

Effort Reporting – Frequently Asked Questions

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- **What is effort reporting, and why am I required to certify an effort report?**

Effort reporting is required by the federal government and University policy, since Texas Tech University receives federal, state, and private funds to be used for sponsored research. Please note that effort reporting applies only to those faculty and staff who are involved in **sponsored/externally funded research** (i.e. those who charge or cost share part of their salary to sponsors). An effort report serves as an after-the-fact confirmation that the assignment of time and associated salary and fringe benefit costs to individual sponsored projects is fair, consistent, and timely.

Effort reporting is not new to TTU. We are moving to a new online system called **ecrt** that will provide greater efficiency and will put TTU in a better position to meet its compliance requirements.

- **Who can certify an effort report?**

All Faculty and PI's will certify their own effort statements in **ecrt**. PI's will also certify for the researchers who work on their grants. If an individual or PI is not available to certify the effort report, an individual having direct knowledge of the employee's total effort, or suitable means of verification that the work was performed, may certify under certain circumstances, with Central Administration (SPAR) approval.

- **When do I have to certify effort?**

Effort will be certified semi-annually. An e-mail notification will be received that an effort statement is ready for certification, and it is expected that the report be reviewed and certified in a timely manner (TTU has established a certification timeline of 45 days after the report is made available). Multiple email notifications will be sent throughout the certification period as reminders to those who have not completed their certification responsibilities.

- **What is “100% effort”?**

For purposes of proposing and certifying effort, TTU faculty and staff should consider “100% effort” to be the total time spent conducting professional activities for which the individual is compensated by TTU (i.e., University effort), irrespective of the normal work schedules. This includes worked performed outside of the '8 to 5' work schedule, work performed on vacation, off-hours and on or off campus.

- **How do I certify an effort report?**

Faculty and PIs will receive notification via email that their effort reports are available for certification. When logged into **ecrt** they can navigate to the effort statement which contains data indicating the percentages of the individual’s salary that were allocated to sponsored project accounts and other “non-sponsored” University activities. These salary allocation percentages are not effort percentages; they are provided solely for informational purposes. Certifiers are expected to review the payroll distribution percentages on the effort statement and determine whether those percentages reasonably correspond to the percentages of the *individual’s actual effort on each project or activity*. If salary percentages reasonably reflect the actual effort, the individual should certify the statement. If the percentages do not reasonably reflect the actual effort, the individual can make changes to their effort in the Certified Effort column of the statement.

- **What does the effort coordinator do? Does he/she certify the effort, too?**

The Effort Coordinator is a key resource to the faculty and the department in the effort reporting process. Effort Coordinators assist PI’s with ensuring payroll is correct and submitting labor redistributions to the budget office if necessary. Effort coordinators will also need to process effort statements once they have been certified if the statement was certified differently from what was in the system.

- **When will we begin using the new effort reporting system for certification?**

TTU employees will begin certifying in **ecrt** on 8/1/11 for 2011 Q1 and Q2.

- **How is training for the new effort reporting system being handled?**

Effort Coordinators (individuals responsible for managing certifications for a department) will be trained in person, by designated personnel in SPAR, prior to the go-live date for TTU, 8/1/11. Faculty and PI’s will be required to take an online training, hosted by Quality Services, which will include an **ecrt** demo as well as applicable policies and procedures.

- **Who do I contact if I need additional information?**

Within each department or center, Effort Coordinators are responsible for reviewing the effort reports after they are certified. They can provide assistance on specific questions related to projects, accounts, percentages/amounts and use of the new system. Alternatively, certifiers may contact the Central Administrators at TTU if there are additional questions that cannot be answered by the Effort Coordinators.