



NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION
OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
OFFICE OF INVESTIGATIONS

CLOSEOUT MEMORANDUM

Case Number: I-18-0080-O

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We received an allegation that a graduate student fabricated data for her dissertation. The graduate student provided her thesis committee with a draft dissertation that contained a figure plotting experimental data with error bars. One of the committee members thought the small size of the error bars indicated a precision beyond which data could be measured by equipment in that lab. The member questioned the graduate student about the experiment and resulting data, including the error bars. The graduate student admitted to making up the error bars but not the underlying data and immediately removed all those data from her draft dissertation.

The allegation was referred to the University's Research Integrity Officer (RIO), who interviewed the graduate student and her advisor. The RIO concluded an inquiry was not warranted. The graduate student graduated and left the University. The allegation was then sent to us for consideration.

We conducted an inquiry and concluded that the totality of facts do not warrant further investigation. We sent a Questionable Research Practice letter to the subject, informing her of the need to maintain the integrity of the research record and advising her of possible ramifications of research misconduct. This case is closed with no further action taken.