In response to the COVID-19 outbreak, the Ministry is implementing a series of temporary policy and procedural amendments to support researchers currently receiving funding from Ontario Research Fund (ORF) and Early Researcher Award (ERA) programs:

- The Ministry will continue to process payment requests for all current projects. The Ministry will also continue to finalize contract agreements for previously awarded projects.

- The Ministry recognizes that research activities may be delayed as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak. Grant extensions can be requested for up to 12 months for ORF and ERA programs with project end dates between February 1, 2020 and March 31, 2021 inclusively. Research teams are asked to work with their respective research offices to initiate a request with the Ministry.

- The Ministry recognizes that in some cases costs may have be incurred related to salaries or stipends for individuals that have been recommended or required to self-isolate, and/or may be unable to work or telework for reasons related to the COVID-19 outbreak. Provided these expenses would otherwise have been eligible to be paid out of an existing ORF or ERA grant, these can be paid from current project funds.

- Any ORF and ERA projects with annual and/or financial reporting due dates between April 1, 2020 and July 31, 2020 will have the deadline extended to September 30, 2020.
• Travel cancellation/rescheduling costs resulting from the COVID-19 outbreak are eligible project expenditures within the contracted funding allocation. The Ministry will continue to assess what other unanticipated project costs will be considered eligible.

• The Ministry recognizes that communications with private sector partners (PSPs) may be difficult at this time. If this is impacting your project’s financial reporting, please contact your Ministry program representative to discuss.

Please contact your Ministry representative regarding your project should you have any further questions.

Thank you,

Katherine Kelly Gatten
Director

C: Rachel Simeon, Assistant Deputy Minister, Data, Research and Innovation Division
   Laurie LeBlanc, Deputy Minister