Leveraging Web Capabilities To Reduce Burden and Cost:

Establishment Survey Example



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Thank You

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About the NSF HERD Survey

- Higher Education Research and Development (HERD) Survey
- Annual census of U.S. universities and colleges that granted bachelor's degrees or higher and had \$150,000 or more in R&D expenditures in the previous fiscal year
- Recent populations have included about 950 universities and colleges.
- <u>Institutionalized:</u> A version of this survey has been fielded by NSF every year since the early 1970s. Some respondents have been doing the survey for decades.
- <u>High response rates:</u> The response rate is typically at or above 95%. Most data are made available to the public at the institutional level, so universities and colleges are motivated to respond.





About the HERD Survey

- <u>Economic survey</u>: Most questions request details about R&D expenditures. Respondents are typically from the finance or sponsored programs office.
- Although there is a paper form, 99% of submitted surveys are completed on the Web.
- The Web survey includes lots of tools to make completing the survey easier
 - Most questions include at least one autosum but some include dozens.
 - There are several cross-question comparisons.
 - Respondents are warned when a value is significantly different from the previous year's.



Home			
2012 Survey			
tus: 28 Questions - 2 Completed, 26 Errors			View PDF with d
ubmit	(🔵 = not started 👩 = completed 🛕 = trer	
&D expenditures by source and type			Status
1. R&D expenditures by source of funds			٢
► <u>1 warning</u>			
uestion 1. How much of your total expenditures for research and development (R&D) cam	e from the following	sources in FY 2012? See definition of	<u>R&D</u> (PDF)
 In rows a, b, c, d, and f: Include both direct and recovered indirect costs (reimb Report the original source of funds, when possible. 	ursement of F&A cos	ts from external sponsors).	
 Report the original source of funds, when possible. Include all fields of R&D (e.g., sciences, engineering, humanities, education, law 	v, arts). See full listin	g in Question 9.	
		penditures	
Source of funds	(Dollars in (for example, re	n thousands) port \$25,342 as \$25)	
a. U.S. federal government			
Any agency of the United States government. Include federal funds passed through from another institution.		\$ 43,004	
b. State and local government			
Any state, county, municipality, or other local government entity in the United States,			
including state health agencies. Include state funds that support R&D at agricultural and other experiment stations.		\$ 126	
Public institutions should report state appropriations restricted for R&D activities here rather than in row e, Institutional funds.			
c. Business			
Domestic or foreign for-profit organizations. Report funds from a company's nonprofit		\$ 34	
foundation in row d.		9 34	
d. Nonprofit organizations Domestic or foreign nonprofit foundations and organizations. Report funds from your			
institution's 501(c)3 foundation in row e1.		\$ 803	
e. Institutional funds			
1. Institutionally financed research	\$ 5,000		
All R&D funded by your institution from accounts that are only used for research.	(Confidential) 0		
2. Cost sharing			
Include committed cost sharing other than unrecovered indirect costs. Report unrecovered indirect costs in row e3.	\$0		
	(Confidential) 🤨		
 Unrecovered indirect costs Calculate this amount as follows for your externally funded R&D only (preferably 			
on a project-specific basis) using the appropriate cost rate—on-campus, off-	Unavailable		
campus, etc. First, multiply the <u>negotiated</u> rate by the corresponding base. 	(Confidential)		
Second, subtract recovered indirect costs.	(Confidential) 🖤		
4. Total institutional funds		\$ 5,000	
f. All other sources		\$ 340	
Other sources not reported above, such as funds from foreign governments.		- 340	
g. Total		\$ 49,307	
omments:			



v	9C-E. R&D expenditures by field and federal agency source: Environmental sciences, Mathematical sciences, Computer
	sciences



