



Time and Effort Certification

I. Purpose

The purpose of this Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) is to establish a consistent process for preparing, reviewing, certifying, correcting, collecting, and maintaining Time and Effort (T/E) certifications for employees whose compensation is charged to or committed as cost share on sponsored projects.

Time and Effort reporting provides documentation that salary and effort charged to sponsored projects, as well as committed cost-shared effort, accurately reflect the work performed. The process also provides evidence that the University has met applicable sponsor and federal requirements.

II. Scope

This SOP applies to University personnel whose salaries are:

- Directly charged to sponsored projects;
- Allocated among multiple sponsored or non-sponsored funding sources;
- Contributed to sponsored projects as cost-shared effort; or
- Otherwise subject to the University's Time and Effort or payroll certification requirements.

The Contracts and Grants (C&G) is responsible for administering and maintaining the University's T/E certification process and for distributing and collecting certifications.

III. Definitions

Time and Effort (T/E): The process used to document and certify the percentage of an individual's total University-compensated work time devoted to specific activities, including sponsored projects.

Effort: The amount of time an individual spends performing a particular University activity. Effort is expressed as a percentage of the individual's total work-related activities for which the University provides compensation.

Cost-Shared Effort: Effort contributed to a sponsored project for which the employee's salary is not charged directly to the sponsored project but is committed as part of the University's contribution to the award.

Principal Investigator (PI): The individual responsible for the sponsored project and, generally, for certifying the effort of personnel working on the project.

Certification of Time and Effort Report: The report generated from the payroll system that identifies the percentage of salary charged to each funding source and is used to document and certify employee effort.

IV. Roles and Responsibilities

Office of Contracts and Grants

- Administer and maintain the Time and Effort/Payroll Certification process.
- Generate or coordinate the distribution of T/E certifications.
- Provide certifications to departments, PIs, and other appropriate personnel.
- Monitor outstanding certifications.
- Review certifications for compliance and identify significant variances from committed effort.
- Maintain records supporting cost-sharing commitments.
- Coordinate corrections to payroll distributions when necessary.
- Provide reminders and escalate outstanding certifications.
- Maintain documentation required for sponsor and audit purposes.

Principal Investigator

- Review the effort of personnel working on the PI's sponsored projects.
- Certify work performed on sponsored projects when the PI has firsthand knowledge or sufficient verification of the work performed.
- Review payroll charges for accuracy.
- Identify employees who worked on a sponsored project but are missing from the certification.
- Ensure cost-shared effort is appropriately documented.
- Request corrections when payroll charges do not accurately reflect actual effort.
- Complete certifications within the required timeframe.
- Work with C&G when committed effort is not being met.

Department Head/Dean

- Review and certify the PI's effort when required.
- Ensure that certifications within the department or college are completed accurately and timely.
- Assist with resolving outstanding certifications and significant effort variances.

Employees

Employees subject to T/E reporting shall:

- Review their certification for accuracy.
- Confirm that the reported effort reasonably reflects the work performed.
- Notify the PI, department, or C&G of discrepancies.
- Complete required certifications within the established reporting period.

V. Procedure Steps

Certification Requirements

Each Adobe Sign certification must contain the required signatures before it is returned to C&G.

The individual signing the certification must have firsthand knowledge or sufficient verification of the services performed for the funding sources identified on the report.

Generally:

- The PI certifies the work performed on the PI's sponsored project(s).
- The department head or dean certifies the PI's effort, when required.

- An employee may certify their own effort when the University's established process permits and the employee has sufficient firsthand knowledge of the work performed.

Certification represents the individual's attestation that the reported effort is a reasonable reflection of actual work performed during the applicable reporting period.

Review of Certification Reports

Upon receipt of a Certification of Time and Effort report, the department and/or PI shall:

1. Review all funding sources listed.
2. Compare the reported percentages with the employee's actual work performed.
3. Confirm that the certification accounts for 100 percent of the employee's University-compensated work activities.
4. Verify sponsored-project and cost-shared effort.
5. Determine whether the payroll distribution accurately reflects the employee's actual effort.
6. Identify employees who worked on sponsored projects but were not included on the report.
7. Make or request corrections before the certification is returned to C&G.

The percentages shown on the Certification of Time and Effort report are based on the payroll system and reflect the percentage of salary charged to each funding source. These percentages should be reviewed against actual effort, not simply accepted without review.

Corrections to Payroll and Effort Distribution

Corrections must be identified and addressed before the Certification of Time and Effort report is returned to OCG, whenever possible.

