

FAQs for Grants/Sponsored Projects Affected by COVID-19

Is the Office of Research Administration open and providing services?

Yes, ORA is continuing to provide services but with minimal staff on campus. We appreciate your patience as we adapt to working remotely. The main telephone number (601-266-4119) is monitored (but you might need to leave a message), and staff are responding to phone calls and email.

What if cancelled travel is related to my grant/sponsored project?

Follow all university policies and procedures for cancelled travel. **Refunds** must be credited to the sponsored project if that project provided the source of funds. **Cancellation costs** may be charged to the sponsored project with full documentation. If the sponsor later disallows the cost, it will have to be moved to another source of funds. If you receive **credit for future travel** rather than a refund, the cost for travel must be moved to another source of funding. If you later use the credit on travel for the same or a different sponsored project, the cost may be transferred to that project with full documentation and waiver of the 90-day cost transfer policy.

I am unable to meet a proposal deadline due to COVID-19.

Discuss your specific situation with your ORA Grants and Contracts Coordinator or Administrator. Some sponsors have existing policies that address special circumstances, some sponsors have extended their deadlines, and some are making accommodations on an individual basis.

I am working on my research remotely. Can I still charge my effort and project staff to my project?

Yes. As long as you and the project staff are working on your project you may charge effort. The sponsor's policies and federal regulations still apply.

I am home sick due to the virus. Can I charge sick leave to my project?

In general, yes. USM's F&A rate agreement allows direct charging of sick leave and vacation time.

What about paid administrative leave? Where do I charge that?

Anyone who is being paid from a sponsored project should continue to charge their leave (administrative, sick, vacation) to the sponsored project. It's possible some sponsors might disallow it later, and we will address individual projects as needed.

Do I need to keep activity records for people working on funded projects?

Yes, it is highly recommended. Besides the usual time approvals for USM purposes, you should have records showing what work was accomplished while working remotely. It is especially important for staff who are sometimes working and sometimes on administrative leave. USM's "Remote Work Log" form can be used or adapted for this purpose. Contact your HR Partner if you need this form.

Salary charges are eating up my budget and I might not have enough funding to produce required deliverables.

Contact ORA to review the award agreement to determine contractual obligations and options, if any, for “force majeure” situations. Then we can determine next steps.

I am working from home. Can I charge supplies such as a laptop, printer, and paper to my grant?

These types of administrative costs are generally not allowable charges on a grant unless specifically approved by the sponsor.

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How do I handle all the paper forms for expenses?

You can scan and email documents to the appropriate office. Or you can complete the paper form as usual, but keep in mind that it might take longer than usual since each office involved has to coordinate with staff working remotely.

I have a question that is not addressed here. Who do I contact?

Call the Office of Research Administration at 601-266-4119 or send an email to sponsoredprograms@usm.edu. Marcia Landen, Associate Vice President for Research, is also available at 601-266-4123 or Marcia.Landen@usm.edu.