 \odot

Enter Zeros in Blank Fields If you have no expenditures to report for this section, "0" will be entered in all blank fields.								nk fields.							
Enter Unavailable i	in Bla	nk Fields	lf yo	u cannot provi	de th	is information	at th	nis time, "Unava	ilabl	e" will be enter	ed ii	n all blank field	S.		
inter 0 for no expenditu	ires ai	nd "U" for Una	availa	able.											
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		(a)		(b)		(c)		(d)		(e)		(f)		(g)	(h)
&D Fields 0	<u>+ si</u>	USDA ubagencies	<u>+ s</u>	DoD subagencies	<u>+ :</u>	Energy subagencies		HHS, includes NIH subagencies		NASA		NSF		Other icies you can	Total
C. Environmental Sciences															
1. Atmospheric sciences	\$	0	\$	0	\$	0	\$	0	\$	0	\$	0	\$	0	\$
2. Earth sciences	\$	248	\$	232	\$	238	\$	6,715	\$	142	\$	1,484	\$	4,819	\$ 13
3. Oceanography	\$	89	\$	672	\$	0	\$	0	\$	36	\$	2,671	\$	860	\$ 4
4. Other environmental sciences	\$	0	\$	0	\$	0	\$	0	\$	0	\$	0	\$	2,060	\$ 2
5. Total	\$	337	\$	904	\$	238	\$	6,715	\$	178	\$	4,155	\$	7,739	\$ 20
). Mathematical sciences	\$	0	\$	367	\$	327	\$	181	\$	0	\$	3,334	\$	5	\$ 4
. Computer sciences	\$	0	\$	2,651	\$	1,242	\$	1,230	\$	0	\$	6,852	\$	216	\$ 12
omments:															





Recent Challenges

- After many years of little change, the survey was significantly redesigned before the FY 2010 collection.
- As part of the redesign several new questions were added.
- The survey needed to allow for the submission of partial data, even within a single question, while still running automated checks.
- After a lengthy data collection period for the FY 2010 survey, we needed to find cost effective ways of speeding up survey review and approvals.
- The increased burden for respondents and data collection staff necessitated an increased focus on the usability of the survey system.





FY 2010 Survey

 Respondents were asked to leave the cells for unavailable values blank.





FY 2010 Survey

 Respondents were asked to leave the cells for unavailable values blank.

Blank Cells:

Question 2: If data are not available, please leave the cell blank. If you had no expenditures for a cell, enter "0."





- Respondents were asked to leave the cells for unavailable values blank.
- On a separate screen respondents were asked to verify whether blank cells should be 0 or "not available."





G13. Of the total amount of R&D expenditures reported in Guestion 1 what were the amounts for the following types of oosts? You left some or all items in this question blank. Please select the reason or enter missing values. © Response is zero © Data not available (please explain in the comment box below) Additional comments about your response: (500 characters remaining)	
At the end of FY 2010, wh (in thousands) for contwark	this question blank. Please select the reason or enter missing ase explain in the comment box below)
Additional comments about your response:	
(500 characters remaining)	
Q16A-C. For the fields of R&D below, what portion of your FY 2010 R&D expenditures went for the purchase of capitalized R&D equipment? Engineering, physical solences, environmental solences You left some or all terms in this question blank. Please select the reason or enter missing values. © Response is zero © Data not available (please explain in the comment box below)	





- Respondents were asked to leave the cells for unavailable values blank.
- On a separate screen respondents were asked to verify whether blank cells should be 0 or "not available."
- The data collection staff had to follow up with almost 100% of respondents and it took 6 months to clarify submitted data.





- A survey can no longer be submitted with blank cells.
- Dropdown lists on each cell allow respondents to select 0 or Unavailable, or enter the requested value.





- A survey can no longer be submitted with blank cells
- Dropdown lists on each cell allow respondents to select 0 or Unavailable, or enter the requested value.

R&D expenditures (Dollars in thousands)						
	14,000	~				
	0 Unavailable					
[\$ 46,732	~				
	\$ 60,	732				





- A survey can no longer be submitted with blank cells
- Dropdown lists on each cell allow respondents to select 0 or Unavailable, or enter the requested value.
- Specialized dropdown lists are used for some fields.