If the payroll charges do not accurately reflect the employee's actual effort:

1. Identify the incorrect funding source and percentage.
2. Determine the appropriate effort distribution based on the employee's actual work.
3. Prepare a revised Certification of Time and Effort report.
4. Initiate the appropriate personnel action form(s) or other required payroll documentation.
5. Ensure the revised effort distribution agrees with the corresponding personnel action form(s).
6. Obtain all required signatures.
7. Return the corrected certification and supporting documentation to C&G.

The T/E certification and related personnel action documentation must be consistent. A correction to the effort distribution should not be processed without appropriate supporting documentation.

Cost-Shared Effort

Cost-shared effort must be documented and certified in accordance with University and sponsor requirements.

Only effort properly documented through the University's approved T/E or payroll certification process may generally be used to satisfy sponsor cost-sharing requirements, except for hourly employees when the applicable timesheet or other supporting documentation clearly demonstrates that the employee's effort was contributed to the sponsored project.

C&G shall maintain records of committed University personnel cost share and use those records when monitoring salary expenditures and reconciling sponsored-project accounts.

Hourly Employees

For hourly employees paid from sponsored-project funds:

1. Hours worked must be recorded on the employee's regular payroll timesheet.
2. The timesheet is maintained by the Payroll Office and may serve as the time and effort certification.
3. When an employee works on multiple projects, supplemental documentation may be required to clearly identify the hours attributable to each project.
4. The documentation must accurately support the salary charges and any committed cost-shared effort.

Salaried Employees

Salaried employees whose compensation is charged to or committed as cost share on sponsored projects must certify their effort through the University's approved T/E or payroll certification process.

The certification must include all institutional activities applicable to the employee, regardless of funding source. Activities may include:

- Sponsored research;
- Instruction;
- Administration;
- Clinical or other University activities, as applicable;
- Departmental activities; and
- Other work-related activities for which the University provides compensation.

The certification must represent a reasonable estimate of actual effort for the reporting period.

Exclusions and Special Circumstances

The following payments are generally not included in T/E reporting:

- Scholarships;
- Fellowship payments for which no services are rendered;
- Non-payroll living-expense payments;
- Payments reported on Form 1099 rather than Form W-2; and
- Certain training fellowship programs, including NIH F and T awards, when not subject to payroll-based effort reporting.

Graduate assistant compensation for services rendered and paid through payroll as taxable compensation is generally included in T/E reporting.

Distribution and Collection

At the end of each reporting period, C&G or the designated Time and Effort/Payroll Certification Coordinator shall generate and distribute the applicable certifications.

Certifications should be released within 30 days of the close of the established reporting period, consistent with University requirements.

Departments and PIs shall review, sign, and route the certifications through Adobe Sign and return them to C&G within the required timeframe.

Outstanding Certifications

C&G shall monitor the T/E certification tracking system or other appropriate records for outstanding certifications.

The following escalation process shall apply:

1. Certifications should normally be completed within four weeks of distribution/release.
2. At or before the applicable deadline, C&G shall review outstanding certifications and send reminders to the PI, department chair, and/or other responsible personnel.
3. The reminder may advise that failure to complete the certification may result in salary costs being disallowed.
4. After the additional escalation period, C&G shall compile a list of non-compliant personnel, the responsible PI, and affected sponsored funds and provide the information to the Director of Contracts and Grants.
5. At the end of six weeks, the Director of Contracts and Grants may disallow uncertified sponsored-project salary costs and transfer those costs to an appropriate non-sponsored fund, consistent with University policy.

Compliance and Audit Requirements

Time and Effort certification is a critical internal control for sponsored-project financial management. The federal government, sponsoring agencies, and auditors may review T/E records to determine whether salary charges and cost-sharing commitments are adequately supported.

Failure to accurately certify effort or to complete required certifications may result in:

- Disallowance of sponsored-project salary costs;
- Transfer of costs to non-sponsored funds;
- Unmet cost-sharing requirements;
- Corrective action; and/or
- Other financial or compliance consequences.

Individuals certifying effort must therefore review the information carefully and certify only when they have firsthand knowledge or sufficient verification of the effort being reported.

Records Retention

C&G shall maintain completed T/E certifications, supporting payroll documentation, revised certifications, personnel action forms, cost-sharing documentation, and related correspondence in accordance with University record-retention requirements and applicable sponsor requirements.

VI. Related Documents/References

- T/E certifications
- Supporting payroll documentation

- Revised certifications
- Personnel action forms
- Coost-sharing documentation
- Related correspondence in accordance with university record-retention requirements
- Applicable sponsor requirements.

VII. 7. Recordkeeping Requirements

C&G shall maintain completed T/E certifications, supporting payroll documentation, revised certifications, personnel action forms, cost-sharing documentation, and related correspondence in accordance with University record-retention requirements and applicable sponsor requirements.

Approving Authority:

History: