

HISTORICAL GUIDANCE FOR AWARDEES ON COVID-19 RELATED IMPACTS ON IRC-FUNDED AWARDS

The purpose of this document was to set out the provisions for IRC-funded awards which may have been impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. Please note that these provisions are no longer applicable to projects with an end date of or after 01 April 2024.

1 Introduction

The IRC recognised that research awards with particular components faced significant disruption and interruption as a result of the COVID-19 crisis. These included awards for which fieldwork and access to facilities, patients, other research subjects, artefacts or manuscripts were a key part of the research.

At the outset of the pandemic, the IRC adopted a number of measures to assist researchers on existing awards and enable the continuity of research, including:

- Requests for No Cost Extensions were facilitated for awards disrupted due to COVID-19.
- Project leaders were encouraged to propose budget re-allocation requests to support the delivery of project objectives in line with broad timelines.
- Budget re-allocation was also permitted to extend the project duration for early-career researchers contracted to the projects.
- The IRC facilitated its awardees to avail of HEA costed extensions and provided cost neutral extensions where appropriate.

The IRC also encouraged new awardees to put in place and implement mitigation plans (in consultation with supervisors and mentors where appropriate) to minimise the impact of COVID-19 and facilitate the achievement of project objectives and deliverables within the overall lifetime of the award.

2 Historical Guidance for Awards that were nearing completion

In accordance with previous guidance provided by the IRC, early-career awardees with projects impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic and scheduled to conclude until 01 April 2024

could submit a budget reallocation request. Awardees can still apply to the IRC for a no cost extension as per the No-cost extension policy available [here](#). Please note that budget reallocation requests will not be permitted for early-career awards with a project end date of or after 01 April 2024, according to the Terms and Conditions.

- **Reallocation of existing budget**

Requests could be submitted to the IRC to reallocate the budget for research expenses, including towards stipend/salary to **support a short-term extension** to support the delivery of project objectives where projects were disrupted due to COVID-19. Budget reallocation could be deployed to extend the project duration for early-career researchers contracted to a project.

The IRC expected host institutions of postgraduate awardees to implement fee waivers where projects were extended as a direct result of COVID-19, and therefore payment of fees were not eligible for inclusion in any budget reallocations. Reallocation of any unspent balance relating to fees was not permitted.

Unspent funds relating to pension provisions could not be reallocated.

Where a budget reallocation request was required by an award holder for reasons unrelated to Covid-19, this request could be processed by the award holder's HEI as per the Terms and Conditions of their award.

Budget re-allocation requests were to be completed in accordance with the IRC's [budget reallocation policy](#).

ENDS

13 March 2024