



Covid update - June 2021

Guidance for Carnegie RIG recipients whose grant-funded research continues to be affected by the pandemic

Despite the lifting of some restrictions, many Carnegie grant holders are continuing to experience challenges as a result of the pandemic the Covid 19 pandemic, both in their professional and personal lives. While some Principal Investigators have been able to progress their work in recent months or weeks, many others are still waiting for conditions to improve to be able to resume or even start their research. This guidance document provides further information on how the Carnegie Trust aims to help recipients of Carnegie Research Incentive Grants manage their awards, particularly in those cases where it is becoming apparent that projects cannot run as originally planned.

If you had to delay the start of your Carnegie RIG

If you are unable to start the grant and the associated research activities by the agreed date, you should email the Trust **before** the agreed start date to discuss options. These could include delaying the start for a further 12 months or amending the project so it can run safely.

If your project start date has already been delayed by 12 months, you can email the Trust to request a further postponement up to July 2022. Please note that the Trust cannot guarantee that it will be able to delay grants beyond July 2022 but we will continue to monitor the situation.

If you are able to restart research suspended by the pandemic

If circumstances allow you to restart your research activities, you may need an extension to the end date of your grant. If that is the case, please email us a short description of the research plan and a new end date **before** you restart your research. A revised budget should also be submitted at the same time if you wish to re-allocate funds to different budget headings. You should assume a maximum expenditure of no more than that originally awarded.

Delays and no-cost extensions

The Trust continues to offer no cost extensions to reschedule research activities but **not** for dissemination activities. If it is unlikely that you will be able to finish the planned research within the originally agreed timeframe, please email us **at least one month before** the grant expires to discuss an extension.

Changing the original plans, focus or repurposing a grant

Recently, a small number of PIs have approached us to request a change in the focus of their project that would enable them to pursue alternative research plans. If conditions relating to the pandemic do not allow you to conduct your research as envisaged in the original application, the Trust will consider a request to change the planned research or focus of the grant, or to repurpose it to a different research project which is viable under current conditions.

To request such a change, please email us with the following information:

- A detailed plan (max 2 pages of A4) for the alternative research project which should explain the

- purpose, scope and topic of the proposed project/alternative plans
- rationale for the proposed changes
- feasibility of the project, including a description of the proposed research methodology
- planned outputs and outcomes.
- A timetable for completion over a period of up to 12 months
- A revised budget (within the originally awarded level of funding) with a narrative explaining the changes

Such requests will be handled on a case-by-case basis. The Trust reserves the right to seek the input from senior reviewers among its Carnegie Research Assessors as to the relevance and feasibility of proposed new plans.

Budget changes

Transferring funds between budget headings

As research activities are rescheduled or adapted to new or ongoing restrictions linked to the global pandemic, you can transfer funds under different budget headings as the need arises. In addition, if you have paid costs for an event, fieldwork or travel which has been cancelled, and these costs cannot be reimbursed or claimed for under insurance, you may claim these against your grant. If you then need to rebook an event, fieldwork or travel at a later date, these costs can also be charged to your grant, offset by savings elsewhere.

NOTE:

- We expect researchers to be flexible and cover costs within the existing budget, in the first instance. Do email us to confirm any budget changes you have made or would like to make.

Dissemination budget

If your grant includes a budget for dissemination activities such as conference attendance, stakeholder workshops, or public engagement events which were cancelled or are unlikely to be held before the end of the grant, you can redirect the funding to cover research costs. You can also use the funds towards publication costs, including open access charges, within the limit of the original dissemination budget listed in the award letter.

NOTES:

- It is not possible to extend the grant period for the sole purpose of attending a conference or holding a KE or Public Engagement event.
- Transfers that lead to increases in expenditure on dissemination are not permitted.

Supplementary funding

In exceptional circumstances, the Trust may consider supplementing the existing award if the research activities have been adversely affected by the COVID-19 outbreak and the existing grant budget does not provide sufficient flexibility for the research activities to continue. Example scenarios include:

Animal maintenance costs

We will consider requests for animal maintenance costs for the period of disruption when laboratories were closed where work carried out before the start of the lockdown has to be repeated.

Travel costs

Where travel arrangements had to be cancelled and no refund is available or costs could not be claimed against insurance the Trust will consider additional support where it cannot be found within the awarded funds.

Increased costs

Additionally, we will consider requests where costs have increased as a result of the pandemic and there is a significant shortfall between the original costings and current prices.

Salary costs of Research Assistants or Technicians employed on a Research Incentive Grant

Where the existing award included the salary of costs of an RA or technician, the Trust will consider requests for additional funding if this staff member was:

- furloughed during the grant period and there is a shortfall between the amount paid out under the UK Government furlough scheme and the actual salary costs originally budgeted in the proposal;
- unable to work due to the closure of facilities during the grant period and they were not eligible for the UK Government's Furlough scheme or the scheme was not available through their university. In these cases, we will consider requests for additional salary costs to enable work to resume and an extension of the employment contract;
- unable to undertake the funded research activities because of shielding or caring responsibilities;
- on sick leave as a result of Covid 19 or had to self-isolate during the grant period and could not undertake the research activities. In cases of sick leave, the Trust will consider requests for supplementary funding to cover the difference between salary costs and any statutory sick payments received.

NOTES:

- Supplementary funding should **only** be requested as a last resort. Principal Investigators are expected to demonstrate that their research will be severely affected without additional funding and that the costs cannot be met within the original budget by transferring costs between budget headings or from university funds.
- Grants must be managed in an effective way that prevents overcommitting or overspending. Supplementary funding cannot be requested to make up for a shortfall resulting from commitments or expenditure beyond the original sum awarded without prior approval from the Trust.

Costs that we will not supplement

We will not provide supplementary funding for:

- additional equipment, including laptops or video conferencing costs or licenses
- access charges

The above costs should be covered by your existing funds by transfers between budget headings.

The Trust's policy of excluding the payment of indirect costs or overheads continues to apply.

How to apply for supplementary funding

To apply for supplementary funding, you should first be able to either start or resume your planned research activities. You should check with your grant administrator how much has been claimed against the grant already and discuss how the remaining funds can be used against your original plans. Then email the Trust with details of your revised research plans, expenditure to date and proposed budget changes and we will discuss possible solutions with you.

Changes to your own personal or professional circumstances

If your personal or professional circumstances have changed or are about to change, and these changes may have an impact on your ability to carry out the funded research, or if your employment contract will cease before the end of the grant period, do get in touch with us so we can discuss possible solutions.