



NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION
OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
OFFICE OF INVESTIGATIONS

CLOSEOUT MEMORANDUM

Case Number: I-22-0040-O

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We received an allegation that two proposals submitted to an NSF program were nearly identical. The proposals were both submitted by the same institution but had different PIs and co-PIs. The lead Program Director for the program told us that institutions are allowed to submit two proposals, but the proposals should be different from one another. We sent inquiry letters to each PI and co-PI of the two proposals to get their perspective on the similarity of the two proposals.

The institution provided a single response to our inquiry on behalf of all the PIs and co-PIs. The institution explained that a grant writer wrote both proposals with input from the PIs and co-PIs, so none of the PIs or co-PIs copied material from one proposal into the other. We concluded the use of identical text by the grant writer did not constitute research misconduct, although the PIs should have acknowledged the grant writer. We sent the institution a questionable administrative practices letter urging it to consult with NSF's Program Director regarding the acceptable amount of overlap between proposals and how to acknowledge its use of a grant writer.

This case is closed with no further action taken.