Effort Reporting

What is Effort Reporting and Why Do I Have to Do It?

If personnel have received a portion of their salary support from a federal source (e.g. NIH contract or grant, federal flow-through funds, etc.) we need to certify how much time they spend on those activities on a quarterly basis. UCLA has a reporting system for this purpose called the [ERS (Effort Report System)](). Typically it is the Principal Investigator's responsibility to certify their own effort in addition to any effort for their staff. (Occasionally staff may be asked to certify their own effort, or a project lead may be able to certify effort for staff whom they supervise, but for the most part it is the PI's responsibility to certify). Twice a year you should receive a request to log into the system and certify your and your staff's effort for the last two quarters. In short, these reports are asking you to confirm that the amount of salary/benefits charged to your federal projects accurately reflects the amount of actual effort dedicated to those projects. If there is any effort without pay, it is your responsibility to add it here. If there are any errors in how you or your staff has been paid, this is your last chance to correct it (although this is something you should be checking on a monthly basis during your monthly fund managers meeting, so hopefully this will not be the case).

How to Certify Effort Reports:

1. Wait until you receive a request to certify from Laura or your fund manager. Be sure to read the email as there may be specific requests regarding which reports are ready to be certified and which are still being finalized.

2. Once instructed to certify, log into ERS: https://ers.it.ucla.edu/EffortReporting/enterERS.do

3. You can use the menu at the top to filter results, but for the most part you will want to select "OPEN" from the "Show Status" option. This will display all of your assigned reports that haven't yet been certified.

4. WARNING: if there is a check mark under the column marked "Under Prelim Review," you should NOT certify that report. You can reach out to your Fund Manager for more information, but it means that these reports have been flagged for correction.

5. WARNING: It is possible that a colleague will show up on your list of Effort Reports to certify. This is most likely because they are a Co-I on one of your federal projects. In those cases, you should <u>not</u> certify their reports (they should certify their own). You can simply skip those personnel and focus on your own reports and those of your staff. PI's will be highlighted in yellow. In general, the only "yellow report" you should certify is your own.

6. Reports must be certified individually (by person and by quarter/reporting period). To certify them, click anywhere on the row for that report. That report will then open.

7. All Federal and Federal Flow-Through Projects will be listed in the top section by FAU, fund title and amount of paid effort. Any non-federal salary support will be listed in the bottom section. Total effort should equal their appointment (so a full-time employee should have a total of 100% effort).

8. **In the rare case that you have non-paid effort on a federal project, you will need to report it.** If you are dedicating additional non-paid effort to a federal project that also has paid effort reported, you would add the non-paid effort as "Cost Share Effort." If you are dedicating non-paid effort to a project for which you are not receiving any paid effort, you will need to select the "Add Additional Sponsored Project" button to add it. **Please coordinate with your fund manager if you need to do this.**

9. Remember, your total effort cannot exceed your appointment. If you are dedicating effort without pay to a project, you must be taking the pay for that effort from a non-sponsored activity. If you have no Non-Sponsored Activity effort to subtract from, then you cannot have had unpaid effort on a sponsored project. (It is unethical and unallowable to dedicate effort without pay to a sponsored project while charging your salary to another sponsored project). Your total effort cannot exceed your appointment. So, if you are full-time employee, you cannot report over 100% effort. A 50% employee cannot report more than 50% effort.

10. By and large your reports should not need any adjustments. If the effort on the report does not look correct, you should STOP and reach out to your fund manager before proceeding. We may need to process direct retros/salary adjustments. Do not certify a report that looks incorrect.

11. Once you have reviewed all lines and ensured that the reported figures match the actual effort dedicated, you can click the "Certify Effort Report" button on the bottom right.

12. The system will ask you to confirm. Once you do so, the system will automatically open the next report on your list. You can go back to your Report List by clicking on the button on the top left, or you can continue certifying the reports in order. Just be sure to double check the name and report period at the top for each report you are certifying.

13. REMEMBER: If there is a checkmark on the Report List page (or red highlighted text in the report itself stating "Report Under Preliminary Review"): Do not certify! Also, if the "Total Effort %" column is highlighted in yellow, that means this is a PI report. Typically the only PI you should certify effort for is yourself, so double check the name before certifying.

If you have any questions, please reach out to Laura Sheehan or your fund manager. We are happy to help guide you through your reports one-on-one if needed.