



NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION  
OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL  
OFFICE OF INVESTIGATIONS

## CLOSEOUT MEMORANDUM

Case Number: A03030012

Page 1 of 1

Our office received an allegation that falsified letters of support were submitted in conjunction with an NSF proposal.<sup>1</sup> Identical letters of support were submitted to NSF with a similar proposal<sup>2</sup> one year earlier. Comparing the two sets of support letters, they appear identical except that the dates were changed on the letters accompanying the most recent NSF proposal. This made it appear that the original letters of support had been altered to make them appear to be more recently written.

We wrote to the subject who confirmed that the dates had been changed on the letters. The subject took "full responsibility" but claimed that his former graduate student was responsible for assembling the most recent proposal and had apparently changed the dates on the support letters to make them appear more recent. The subject also provided evidence that his collaborator was responsible for obtaining the original letters of support and had provided the subject with an email stating that the letters of support were still valid for the more recent proposal.

We were unable to contact the former graduate student to confirm the subject's explanation. We confirmed with the institution that the graduate student had been enrolled at the institution and worked under the direction of the subject. The institution also confirmed that the graduate student had left the university and returned to his home abroad. No forwarding address was available.

Our conclusion is that the dates on the letters of support submitted with the original proposal were altered to make them appear more timely with the submission of the more recent proposal. We were unable to determine if the graduate student was responsible for the falsification, as claimed by the subject, as he has left the country. The subject is ultimately responsible for the content of the proposal and has accepted full responsibility for the alleged actions of his graduate student.

We wrote a letter to the subject reminding him of his responsibility regarding the entire content of any proposal submitted to NSF and the potential ramifications should falsified documents be found in future proposals he submits. Accordingly, this case is closed and no further action will be taken.

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