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During the second half of the previous fiscal year (FY), the National Science Foundation (NSF) disagreed with its Office of Inspector General's (OIG) recommendation to debar two investigators who committed research misconduct, defined as fabrication, falsification or plagiarism.^[1]

Debarment is the most severe administrative option open to NSF, which determines sanctions if it agrees with OIG's recommendations that misconduct occurred.

Instead of debarment, NSF typically issues a letter of reprimand, requires interactive training in the responsible conduct of research (RCR), and prohibits service as a peer reviewer or other type of advisor or consultant to the agency. It also mandates that individuals and any institution with which they are associated take steps to ensure the integrity of any future NSF-funded research or supported projects through certifications and assurances. These requirements can be in effect for one year or multiple years. On occasion, they are in place for a period following the conclusion of debarment.

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