

Office of Research and Projects Guidance for Current Pandemic

Below are FAQs for those working on proposals for external funding and awarded projects as well as FAQs for ethical compliance, including human subjects and animal research.

ORP Pre-Award FAQs

If you do not find the answer to your question below or experience difficulties, email siueresearch@siue.edu or call x3010.

1. What is the schedule for ORP Pre Award staff/Are we still able to work on proposal with ORP Pre Award staff?

Research Associates assigned to support you will be working throughout the pandemic period identified by the University. The normal working schedule of 8:00 – 4:30 will be maintained unless you are notified of a different schedule from the Research Associate assigned to support you with pursuing your opportunity. Although some ORP Pre-Award staff may be working remotely, we will all be available to continue to meet your needs through Zoom meetings, emails and phone calls.

2. Do we have access to Kualu Research?

Kualu Research is a web-based program and will operate as usual. You may access it through the SIUE website if you are not on campus by searching for “KR” and logging in using your eId and password.

3. Will ORP still help me with Kualu Research, including creating the budget?

ORP Pre-Award remains ready to assist in whatever manner is needed to ensure a successful entry in Kualu Research. Research Associates will continue to enter your budget for you. If you need assistance, please contact the Research Associate that has been asked to support you in pursuing your opportunity or email siueresearch@siue.edu.

4. Can I include travel in my proposals that are being submitted?

At this time there are no limitations about what may be included in proposals. Please read the Request for Proposal carefully to ensure no restrictions have been placed on the opportunity you wish to pursue.

5. Will ORP still put together a collaborative team for me?

Yes, ORP Pre-Award services are available to establish a collaborative team for you. Email siueresearch@siue.edu or contact Diane Cox, extension 5886 diacox@siue.edu for assistance.

6. How can I meet with my collaborators to work on a grant that is due?

The Research Associate that has been assigned to you is happy to establish Zoom meetings or conference calls to assist you. Please contact your Research Associate for assistance.

7. How do I get in touch with my assigned ORP Pre-Award Research Associate for assistance with my grant application in process?

ORP Pre Award staff is maintaining regular working hours. Please reach out via phone or email and they will respond as soon as possible.

8. Will federal agencies be extending deadlines for submissions?

As information is available it will be distributed through ORP News and you will be contacted individually by the Research Associate that has been asked to support you with your submission.

9. How do I get my proposal successfully submitted that requires an AOR signature?

This process remains the same. Please work with the Research Associate that has been asked to support you in pursuit of the opportunity. What if I need the Associate Provost's REAL signature and not just his stamped signature?

Please work with your Research Associate to obtain needed signatures. There will always be someone in the office to obtain an actual signature if needed.

10. Are we still held to the 10-business-day routing window?

Yes, it is more important than ever to meet the 10-business-day routing window particularly if other universities are involved. Many universities' offices of sponsored projects are working under difficult conditions and may have difficulty in obtaining the necessary documents from your collaborators.

11. What do I do if I find an opportunity I want to pursue?

You may open a proposal in Quali Research and a Research Associate will be asked to contact you to determine what support you need to pursue the opportunity. If you are not yet ready to open a proposal in Quali Research, uncertain as to how to do that or just want to determine if you're eligible, please contact Diane Cox at extension 5886 or diacox@siue.edu for assistance.

12. Will the ORP face-to-face training sessions still take place?

Face-to-face training sessions will not be scheduled until the University resumes normal operations and face-to-face classes. Virtual trainings will be scheduled and announced through ORP News and on the internal program websites. Please contact Diane Cox at extension 5886 or diacox@siue.edu with any questions.

13. I've applied for the RET or STEP. What is happening with those submissions?

All RET and STEP proposals received within the prescribed timeline will be reviewed and a status of the proposal conveyed to the PI. The University committees responsible for reviewing these will meet remotely to make the recommendations for funding to the Associate Provost.

14. What if I want to pursue internal grant opportunities?

All Internal Grant opportunities require an online application through Quali Build and are not impacted by issues related to the current pandemic status. All signatures/approvals occur when the application routes so no action regarding obtaining signatures is needed by the applicant. It is important that the respective chair and dean are made aware of the application prior to receiving it electronically for review. The links to the electronic applications can be found on the respective webpage for each internal program.