- A survey can no longer be submitted with blank cells
- Dropdown lists on each cell allow respondents to select 0 or Unavailable, or enter the requested value.
- Specialized dropdown lists are used for some fields.
- Follow-ups by data reviewers dropped by 40% and the collection was 2 months shorter.
- End-of-year data processing was also easier because there was less recoding of submitted data.





- Some data checks were presented out of context on a separate screen.
- Respondents could view only one question screen at a time, so it was difficult to compare answers across questions.





→ ?	Not started Needs your review Ready to submit	W Review Your Data Submit Your Data							
F	FY 2010 Question List								
-									
5	Questions 1–6: R&D expenditures by source and type								
8	Question 1	R&D expenditures by source of funds							
?	Question 2	Foreign funding for R&D							
?	Question 3	Contracts and grants							
?	Question 4	R&D at medical schools							
5	Question 5	Clinical trial R&D							
*	Question 6	Types of R&D: Basic research, applied research, and development							
	O	Para through and subscription DSD surger disease							
×	Question 7	Pass-through and subrecipient R&D expenditures Subrecipient R&D expenditures							
?	Question 8	R&D expenditures passed through							
	Question o	nab experiora es passes ra organ							
	Questions 9-11	R&D expenditures from federal sources							
1	Question 9A	R&D expenditures by field and federal agency source: Engineering							
>	Question 9B	R&D expenditures by field and federal agency source: Physical sciences							
>	Question 9C-E	R&D expenditures by field and federal agency source: Environmental sciences, mathematical sciences, computer sciences							
>	Question 9F	R&D expenditures by field and federal agency source: Life sciences							
>	Question 9G-I	R&D expenditures by field and federal agency source: Psychology, social sciences, other sciences							
>	Question 9J-K	R&D expenditures by field and federal agency source: Non-science and engineering fields							
>	Question 10	Other federal agency sources							
?	Question 11	R&D funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA)							
		&D expenditures from nonfederal sources							
?	Question 12A-B	R&D expenditures by field and nonfederal source: Engineering, physical sciences							
>	Question 12C-I	R&D expenditures by field and nonfederal source: Environmental sciences, mathematical sciences, computer sciences, life sciences, psychology, social sciences, other sciences							
>	Question 12J-K	R&D expenditures by field and nonfederal source: Non-science and engineering fields							
		15: R&D expenditures by cost elements							
+	Question 13	Cost elements of R&D							





- Some data checks were presented out of context on a separate screen.
- Respondents could view only one question screen at a time, so it was difficult to compare answers across questions.
- It was difficult for respondents to identify the problematic value, particularly on questions with larger grids.





Warnings:

Question 9A, row 5, column h: This value represents a large decrease from last year's value. To compare data from both years, return to the Main Menu and click on Compare your 2008-2010 survey answers. Please use the box labeled 'Comments' on this screen to explain trend variances.

Question 9A, row 8, column h: This value represents a large decrease from last year's value. To compare data from both years, return to the Main Menu and click on Compare your 2008-2010 survey answers. Please use the box labeled 'Comments' on this screen to explain trend variances.

Question 9A, row 9, column b: This value represents a large decrease from last year's value. To compare data from both years, return to the Main Menu and click on Compare your 2008-2010 survey answers. Please use the box labeled 'Comments' on this screen to explain trend variances.

