



NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION  
OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL  
OFFICE OF INVESTIGATIONS

## CLOSEOUT MEMORANDUM

Case Number: I-19-0052-O

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We received an allegation of plagiarism in a Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) proposal. Our analysis of the proposal found approximately three pages of copied material from eight sources. Although some of the sources were cited, the PI did not demarcate the copied text, nor did he clearly link copied material to a specific source. When asked about the copied text, the PI admitted that the proposal did not demarcate verbatim text but stated he used an accepted industry citation format that does not require quotation marks or indentation to demarcate copied, verbatim text. He provided five articles that purportedly illustrated this citation format; we determined they did not.

When we asked the PI to provide the name of the citation guide used when drafting his proposal, he referenced the Bluebook and general industry standards. We reviewed multiple style guides and found all, including the Bluebook, require demarcation and attribution of copied, verbatim text. We determined there is no industry standard that allows the use of verbatim text without quotation marks or indentation. We reviewed three other SBIR proposals the PI submitted to NSF, all of which contained copied text not appropriately credited to the original source. Consequently, we concluded the Subject knowingly committed research misconduct.

We recommended NSF make a finding of research misconduct and for 2 years require the PI to submit certifications with each document submitted to NSF. We also recommended NSF prohibit the PI from serving as an NSF peer reviewer, advisor, or consultant for 2 years. NSF concurred with our recommendations and in addition required 2 years of assurances. Although the PI appealed NSF's decision, NSF upheld its finding of research misconduct and its imposed actions.

This case is **closed** with no further action taken.

Approvals