Additional guidance is provided below for some programs.

- a. **Travel** – ORP will comply with the most current University guidelines regarding travel. Costs affiliated with virtual conferences are allowable requests under the travel guidelines.
- b. **NFIP** – No signatures are needed due to the use of the electronic application process, Quali Build. Please contact Diane Cox, Director of Grant Management, diacox@siue.edu to schedule the required meeting with the Director of Grant Development. This meeting will occur virtually.

ORP Post-Award FAQs

If you do not find the answer to your question below or experience difficulties, email siueresearch@siue.edu or call x3010.

Guidance is expected from all federal agencies in the near future. It is anticipated that many of the federal agencies will allow flexibility in allowable costs and provide extensions where necessary to complete your project and/or research. ORP is suggesting to refrain from non-essential expenditures on federal and federal flow through grants until further guidance from the federal agencies is received unless that would prevent the project from moving forward. If your project is ending in the near future, please contact your grant accountant to discuss if a no-cost extension is needed to complete your project.

1. A portion (or all) of my salary is currently being paid on an externally funded project; will I continue to get paid during the pandemic?

Yes, if you remain engaged in the project, including remotely, you will continue to get paid. If you are unable to continue working on the project, contact your PI, who will contact the grant accountant for guidance. As of March 16, 2020, there is no direct federal agency guidance. However, the White House Office of Management and Budget provided the following guidance to federal agencies.

Expenditure of award funds for salaries and other project activities.

Awarding agencies may allow recipients to continue to charge salaries and benefits to currently active Federal awards consistent with the recipient organization's policy of paying salaries (under unexpected or extraordinary circumstances) from all funding sources, Federal and non-Federal. Agencies may allow other costs to be charged to Federal awards, including those necessary to resume activities supported by the award, consistent with applicable Federal cost principles and the benefit to the project. Federal agencies may also evaluate the recipient's ability to resume the project activity in the future and the appropriateness of future funding, as done under normal circumstances, based on subsequent progress reports and other communications with the recipient.

2. I have students currently being paid on an externally funded project; will they continue to get paid during the pandemic?

See the separate University guidance regarding student workers and graduate assistants. The Principal Investigator is responsible for ensuring employees remains active and time is verified through payroll certifications.

3. I am supposed to travel on my grant; can I still travel?

No, the University has banned all non-essential travel for all university personnel. The National Institutes of Health (NIH) will allow non-refundable travel costs, cancelled due to the pandemic, to be charged to their grants. No other federal agencies have provided direction on travel.

4. I work in Head Start/Early Head Start. If my program is shut down, will I get paid?

The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) has deemed the coronavirus a disaster and thus covered under their General Disaster Recovery Flexibilities, issued 03/06/2019.

The department's disaster recovery guidance on salaries is as follows:

Staffing and Wages

Program staff and volunteers may have suffered personal and property losses because of the disaster. Employees may not be able to reach their work locations and centers may be closed for extended periods of time. Grantees should consider federal and state labor laws to determine whether they are required to compensate staff unable to work on account of inclement weather. The U.S. Department of Labor website provides helpful information about disaster related benefits and support: <https://www.dol.gov/general/hurricane-recovery>

Laid-off employees should be encouraged to apply for unemployment compensation benefits and any other financial assistance available to support dislocated workers. With tasks that can be performed off-site, employees may be allowed to temporarily work from home during the disaster recovery period. Employees who take on new job responsibilities during the disaster recovery period, such as contacting parents or cleaning up centers, can be paid their regular wages for such work. Reasonable amounts of overtime may be paid if necessary to support recovery activities. Employees and volunteers should engage in clean-up and other on-site recovery activities only with appropriate supervision and safety gear.

To facilitate the retention and availability for recall of employees when services resume, employees laid off on account of the disaster may be paid their regular wages (allocated for shared employees) from Head Start funds for up to two weeks (80 hours for hourly employees, one half of the regular monthly salary for salaried employees) if they are unable to engage in other employment activities, such as those noted above.

