



## ASH Summary of NIH Guidance on Grants, Operations During COVID-19 Response

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) recently released a series of notices to help researchers and administrators manage grants-related obligations while their institutions respond to disruptions from COVID-19.

The [first notice is an updated announcement](#) about late applications:

- NIH will be highly accommodating of late applications submitted through May 1, 2020. It anticipates, but cannot guarantee, that all late applications submitted by that date will be reviewed in the council round to which they were submitted (e.g. August or October 2020).
- Applicants should assume that late applications submitted after May 1 may not be reviewed until meetings for the January 2021 council round (e.g., October-November 2020).

The [second notice](#) provides:

- Responses to frequently asked questions (FAQs) about managing proposals and awards in an emergency, such as the ability to recover expenses for travel or attending a conference that was unavoidably cancelled.
- Grant policies also allow for extensions in submitting required progress or financial reports, although prior approval may be needed depending on the circumstances.

The NIH also released:

[Flexibilities Available to Applicants and Recipients of Federal Financial Assistance Affected by COVID-19](#), which includes information on:

- Reimbursement of expenses and salaries on research projects:  
NIH understands that many researchers may be unable to work as a result of or related to the effects of COVID-19. If a recipient organization's policy allows for the charging of salaries and benefits during periods when no work is performed due to the effect of COVID-19, regardless of the funding source... then such charges to NIH grant awards will be allowable.

Additionally, the NIH released guidance regarding:

- [Flexibilities on NIH-funded clinical trials and human subject studies impacted by COVID-19](#)
- NIH encourages grant recipients to consult with their IRB and institutions about potential measures to protect participants and research staff

Institutional officials are advised to monitor [the agency's webpage, NIH Extramural Response to Natural Disasters and Other Emergencies](#), for further updates.

Like many organizations, NIH has curtailed staff travel and large meetings. It recently announced that grant review study sections, along with many other meetings, would be held "virtually" through telecommunications instead of in person. Many agency staff are also working remotely.