Effort Reporting Essentials for Principal Investigators
Topics

- Effort certification compliance overview
- Effort certification process
- Initial ecrt certification cycle
  - Table of dates, activities and responsibilities
  - Process flow diagram
- Data in ecrt
- Effort statement statuses
- Training curriculum
- Committed effort
- Summary
Effort Certification Compliance Overview

- As recipients of external funding from both federal and other sponsors the RF must comply with numerous rules and regulations disseminated by the federal government and sponsors.

- The federal Office of Management and Budget (OMB) sets forth broad policies governing grant and contract financial administration.
  - OMB Circular A-21, Section J.10 outlines acceptable methods for supporting charges related to compensation for personal services on federal grants and contracts (effort certification).

- The rationale for this requirement is that:
  - Salary charges are based on estimates in proposals of how effort will be expended.
  - Effort certification verifies how effort was actually expended.
Effort Certification Compliance Overview

- **Effort Certification:**
  - Provides support for salaries charged to sponsored programs (and reimbursed by the sponsor) as well as for cost sharing salary (not reimbursed by the sponsor)
  - Documents that effort commitments were met

- The principal investigator (PI) is responsible to ensure that charges to sponsored programs are:
  - Consistent with the effort expended by those working on the sponsored program as they relate to personnel costs
  - In compliance with federal and RF policies and campus procedures
  - Allowable, reasonable and allocable to the sponsored program charged
Effort Certification Process

- The RF uses an “after-the-fact” activity record that accounts for the total activity for which employees are compensated
- PIs certify their effort and the effort of staff working on their sponsored program(s)
- A proxy certifier or restricted effort coordinator may be delegated authority to certify effort for a PI
- This individual:
  - Can be another employee, PI or other responsible official with first-hand knowledge of the employee’s effort
  - Has suitable means of verifying that the work was performed
  - Is set up within ecrt by the campus effort reporting administrator
  - Will receive notifications that would otherwise be sent to the PI
Effort Certification Process

- Current manual paper-based Oracle effort certification process will change to a new online effort reporting Web-based tool: Effort Certification and Reporting Technology (ecrt)
  - Effort certification will be completed using electronic signatures
  - All the payroll detail for the effort reporting period is available within the tool

- PIs (or their designated proxy certifier/restricted effort coordinator) will receive an e-mail prompting them to certify:
  - Their effort
  - The effort of staff working on their sponsored programs (if applicable)
Effort Certification Process

Implementation of **ecrt** will be effective for all campuses:

- **Spring 2013** effort reporting period of performance for campuses that use academic periods
- **January 1 – June 30, 2013** effort reporting period of performance for campuses that use semiannual periods
  - Upstate Medical University
  - SUNY Downstate Medical Center
  - Empire State College
  - System Administration
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| January 1 to May/June 2013  | Payroll Data is loaded to ecrt and effort statements are building:  
• SUNY monthly payroll processing  
• RF biweekly payroll         | Automatic process within ecrt                                                                                                                     |
| May/June 2013 (30-day period) | Effort statements are reviewed  
Payroll adjustments are processed                                  | Campus Effort Reporting Administrator                                                                                                           |
| June/July 2013              | An e-mail is sent to each PI with a link to access ecrt                                                                                     | Automatic process within ecrt                                                                                                                   |
| June/July to August/September 2013 (60-day period) | “Certification Period” – timeframe for PI to certify their effort and effort of their staff; PI will electronically certify Effort Statements          | PI (or proxy certifier/restricted effort coordinator)                                                                                           |
| 2 weeks and 1 week before the end of the certification period | Reminder e-mails are sent to PIs for any effort statements still needing certification                                                        | Automatic process within ecrt                                                                                                                   |
| 1 day before the end of the certification period | Final e-mails are sent to PIs to comply with the certification deadline of November 30th                                                    | Automatic process within ecrt                                                                                                                   |
**Effort Reporting Cycle**

**Effort Reporting Period of Performance Starts**
- *ect* builds the effort statement based on payroll feeds
- Administrator monitors the building effort statements to determine if changes needed
- Period of Performance Ends

- 30-day pre-review period for effort reporting administrators to review effort statements

