



NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION
OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
OFFICE OF INVESTIGATIONS

CLOSEOUT MEMORANDUM

Case Number: A-03110074

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We received an allegation that a section of the subject's NSF proposal¹ contained text that was copied from a published paper (source document).² Our review showed that about a paragraph of text in the subject's proposal was substantially similar to text in the source document and the similar text had not been cited appropriately to the source document. The similar text presented details about an experimental procedure. Both the subject's proposal and the source document cited the experimental procedure to an earlier published source.

We wrote to the subject who responded that the material had been copied. The subject explained that this was an innocent mistake, most likely because of the rush to get the proposal submitted. The subject pointed out that the source document was cited in the proposal, but not in the section with the substantially similar text. Further, the subject did cite the original published source for the experimental procedure described in the paragraph. Given that the amount of copied text involved is small and that the subject is a new young investigator, we determined that, although the subject's act was a departure from accepted practices, the act was not a significant departure, and hence, not research misconduct. We called the subject to discuss this matter. Subsequently, we wrote to the subject emphasizing the need to review all work submitted and to ensure that all ideas and copied text are appropriately identified and attributed.

This case is closed and no further action will be taken.

¹ NSF proposal [REDACTED], entitled "[REDACTED]" was submitted by the subject [REDACTED] as the sole PI.

² "[REDACTED]" by [REDACTED] is [REDACTED]