R&D expenditures from federal sources 💿 (Dollars in thousands)													
	(a)	(b)		(C)		(d)		(e)		(f)		(g)	(h)
R&D Fields 0	USDA + subagencies	DoD + subagencies	+	Energy + subagencies		HHS, includes NIH + subagencies		NASA	NSF		Other Agencies you can		Total
												eport here	
A. Engineering													
1. Aeronautical/ Astronautical	\$ 0	\$ 708	\$	126	\$	0	\$	1,221	\$	382	\$	661	\$ 3,098
2. Bioengineering/ Biomedical eng.	\$ 224	\$0	\$	646	\$	588	\$	1	\$	252	\$	1,418	\$ 3,129
3. Chemical	\$ 420	\$ 1,399	\$	3,266	\$	943	\$	0	\$	2,589	\$	2,451	\$ 11,068
4. Civil	\$ 0	\$ 263	\$	0	\$	137	\$	36	\$	1,394	\$	3,465	\$ 5,295
5. Electrical	\$ 21	\$ 2,920	\$	776	\$	138	\$	0	\$	6,705	\$	1,889	\$ 12,449
6. Mechanical	\$ 0	\$ 604	\$	71	\$	0	\$	0	\$	1,363	\$	1,186	\$ 3,224
7. Metallurgical/ Materials	\$ 0	\$ 3,465	5	501	\$	464	\$	74	\$	2,396	\$	2,949	\$ 9,849
8. Other engineering	\$ 23	\$ 108	\$	1,495	\$	32	\$	0	\$	1,299	\$	10,580	\$ 13,537
9. Total	\$ 688	\$ 9,467	\$	6,881	\$	2,302	\$	1,332	\$	16,380	\$	24,599	\$ 61,649





- Some data checks were presented out of context on a separate screen.
- Respondents could view only one question screen at a time, so it was difficult to compare answers across questions.
- It was difficult for respondents to identify the problematic value, particularly on questions with larger grids.
- All explanations for significant differences from last year's data were included in one comment box. Respondents were instructed to, "use the box labeled 'Comments' on this screen to explain".





FY 2011 and FY 2012 Surveys

- All data error or warning messages appear at the top of the relevant question page.
- Problematic cells are highlighted.





R&D expenditures

Pre-submittal Data Checks

1 error, 1 trend variance

Error - Question 13, row d: Pass-through expenditures in row d should match the Total pass-through expenditures in Question 8, row e, column 3: \$10,600

Trend Variance - Question 13, row e: There is a large decrease from last year in the percentage of expenditures going to other direct costs. Enter an explanation.

Question 13. Of the total amount of R&D expenditures reported in Question 1, row g, what were the amounts for the following types of costs?

Please report only direct costs (including cost sharing) in rows a-e. Recovered and unrecovered indirect costs should be reported in rows f1 and f2.

		(Dollars in thousands)
a. b.	Salaries, wages, and fringe benefits Include compensation for all R&D personnel whether full-time or part-time, temporary or permanent. Include salaries, wages, and fringe benefits paid from your institution's funds and from external support. Software purchases	\$ 23,250 ¥
	All payments for software. Include both purchases of software packages and license fees for systems.	
	1. Noncapitalized software	s 15,000 🛩
	 Capitalized software (If you are unable to distinguish capitalized software from capitalized equipment, report both in row c) 	S 0 🖌
C.	Capitalized equipment Payments for movable equipment exceeding your institution's capitalization threshold. Include ancillary costs such as delivery and setup.	s 3,789 🖌
d.	Pass-throughs to other universities or organizations (should match the total in Question 8, row e, column 3)	\$ 10,500 💟
e.	Other direct costs Other costs that do not fit into one of the above categories, including (but not limited to) travel, tuition waivers, services such as consulting, computer usage fees, and supplies.	s 303 💙
f.	Indirect costs	





FY 2011 and FY 2012 Surveys

- All data error or warning messages appear at the top of the relevant question page.
- Problematic cells are highlighted.
- Multiple questions can now be viewed at the same time.

