Effort Reporting & ecrt Training

University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill
Agenda

• Effort 101 Overview
• ecrt Overview
• ecrt Demonstration
What is Effort?

- Effort is the portion of time spent on a given professional activity and expressed as a percentage of the total 100% professional activity for which an individual is employed by UNC.

- Important points:
  - The government recognizes that it is a “reasonable estimate”
    - It may be reasonable for a faculty member who was awarded and expended 40% effort on a grant to sign an effort report stating 39% payroll support for that grant.
    - It may not be reasonable for a faculty member who teaches two classes to certify that she worked 95% on sponsored research.
  - Total effort must equal 100%
  - Effort is not based on a standard (e.g., 40-hour) work week, instead based on whatever was worked
  - “100% Effort” considers all professional activities related to the individual’s UNC appointment (teaching, clinical, research, service)
  - Effort does not include outside activities (e.g., external consulting)
Why Certify Effort?

- Effort Certification is a Federal requirement
  - OMB Circular A-21 (Cost Principles for Educational Institutions) requires some form of after-the-fact confirmation that labor expenses represent actual costs
    - EPA will certify every six months (July – Dec, Jan – Jun)
    - SPA will certify every quarter (09/13/10 – 12/19/10)

- Effort certification is the primary means of verifying that:
  - Effort supported (paid) by the project has been performed as promised, and
  - Effort expended in support of a project but not paid by the project (cost sharing) has been performed as promised.

- Labor expenses typically represent the majority of direct costs of research
Certifying Effort or Payroll?

• Effort reports will pre-populate total percentages using payroll distributions as a starting point; the payroll distributions should be monitored on an ongoing basis and revised based on effort expended.

• However, these percentages may need to be revised during certification based on actual expended effort.

• This after-the-fact certification of the effort report is necessary for compliant effort reporting.
Overview – Research Compliance

• Sponsored awards are made to the University of North Carolina, with the Principal Investigator serving as the “steward” of the research project and accompanying funds received from the sponsor.

• The University is legally responsible to the sponsor, but the PI is held accountable for the proper fiscal management and conduct of the project. PI responsibilities include:
  – Scientific performance of the work related to the project
  – Management of the project within funding limitations
  – Assurance that the sponsor will be notified when significant conditions related to the project change

  Responsibility for the day-to-day management of project finances may be delegated to administrative or other staff, but accountability for compliance with UNC policy and sponsor requirements ultimately rests with the PI.
Effort Reporting encompasses more than just certifying effort.

1. **Appointing Faculty & Staff**
   - Employment terms are established.

2. **Preparing the Proposal Budget**
   - Effort is proposed, a commitment is made to the sponsor.

3. **Charging Salary**
   - Salary is charged (or cost shared), consistent with activity. Adjustments may be made, shortly after-the-fact.

4. **Certifying Effort**
   - Effort is attested to, after activity has occurred (adjustments to salary distribution may be made if effort < salary%).
Effort Certification at UNC

- All individuals paid from, with cost sharing, or with effort committed to a sponsored project are required to complete an effort report, per federal regulations.

- Effort reports should be certified by:
  - The employee that performed the work, or
  - If the employee is unable to certify
    - Another employee, principal investigator or other responsible official with first-hand knowledge of all of an employee’s effort, or
    - An individual who used suitable means of verifying that the work was performed.

**NOTE:** If the named employee is unable to certify his/her effort, a proxy certifier must be approved and set up by ecrt_help@unc.edu

- What are suitable means of verification?
  - The individual should have some documentation of how the time was spent that is certified.
  - Documentation could be in the form of an email, calendar, project reports, etc.

We listen. We partner. We focus. We deliver.
Important concepts to consider with respect to effort reporting include:

- Cost sharing
  - Mandatory, Voluntary, Salary Cap
- Summer salaries
  - Summer Salary cannot exceed 1/9 of overall salary. Expected that 100% effort will be on summer activities
- Committed Effort
  - 100% Effort is not realistic for PI’s. Be Aware of Overcommitments
- Payroll cost transfers
  - Salary Charged to a sponsored project should not exceed the effort performed
EFFORT CERTIFICATION AT UNC
What is ecrt?

- Web Based Effort Certification System
- Encourages Compliance
- Increases Productivity
- Allows for Proactive Monitoring
  - Watch payroll build
  - Make Salary Changes throughout the Period of Performance
- Built in routing
- Automatic Notifications (emails)
  - Reminders
  - Questions
  - Effort Card Reopening
- Management Reporting
Who’s Involved?

- OSR
- Primary Effort Coordinator
- Effort Coordinator
- Secondary Effort Coordinator
- Self Certifier
  - Faculty
  - Staff
  - Students
# Responsibilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Rights</th>
<th>How many per department?</th>
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| Primary Effort Coordinator | - Views effort cards.  
|                          | - Edits cards during pre-certification period.  
|                          | - Processes cards after the Self-Certifier certifies them              | Only one per department             |
| Effort Coordinator       | - Views effort cards.  
|                          | - Edits cards during pre-certification period.                         | None to many                        |
| Secondary Effort Coordinator | - Views effort cards.                                               | None to many                        |
| Self-Certifier           | - View and certify effort cards                                      | None to many                        |

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The ecrt Process

During the Period of Performance, ecrt builds the effort card based on payroll feeds.

Pre-review period begins. PEC & ECs receive email notification.

During the pre-review, PEC or EC edits effort cards, if necessary.

Pre-review period ends.

30-day Certification period begins. Self-certifiers receive email notification.

Self-Certifier edits/certifies effort card.

Card is ready for PEC to approve.

If Approved

Card is “Processed” by PEC.

If necessary, a cost transfer is done, and submitted to EPAWeb, HRIS, Payroll.

If PEC does not approve, card is returned to certifier with notes.

* PEC – Primary Effort Coordinator
* EC – Effort Coordinator

We listen. We partner. We focus. We deliver.
From: ecrt_help@unc.edu

Sent: Tuesday, February 08, 2011 2:24 PM

To: Mia Hamm

Subject: Your reminder that the effort certification period has begun

Educational Institutions which receive federal funding are required by the OMB Circular A-21 "Cost principles for Educational Institutions" to maintain an effort reporting system, the purpose of which is to assure that the distribution of pay is in accordance with actual effort expended (by funding source and activity). The system known as ecrt (Effort Certification Reporting Technology) has been developed to comply with this requirement.

Our records indicate that you met the criteria that require that you certify your effort. The Period of Performance to be Certified by EPA employees is: July 1, 2010 - December 31, 2010. The Period of Performance to be Certified by SPA employees is: September 13, 2010 - December 19, 2010. You will be able to review and certify your effort in ECRT starting today. If you need additional training please click on HERE.

Available certification for Mia Hamm- 901000014 (Period of Performance, Certification Period):
07/01/2010 to 12/31/2010, 02/28/2011 to 03/28/2011

Certification system links:
Home
Single – Sign on

Onyen -or- UNC Guest ID:

Password:

Sign in

IMPORTANT: To protect your personal information, you must close every instance of this browser that is open on your computer when you log out.

For assistance please call (919) 962-HELP or (919) 962-4357. Toll-free from US and Puerto Rico: (866) 962-4457.

We listen. We partner. We focus. **We deliver.**
Who to Contact with Questions

• ecrt_help@unc.edu

  – ecrt Central Administrators:
    • Christine (Chris) Lawless
    • Kelly Spivey
    • Mel Jones (technical)