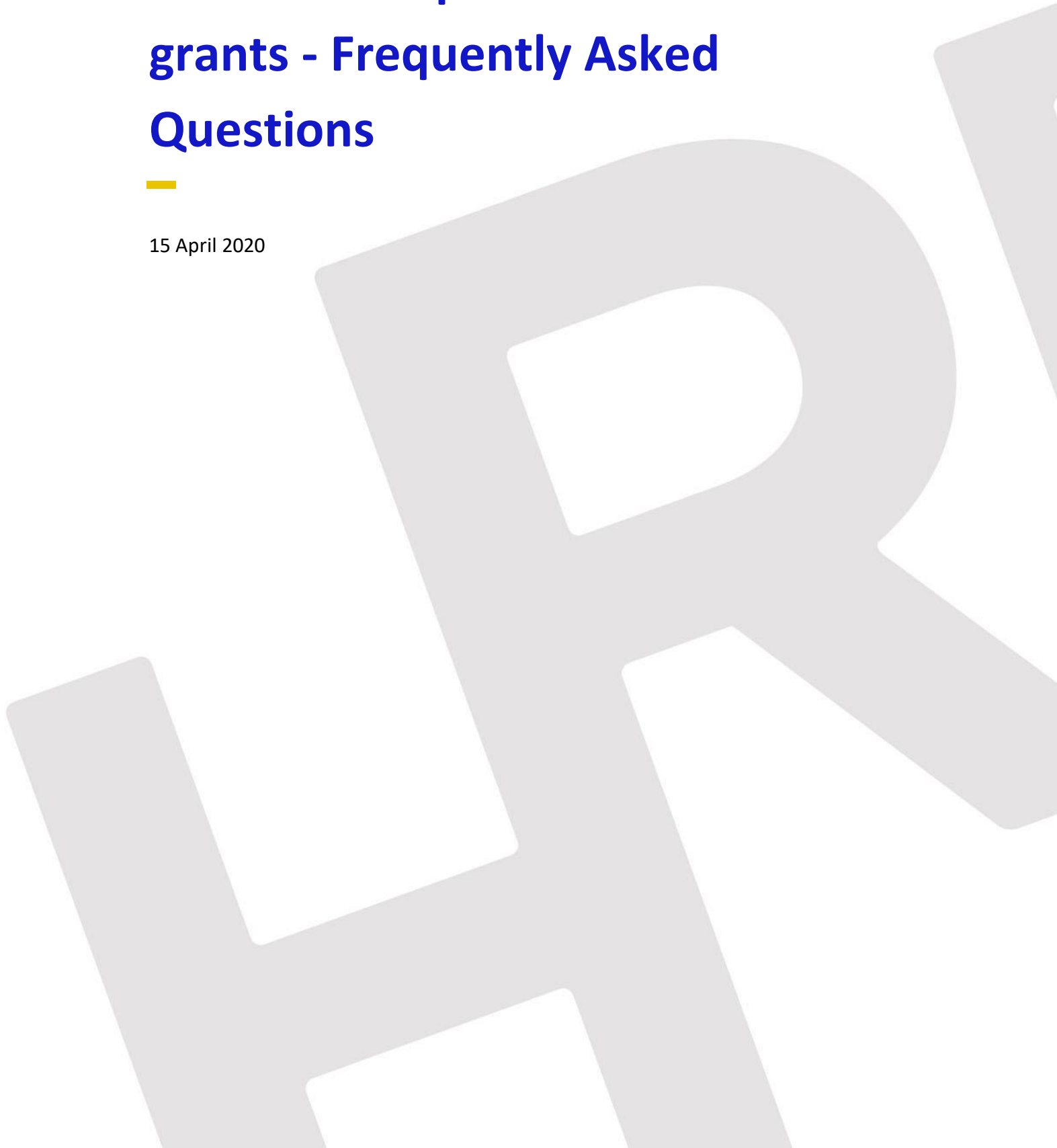


COVID-19 Impact on active HRB grants - Frequently Asked Questions



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Disclaimer

Please note that given the rapidly evolving nature of the COVID-19 pandemic, this FAQ will be kept under review and will be subject to change as the situation becomes clearer.

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Copies of this document can be obtained from www.hrb.ie/funding/manage-a-grant/COVID-19-impact-on-active-hrb-grants/

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1 My deliverables will be impacted by COVID-19, should I apply for a No Cost Extension?

The HRB will be supportive and flexible in our approach to addressing delays to research projects as a result of COVID-19. In general, you should not apply for a No Cost Extension until the situation is clearer regarding the length of time the COVID-19 restrictions will be in place, and you have a better understanding of the likely impact on your grant, including the length of extension required (see Q2 for grants ending in the next three months). We will issue further guidance in due course.

2 My grant is ending in the next three months and I will not be able to complete my objectives as a result of COVID-19, should I look for a No Cost Extension now?

The HRB will be supportive and flexible in our approach to addressing delays to research projects as a result of COVID-19. Given the current uncertainty, we recommend you apply for a No Cost Extension one month in advance of the end date when you have a better understanding of the likely impact on your grant including the length of extension required. Please contact grantchanges@hrb.ie for further guidance if required.

