of Earned Doctorates (SED)—*available now*
- ✓ Overview of the Institution Contact Administrative Tool (ICAT)—*expected spring 2026*
- ✓ SED Data Uses and Best Practices—*expected spring 2026*

ICAT Website

The SED [Institution Contact Administrative Tool \(ICAT\)](#)  contains information and helpful tools to assist ICs in administering the SED on their campus. On the website, ICs can obtain survey materials to distribute to graduating research doctorates, transmit various SED forms and files, and maintain contact information for key personnel responsible for SED administration. Furthermore, ICs can view their school's response rate, SED document submission status, and students' survey response status. The ICAT allows you to access the following:

- ✓ View informational brochures, current and past SED questionnaires, Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act exemption letter, and the SED's Confidentiality and Privacy policy.
- ✓ Update contact information for deans, ICs (ICs), and list coordinators (LCs).
- ✓ The **SED Response Rate** table displays various counts for each graduation date provided on the graduation list(s).
- ✓ The **SED Response Status** table displays various student counts, including ineligible students and students who have completed the survey versus students who have not.
- ✓ The **Document Status** table displays all documents needed from your school and their current status.
- ✓ The **Student List** displays all students currently in the SED's records, along with their survey status (Complete, In Progress, Not Started, Receipted), for any open round of data collection.
- ✓ Send an **e-mail** directly to any graduate who has not yet completed the survey.

IC Contact Information

If you are new to the IC role or your contact information has changed, please e-mail your updated contact information to sed@rti.org.

Eligible Types of Doctorates

The SED includes **research doctorates** only; for this survey, a research doctorate is a doctoral degree that requires the completion of an original intellectual contribution in the form of a dissertation or an equivalent culminating project (such as a musical composition) and that is **not primarily intended as a degree for the practice of a profession**.

The PhD is the most common research doctorate degree.

Recipients of professional, practitioner, or applied doctorates—such as AuD, MD, DDS, DPT, JD, PsyD, DMin, PharmD, and DNP degrees—are NOT included in the SED.

However, in some institutions, there are some doctoral degree programs that may be equivalent to the PhD, such as Doctor of Education, Doctor of Science, and Doctor of Engineering. Students with these degrees should be reported **ONLY** if NSF has determined these particular degree programs at your institution are eligible for the SED.

If your institution has a medical school, please make sure that any research doctorates awarded through the medical school are included in the SED. If you have any questions about SED eligible degrees awarded by your institution, please call us toll-free at 1-877-256-8167.

Types of Research Doctoral Degrees Eligible for the Survey of Earned Doctorates (SED)

Abbreviation	Degree title
PhD	Doctor of Philosophy
DA	Doctor of Arts
DBA	Doctor of Business Administration
DDes	Doctor of Design
DEng, DESc, DES	Doctor of Engineering or Engineering Science
DFA	Doctor of Fine Arts
DHL	Doctor of Hebrew Letters
DMA	Doctor of Musical Arts
DME	Doctor of Music Education
DML	Doctor of Modern Languages
DNSc	Doctor of Nursing Science
DPH, DrPH	Doctor of Public Health
DSch, ScD	Doctor of Science
EdD	Doctor of Education
JCD	Doctor of Canon Law
JSD, SJD	Doctor of Juridical Science
STD	Doctor of Sacred Theology
ThD	Doctor of Theology

Types of Data Requested (2026 SED Eligibility Period: July 1, 2025–June 30, 2026)

Graduation Lists	are required to ensure the SED has an accurate base count of your doctoral graduates.
Address Roster	requests contact information only for students who have yet to complete the survey, where contact information was not provided on the Graduation List.
Missing Information Roster	requests a subset of critical data items only for students who have yet to complete the survey.

(1) **GRADUATION LIST:**

- ▶ After each graduation date during the eligibility period, please submit a graduation list within 2 months of the graduation date.
- ▶ Graduation lists ensure that we have an accurate base count of your doctoral graduates.
- ▶ The following information is requested for each student:
 - Student's First and Last Name
 - Graduation Month/Year
 - Degree Type (PhD, EdD, JSD, etc.)
 - Doctoral Field of Study or CIP Code
 - Advisor's Name and E-mail Address
 - E-mail Address(es)
 - Physical Mailing Address (Domestic)
 - Telephone Number