FY 2012 Survey



Status: 28 Questions - 24 Completed, 4 Errors

R&D expenditures by source and type	Status
1.RSD expenditures by source of funds	0
11. Institutionally financed R&D expenditure sources	0
2. Foreign funding for R&D	0
3. Contracts and Grants	0
4. RSD at medical schools	0
5. Clinical Wall RSD	0
6. Types of R&D: Basic research. Applied research, and Development	0
Pass-through and subrecipient R&D expenditures	
7. Subrecipient R&D expenditures	Status
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R&D expenditures from federal sources	Statu
9A. R&D expenditures by field and federal agency source: Engineering	0
98. R&D expenditures to field and federal agency source. Physical sciences	0
BCE: R&D expenditures by field and federal agency source. Environmental sciences, Mathematical sciences, Computer Sciences	0
9F. R&D expenditures by field and federal agency source. Life sciences	0
2G-L R&D expenditures by field and federal agency source. Psychology, Social sciences. Other sciences	Ø
9.14. R&D excenditures by field and federal agency source. Non-science and engineering fields	0
10. Other federal agence sources	0
11. R&D funded on the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA)	0
R&D expenditures from nonfederal sources	
12-B - R&D expenditures by field and nonfederal source. Enclineering, Physical sciences	Statue
12C-L R&D extenditives to field and nonfederal source: Environmental sciences. Mathematical sciences. Computer	0
sciences. Les sciences. Psychology. Social sciences. Other sciences	
123K, R&D expenditures by field and nonfederal source. Non-science and engineering fields	0
R&D expenditures by cost elements	Status
13. Cost elements of R&D	0
- 14. Capitalization thresholds	0
15A-C. R&D equipment expenditures by field: Engineering, Physical sciences, Environmental sciences	0
15D-1 RAD equipment excendatives by field. [Influential sciences. Computer sciences. Life sciences. Psychology Social sciences. Other sciences	0
15J-K. R&D equipment excenditures or field. Non-science and engineering fields	0
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	Statu
16. Headcount of RAD cersonnel	
17. Headcount of R&D coatdoca	0
Institutional information	Statu
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18. Contact information and fiscal year	



View PDF with data

🔿 = not started 👩 = completed 🛕 = trend variance 📵 = errors

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FY 2011 and FY 2012 Surveys

- All data error or warning messages appear at the top of the relevant question page.
- Problematic cells are highlighted.
- Multiple questions can now be viewed at the same time.
- There is a separate text box for each significant difference from last year that requires an explanation. Something must be entered in that text box before the survey can be submitted.





1 error, 1 trend variance

Error - Question 13, row d: Pass-through expenditures in row d should match the Total pass-through expenditures in Question 8, row e, column 3: \$10,600

Trend Variance - Question 13, row e: There is a large decrease from last year in the percentage of expenditures going to other direct costs. Update explanation.

Question 13. Of the total amount of R&D expenditures reported in Question 1, row g, what were the amounts for the following types of costs?

		Question 13, row e Trend Variance Explanation	
		(462 characters remaining)	R&D expenditures
		Sample explanation for large decrease.	(Dollars in thousands)
a.	Sala		\$ 23,250 🖌
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b.	Soft		
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	1.		\$ 15,000 😼
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	2.		\$ 0 🖌
c.	Cap		
	Pay	Save	\$ 3,789
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d.		throughs to other universities or organizations	\$ 10,500 🗸
		Id match the total in Question 8, row e, column 3)	
e.		direct costs	\$ 303 🔜
		costs that do not fit into one of the above categories, including (but not limited to) travel, tuition	





FY 2010 and FY 2011 Surveys

- All questions and responses were relayed though e-mail and phone calls.
- Questions about data were out of context.
- Changes to data often resulted in new errors that needed to be resolved.
- When revisions were needed to numerical data or comment text, the changes had to be made by data collection staff, adding processing time and more quality controls.





- E-mails from the data reviewer direct respondents back to the Web survey.
- Data quality issues are presented at the top of each question, just like pre-submittal errors.
- Respondents can revise data, and if any new errors are triggered, they immediately see the new error.
- Any new explanations are automatically associated with the value in question without cutting and pasting from an e-mail.
- Processing time by data collection staff is reduced.





