



## 2010 International Database Training Seminar Announcement

Using NCES International Databases for Research and Policy Discussion

Monday, August 23, through Wednesday, August 25, 2010  
Washington, DC

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education, will sponsor a 3-day seminar on the use of NCES International Databases: the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA), the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), and the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS).

This seminar is open to advanced graduate students and faculty members from colleges and universities nationwide and to researchers, education practitioners, and policy analysts from state and local education agencies and professional associations.

**In order to better accommodate an expected high level of interest in the International Database Training, we will accept up to 40 applicants this year instead of 30 (as done last year).**

### OVERVIEW



**Program for International Student Assessment (PISA).** PISA is an international assessment of 15-year-old students' performance in reading, mathematics, and science literacy. PISA emphasizes knowledge and skills that students have acquired in and out of school environments as they near the end of compulsory schooling. PISA also collects background information on students and schools. Developed and implemented at the international level by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), PISA is administered every three years, with emphasis on one subject in each data collection cycle. PISA began in 2000 focusing on reading literacy. PISA focused on mathematics literacy in 2003 and science literacy in 2006. In 2009, reading literacy was the primary focus again. The PISA 2009 national and international reports will be released in December 2010.

For more information about PISA, including participating countries, highlights, sample items, and a list of available publications that can be downloaded or ordered, visit the study website:

<http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/pisa>



**Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS).** TIMSS, formerly known as the Third International Mathematics and Science Study, is used to measure over time the mathematics and science knowledge and skills of fourth- and eighth-graders. TIMSS is designed to align broadly with mathematics and science curricula in the participating countries. TIMSS also collects background information on students, teachers, and schools. Developed and implemented at the international level by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA), TIMSS data have been collected in 1995, 1999, 2003, and 2007.

For more information about TIMSS, including participating countries, highlights, sample items, and a list of available publications that can be downloaded or ordered, visit the study website:

<http://nces.ed.gov/timss/>



**Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS).** PIRLS is an international assessment of the reading literacy of fourth-graders. PIRLS includes a test of reading comprehension and a set of background questionnaires providing contextual information on factors associated with the development of reading literacy. Results are reported on a combined scale and subscales that measure two purposes of reading: reading for literary experience and reading to acquire and use information. Developed and implemented at the international level by IEA, PIRLS is conducted every 5 years. It was first conducted in 2001 and again in 2006.

For more information about PIRLS, including participating countries, highlights, sample items, and a list of available publications that can be downloaded or ordered, visit the study website:

<http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/pirls/>

## **PURPOSE AND EXPECTED OUTCOME**

The overall goal of the seminar is to provide researchers with opportunities to gain access to some of the most comprehensive education data resources in the nation and to use the PISA, TIMSS, and/or PIRLS data in substantive research. The seminar will include both lecture and hands-on instruction. Specifically, the seminar will include the following topics and activities:

- an overview of the survey sample designs, data components, and coverage;
- discussion of methodological and technical issues relevant to data use;
- instruction and practice with PISA 2006, TIMSS 2007, and PIRLS 2006 data; and
- hands-on experience in conducting analyses.

It should be noted that this seminar will not provide formal instruction on advanced statistical methods and analyses, such as multilevel modeling.

At the conclusion of the seminar, participants shall submit a preliminary analysis plan that uses NCES international data, including a clear specification of the research questions, a rationale for the analysis, analytic approach (specifications of population, variables, statistical techniques, etc.), and preliminary analysis results, if available. When the analysis is completed and a paper or report drafted, a complimentary copy of the paper or report should be sent to NCES.

## **QUALIFICATIONS**

Participants attending this seminar should have a solid understanding of statistical methods, be experienced in using personal computers, and be proficient in the use of SPSS or SAS statistical software packages. Participants will be expected to know how to recode data, run descriptive analyses (e.g., frequency distributions and cross-tabulations), and understand bivariate and multivariate analyses (e.g., correlation and multiple regression). Applicants will be evaluated on the following criteria:

- significance of the proposed research and potential benefit from participation in the seminar;
- consistency of the proposed research agenda with the data available in PISA, TIMSS and/or PIRLS;
- experience in educational research; and
- knowledge and skills in statistical analyses and the use of statistical computer packages. (Please see the attached application form for specific questions pertaining to your level of experience).

