



National Research Council Student Questionnaire

In the next several days, advanced doctoral students in 4 different doctoral programs at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill will receive a message via email and the U.S. Postal Service from the National Academies, inviting them to participate in the National Research Council (NRC) doctoral education assessment project.

This is a particularly important study for Carolina in promoting the stature of our doctoral programs. Therefore, along with the Provost and the Chancellor, I urge all students to respond. This is the first time the NRC has chosen to survey students, and we hope to achieve a high campus response rate of 80% or greater. Every student who responds will receive \$15 from the NRC.

Please note that students need to submit the questionnaire no later than **June 30, 2007**. The questionnaire has been approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of the NRC and accepted by the IRB at UNC.

Although details of the study can be found at the websites noted below, I thought it would be helpful if I provided students with a brief summary of the project.

<http://www7.nationalacademies.org/resdoc/>

<http://gradschool.unc.edu/nrc/index.html>

The study includes over 200 doctoral-granting universities in the U.S. and its goals are to help universities improve the quality of their programs through benchmarking, as well as provide potential students, faculty and the public with accessible, readily available information that they can use to make decisions about pursuing doctoral education.

I am serving as the Institutional Coordinator of the study at UNC, along with Associate Dean Stephanie Schmitt and Assistant Provost Lynn Williford. Please feel free to contact us at any time if you have questions. We have also prepared a tip sheet to assist you in your response, and it is included on the second page of this communication.

I thank you in advance for your willingness to participate in this important study.

Sincerely,
Linda Dykstra
William Rand Kenan Jr. Professor
Dean of the Graduate School

Student Tip Sheet

National Research Council Study of Research Doctorates

This tip sheet has been designed to facilitate completion of the Student Questionnaire from the NRC for its assessment of research doctorate programs. Information provided by students enhances the questionnaire's findings and enables an accurate picture of doctoral programs in the United States. If students do not answer in a consistent and complete manner, the questionnaire will not yield correct data, and programs could be adversely affected in their rankings. Responses to the questionnaire will help form a more complete picture of successful programs, permit a statistical description of students in certain departments, and provide information to many constituents, including prospective students and faculty, funding agencies, government officials, potential donors, researchers, and colleagues.

1. **Contact:** You will be contacted initially through an invitation from the NRC via your email address. A copy of the invitation will follow via the U.S. Postal Service. The initial letter invites participation in the questionnaire and provides you with a login and password necessary to continue in the process. The subject line is "The 2006 Assessment of Research Doctorates". Please monitor your "spam" email folders for the address *nrc-assessment@bhew.nas.edu* in case your invitation is filtered out.
2. **Deadline:** The current deadline for the NRC Student Questionnaire is April 30, 2007. *Every student who responds will receive \$15 from the NRC.*
3. **Information Requested:** The survey is intended to provide baseline information about advanced students in your discipline nationally. The questions center on your academic background, your activities while a graduate student, your funding levels, and future career plans. The survey also asks questions about your program, including the support they provide students.
4. **Candidacy:** Some questions in the survey ask about the fact that you were admitted to candidacy. At UNC-Chapel Hill we do not officially have an "advanced to candidacy" designation. However, for the purposes of identifying advanced students, programs named those students who had completed their comprehensive exams and are generally working on their dissertation research. You can refer to the date you passed your exams as your advanced to candidacy date.

For additional details, please see our website: <http://gradschool.unc.edu/nrc/index.html>

**For interpretation or policy questions, please feel free to contact Stephanie Schmitt
at the Graduate School at sschmitt@email.unc.edu**