As of March 17th, the National Head Start hosted a webinar providing additional guidance and flexibility. Their overall guidance is to be reasonable, use common sense, and be creative during this extraordinary time. In order to maintain program continuity and retain staff, programs are asked to be creative in providing client services through other mediums (phone, email, social media, zoom conferences, etc..) as well as providing supplies (diapers, wipes, art projects, food, etc..) to clients. Being creative such as re-purposed staff or buses to deliver food and supplies will keep communication open and families connected to these much needed services. Program Managers must work hard to provide creative solutions to continue to provide services. Employees are expected to contribute to these creative solutions and will be paid through April 30th to help retain staff until the programs can be safely reopened.

Special permission has been given to pay our needed Head Start collaborators, reserving our client slots, and to protect our relationships making sure they are ready when the programs can safely reopen.

There is no expectation to recruit eligible children to the program or hire program staff at this time. Those functions will resume once the program has been re-opened. Please pay close attention to those that are homeless, the program is expected to be creative and help those that are most vulnerable in our communities.

5. Given everything happening, I may not be able to meet my deliverables on time; what do I do?

Contact your grant accountant to discuss options, such as asking the sponsor for a revised timeline or a no-cost extension.

6. I have a non-federal grant; what additional guidance is there for me?

Grants that are not federally funded sometimes have more flexibility in deadlines and outcomes. These will be taken on a case-by-case basis, so please work with your grant accountant to ensure your grant remains financially compliant. If your project is ending in the near future, please let ORP and your grant accountant know as soon as possible.

7. What do I do if I am overseeing internships sponsored by agencies?

ORP recommends contacting the sponsors to ensure that the sponsors are still able to provide work for the student and contacting the students to ensure they are still planning to work. Contracts that place graduate assistants or student workers at area organizations should be fulfilled as SIUE is contractually obligated. If any student cannot fulfill their obligation, please let your grant accountant know as soon as possible so they can reach out to the sponsor to work out alternative arrangements. See also the separate guidance provided by the University regarding GAs and student workers.

ORP Ethical Compliance FAQs

If you do not find the answer to your question below or experience difficulties, email researchcompliance@siue.edu or call x3010.

1. Is CITI training still available?

Yes, CITI continues to be available for faculty and students to complete required training, including for human subjects research, research with animals, responsible conduct of research, and export control.

2. Can I still conduct human subjects research?

Yes, however note the following.

- IRB Protocol reviews and notifications of approval will continue as usual using the Quali Research for exempt and expedited reviews. As we may be unable to conduct full-board reviews during this time, the IRB will work to be as timely as possible when things return to normal.
- The IRB recommends, when possible, those conducting research with human subjects move from face-to-face contact with participants to electronic contact.
 - a) Surveys can be conducted via Qualtrics.
 - b) Interviews can be conducted via Zoom, Skype or over the phone.
 - c) Recruiting can be done via Amazon MTurk or email.

- d) Depending on the research, subjects could be consented using an Oral/Internet-Based Informed Consent. In these cases, you would want to include consent statements (with 'I AGREE'/'I DISAGREE' checkboxes) at the end of the form.

Please note: You must amend your previously approved protocol, via Kual Research, and these changes will need to be approved by the IRB before you can implement them.

3. Can I still conduct research with animals?

Yes, however note the following.

- Live laboratory animals must be cared for daily as usual. Contact researchcompliance@siue.edu or call x3010 immediately if you are unable to care for the animals.
- Animal Care Protocol submission will continue as usual using Kual Research. All animal care protocol reviews must be done by the full board of the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC). As this may not be feasible to do during this time, the IACUC will work to be as timely as possible.

4. Can I still do my research with biohazardous materials?

Yes, if you experience any issues, contact the IBC Chair, Dr. Tom Fowler at tfowler@siue.edu or ORP at researchcompliance@siue.edu or x3010.immediately.

5. Can I still disclose conflicts of interest and commitment?

Yes, Kual Research is available online.

6. Can I still request to use unmanned aerial systems?

Yes, you can submit the documents via email for review.