



## UNC CHARLOTTE

### Vice Chancellor for Research and Economic Development

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## MEMORANDUM

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**TO:** UNC Charlotte Deans, Associate and Assistant Deans, Department Chairs and Directors, and Research Administration Advisory Council

**FROM:** Richard A. Tankersley, Ph.D.  
Vice Chancellor for Research and Economic Development

**SUBJECT:** COVID-19 Guidance for Supporting Personnel on Sponsored Awards

**DATE:** 3/27/2020

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As we continue to respond and adapt to the COVID-19 outbreak, UNC Charlotte is committed to continuing the paid work-status of students and staff supported by sponsored research grants and contracts, regardless of the work location or schedule. Although on-campus research has been scaled back to essential research activities, faculty are encouraged to transition members of their research team, especially those supported on external awards, to activities that can be done remotely and still contribute to the project.

To help universities and researchers cope with the disruption caused by the pandemic, most federal sponsors, including the NSF, NIH, DOJ, DOE, and DOD, have issued statements allowing for the continued charges of salaries and benefits from awards as long as the charges are consistent with the university's policy on paying salaries under extraordinary circumstances. Therefore, in certain qualifying circumstances, students and staff supported on federal grants may be eligible for [COVID-19 Administrative Leave](#) paid from the award. Individuals supported by non-federal sponsors, including state and local agencies and governments, may also qualify for the same paid leave if the terms of the award or contract permit it.

Given that the guidance from agencies and sponsors changes regularly, PIs are strongly encouraged to **carefully document the effort and time expended by individuals in support of their grants**. As we continue to receive notifications from sponsors, we will update our guidance on how to best handle salaries, stipends, and benefits for staff and students. For now, we recommend the following options for paying and supporting full and part-time employees on **federal awards**:

1. If the individual is working remotely and contributing to the project, then their salary and benefits (including tuition) should continue to be charged to the grant.

2. If the individual cannot contribute to their current project but can contribute to another sponsored project, their salary and benefits should be moved to that funding source.
3. If the individual is supported on an award from a federal sponsor but they are unable to contribute to the project because of (a) childcare or eldercare facility closings, (b) their work cannot be performed remotely and reasonable alternate remote work is not possible, or (c) they are unable to work due to cold, flu, or COVID-19 symptoms or are caring for someone with symptoms from these illnesses, they may qualify for COVID-19 Administrative Leave.

Policies governing **non-federal awards** may differ from the guidance provided by federal sponsors. PIs are encouraged to contact their College Research Office or Grants and Contracts Administration to review the terms of their award to determine which of the options listed above may apply.

PIs are **strongly discouraged** from making changes to existing employment contracts for staff or students supported on sponsored awards. Such changes, including ones triggered by the suspension or cancellation of a research grant or contract, will require approval from the PI's supervisor (Chair, Unit Head, or Dean) and the Vice Chancellor for Research and Economic Development.