## FINANCIAL SUPPORT

There is no fee to attend this seminar. NCES will provide training materials as well as computers for hands-on practice. NCES will also pay for transportation, hotel accommodations, and a fixed per diem for meals and incidental expenses during the training seminar.

## LOCATION

The seminar will be held in Washington, DC, on Monday, August 23, through Wednesday, August 25, 2010. Accepted applicants will be sent information about both the meeting and lodging arrangements.

## REGISTRATION INFORMATION AND APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

If you are interested in attending the seminar, please complete and return the following documents (electronic versions are preferred):

1. The application form.
2. A copy of your resume.
3. A 1- to 2-page statement clearly describing your research study using PISA, TIMSS, and/or PIRLS data and how the study can be furthered by your participation in the seminar.
4. A letter of recommendation from your faculty advisor if you are a graduate student.

Your 1- to 2-page statement should describe your proposed research topic, rationale, variables of interest, and analytical approach. Space is limited for the seminar. Only complete applications will be considered, and only two applicants from the same organization or institution can be accepted.

Applications will be reviewed and candidates will be notified on a rolling basis beginning in June, so **early submission of all applications materials is highly encouraged**. The final deadline for accepting applications is **Wednesday, June 30, 2010**. Only complete applications received by the deadline will be reviewed. All candidates will be notified about the outcome of their application by Friday, July 16, 2010. Candidates selected for participation will receive the seminar agenda and information about travel arrangements upon notice of acceptance.

Applications should be returned to: Patricia Jackson  
Synergy Enterprises, Inc.  
8757 Georgia Avenue, Suite 1440  
Silver Spring, MD 20910  
Email: [pjackson@seiservices.com](mailto:pjackson@seiservices.com)

If you have questions regarding this seminar, please contact Patricia Jackson through e-mail at [pjackson@seiservices.com](mailto:pjackson@seiservices.com) or by telephone at (240) 485-1700, ext.197.

**NOTE: Applicants are allowed to attend no more than two NCES-sponsored seminars within a 6-year period.**



**APPLICATION**  
**2010 International Database Training Seminar**  
**National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)**  
**U.S. Department of Education**  
**August 23-25, 2010**  
**Washington, DC**

Dr.       Mr.       Ms.

NAME:

(please type or print clearly)

AFFILIATION:

TITLE/POSITION:

PREFERRED MAILING ADDRESS:

CITY:

STATE:

ZIP CODE:

OTHER ADDRESS

CITY:

STATE:

ZIP CODE:

TELEPHONE:

FAX:

E-MAIL - Work/school:

Home:

**Computer Statistical Software Experience:**

**All participants must have at least 2 years of SPSS or SAS experience.**

Software	Level of experience			None
	Extensive (= proficient in aggregating, merging, recoding, weighting, and analysis)	Some (= familiar with recoding and many analysis procedures)	Very little (= simple descriptive procedures and recoding)	
SPSS (Windows)				
SAS (Windows)				

**Please answer the following:**

1. Do you have experience merging files in SPSS or SAS?       yes       no
2. Do you have experience recoding variable values in SPSS or SAS?       yes       no
3. Have you used weights in your analysis using SPSS or SAS?       yes       no
4. Have you run statistical analyses using SPSS or SAS?       yes       no

5. How did you hear about this training? \_\_\_\_\_

Please attach a clearly written description of your proposed research study and how it can be furthered through the use of NCES data (1-2 typewritten pages). Be as specific as possible. If you are a graduate student, a letter of recommendation from your faculty advisor must be included with your application.

Applications will be reviewed and candidates will be notified on a rolling basis beginning in June, so **early submission of all applications materials is highly encouraged**. The final deadline for accepting completed applications is **Wednesday, June 30, 2010**, with selected candidates notified by Friday, July 16, 2010.

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