

Closeout of M91-030016

This case concerns Professor [REDACTED] (the subject), [REDACTED] University. His proposal [REDACTED] entitled "[REDACTED]" was received on [REDACTED] and awarded [REDACTED] by the Division [REDACTED], Directorate [REDACTED] (the complainant), a panel reviewer of [REDACTED], alleged: (1) three instances of 3 lines, 6 lines and 11 lines in which the subject used text from referenced sources without quotation marks in a 14-page, single-spaced proposal. One was in the "Introduction"; one in the "Background of the Proposed Research"; and one in the body of the proposal; (2) failure to cite the source of the figure on each of two relevant figures; (3) failure to include the source of one of the figures in the bibliography; and (4) failure to include the publication volume number and page numbers in a citation in the bibliography. The complainant also stated that he previously informed NSF of improper attribution by the subject in two of his earlier proposals [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]

OIG's inquiry revealed that this was not a serious case of plagiarism. Although some sentences are close to verbatim, only one sentence which appeared in the title of a figure was actually verbatim. The written material cited in the allegations is for the highly specialized, technical reader. Alternatives to a technical vocabulary are limited. Further, part of the allegedly plagiarized material is from a source common to both the subject and the author(s) of the paper allegedly plagiarized; both originally contributed to this common source. The complainant incorrectly attributed one figure which the subject correctly attributed but only listed in his bibliography and not on the figure itself. The second figure is not identical as alleged and it is arguable that the figure itself should carry a citation. OIG resolved this matter by having the subject submit to NSF revised pages for his three proposals. These pages clarify sources in his text and for his two figures. This case can now be closed with a finding of no misconduct.

[REDACTED]  
James J. Zmurek  
3/31/92

ndj: PMS in L 6/9/92