



Department of Energy

Office of Science
Washington, DC 20585

March 13, 2020

MEMORANDUM FOR APPLICANTS AND AWARDEES

FROM: CHRIS FALL
DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF SCIENCE

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SUBJECT: Accommodating Interruptions from Coronavirus Disease 2019
(COVID-19)

As the Department of Energy and Office of Science (SC) continue to monitor and examine the ongoing developments and impacts of the COVID-19 outbreak in the U.S. and internationally, we provide this update regarding associated disruptions that may have impacts on the research community. This guidance may be updated as circumstances change.

The Office of Science is assessing its current soliciations that have due dates that occur through mid-April to make a determination on extensions to those due dates. Please check the specific Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) or DOE Laboratory Announcement for the most up-to-date information.

A list of all FOAs and DOE Laboratory Announcements may be found at <https://science.osti.gov/grants/FOAs/Open>, and <https://science.osti.gov/grants/Lab-Announcements/Open>, respectively.

The Office of Science extends the following flexibilities to its applicants and awardees:

Applicants preparing a pre-application, letter of intent, or application:

If the lead principal investigator (PI) or the applicant institution are subject to a quarantine or a closure, deadlines for submitting pre-applications, letters of intent, or applications may be extended by no more than fourteen (14) days from the applicable due date. **Please contact the Program Manager identified in the FOA or DOE Laboratory Announcement under which the pre-application, letter of intent, or application is being submitted prior to the applicable due date.**

Awardees preparing progress reports:

If the lead principal investigator (PI) or the applicant institution are subject to a quarantine or a closure, progress reports for grants, cooperative agreements, and interagency awards may be submitted through the PAMS website at

<https://pamspublic.science.energy.gov> as soon as practicable. Note that delays in submitting progress reports may cause unavoidable delays in continuation funding.

PIs from DOE National Laboratories should contact their program manager if there will be a delay in submitting progress reports.

Applicants and awardees preparing revised budgets or public abstracts:

If the principal investigator (PI) or the applicant institution are subject to a quarantine or a closure, revised budgets and public abstracts may be submitted through the PAMS website at <https://pamspublic.science.energy.gov> as soon as practicable. Note that delays in submission may cause unavoidable delays in making awards.

Awardees with changed travel plans:

The Office of Science will not consider changes to planned travel caused by the cancellation of meetings, quarantines, closures, or other public health measures to be a change in the scope of an award requiring agency prior approval. Rebudgeting funds that does not create a change in scope does not require agency prior approval.

If a meeting has been cancelled, awardees must follow their institutional travel policies to determine whether costs may be charged to an award. If institutional policy permits travelers to purchase nonrefundable items (airfare, lodging, or other) and does not require travelers to reimburse the institution for change or cancellation fees, such fees may be charged to an award. If institutional policy prohibits the purchase of nonrefundable travel or travelers are required to reimburse the institution for change or cancellation fees, such fees may not be charged to an award.

Please review the attached Q&As. You are encouraged to contact the Administrative Contact for the FOA/Laboratory Announcement or your Program Manager with any concerns or questions regarding your circumstances.

Questions and Answers (Q&As):

Q: The scientific conference my lab group was scheduled to attend has been cancelled. Can our costs be reimbursed?

A: Yes, if your institutional travel policy:

- a. Permits the purchase of nonrefundable travel, and
- b. Does not require reimbursing the institution for change or cancellation fees.

Priority should be on costs incurred by students and postdocs, not by their departments.

Q: My institution told all employees to work from home. May I request an extension to a deadline?

A: Working from home—while it may introduce some complications—should not make it impossible to complete work or meet deadlines. If closure or remote access orders by your institution has occurred within a week of the deadline, please contact your Program Manager.

Q: My Sponsored Research Office has been closed. How do I request a deadline extension?

A: Please contact your Program Manager and include a copy of the closure order or other official notification.

Q: My Vice President for Research, who customarily signs all applications, has been quarantined. What should I do?

A: Please work with your Sponsored Research Office to determine how your institution is handling the situation. If your institution has established delegations of authority or if your Vice President for Research is capable of electronic signatures, there should be no impact on your ability to submit an application. However, if submitting an application is impossible, please contact your Program Manager.

Q: Our postdoc was quarantined after visiting family overseas. Our experiment has fallen behind schedule. Will this delay impact our continuation funding?

A: Please explain the situation—without disclosing protected personally identifiable information—in your progress report. SC may need to modify an award to be a prudent steward of taxpayer funds by delaying access to continuation funds, but SC's interest is in seeing the research results—even if it takes longer than originally expected.

Q: What information should I include in a request for a deadline extension?

A: Please include official confirmation of the closure, quarantine, or other incident that makes a timely submission impossible. An institutional declaration requiring staff telework, in and of itself, will not warrant a deadline extension. There must be further complications that make the original deadline impossible. Requests to extend a deadline must be made before the deadline. SC does not expect to support every request for an extension.

Q: May I submit a letter of intent, preproposal, proposal, or progress report before its deadline?

A: SC always encourages prompt and timely submissions. Progress reports may not be submitted more than one month before they are due.