



Office of the Vice Provost for Research

To: Penn Research Community
From: Dawn Bonnell, Vice Provost for Research
Missy Peloso, Associate Vice President & Associate Vice Provost Office of Research Services
Date: March 13, 2020
Re: **Questions related to coronavirus and the management of federal grants**

Please share this information with appropriate faculty and grants managers.

ORS is receiving many questions related to the allowability of charges to grants. While [NIH](#), [NSF](#) and other federal sponsors of research have launched websites related to COVID-19, the current information does not include special guidance for grant management at this time. While we await formal guidance beyond what is provided by grants policy, the following are suggested practices for Penn at this time.

Travel:

Airline cancellation fees and non-refundable hotel deposits: Air travel fees for trips cancelled as a result of meeting cancellations or travel restrictions should remain on the source to which they are currently charged. In the event that agency guidance is issued as expected that these charges are allowable grant expenses, they may be moved to the grant if currently on an unrestricted fund. If charges are currently on grant funds, they will need to be moved off the grant **if** agencies determine them to be unallowable.

Please work with conference organizers to follow up on any possible refunds of hotel deposits. Many larger conferences have insurance policies that may apply, and reasonable efforts should be made to attempt to recoup the costs.

Booking future travel: While we remain optimistic, it is most likely not prudent to book new non-refundable travel for grants related travel until the current travel restrictions are no longer in effect. As a reminder, the Uniform Guidance requirement is that travel costs are not more than the basic least expensive unrestricted accommodations class offered by the airline. While the basic refundable ticket is often much more expensive than the non-refundable lowest cost ticket, it is likely a better fare choice given the current uncertainty.

Salaries:

Salaries should be charged to grants so long as doing so is in compliance with Penn's HR policies related to coronavirus. Please see <https://www.hr.upenn.edu/PennHR/wellness-worklife/communicable-disease-health-and-safety/covid-19-guidance-for-managers> for specific guidance and helpful FAQs.

If you have specific questions, please reach out to your ORS contacts. Further updates will be provided as more information becomes available.