
COVID-19 Announcement 14 April 2020

The Covid-19 pandemic is rapidly evolving worldwide with restrictions that are having a big impact on our grant recipients. The Neurological Foundation is committed to supporting neurological research in these unprecedented times. We have created the following guidelines to give grant recipients time to plan their next steps without needing to submit contract variations immediately. We want to reassure current recipients that they can continue to receive salaries and pay for expenses, even if the research is on hold at the moment.

For contracts that will require variations, we would like to know which category the grant will most likely be in, by Friday 8 May 2020. Our Research Manager will email Principal Investigators (PIs), copying in their research office, and will simply request an email reply. For those who need to revise their research plan, we would like to receive the revision by Friday 29 May 2020. This will enable us to work with research offices on contract variations before the three-month extension period is up and address issues that may continue beyond three months.

2020 Grant Rounds

Travel grants are on hold until global travel restrictions are lifted. Conference and Training Course grants will be assessed on a case-by-case basis. Our grant rounds will continue and committees will review applications online.

Current Travel or Conference and Training Course grants

For 2019 Travel or Conference and Training Course grants that have not been able to be used due to the Covid-19 pandemic, PIs can apply for a contract variation to use this at a later date, or we can cancel the contract.

Category 1: Extended

Extend the dates of the contract to use the grant once restrictions are lifted

Category 2: Cancelled

Cancel the contract and reapply at a later date. This will be the best option if the original itinerary and quotes are not likely to apply at a later date

Awarded grants that have not yet started

For Neurological Foundation grants that have not yet started, PIs can delay the start date if the Covid-19 restrictions prevent the research from starting on time. If the grant includes a salary the original start date can still apply, even if the research is on hold, and we will extend the contract (including the salary) by three months.

Category 1: Delayed

Delay the start date of the contract till Covid-19 restrictions are lifted to the point where the project can begin

Category 2: Extended

Maintain the current start date and extend the length of the contract by three months. If the grant provides a salary, we will also extend the salary by three months

Current Fellowship and Scholarship grants

We have provided current fellowships and scholarships with a three-month contract extension, which includes a salary/stipend extension, so they can continue to receive their salary/ stipend even if the research is on hold at the moment.

Current Project and Small Project grants

We are offering a number of support options for projects affected by Covid-19 restrictions, which include contract extensions, budget extensions and changes to research plans. We will put together a special committee to review any significant changes to research plans. If the grant includes a salary, we will extend the contract (including the salary) by three months. Projects will probably fall into one of three broad categories, described below.

Category 1: Unaffected

The project can be completed within the current timeline and budget, possibly with some revisions to the research plan. No action required

Category 2: Suspended

The project is currently suspended, with minimal or no activity at this time.

PIs anticipate that the project will be able to resume once restrictions are lifted

Option 1: If the budget is for working expenses only, extend the contract and request funds for additional costs incurred due to the suspension, such as replacement supplies of expired reagents, animal housing costs during suspension, replacement participant costs

Option 2: If the budget includes salary or wages, extend the contract and the Foundation will provide an additional three months of salary/wages for those currently receiving salary/wages from the project budget. Funds can also be requested for additional costs incurred, as for Option 1

Category 3: Stopped

The project has stopped and cannot be resumed when restrictions are lifted. Instead, the project will need to start again at the beginning of the research plan or make significant revisions

Option 1: Prepare a revised research plan, including a new budget and timeline, for review by our committee. The project can continue to pay staff currently receiving salary/wages from the project budget, for up to 3 months after the project stops, to support the transition to the new research plan

Option 2: Project cancellations will be accepted if the research is not able to be restarted with existing funding for salary/wages available able to be used until 25 June 2020 to cover close down activities and redeployment of staff