



NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION  
OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL  
OFFICE OF INVESTIGATIONS

## CLOSEOUT MEMORANDUM

Case Number: I-16-0072-O

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A graduate student at a university, supported by an NSF Graduate Research Fellowship Program award, fabricated data included in an NSF proposal and in two submitted manuscripts, one of which was accepted for publication. The student admitted to the research misconduct and voluntarily withdrew from the graduate program prior to the university's investigation. The two manuscripts were withdrawn prior to publication. The university's Investigation Committee determined that the student intentionally fabricated and falsified data, a significant departure from accepted practices of the research community. The university took disciplinary actions, which included recording the research misconduct finding in the student's transcript and sending notifications to the student's previous research mentors. In addition, grades in the student's graduate research courses were changed to unsatisfactory, and those credits cannot be applied towards a degree.

We concluded that the student's acts of data fabrication were intentional, fit a pattern of research misconduct, and were a significant departure from accepted practices. We recommended that NSF debar him for 3 years. We further recommended that for 3 years after the debarment period, NSF require certifications and assurances; require submission of a detailed data management plan with annual certifications of adherence for any resulting awards; and bar him from participating as a peer reviewer, advisor, or consultant for NSF. NSF made a finding of research misconduct and required completion of RCR training within one year. NSF imposed a 1-year debarment concurrent with 4 years of the additional requirements and prohibitions as recommended above.

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