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## **Best Practices in Grant Writing and Text Recycling**

This document is to help address some questions and concerns about text recycling in grant applications. Our researchers at Ball State work on complex problems that may be separated into different projects to accomplish one larger goal. This may result in grants that have common literature review and methodology areas. In reviewing plagiarism in grant writing, The National Science Foundation (NSF) found it to occur 1% - 1.5% in an internal study of received grants (Mervis 2013). In another study looking at 800,000 grant applications to 5 different agencies, 167 duplicates were found and potentially 12,441 pairs of grants contained some form of text recycling (Garner, McIver and Waitzkin 2013). So what is text recycling? Is text recycling ethical or acceptable to use in our submissions?

Definition of Text Recycling (updated January 2020), taken from [textrecycling.org](http://textrecycling.org)

*Text recycling is the reuse of textual material (prose, visuals, or equations) in a new document where (1) the material in the new document is identical to that of the source (or substantively equivalent in both form and content), (2) the material is not presented in the new document as a quotation (via quotation marks or block indentation), and (3) at least one author of the new document is also an author of the prior document (TRRP 2020)*

- **Developmental recycling**
  - “The reuse of material from unpublished documents. This is common in research and generally considered acceptable.”
- **Generative recycling**
  - “The reuse of portions of a previously published document in a new work that makes an original intellectual contribution clearly distinct from that of the source. Whether it is ethical or legal depends on the specifics of the case.”
- **Adaptive publication**
  - “The republication of an entire document or of its central part(s), but modified to fit a different context. The new context may, for example, be different in the target audience (different language or expertise) or genre. Whether this is ethical or legal depends on obtaining publisher permission and transparency with editors and readers.
- **Duplicate publication**
  - “the publishing of a work that is the same in genre, content, and intended audience as a previously published source document. This is widely considered unethical; in

most publishing situations it would be illegal as well—whether as copyright infringement or a violation of author-publisher agreements.”

### **Developmental Recycling:**

Text recycling in things like workplace documents, internally, for IACUC, IRB protocols, grants, boilerplate language is perfectly acceptable in terms of describing the institution and certain methods as long as this is in the absence of other plagiarism issues (TRRP 2020, Roig 2015). In our use case, grant proposals in our institution could largely be categorized as unpublished work. Our current view and best practices on the topic include:

- Grant proposals are usually considered unpublished work and the researchers hold the copyrights in their work if it has not been published. Recycling in these cases has been both common and appropriate.
- Text recycling from unfunded proposals to a new agency with a new grant is acceptable
- Text recycling in funded grant application to a new or existing agency is generally acceptable as long as the main focus of the grant is different now, it is not looking to fund the exact same endeavor. Reusing some introductory and background literature material would be ok in these cases.
- Text recycling in which you are restating your research question from previously published papers do not have to be re-written or put in quotes in these contexts.
- Text recycling should be permitted in cases that need consistency in the language in order to make the most sense to readers. To describe methods, or statistics, these areas of a study may not have any changes although they are now used in a new study you are doing. In these cases, the changes may further alter the text in a way that can make it harder for readers to understand.
- BE TRANSPARENT. If not sure, indicate with a footnote that this contains recycled material. If there are any problems with this submission, changes can be requested. This transparency can solve most if not all of the problems encountered in this field.
- There are agency specific requirements (e.g. NIH). Find out if you are submitting a new grant or resubmission. Check for any other specific requirements regarding any resubmissions.
- Cannot resubmit after a second time. But can resubmit same and recycled materials for a new NIH grant with a different focus in mind.

## Works Cited:

Garner, H. R., McIver, L. J., & Waitzkin, M. B. (2013). Research funding: Same work, twice the money? *Nature*, 493, 599-601.

Hall, S., Moskovitz, C., and Pemberton, M. 2021. Understanding Text Recycling: A Guide for Editors. Text Recycling Research Project. Online at [textrecycling.org](http://textrecycling.org)

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Mervis, J. (2013). NSF Audit of Successful Proposals Finds Numerous Cases of Alleged Plagiarism. *ScienceInsider*, March 8th, <http://news.sciencemag.org/2013/03/nsf-auditsuccessful-proposals-finds-numerous-cases-alleged-plagiarism>.