



NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION
OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
OFFICE OF INVESTIGATIONS

CLOSEOUT MEMORANDUM

Case Number: I-04070026

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On 23 July 2004, OIG Office of Investigations received a referral from OIG Office of Audits as a result of its audit work on NSF's Visiting Personnel. The Visiting Scientist Engineer and Educator (VSEE) program permits a scientist to stay at NSF for a term of one year with an option for a second year extension. The VSEE must take a leave of absence from his/her home institution to become a Federal employee during the appointment. The agency pays the VSEE's salary and expenses based on a "Compensation Certification" form completed by someone at his/her home institution.

The audit revealed inconsistencies in a VSEE's (subject)¹ salary certification. The auditor also questioned the authenticity of the compensation certification form received from the institution² with which the subject claimed affiliation.

OIG requested the personnel file for review and contacted the institution of record to obtain documentation to verify the subject's employment. It was determined that the subject held a "Graduate Faculty" appointment at the institution which permitted interaction with graduate students but was neither an actual position nor one which entitled him to compensation. This presented a problem for NSF because one of the criteria for eligibility is that the VSEE has to have a home institution to return to after the appointment has expired. Additionally, this position must carry compensation (full/part-time). Since the "Graduate Faculty" appointment held by the subject was not an actual position and did not require compensation, the subject was not eligible for the VSEE program during the second year extension.

OIG interviewed NSF staff³ in the Human Resources Management Division responsible for processing both the initial VSEE appointment and the subsequent extension. OIG interviewed the university official⁴ who completed the compensation certification for the subject (2nd year extension). And finally, OIG interviewed the subject of the investigation to ascertain the events surrounding the second year appointment.

After reviewing all information available and interviewing all personnel involved with the subject's appointment at NSF, it is clear that the subject gained financially⁵ from being in the VSEE program when he was not actually eligible; however, we cannot substantiate the intention of the subject to defraud NSF. Accordingly, this case is closed.

¹ footnote redacted

² footnote redacted

³ footnote redacted

⁴ footnote redacted

⁵ footnote redacted