

Frequently Asked Questions re: Managing the Financial Impacts of COVID-19

Updated as of April 21, 2020

A. Additional FAQs since April 10 Communication

I. Hiring and Compensation Freeze

What is the guidance around the hiring of Postdoctoral Researchers (PDR)? Is there a requirement that PDRs be 100% grant-funded, following the guidance around the hiring of staff?

The hiring of PDR is allowable when 100% grant-funded or funded with faculty start-up funds. Please provide a justification, including the faculty start-up account to which the PDR's salary will be charged, to the Provost's Office along with the request for these positions.

Can grant funds be used to provide compensation increases or promotions?

The compensation freeze applies to all positions, regardless of funding source. Allowing increases based on the position funding source has potential to create a campus-wide disparate impact. For graduate fellowships or postdoctoral researchers funded on external funds, salary increases in accordance with federal guidelines or requirements for the grant may be considered.

What is the guidance around the hiring of students? Is there a restriction on funding types that can be used to hire students?

Given the cyclical nature of student employment and the desire to keep our students financially supported, units may continue with student hiring if deemed critical by unit leadership. They may use any fund type for student employment, as long as it is within their budget.

Can temporary assignments be extended beyond the current policy of a one-year maximum?

No, there will be no change to the current policy and temporary assignments will continue to be limited to a one-year period.

For positions that already exist in Workday and were previously approved by the PPPC, how do we provide the additional information to demonstrate that they are 100% grant-funded or mission-critical, and should not be closed?

Central HR will provide Units with access to Excel spreadsheets containing posted staff, temporary staff and seasonal positions, by the end of April. Units will be asked to reassert that positions previously submitted indicating full grant funding are still 100% grant-funded. For positions that are not 100% grant-funded, Units will be asked to indicate if they request to leave the position open. For requests to leave positions open, the Unit must be able to assert that the position 1) supports significant external revenue generation, and/or 2) performs core operational duties whose absence would put the University at risk and cannot be absorbed by other staff/are of an expertise that is not replicated on campus. Units will have two weeks to populate their spreadsheets with appropriate responses. Central HR will communicate to each Unit once PPPC decisions are indicated on the Unit spreadsheet.

If I have unfilled positions that are neither grant-funded nor mission-critical, can I proceed to close the positions in Workday?

Yes, Units may close positions at their own discretion in advance of the mass effort. When closing a position in Workday, Units must be mindful of the need to appropriately disposition all active candidates on open requisitions attached to the closed position. Please use the following reason codes and template for any positions you close.

- Requisition close reason: Administrative > No Longer Recruiting Due to Covid-19
- Candidate disposition code: Job No Longer Available
- Candidate email template: Close/Cancel Requisition – Covid-19 Freeze

How will candidates be notified of position closings?

Messaging has been developed that will be emailed to active applicants when the requisition is closed.

What will happen to my unfilled positions in Workday that were never posted or approved by the PPPC (e.g., most temporary staff, seasonal)?

Unfilled positions that were never posted or routed for approval to the PPPC will be closed as part of the mass effort. If you have a temporary staff or seasonal hiring need, you must create a new position. The new position will route to PPPC for approval, who will apply the same criteria as staff positions (documented evidence of full grant funding or mission critical).

Are faculty start-up funds an allowable funding source for the hiring of postdoctoral researchers, lab managers, research associates, or other scientific staff to conduct research?

Faculty start-up funds are considered contractual obligations in that they are included in a faculty member's recruitment or retention package. As with all exceptions, these cases will need to be reviewed and considered carefully by unit leadership. Any request to hire new staff or postdoctoral researchers in accordance with these funding sources needs to be accompanied by the specific faculty start-up account where the position will be funded. In the case of staff positions funded from faculty start-up, this information should be clearly communicated through the fields in Workday during the submission process.

Are non-grant-funded faculty research accounts an allowable funding source for non-compensation related research support?

Unrestricted faculty research accounts may be used to support critical faculty research activities. Only expenses that are critical and essential should move forward. Units will be required to manage this in accordance with their budget target.

II. Budget and Cost Reductions

How should units interpret the guidance of 'discretionary spending will be suspended' from President Zimmer's April 7 communication?

Only essential spending will continue, and discretionary spending (catering, non-essential travel and conferences, etc.) should be paused. Adherence with this policy is up to the careful judgment of budget managers.