**Certification Period Starts**
- Certifiers receive e-mail notification
- Certifier reviews/certifies effort statement
- Administrator responds to questions and monitors certification

- 2 weeks before end of Certification Period
  Escalation process begins for effort statements that are not certified
- 1 week before end of Certification Period
  2nd Reminder
- 1 day before end of Certification Period
  3rd Reminder

**Effort Reporting Administrator Task**
- Certifier Task

**Ends after 60 days**
Data in ecrt

The Oracle business system is the system of record for all source data that is uploaded to ecrt

- **Payroll file**: SUNY monthly salary – through the IFR/Cost Sharing processing, RF biweekly payroll, labor schedule charging instructions, distribution adjustments (salary cost transfers)
- **Award file**: Award full name, companion cost share awards, award start and end dates, award PI, budget amount, etc.
- **Commitment file**: Committed effort data for PIs, co-PIs and other key personnel
- **Certifier File**: Includes PI e-mail address, actual department name and actual job title information. All SUNY monthly and RF employees with a role of PI on a sponsored award will be assigned the role of self-certifier in ecrt
- **Sponsor File**: Includes sponsors and award type of federal, nonfederal and nonsponsored (includes other institutional activity)
Effort Statement Statuses

The table below illustrates the most common effort statement statuses:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effort Statement Status</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ready to be Certified</td>
<td>The effort statement is ready for PI, Proxy Certifier or REC review and certification.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building, Not Ready for Certification</td>
<td>An effort statement is being built for the current effort reporting period of performance. Salary expenditures will be applied to applicable awards each pay period.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Training Curriculum

PIs should review the following materials that are available on the RF public Web site:

- **Video simulations:**
  - Introduction to the Effort Reporting Electronic Tool
  - Certify my Effort
  - Certify my Effort and the Effort of my Staff (if applicable)

- “How to” documents with step-by-step instructions for each of the simulations

- **Additional Information:**
  - Effort Statement Statuses Guidance Document
  - Glossary of Terms
Committed Effort

Effort Certification
Federal regulations require effort certification for anyone with salary charges that are reimbursed or cost shared to a *federal or federal flow-through award*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Whose effort is certified?</th>
<th>Who certifies that effort?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal investigator (PI)</td>
<td>PI or designated proxy certifier/restricted effort coordinator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-PI</td>
<td>Co-PI or designated proxy certifier/restricted effort coordinator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key/Senior personnel</td>
<td>Key/senior personnel or designated proxy certifier/restricted effort coordinator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research staff</td>
<td>PI or designated proxy certifier/restricted effort coordinator</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Budget**

- Committed Effort
  - Must be recorded in Oracle for PIs, co-PIs and all persons identified as senior/key personnel in the award document
  - Recorded on the sponsored award
  - May be entered as a percent or in person months

**Actuals**

- **Reimbursed Effort**
  - Sponsor reimbursing salary charges (salary charged directly to sponsored award)
    - Sponsored award established in Oracle
    - Committed effort information is recorded on this award
    - Companion cost share award is established and linked to the sponsored award (if applicable)
    - Labor distribution schedule needed to charge salary expenses to the sponsored award

- **Unreimbursed Effort**
  - Salary charges are cost shared and charged to another source
    - Companion cost share award established in Oracle
    - Sponsored award is linked to this award (1-to-1 match)
    - Labor distribution schedule needed to charge salary expenses to the companion cost share award
Committed Effort

- Commitment of effort in a proposal, once awarded, is recorded in the Oracle business system for PIs and key personnel.
- Effort commitments trigger the necessity to complete an “IFR/Cost Sharing Appointment Form.”
- If key personnel intend to reduce their effort on sponsored programs by more than 25 percent the institution needs to notify the sponsor and receive approval.
Summary

- PIs (or their designated proxy certifier/restricted effort coordinator) will receive an e-mail at the end of each effort reporting period of performance with a link to access ecrt.
- PIs are encouraged to review the ecrt training simulations and related documents.
- Use of the ecrt system is intended to reduce administrative burden while maintaining a compliant system.
- Additional information is available from your campus effort reporting administrator or sponsored programs office.