

RESEARCH ADMINISTRATION

GOT QUESTIONS?

Maestro? Budgeting? Proposals?

Allowable Costs? Cost Transfers? Payroll Issues?

SPONSORED RESEARCH SERVICES (SRS) HAS ANSWERS FOR YOU

AnSRS4U

Answers for you is SRS's new program for promoting engagement and research administration learning.

Welcome to AnSRS4U

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Due to COVID-19, Presentations are offered remotely via Zoom

Join our Listserv to get updates on **AnSRS4U** presentations and other important research administration news. E-mail AnSRS4U@tamu.edu or Rachel Vaughn at rvaughn@tamu.edu to be added to the group.



Texas A&M Sponsored Research Services

COVID-19 Questions and & Answers Regarding Sponsored Research

Update From Kristi Billinger, SRS Executive Director on how SRS is continuing to operate during the COVID-19 Pandemic



Questions / Answers



Question: How can I reach my SRS contact?

Answer: As with other units, some SRS staff will be working remotely. They will still respond to emails and voicemail as normal.



Question: Will there be extensions on due dates for NIH competitive renewals of an existing award?

Answer: That depends -- Late proposals may be accepted. The latest information from NIH is:

NIH will consider whether to accept late applications on a case-by-case basis. NIH (NOT-OD-20-082). Note that a later notice (NOT-OD-20-091) states that all grant applications submitted late for due dates between March 9, 2020 and May 1 2020 will be accepted through May 1, 2020, but that late applications received after May 1, 2020 may not be reviewed until the Jan. 2021 council round. NOT-OD-20-091 also states that the above applies to applications reviewed by CSR (Center for Scientific Review) and does not supersede the IC's (Institute/Center's) discretion. It would be best to check with your program officer about the timing of your renewal application. If your renewal is late and not reviewed in a timely manner, it could mean an interruption of funding. So best to check before submitting.

Question: Are there changes in SRS policies about proposal submission during this time?

Answer: SRS is operating in a “business as usual” mode. While most staff are working remotely, they are available via e-mail and phone to assist with proposal submission, project management, and other SRS functions. So there are really no changes in SRS policy. We are here to help.



Question: Some of the COVID-19 proposal opportunities require very fast turnaround times. Will SRS help me with those or should I just submit on my own?

Answer: If you need help, contact your SRS Proposal Administrator for guidance. We do not want you to miss an opportunity. We are giving priority to COVID-19 proposals.

For any contact at SRS, remember to check the “My Contact” section on our website, <https://srs.tamu.edu/>.



Question: Can a principal investigator working remotely during self-isolation charge salary/effort on a federal grant?

Answer: Yes, as long as the investigator remains engaged in the project. NIH and NSF prior approval requirements regarding disengagement from the project for three (3) months or more, and effort reductions of 25 percent or more, remain in effect.



Question: How to handle the canceled airfare that was intended for grants but has been refunded as airline credits. How are we handling these expenses for all types of grants?

Answer: It Depends. Several scenarios will be discussed.



Question: For a canceled conference airfare, will those expenses need to be coded C19 in Ref A in Concur when routing? Based on what I see the expense is allowable to charge to the grant, I am just unsure if the code is needed. Since C19 in Ref A will be reported to FEMA and could possibly be reimbursed. The airfare was charged but a credit was given for future use and they intend on using it for the future conference when it is allowed again.

Answer: Yes, per member guidance, please put the C19 designation on Concur reports that contain cancelled airfare due to COVID-19.



Question: Are sponsors of projects with end dates between now and August going to give an automatic extension, and if so, for how long?

Has NIH given consideration to permitting institutions to give a blanket notification to NIH regarding an institution's status vis-à-vis COVID-19 restrictions and the impact on grant activities?

Answer: NIH is requiring institutions to notify NIH of problems, delays or adverse conditions related to COVID-19 on a grant-by-grant basis.

NIH has issued specific guidance stating that RPPRs due within the next 90 days should include a description of any COVID-19 effects and impact on research outcomes, as well an outline of when recipients believe they will be able to include more detail about disruption to research efforts.



Question: One of our PIs responded to a subaward invoice review by saying "COVID19 delays everything nowadays. How can I certify such a statement as below?"

Our normal requested response is “I certify these costs were incurred to conduct research and are properly chargeable to the project listed above. All deliverables or reports required to date have been received and are acceptable. The work is currently on schedule and I am not aware of any delays or potential delays.”

Answer: New Certification language: “To the best of my knowledge, I certify these costs were incurred to conduct research and are properly charged to the referenced project. All deliverables or reports required to date have been received and are acceptable. COVID-19 may have adversely impacted the productivity of the work but I am unaware of delays or potential delays due to other reasons.”



Question: Will NIH permit the carry-over of trainee support funds under the COVID-19 flexibilities afforded by NOT-OD-20-086, Flexibilities Available to Applicants and Recipients of Federal Financial Assistance Affected by COVID-19?

Answer: NIH will permit carry-over of trainee support funds as part of the flexibilities it has extended concerning training, fellowship and career development awards. NOT-OD-20-086 states that “recipients may extend awards affected by COVID-19” by notifying the funding Institute or Center (IC).



Resources

- DOR website: <https://vpr.tamu.edu/covid-19>
- OMB Memo M-20-17 Administrative Relief for Recipients Affected by COVID-19 Due to Loss of Operations
 - Provides flexibility in the administration of grants
- Council of Governmental Relations (COGR)
 - <https://www.cogr.edu/institutional-and-agency-responses-covid-19-and-additional-resources>
 - <https://www.cogr.edu/cogrs-faqs-and-resources-covid-19s-impact-federal-awards>
 - Agencies Implementation letters/guidance
 - COGR's Federal Agency Guidance Matrix

Thank You for Your Participation

Remember SRS is here to support the PIs and the research administration staff. Information and guidance is evolving. Please feel free to contact SRS with your questions as we are all in this together.

Feel free to provide SRS with your suggestions for future topics. Email AnSRS4U@tamu.edu