3 I was recently awarded a HRB grant and I need to delay the start date of my project. Can this be facilitated?

You may delay the start date of your project. Once the situation is clearer, we will discuss contract variations for awards that have been forced to delay start on a case-by-case basis.

4 Can I continue to use the salary budget to pay staff on my HRB grant during the COVID-19 restrictions?

Yes. While terms of employment are the prerogative of the Host Institution, as it stands the HRB supports the payment of staff during the restrictions. Many of these individuals will be able to continue desk-based research during this period. Where staff are in receipt of alternative salary or social welfare, salary claims should be reduced accordingly.

5 My HRB funded study is an interventional trial and is impacted by COVID-19, what should I do?

The HRB acknowledges the potential impact of COVID-19 on the health system and broader society, and the impact it may have on your clinical study and its participants. We are aware that new challenges now exist, and action is required to deal with the challenges of conducting research whilst ensuring the rights, safety and wellbeing of participants. This is an evolving situation and the HPRA¹ continues to provide pragmatic guidance for all the parties involved in clinical studies. The HRB recommend that you review this guidance in the first instance to help guide you on specific action required for your study. The HRB team will liaise directly with Investigators of regulated and non-regulated clinical studies to establish whether your study can continue in its present form, requires modifications to continue, will be paused or needs to close.

6 I am conducting an intervention study. What should I do if clinical staff are redeployed (redirected) to frontline care or COVID-19 specific tasks?

In this instance the HRB ask that the Host Institution track and report, when requested, to the HRB on any known cases of staff redeployment or alteration of associated FTE away from the agreed Grant Funded Activities. In addition, the Host Institution should accurately track situations where redeployed staff are paid from sources outside of the Grant Budget. The HRB also recommend that you review the HPRA guidance, as outlined in point 5 above, to help guide you on specific action required for your study now in the absence of clinical support staff.

¹ [http://www.hpra.ie/homepage/medicines/regulatory-information/clinical-trials/covid-19-\(coronavirus\)-and-cts](http://www.hpra.ie/homepage/medicines/regulatory-information/clinical-trials/covid-19-(coronavirus)-and-cts)

7 I hold an infrastructure award. What should I do if my core staff are redeployed (redirected) to frontline care or COVID-19 specific tasks?

In this instance the HRB ask that the Host Institution track and report to the HRB any known cases of staff redeployment or alteration of associated FTE away from the agreed Grant Funded Activities. In addition, the Host Institution should accurately track situations where redeployed staff are paid from sources outside of the Grant Budget.

8 Will additional funds be made available by the HRB to cover the financial impact of the COVID-19 shutdown on my grant?

In most cases impacts on research projects as a result of COVID-19 will be addressed via a No Cost Extension or a Budget Reallocation. In a small number of cases there may be a need for additional funding, and we are examining ways in which we can support researchers whose projects will require budgetary assistance. This will be addressed on a case-by-case basis and we will issue further guidance in due course.

9 I have paid for non-refundable conference travel with HRB funds and the conference has been postponed. Will these costs be covered by the HRB?

If you have paid costs for an event or travel that has been cancelled, and these costs cannot be reimbursed or claimed for under insurance, you can claim these against your grant.

10 A researcher on my HRB grant has been unable to work as a result of contracting COVID-19. What social benefit resources are available from the HRB?

If a postgraduate student or staff member has taken paid sick leave, Social Benefits additional to the statutory entitlements may be available from the HRB. Our detailed policy on Social Benefits can be found at the following link:

[https://www.hrb.ie/fileadmin/1. Non-plugin related files/RSF files/Manage a grant/Grant Variation Request For ms/HRB Payment of Social Benefits Request Form.docx](https://www.hrb.ie/fileadmin/1. Non-plugin related files/RSF files/Manage a grant/Grant Variation Request Forms/HRB Payment of Social Benefits Request Form.docx).

11 I submitted my Annual Report for 2020 before the shut-down. Do I need to update it to take into account any changes to my grant related activities necessary as a result of the disruption due to COVID-19?

Your Annual Report covers the period up to 31 December 2019. You therefore do not need to account for COVID-19 changes in that report. It will provide HRB with a very useful baseline of pre-pandemic research activity on all active grants. As part of our Annual Report follow-up process, we intend to engage with you around potential impacts to your grant as a result of the disruption.

12 How should I notify HRB about potential impacts to my grant as a result of COVID-19?

As part of the follow up process to Annual Report review, we intend to engage with you around potential impacts to your grant as a result of the disruption. If your grant is due to end before 30 May 2020 and you were therefore not required to submit an Annual Report, see Q2 (NCE). If you were not required to submit an annual report because your grant is subject to interim review this year, we will be in touch. If you have any urgent concerns otherwise, please contact us as detailed below.

If you have queries in relation to any of the above or other queries related to the impacts of COVID-19 on your grant, please contact us at grantchanges@hrb.ie or on 01-2345108.