
Who are we?

Each federal agency has an independent Office of Inspector General (OIG) charged with conducting objective audits, investigations and inspections and evaluations, as well as preventing and detecting fraud, waste and abuse. Within NSF's OIG, the Office of Investigations handles allegations of wrongdoing involving organizations or individuals that receive awards from, conduct business with, or work for NSF.

What do we do?

OIG investigators examine allegations in which NSF is the potential victim of fraud by employees, grantees, contractors, or others. We receive allegations from many sources, including proposal reviewers, agency employees, the OIG hotline, other OIG offices and the public. NSF regulations also require that we handle all allegations of research misconduct, in addition to allegations of fraud, waste and abuse. These allegations may lead to civil or criminal investigations.

Where can you get additional information?

Internet
oig.nsf.gov

Telephone
703 292-7100

OIG Anonymous Hotline
1-800-428-2189

Fax
703 292-9158/9159

Write
National Science Foundation
Office of Inspector General
4201 Wilson Boulevard
Arlington, VA 22230

E-mail Hotline
oig@nsf.gov

Report any possible research misconduct, fraud, waste, abuse, or mismanagement associated with NSF programs and operations to our office.

OIG Office of Investigations



Research Misconduct

What is Research Misconduct?

“Misconduct means fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism in proposing or performing research funded by NSF, reviewing research proposals submitted to NSF, or in reporting research results funded by NSF.” 45 C.F.R. §689.1

- Fabrication means making up data or results and recording or reporting them. 45 C.F.R. §689.1
- Falsification means manipulating research materials, equipment, or processes, or changing or omitting data or results such that the research is not accurately represented in the research record. 45 C.F.R. §689.1
- Plagiarism means the appropriation of another person’s ideas, processes or words without giving appropriate credit. 45 C.F.R. §689.1

How do we assess allegations?

The OIG investigator thoroughly examines allegations for possible violations of statutes, abuse of federal rules and regulations, or other actions that could compromise the integrity or effectiveness of NSF programs and operations.

Whenever possible, OIG also relies on the relevant professional community to evaluate the seriousness of alleged

misconduct based on its accepted standards and practices. To achieve this, we often refer investigations to the institution managing the award for evaluation.

After receipt of the institution’s report, we independently determine whether misconduct occurred. A finding of misconduct requires:

A significant departure from accepted practices

Misconduct that was committed knowingly, willingly or recklessly

Support for the allegation is proven by a preponderance of the evidence. 45 C.F.R. §689.1

OIG offers seminars on ethical conduct in research and compliance with Federal laws and regulations for faculty, administrators, and students.

How does NSF handle research misconduct

1. Investigation by OIG

Evaluate the complaint or allegation

Conduct inquiry

Refer investigations to institution receiving the award, conduct our own investigations, or both

Contact subject

Request comments on draft

investigation report from subject

Incorporate subject’s comments

and forward report to adjudicator with

recommendation to find misconduct by NSF

2. Adjudication by NSF’s Deputy Director

Evaluate investigation report and recommendations from OIG

Determine independently whether misconduct occurred

Provide subject with notice of proposed action and right to appeal

Close case or proceed to appeal

3. Assessment of Appeal to NSF’s Director

Evaluate merits of appeal

Make final determination

Who MUST report possible misconduct?

- NSF employees, all auditors, all institutions receiving NSF funds

Who else reports possible misconduct?

- Anonymous callers
 - Concerned citizens
 - Merit reviewers
 - Other Agencies
 - Staff
 - Post Doctoral Researchers
 - Principal Investigators
 - Students
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