



NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION
OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
OFFICE OF INVESTIGATIONS

CLOSEOUT MEMORANDUM

Case Number: I-20-0017-O

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NSF OIG received an Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC) incident report regarding biosafety noncompliance by a principal investigator (PI) supported by NSF awards. The PI failed to obtain IBC approval for changes to research work involving recombinant nucleic acid molecules. The PI submitted amendments to reflect changes and/or additions in personnel, funding support, and research material. The PI had performed research before the amendments were approved by the IBC, and the PI's research work on recombinant nucleic acids was temporarily suspended. The IBC investigated the biosafety noncompliance violation and found that the unapproved material was used for authentication studies, and not directly used in research.

The institution implemented a corrective action plan for the PI that included documentation requirements and the establishment of protocols and biosafety training for the laboratory. The institution approved the PI's amendments, and suspension of the recombinant nucleic acid research work ended. The institution reviewed the costs associated with the unapproved work and returned over \$700 to NSF.

Our review of the matter concluded that appropriate actions were taken by the institution to address the IBC noncompliance and to ensure proper oversight of NSF-funded projects involving the use of recombinant nucleic acid molecules. We sent the PI a letter reminding him about his responsibilities in conducting recombinant nucleic acid molecules research work; the proper submission and oversight of documentation, including any changes when performing research studies utilizing NSF funds; and, the need to ensure new laboratory members complete required biosafety training.

Accordingly, this case is closed with no further action taken.