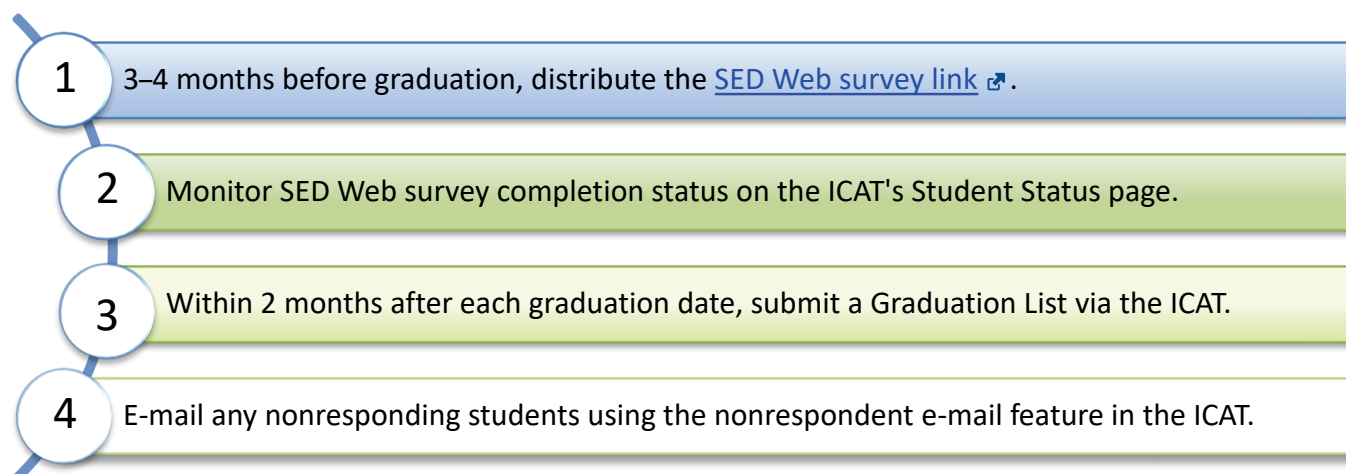
(2) **ADDRESS ROSTER** *(Requested only if contact information was not provided on the Graduation List and only for students who have yet to complete the survey):*

- ▶ Requested two times during the eligibility period.
- ▶ Address roster information is needed to contact nonresponding students to complete the survey.
- ▶ The following information is requested for each student:
 - Student's E-mail Address(es)
 - Physical Mailing Address (Domestic)
 - Telephone Number

(3) **MISSING INFORMATION ROSTER (MIR):**

- ▶ Requested near the end of data collection.
- ▶ MIR information is a subset of critical data items for students who have not completed the survey.
- ▶ The following information is requested for each nonresponding student:
 - Student's Doctoral Field of Study or CIP Code
 - Birthdate
 - Sex
 - Citizenship
 - Ethnicity and Race
 - Bachelor's Degree Year; Institution Name and Location
 - Post-Degree Location (United States or Outside of the United States)

Step-by-Step Instructions



1. 3–4 months before graduation, distribute the [SED Web survey link](#)—for each student applying for graduation or award of a research doctorate. The SED Web survey can be linked to your institution's exit survey or included in a graduation checklist for your research doctorates.
2. Monitor SED Web survey completion status on the [ICAT's](#) Student Status page for each upcoming graduate and follow up regularly with doctoral recipients who have not yet completed the survey.
3. Within 2 months of each graduation date, use the recommended Graduation List Excel template available on the ICAT to upload a final Graduation List.
4. E-mail any nonresponding students using the nonrespondent e-mail feature in the ICAT.

2026 SED Timeline

	Graduation Eligibility Period	July 1, 2025–June 30, 2026
	SED Web Survey Available to Institutions	June 2025
	Submit Graduation Lists	Quarterly
	Submit Address Rosters (if needed)	March 2026 and August 2026
	Submit Missing Information Rosters (if needed)	October 2026
	Deadline to Submit Graduation Lists	October 15, 2026
	Data Collection Ends	December 31, 2026

SED Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

✓ What is the student SED Web survey link?

We suggest adding the [SED Web survey link](#) to a graduation checklist.

✓ What is the Institution Contact Administrative Tool (ICAT)?

The [SED Institution Contact Administrative Tool \(ICAT\)](#) contains information and helpful tools to assist ICs administer the SED on their campus. Please see the [ICAT website](#) section of this document for more information.

✓ What are the roles of an Institution Contact (IC) and a List Coordinator (LC)?

- Each school has the option of having one IC and one LC. These two roles are granted access to the Institution Contact Administrative Tool (ICAT).
- The main responsibilities of an IC are to:
 - Direct your research doctorate students to complete the survey at the [SED Web survey link](#).
 - Provide a Graduation List of research doctorate graduates via the ICAT system, preferably within 2 months of each graduation period.
- If your school has both an IC and an LC:
 - The IC is responsible for directing research doctorates to complete the survey.
 - The LC is responsible for providing Graduation Lists (and other requested data, as needed) of research doctorate graduates via the ICAT system, preferably within 2 months of each graduation period.

