

PRINCETON UNIVERSITY

Office of Research and Project Administration
Sponsored Research Accounting

To: Department Administrators supporting Sponsored Research Projects

From: Elizabeth H. Adams, Director, Office of Research and Project Administration
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Subject: Guidance for Sponsored Research Projects Impacted by COVID-19

Date: June 15, 2020

Dear Colleagues,

We hope this email finds you and your loved ones healthy and adapting to this remote environment.

As we head into the summer, we are reaching out to highlight University guidance on the management of sponsored programs during COVID-19. This guidance is designed to promote consistent treatment, documentation, and oversight of sponsored program expenditures in support of the [unprecedented flexibilities currently authorized by federal agencies on federal grants](#), including the allowability of non-productive personnel time and non-refundable costs associated with the cancellation of in-person events and travel. Here's what you need to know:

GUIDANCE ON THE TREATMENT OF NON-PRODUCTIVE TIME:

- The University established a [policy and procedure](#) to ensure consistent treatment of non-productive personnel time across *all* funding sources, sponsored (federal and non-federal) and non-sponsored, as required by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB).
- Non-productive time is defined as *the inability to provide any documentable progress in support of the research aims on an award*, either remotely or on-campus.
- Until further notice, salaries representing both productive and non-productive time of individuals committed and charged to a sponsored project as of March 13, 2020 **CAN** continue to be charged to the same project, provided there is no break in service.
- Existing commitments/charges of salaries for non-productive individuals **CANNOT** be increased on sponsored projects.
- Salaries **CANNOT** be transferred to an existing or new sponsored project, if an individual will be non-productive on that award. This includes faculty and graduate student summer salaries.

GUIDANCE FOR DOCUMENTING THE EFFECTS OF COVID-19 ON SPONSORED PROJECTS:

- A [communication was sent to Principal Investigators dated June 5, 2020](#) strongly recommending they use their progress reports as the primary method of communication/documentation with their sponsors, both federal and non-federal, about the following:
 - programmatic progress/non-progress
 - financial impact related to costs associated with non-productive time and cancellation of in-person activities
 - related costs and time allocated to the phased reopening of research lab operations

- As appropriate, progress reports may demonstrate a negative programmatic and/or financial impact that the COVID-19 had on the project, and may assist Principal Investigators in requesting project extensions and/or potential supplemental funding due to lost progress, as well as justifying costs in future audits.
- Departments should maintain internal documentation (*e.g., attempts to obtain refunds/credits, attachments in Concur, cost transfers, etc.*) to support cancellation costs related to events, travel, or other activities necessary and reasonable for the performance of the award.

RESOURCES:

- ORPA's website [FAQs](#) continue to be updated with current information as available.
- [Phased Resumption of On-Campus Research](#) – Princeton University has created a plan for the phased resumption of on-campus laboratory-based research in a safe and orderly manner.

LIST-SERVs:

We encourage you to subscribe to both the ORPANews and SRA list-servs to receive up to date information regarding the management of sponsored research. To subscribe:

- [ORPANews](#) – listserv.
- Send an email to sra@princeton.edu to be added to the SRA Department Contact listserv.

UPCOMING PRESENTATION:

- COVID-19 and its Impact on Sponsored Research Expenditures – June 24, 2020 at 10:00 am.
Please register to attend through the [Employee Learning Center](#), Training by Department/ORPA.

Please continue to reach out to your ORPA and SRA administrators with questions and monitor the Princeton and ORPA websites for updates as we receive current guidance from our sponsors.

Best regards,

Elizabeth and Glynis