



NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION
OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
OFFICE OF INVESTIGATIONS

CLOSEOUT MEMORANDUM

Case Number: A06060024

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An NSF employee¹ advised NSF OIG that an NSF grant proposal² to the Biological Sciences Directorate was effectively, a duplicate of a pending NIH proposal³. Further investigation and the subject's response⁴ verified this allegation. The Biological Sciences Directorate has a long-standing policy against this practice which says in pertinent part:

Research proposals to the Biological Sciences Directorate (not proposals for conferences or workshops) cannot be duplicates of proposals to any other Federal agency for simultaneous consideration.⁵

This investigation was opened to determine if this was an isolated incident or part of a pattern of misconduct. The subject received one prior award⁶ from NSF. That application was for a Beginning Investigator Award, and therefore, qualified for an exception to the Biological Sciences Directorate prohibition on duplicate proposals. See *Grant Proposal Guide*, Ch. I, Sect. A. The subject withdrew his NIH application upon receiving that earlier NSF award.

The NSF proposal under investigation is a revised proposal⁷ initially submitted to NSF and resubmitted a month later to address broader impacts. Ultimately, NSF declined to fund that original proposal. A similar original NIH proposal was already under consideration, but was declined shortly after the NSF proposal was filed.

Therefore, at the time of the original NSF application, the subject had not been officially declined by NIH⁸. There was a six-day overlap in the original proposals to NIH and NSF. Furthermore, the subject failed to indicate a "submission planned in the near future" in the revised proposal that generated this investigation.

The subject cited personal errors and demonstrated genuine remorse in his response to our inquiry. He explained how these events unfolded and had his university's vice president of graduate research⁹ co-sign his response.

1 [REDACTED]
2 [REDACTED]
3 [REDACTED]
4 [REDACTED]
5 *Grant Proposal Guide*, Ch. I, Sect. A
6 [REDACTED]
7 [REDACTED]
8 The NIH application was officially denied six days later.
9 [REDACTED]



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Conclusion

The subject's response and past actions do not demonstrate a pattern of misbehavior. The subject admits that these proposals did not properly reflect the status of pending support. His response acknowledges his past inappropriate conduct and future responsibilities.

As the principal investigator and as the recipient of federal research funds, it is my responsibility to know the rules...[I]n the future, I will...seek assistance from the experienced research administrators available at my institution. I also realize that I need to manage the time required for preparing my submissions...in order to...review all of the details...including administrative details.¹⁰

Accordingly, this case is closed.