<u>1. R&D expenditures by source of funds</u>	<u>(</u>
Data Quality Issues	
Question 1, row a - Federal R&D expenditures increased from \$43M in FY 2011 to \$59M in F department. However, the increases in engineering expenditures on Question 9 (row A9), or about the variance or revise your data. <u>Resolve</u>	
View Your FY 2010-2012 Survey Data Ø	
<u>1 trend variance, 1 warning</u>	
Question 1. How much of your total expenditures for research and development (R&D) carr	ne from the following sources in FY 2012? See definition of R&D (PDF)
 In rows a, b, c, d, and f. Include both direct and recovered indirect costs (reim) Report the original source of funds, when possible. Include all fields of R&D (e.g., sciences, engineering, humanities, education, lateration) 	
	R&D expenditures
Source of funds	(Dollars in thousands) (for example, report \$25,342 as \$25)
a. U.S. federal government	
Any agency of the United States government.	
Include federal funds passed through from another institution.	\$ 59,000 🛩
b. State and local government	
Any state, county, municipality, or other local government entity in the United States, including state health agencies. Include state funds that support R&D at agricultural and other experiment stations.	\$ 866 🗸
Public institutions should report state appropriations restricted for R&D activities here rather than in row e, Institutional funds.	
c. Business	
Domestic or foreign for-profit organizations. Report funds from a company's nonprofit foundation in row d.	s 0 🛩
d. Nonprofit organizations	
Domestic or foreign nonprofit foundations and organizations. Report funds from your institution's 501(c)3 foundation in row e1.	\$ 866 🖌
e. Institutional funds	
1. Institutionally financed research	S 15 🗸
All R&D funded by your institution from accounts that are only used for research.	(Confidential)
2. Cost sharing	
Include committed cost sharing other than unrecovered indirect costs. Report unrecovered indirect costs in row e3.	S 0 V (Confidential)
3. Unrecovered indirect costs	
Calculate this amount as follows for your externally funded R&D only (preferably on a project-specific basis) using the appropriate cost rate—on-campus, off-	\$ 6.253 V
campus, etc.	
 First, multiply the <u>necotiated</u> rate by the corresponding base. Second, subtract recovered indirect costs. 	(Confidential) 🔍
4. Total institutional funds	\$ 6,268
f. All other sources	
Other sources not reported above, such as funds from foreign governments.	Unavailable 🔀
g. Total	\$ 67,000
Comments:	
500 characters remaining)	13
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▼ 1. R&D expenditures by source of funds		0
	ditures increased from \$43M in FY 2011 to \$59M in FY 2012. You attributed this increase to 2 large grants in the engineering engineering expenditures on Question 9 (row A9), only explain a small part of the increase. Please provide more information esolve	
	Data Quality Issue X	
<u>1 trend variance, 1 warning</u>		
 Question 1. How much of your total exp In rows a, b, c, d, and f: Inc Report the original source Include all fields of R&D (e) 	Data Quality Issue - Question 1, row a Federal R&D expenditures increased from \$43M in FY 2011 to \$59M in FY 2012. You attributed this increase to 2 large grants in the engineering department. However, the increases in engineering expenditures on Question 9 (row A9), only explain a small part of the increase. Please provide more information about the variance or revise your data.	
Source of funds	Choose one: O Provide an explanation	
a. U.S. federal government Any agency of the United States go Include federal funds passed throu	 I have revised my FY 2011 data and this issue is resolved See "Revise Last Year's Data" on the survey homepage. I have revised my FY 2012 data and this issue is resolved 	
b. State and local government		
Any state, county, municipality, or o including state health agencies. In and other experiment stations. Public institutions should report st.	cancel save	





Lessons Learned

- The additional programmer time needed to automate processes or revise an interface can be cost effective, if done well.
- You can have a survey that takes advantage of the capabilities of the Web while still being consistent with a paper form.
- Follow-ups with respondents after a survey is submitted is a burden to the respondents, as well as data collection staff.