

COVID-19 Coverage Data Collection Initiative

FAQs

20 April 2020

- 1. What is the timeframe that I should be accounting for when I speak to my RAS representative? Is it how I have spent the most recent month, how I plan to spend the next month, or some other timeframe (like from March 1 forward)?**

Provide the best estimate of the COVID-19 impact (as a percentage of work performed) on each sponsored project as of right now (reflecting your experience of the impact).

- 2. How frequently are we expected to update this?**

The length of the period of social distancing is unknown. If future data collection periods are warranted, the impact of COVID-19 would be updated only if/when changes in your estimates occur.

- 3. Do I have to do this for every person paid from my grant...including students and post docs?**

It is not necessary to provide information at the individual staff level. You may provide your best estimate of work performed by project as of today (as a percentage) for the RAS to use for the internal projection. If you prefer, you may provide an estimate of the percentage work performed by person.

- 4. My RAS Post award staff are already very time constrained. How will they have time to keep up with this additional work when some units are challenged with normal day to day requirements?**

In order for faculty and RAS staff to dedicate time to support these internal projections, the official deadline to certify effort forms for the September – February period has been extended to June 15th, 2020. While we know this adds an additional burden, these data serve important goals.

The internal projection data will be used to:

- Build a strong case for Emory to present to the state and federal government of how this has fiscally hurt research and why we need more support in future relief packages,
- Support institutional financial risk projections,
- Estimate the need for COVID coverage of your specific projects, and
- Provide you with a tracking tool for you to utilize in the future if you choose to seek administrative supplements from sponsors,

- 5. Will the data shared with RAS personnel replace my Effort %'s for Effort certification purposes or will I certify effort separately?**

No. Effort certifications will still be handled according to Emory's standard operating procedure. RAS will complete pre-reviews and PI's will certify during the next effort period.

- 6. Should I now be accounting for my time by the hour or are estimations still acceptable (as they are for effort reporting)?**

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No. Effort certifications will still be handled according to Emory's standard operating procedure

7. **It is my understanding that we will capture effort changes through FORT and then the effort certifications will be adjusted accordingly rather than the PI certifying effort themselves. Is that correct?**

We are capturing estimates of the impact of COVID-19 as outlined in FAQ4 above. These data do not replace the standard effort reporting process. ***This is an internal projection tool only.***

8. **Will the effort collected on these reports be used for effort reporting purposes? If not, we are creating two different representations of effort. Which one will tie to what is being billed to the funding agency?**

We are capturing estimates of the impact of COVID-19 as outlined in FAQ4 above. These data do not replace the standard effort reporting process. ***This is an internal projection tool only.***

9. **How do we manage faculty that will not be comfortable certifying for % different from what is being charged to grants?**

We are capturing estimates of the impact of COVID-19 as outlined in FAQ4 above. These data do not replace the standard effort reporting process. ***This is an internal projection tool only.***

10. **Will effort reports still be the official source of record for financial reports?**

Yes. ***This is an internal projection tool only.*** We have confirmed there is no audit risk for differences in these projections of the estimated impact of COVID-19 and the actual effort certification system.

11. **How will we keep track of what effort % exist for varying time periods for different purposes?**

See below:

- Effort for financial reports
- Effort for billing grants
- Effort linked to work on grant/meeting aims
- Effort for certification purposes
- Effort linked to charging payroll distributions

For the purpose of estimating the impact of COVID-19, estimate the impact as a percentage of work performed. Effort continues to be handled in the effort system.

12. **Can you elaborate on what this bullet means (the % of estimated work to be performed on affected projects during social distancing)? Are we assuming that the % effort would be different for faculty with the social distancing protocol being instituted? Why wouldn't we assume the effort would have been what was being charged before the protocol and adjust to actuals? Just trying to understand the bullet.**

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Dr. Bruner's 4/16 email clarified the data collection methodology for estimating the impact of COVID-19. You are not reporting effort. Provide the best estimate of the COVID-19 impact (as a percentage of work performed) on each sponsored project as of right now.

13. If we are capturing time “not worked” on grants? Are PIs setting themselves up to look not productive?

Not at all. This data collection tool is not designed to measure of productivity. These data serve as an internal projection tool as outlined in FAQ4.

14. Will the University be providing official guidance/communication for federal and industry sponsors regarding continued funding of research projects that have ramped down and continue to charge grant expenditures? Will these projects be eligible for cost extensions?

Most federal agencies indicate there will be opportunities for both no-cost *and* cost extensions with a strong rationale and supporting documentation. Non-federal agencies have been less clear on either documentation or support as of today. ORA continues conversations with non-federal sponsors. Additional information on non-federal sponsors will be provided as it becomes available.

15. Where can investigators find the official federal and other sponsor guidance regarding the requirement to maintain documentation of the level of investigator/staff effort that is being provided while work is decreased/not being performed?

ORA maintains a COVID 19 website that has information and links to sponsor guidance. See <http://ora.emory.edu/COVID/index.html>.

16. Should I account for staff on my report if I'm currently in the process or in the future going to use the University's redeployment tool for the individual?

Provide the best estimate of the COVID-19 impact (as a percentage of work performed) on each sponsored project as of right now. The length of the period of social distancing is unknown. The impact of COVID-19 would be updated to reflect any staff who are redeployed in the future.

17. Will this become an auditable document for UG/A-133 purposes?

No

18. Will my billing to the funding agency be different than what my effort certification says? If so, how do I reconcile this when I am reporting on award aims and progress?

It may be. Billing and effort often differ due to the salary cap and cost sharing. As we continue to learn more about sponsor responses to the pandemic, ORA will continue to provide updates.

19. If we are billing funding agencies for a greater percentage of salary to my grant than what I am actually working will there be any risk to me as a PI?

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There is currently an Emory wide salary continuity and consistency policy in accord with federal guidance.

20. What is going to be done with this information?

These data serve as an internal projection tool as outlined in FAQ4.

21. Will it affect my performance evaluations?

Absolutely not. These data serve only as an internal projection tool as outlined in FAQ4.