



Evaluating the feasibility of collecting detailed race and ethnicity data about students and employees from their institutions

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Overseen by the U.S. Chief Statistician within the White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB)

MISSION

Produce policy relevant, policy neutral **statistical information** on the **U.S. science and engineering enterprise**:

- Research and development
- Science and engineering workforce
- U.S. competitiveness in STEM
- STEM education in the United States

GSS and FFRDC Postdoc Survey

GSS

- **Census** of all U.S. academic institutions that grant research-oriented graduate degrees in science, engineering, or health (SEH) fields
- **Enumerates**
 - Master's and doctoral students
 - Postdoctoral researchers (postdocs)
 - Doctorate-holding nonfaculty researchers (NFRs)

FFRDC Postdoc Survey

- **Census** of all FFRDCs that employ postdocs
- **Enumerates**
 - Postdoctoral researchers (postdocs)

Characteristics

Demographic characteristics, including sex, race, and ethnicity

Financial support, including source and mechanism

Aggregated by

Administrative unit

Current GSS Race/Ethnicity Categories

Citizenship, Ethnicity, and Race of Full-time Students (report full-time students in whole numbers)		Male 1	Female 2
Foreign nationals holding temporary visas, regardless of ethnicity or race.....	A	0	0
U.S. citizens and permanent residents (non-U.S. citizens holding green cards)			
• Hispanic/Latino ethnicity (one or more races)	B	0	0
• Not Hispanic/Latino (one or more races)			
One race, American Indian/Alaska Native	C	0	0
One race, Asian.....	D	0	0
One race, Black/African American	E	0	0
One race, Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	F	0	0
One race, White	G	0	0
More than one race (not Hispanic/Latino).....	H	0	0
• Ethnicity/race unknown or not stated	I	0	0

Methods

Recruitment

- Selected 51 of 719 GSS schools; goal to complete 25 interviews with coordinators
- Selected 10 of 19 FFRDCs; goal to complete 5 interviews with coordinators
- E-mailed invitation to data collection coordinators
- Self-scheduled by clicking a link and selecting an available timeslot
- All interviews scheduled within one week

27 Participating GSS Schools

- Size: Ranged from fewer than 100 to over 3,000 graduate students
- School type: 22 public; 5 private
- Location: 22 U.S. states and territories
- Race and ethnicity of graduate students*:
 - % White ranged from less than 10% to 90%
 - At least 1 school:
 - > 20% Asian, Black or African American, or Multiracial
 - > 5% American Indian or Alaska Native, or Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander

6 Participating FFRDCs

- Size: Ranged from fewer than 50 to over 400 postdocs
- Race and ethnicity of postdocs*:
 - % White ranged from 50% to 100%
 - At least 1 FFRDC:
 - > 20% Asian

*U.S. citizens and permanent residents

Interview Protocol

- Interagency Technical Working Group developed a pool of questions
- Selected questions most pertinent to GSS/FFRDC
 - Recordkeeping practices for graduate students and postdocs
 - How and when race/ethnicity data collected, categories used, etc.
 - Feedback on both versions of the question
 - First impressions, alignment with current categories, feasibility of reporting, preference

Interview Procedures

- Interviews conducted online, 1 hour
- Audio and video recorded*
- Transcription via videoconferencing software*

*With participants' permission

Results

Record Data Collection and Maintenance

- Collected upon entry
 - Graduate students = Application form
 - Postdocs = Onboarding forms
- Not formally re-collected after entry
 - Individuals can update their race/ethnicity if they choose
- Data stored in different systems
 - Graduate students = Student records
 - Postdocs = Human Resources

Race/Ethnicity Categories Currently Collected

- Race and ethnicity categories are based on OMB's current statistical standards and other federal data collections
- Some follow additional standards
- None collect data in as much detail as the detailed version
- Few collect the Middle Eastern and North African (MENA) category
- Race is not always collected for Hispanic individuals, especially postdocs

Feedback on Minimum Categories

- Preferred version by majority of respondents
- Mixed opinions about the addition of the Middle Eastern or North African (MENA) category
- Ordering categories by prevalence caused diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) concerns

