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Effort Reporting – Frequently Asked Questions

- **What is effort reporting and why am I required to certify an effort report?**
  Effort reporting is required by the federal government since Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center El Paso receives federal 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 and/or who have effort commitments to sponsored programs). 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.

- **What does PEC stand for?**
  PEC stands for Primary Effort Coordinator. This is the person in charge of processing a faculty and staff member's effort statement once it has been certified.

- **Who can certify an effort report?**
  All faculty will certify their own effort statements in ecrt. PIs will also certify for the researchers who work on their grants and for any staff who has commitments to their grants but was not paid from any sponsored FOP. 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.

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

  Effort will be certified quarterly (Quarterly deadlines: Jan. 22, April 22, July 22, Oct. 22). Ecrt will send an automatic email notification to the certifier stating that the effort statement is ready for certification. The Research Compliance Officer will also send an email notification to the PEC after the certification period begins each quarter. It is expected that the report be reviewed and certified in a timely manner. Multiple email notifications will be sent throughout the certification period as reminders to those who have not completed their certification responsibilities.

- **What is "100 percent effort"?**

  For purposes of proposing and certifying effort, TTUHSC El Paso faculty and staff should consider "100% effort" to be the total time spent conducting professional activities for which the individual is compensated by TTUHSC El Paso (i.e. university effort), irrespective of the normal work schedules. This includes work performed outside of the nine-to-five 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.

- **What should I do if the percentages do not reasonably reflect the actual effort?**

  If the percentages do not reasonably reflect the actual effort, the certifier can make changes to the Certified Effort column of the statement. This will trigger the PEC to change the status of the effort statement by selecting Labor Redistribution Required near the bottom of the effort statement. This will open a new form in which the PEC can change the effort assigned to each FOP. Upon submission, this labor redistribution request is routed to accounting and loaded onto Banner. Once in Banner, it takes up to 24 hours for the change to be processed and appear on ecrt. The whole process can take up to a week and should be planned accordingly.

- **Where can I find training information about effort certification and reporting?**

  Training information for ecrt is available on the WebRaider Portal and can be accessed by following: WebRaider Portal > HSC El Paso Finance tab > Accounting Section >

Contracts and Grants Accounting Home > Reference Material. The direct link to the ecrt Training page is:
http://elpaso.ttuhsc.edu/fiscal/businessaffairs/grantaccounting/Trainings.aspx.

- **I am the PEC for my department, but a faculty or staff member is not appearing on my list of people whose statements I can process. How do I transfer an effort statement so that it appears on my list to process?**

    You cannot transfer a faculty or staff member's effort statement to your list on your own. In order to transfer the staff member's effort statement, you will need to contact Effort Reporting and request a change in their PEC.

    (Please note: This change is not immediate and may take a couple of days. Be sure to make these requests well before statements are due.)

- **I need to request an effort statement transfer, but the faculty or staff member's statement has already been certified, not processed. Can this statement still be transferred or will I need to wait until the next quarter to transfer the statement?**

    You do not need to wait until the next quarter to transfer this statement. In order to make this transfer, you will need to ask the faculty or staff member's PEC to reject the certified effort statement. Then you will need to contact Effort Reporting in order to request a change in PEC for the faculty or staff member.

- **I am listed as a certifier for a faculty member, but the system is not allowing me to certify the faculty member's statement. Why is this happening?**

    Only faculty members are allowed to certify their own time. The faculty member will have to access and review their own statement, certify it, and then the PEC will be able to process it.

    (Please note: If the staff member should not be listed as "faculty," this change will need to go through Human Resources.)

- **I am listed as my own certifier and am attempting to certify my own statement but ecrt is not letting me certify. What should I do?**

    First you can try certifying your statement later that day or even the next day. Sometimes the system freezes since so many faculty and staff members are trying to access the system all at once, so allowing some time to pass before you try to certify or even process a statement can be considered part of troubleshooting in this circumstance. If the system still does not allow you to certify your statement, then you will need to print out the statement and review the statement, sign and date the paper statement. This will then need to be sent to the Research Compliance Officer to be added to the system, certified and processed.

- **The system keeps giving me an error message whenever I try to view the statements I need to process, process a statement, certify a statement, load a statement, etc. What should I do?**

  Try certifying your statement later that day or even the next day. Sometimes the system freezes since so many faculty and staff members are trying to access the system all at once, so allowing some time to pass before you try to certify or even process a statement can be considered part of troubleshooting in this circumstance.

- **One of my staff members was only here for one out of the three months we are currently certifying for them. Should the effort statement for this person reflect 33.3 percent effort on a grant or 100 percent effort on a grant?**

  The question you must ask yourself in this situation is: "Is this staff member being paid from one grant or from multiple grants and FOPs?" If the staff member is only being paid from one grant, then their effort statement will always be 100 percentage whether they worked one day or 90 days since all of their effort is going into that one grant. The efforts will be different if the staff member is being paid from multiple grants and FOPs, but the concept is the same.

- **We hired a new person during the previous quarter, but their effort statement is appearing in a different department and under a different PEC. Why does this continue to happen?**

  As of the 14th of September 2015, all new hires in the Department of Biomedical Sciences will be redirected to appear under the Senior Director of Biomedical Sciences. This does not apply to other departments. A request needs to be submitted to Effort Reporting requesting a change in PEC for the faculty or staff member before the second quarter following the date that they were hired.

- **A different PI is listed as a certifier for our department than the PI we are currently working under. Why might we be seeing this?**

  Grants do not always belong to the PI that a department is currently working under. If the wrong PI is listed as the certifier, the name on a grant FOP may need to be changed to reflect the different PI. This will then allow the correct PI to certify statements, but all parties must be in agreement that this is what needs to be done.

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

  Within each department, PECs 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 administrator at ecrtelp@ttuhsc.edu or the Research Compliance Officer if there are additional questions that cannot be answered by the PECs.