○ Where do I find my ICAT username?

When you were identified as an IC or LC, you were sent login credentials via e-mail. If you cannot locate that

e-mail, you may retrieve your ICAT username by contacting the SED Help Desk at 877-256-8167 or sed@rti.org. For security purposes, Help Desk staff are unable to provide password information.

○ How do I reset my ICAT password?

1. Go to the [SED ICAT home page](#).
2. Enter your username.
3. Click "forgot password."

Note: password reset e-mail security settings will prevent automated e-mail from reaching your inbox. If you cannot find the password reset e-mail in your inbox, spam, or junk folders, please e-mail the SED Help Desk at sed@rti.org, and we will manually forward the e-mail to you.

✓ How do I update my contact information?

You may update contact information by notifying us at sed@rti.org or by calling 877-256-8167.

✓ Where do I find my SED Institution ID?

You may retrieve your SED Institution ID by contacting the SED Help Desk at sed@rti.org or 877-256-8167. Your Institution ID is also included in all Graduation List e-mail prompts in the e-mail subject line.

SED Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) *continued*

✓ Can I receive copies of the Certificate of Completion e-mail that are sent to the student?

Yes. We can identify one e-mail address to be cc'd on the e-mail sent to the student upon completion of their survey. Please e-mail sed@rti.org to make this request.

✓ How often should I provide a Graduation List?

As a general practice, we ask that Graduation Lists be provided within 2 months of **each** graduation date.

✓ Where do I find the Graduation List Excel template?

1. Log into the [SED ICAT home page](#) .
2. Select Data Collection menu.
3. Select Graduation Lists, then click the Download Template (Excel) button. Alternatively, you may click on the screenshot image of the Variable_Codes Tab, and the file will automatically download for you.
4. Enter student information in the Graduation List template.
5. Submit the Graduation List via the Upload Forms page.

✓ What should I title my Graduation List?

Please include the month/year in your file title. We suggest using the following format:
 "MonthYear_GraduationList_Institution"

Examples: December2025_GraduationList_HarvardLaw

January_March2026_GraduationList_EastCarolinaUniv

✓ What data are requested on the Graduation List?

- Student First and Last Name
- Graduation Month/Year
- Degree Type (PhD, EdD, JSD, etc.)
- Field of Study
- Student E-mail Address
- Student Physical Mailing Address
- Student Phone Number
- Advisor's Name

✓ What is the difference between the Graduation List and the Address Roster?

A **Graduation List** is a complete roster of all eligible research doctorates per conferral date (graduation). An **Address Roster** contains a subset of all eligible research doctorates who were previously reported on a Graduation List(s) but who have not yet completed the survey. For more information about the data that each list requests, please see the [Types of Data Requested](#) section of this document.

✓ I uploaded a wrong Graduation List file to the ICAT. What should I do?

If you uploaded a wrong file or need to provide a file with updated/corrected data, please upload a new file to the [SED ICAT home page](#) . Please use "corrected" or "updated" in your new file's name. You may also use the upload's file description to let us know you uploaded a corrected file.

✓ In the ICAT, the correct graduation date is not available for me to select in my graduation list upload. What should I do?

Please contact the SED Help Desk at sed@rti.org or 877-256-8167.

SED Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) *continued*

✓ **How do I request my institution's data?**

There are several types of data requests available to you. Please visit the ICAT for instructions.

1. Log into the [SED ICAT home page](#) .
2. Select Study Results menu.
3. Select Institution Data.
4. Follow directions to request Institution Datasets or Preliminary Institution Files.

✓ **A student told me their graduation date is not available to register for the SED—what should I do?**

If your student is attempting to register for a survey cycle that is not yet available, their graduation date will not be visible in the drop-down menu. Please ask your student to e-mail the SED Help Desk at SED@rti.org for instructions.

Each survey cycle is associated with a specific range of graduation dates. For example:

SED 2026 cycle allows access to students with graduation dates between July 1, 2025, and June 30, 2026.

SED 2025 cycle allows access to students with graduation dates between July 1, 2024, and June 30, 2025.

A couple of months prior to a new cycle beginning, the new SED survey becomes available online. When a new cycle's survey becomes available, SED ICs will receive a "Launch" e-mail notifying the institution.

✓ **A student registered with the incorrect graduation date and/or misspelled their name—what should I tell the student?**

The SED staff can make this correction on behalf of the student. Please ask your student to contact the SED Help Desk at SED@rti.org with the following information:

- First and Last Name
- Certificate of Completion confirmation number
- Description of the error/what information *needs* to be corrected
- Description of the correct information