Feedback on Detailed Categories

- Concerns about the level of detail included:
 - Why these detailed categories?
 - Utility
 - Data quality
 - Burden
 - Disclosure risk
 - Coding/processing write-in responses
 - Level of effort and resources needed

Limitations of Research

- Testing focused on categories in the self-report questions
- Participants were not always knowledgeable about all aspects of the data collection
- Input needed from administration with decision-making authority

Resources

Survey descriptions and methodology

GSS: <https://nces.nsf.gov/surveys/graduate-students-postdoctorates-s-e/2021#methodology>

FFRDC Postdoc Survey:

<https://nces.nsf.gov/surveys/ffrdc-postdocs/2021#methodology>

2021 data

GSS:

<https://nces.nsf.gov/surveys/graduate-students-postdoctorates-s-e/2021#data>

FFRDC Postdoc Survey:

<https://nces.nsf.gov/surveys/ffrdc-postdocs/2021#data>



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Slides for Post-Conference Version

Motivation for the Research

- January 2023: OMB released Initial Proposals for Updating OMB's Race and Ethnicity Statistical Standards
- Two versions of a self-report race/ethnicity question proposed
- OMB requested NCSES and other federal statistical agencies test the proposed questions in the context of establishment surveys
- NCSES selected two related surveys for this research
 - Survey of Graduate Students and Postdoctorates in Science and Engineering (GSS)
 - Survey of Postdocs at Federally Funded Research and Development Centers (FFRDCs)

Current Race/Ethnicity Questions

OMB's 1997 Statistical Standard for the Collection of Race and Ethnicity

Are you Hispanic or Latino?

- Yes
- No

What is your race? *Select one or more*

- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Black or African American
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- White

Proposed Race/Ethnicity Questions

Combined Question with Minimum Categories

What is your race or ethnicity?

Select all that apply.

- White
- Hispanic or Latino
- Black or African American
- Asian
- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Middle Eastern or North African
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander

EXAMPLE

Combined Question Detailed Categories

What is your race or ethnicity?

Select all that apply **AND** enter additional details in the spaces below. Note, you may report more than one group.

White – Provide details below.

- | | | |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> German | <input type="checkbox"/> Irish | <input type="checkbox"/> English |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Italian | <input type="checkbox"/> Polish | <input type="checkbox"/> French |

Enter, for example, Scottish, Norwegian, Dutch, etc.

Hispanic or Latino – Provide details below.

- | | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mexican or
Mexican American | <input type="checkbox"/> Puerto Rican | <input type="checkbox"/> Cuban |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Salvadoran | <input type="checkbox"/> Dominican | <input type="checkbox"/> Columbian |

Enter, for example, Guatemalan, Spaniard, Ecuadorian, etc.

EXAMPLE

Combined Question Detailed Categories

What is your race or ethnicity?

Select all that apply **AND** enter additional details in the spaces below. Note, you may report more than one group.

Black or African American – Provide details below.

- African American
- Jamaican
- Haitian
- Nigerian
- Ethiopian
- Somali

Enter, for example, Ghanaian, South African, Barbadian, etc.

Asian – Provide details below.

- Chinese
- Filipino
- Asian Indian
- Vietnamese
- Korean
- Japanese

Enter, for example, Pakistani, Cambodian, Hmong, etc.

EXAMPLE

Combined Question Detailed Categories

What is your race or ethnicity?

*Select all that apply **AND** enter additional details in the spaces below. Note, you may report more than one group.*

- American Indian or Alaska Native– *Enter, for example, Navajo Nation, Blackfeet Tribe, Mayan, Aztec, Native Village of Barrow Inupiat Tribal Government, Tlingit, etc.*

- Middle Eastern or North African – *Provide details below.*

- Lebanese Iranian Egyptian
- Syrian Moroccan Israeli

Enter, for example, Algerian, Iraqi, Kurdish, etc.

EXAMPLE

Combined Question Detailed Categories

What is your race or ethnicity?

Select all that apply **AND** enter additional details in the spaces below. Note, you may report more than one group.

Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander – *Provide details below.*

Native Hawaiian

Samoan

Chamorro

Tongan

Fijian

Marshallese

Enter, for example, Palauan, Tahitian, Chuukese, etc.

EXAMPLE