

## News and Notes

### Office of Sponsored Programs News

#### COVID-19 Sponsor Updates and Funding Opportunities

The Office of Sponsored Programs (OSP) has a webpage that links to sponsor updates related to the COVID-19 Pandemic and highlights COVID-19 funding opportunities. This page is updated on a regular basis.

Investigators are encouraged to assess their active sponsored projects, review award terms and conditions, and check sponsor websites for COVID-19 updates to determine how and when to communicate to sponsors project delays or scope changes due to COVID-19. All prior approval requests are required to be reviewed and endorsed by OSP before submission to the sponsor.

For more information, see the [OSP COVID-19 webpage](#).

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### University News

#### Updated Health Sciences Tissue Policy and Process for Biorepository Registration

The updated [Governance of Use and Transfer of Human Biological Materials in Health Sciences](#) policy streamlines the approvals for sharing human biological materials with some external entities.

[Biorepository Registration](#) is mandatory. Transfer of human biological material will not be approved until registration is completed, which takes less than 10 minutes.

The [Pitt Biorepository Database](#) is a searchable web application via Pitt and UPMC computer networks that includes data for registered biorepositories with the aim to explore human sample collections and find potential collaborators based on your research interests.

Please contact [Paul Wood](#) for any questions related to biorepository registration and [HBMC@pitt.edu](mailto:HBMC@pitt.edu) for questions regarding the tissue policy.

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#### Reminder: Investigators leaving the University

The [Office of Research Protections](#) provides [guidance](#) to investigators leaving the University, which includes an online notification form and a checklist. Departing investigators should consult with their department administrators to ensure all steps are completed in addition to any school-specific or department-specific requirements.

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## Funding Agency Updates

### National Science Foundation Delays New Biosketch and Other Support Format Requirements

On May 22, 2020, the National Science Foundation (NSF) announced that it “made the decision to delay the requirement to use NSF-approved formats for the [biographical sketch](#) and [current and pending support](#) sections of NSF proposals **until October 1, 2020**. Proposers must continue to format these documents in accordance with PAPPG requirements (see PAPPG sections [II.C.2.f](#) and [II.C.2.h](#)). NSF encourages the community to use these formats and continue to provide valuable feedback as we enhance them for future implementation.

Over the coming week, NSF will make updates to existing policy guidance, websites and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) to reflect the change. NSF will communicate further with the community once these updates have been made.”

**NSF will continue to implement all other changes to the PAPPG beginning June 1, 2020, including the following:**

- New requirement for proposing organizations to submit government-wide representations and certifications in the System for Award Management (SAM);
- New requirement for providing e-mail documentation of Program Officer approval for the submission of RAPID and EAGER proposals; and
- Clarifications to current and pending support coverage as well as other changes throughout the document.

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### National Institutes of Health Addresses Application Scores and Temporary, Emergency Situations due to COVID-19

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) seek to reassure applicants by “releasing [guidance for reviewers](#) that makes it clear that, when reviewing applications during the coronavirus pandemic national emergency, reviewers should assume that issues resulting from the coronavirus pandemic, such as the following, should not affect scores:

- Some key personnel on grant applications may be called up to serve in patient testing or patient care roles, diverting effort from the proposed research
- Feasibility of the proposed approach may be affected, for example if direct patient contact is required
- The environment may not be functional or accessible
- Additional human subjects protections may be in order, for example if the application was submitted prior to the viral outbreak
- Animal welfare may be affected, if institutions are closed temporarily
- Biohazards may include insufficient protections for research personnel
- Recruitment plans and inclusion plans may be delayed, if certain patient populations are affected by the viral outbreak
- Travel for key personnel or trainees to attend scientific conferences, meetings of consortium leadership, etc., may be postponed temporarily
- Curricula proposed in training grant applications may have to be converted to online formats temporarily
- Conferences proposed in R13/U13 applications may be cancelled or postponed.”

The [COVID-19 reviewer guidance](#), along with [FAQs](#) for applicants and awardees can be found in the NIH repository of resources, [Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\): Information for NIH Applicants and Recipients of NIH Funding](#).

See the [Open Mike](#) post for more information.

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## Reminder: NIH FORMS-F and MyFunding

The NIH is requiring the use of FORMS-F for all proposals with due dates on or after May 25, 2020. For a high-level summary of the changes between FORMS-E and FORMS-F, see the [NIH website](#).

The SF-424 feature of MyFunding that allows System-To-System proposal submissions has been upgraded to support NIH FORMS-F.

View [NIH Notice NOT-OD-20-077](#) for more details about the FORMS-F requirement.

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## American Heart Association Begins Using ProposalCentral

At noon on Thursday, May 28, 2020, the American Heart Association (AHA) [will retire Grants@Heart](#) and begin using ProposalCentral on Tuesday, June 2, 2020 for applications, peer review, and award management. Note: Neither system will be available between May 28 and June 2. The records that will transfer from Grants@Heart to ProposalCentral include:

- Applications submitted to AHA for which funding status has not yet been announced
- Current and past awards
- Unfunded applications since 2015. This includes Principal Investigator, Fiscal Officer, Grants Officer and Sponsor names and uploads, if applicable
- Your activity as a peer reviewer since 2009

Grants@Heart users are encouraged to retrieve their information that will not transfer to ProposalCentral by Thursday, May 28 at noon. AHA will be sending additional announcements on how to access AHA accounts in ProposalCentral.