

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO OFFICE OF RESEARCH AND SPONSORED PROJECTS EFFORT REPORTING POLICY

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish appropriate guidelines for ensuring compliance with Effort Reporting/Certification requirements on sponsored projects in accordance with and up to the limits prescribed in the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular A-21 “Principles for Determining Costs Applicable to Grants, Contracts, and Other Agreements with Education Institutions”, and the University of Texas System Policy UTS 163 which provides guidance to address Effort Reporting and Certification.

POLICY STATEMENT

It is the policy of The University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP) to comply with federal guidelines and regulations regarding Effort reporting and certification, referred to in the federal costing principles as payroll distribution confirmation. Federal and state agencies, private foundations, organizations, industry, non-profit organizations and other organizations provide significant funding to enable UTEP to conduct instruction, public service, research and training under extramurally funded Sponsored Programs. Consequently, effort reporting and certification policies, supported by detailed procedures, are necessary to ensure that the salaries, wages, and fringe benefits charged to these Sponsored Programs are allocable, allowable, consistently treated, and reasonable.

To follow the requirements set forth by The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular A-21, Cost Principles for Education Institutions, Subpart J, Section 10. regarding the charging of compensation for effort to a sponsored project and means of verification.

DEFINITIONS

- 1. Effort:** The total amount of time spent by University personnel on teaching, service, research and other.
- 2. Committed Effort:** Time spent on a project for which project personnel will be compensated from a grant or contract.
- 3. Percent Effort:** Percent effort, as it relates to certification of effort in accordance with the OMB Circulars, is defined as an individual’s total institutional activities, or 100% maximum. It is not defined as a percent of a regular 40 hour workweek or as a percent of FTE of an academic appointment or other staff appointment. Effort can be certified regardless of location of the certifying individual. An individual may perform essential project related activities in locations such as home, external laboratories, conferences, or off campus/site project related meetings.
- 4. Effort Certification:** Effort Certification is the documentation of the amount of actual effort committed on a federally sponsored project. Certifying individuals are responsible for reporting and

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO OFFICE OF RESEARCH AND SPONSORED PROJECTS EFFORT REPORTING POLICY

certifying actual effort on a project. This certification of effort is based on actual time and is not related to percent of payroll distribution.

5. Certifier: are Primary Individual and/or Principal Investigator (PI) and Project Director (PD). The PI or PD is the individual who will direct the project and who is designated by the University as responsible for completing project objectives and personnel supervision as agreed upon. The Primary Individual is an individual who has knowledge concerning actual effort commitments on a sponsored project and who is responsible for certification of this effort for all grant compensated personnel.

6. Minimum and Maximum Effort: Minimum acceptable effort, charged or contributed should be measurable, auditable, and compensable. All effort should be sufficient and realistic to affect the accomplishment and execution of project objectives.

a. **Minimum Effort:** minimum effort of 2.5% is defined as the least/minimum auditable and certifiable amount of actual time spent to accomplish project or program objectives.

NOTE: The OMB A-21 Clarification Memorandum of January 5, 2001 states that some types of federally-funded projects, such as grants for equipment and instrumentation or student support and/or training, do not typically require committed Primary Individual Effort. Exceptions to the minimum level of Effort may be permitted for equipment and instrumentation grants, doctoral dissertation grants, augmentation grants, and special institutional and training awards. Such exceptions are to be documented and approved by the institutions. UTEP has determined that such projects will have a 1% effort commitment, which must be certified but will not result in charges to the sponsored project. This will ensure that a certification card is generated.

b. **Maximum Effort:** maximum effort of 100% is defined as the maximum amount of actual time spent to accomplish project or program objectives. It is generally not realistic to charge 100% effort of a faculty member to sponsored projects since 100% effort represents the total activity of an employee, including teaching, service, mentorship, and other.

Effort Management:

1. **Effort Certification:** A means of confirming that the effort paid or unpaid by the sponsor has been performed. It is important to note that payroll distributions and Effort Certification are related but not the same thing. Payroll distributions describe the allocation of an Individual's salary; whereas, Effort Certification describes the allocation of an Individual's Effort.
2. OMB Circular A-21 Section J.10.b.(1)(c) states "...in an academic setting, teaching, research, service, and administration are often inextricably intermingled. A precise assessment of factors that contribute to costs is not always feasible, nor is it expected. Reliance, therefore, is placed on estimates in which a degree of tolerance is appropriate. UTEP's degree of tolerance is 2.5%.

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO OFFICE OF RESEARCH AND SPONSORED PROJECTS EFFORT REPORTING POLICY

Effort Certification & Reporting Technology (ECRT)

UTEP has joined a UT System sponsored software application for effort certification. The [Effort Certification & Reporting Technology \(ECRT\)](#) system is a web-based system which serves to facilitate the effort certification and reporting process. The University's previous paper-based ((Personnel Effort Reporting System (PERS))), will no longer be used by individuals that are required to certify their and other's research effort.

The ECRT system is designed to help you comply with the provisions of this institution's effort reporting policies, UT System policy, federal policy OMB Circular A-21 section J.10., NIH Salary Cap on grants, and other relevant agency policies that govern the need to provide certification of an individual's effort pursuant to his/her sponsored and non-sponsored programs.

The below links are provided to ensure certifiers have access to sufficient information to certify effort as prescribed above:

Contact: Email: ecrt@utep.edu

- [ECRT INSTRUCTIONS](#)
- [Access ECRT](#)

ECRT Training

- [ECRT INSTRUCTIONS](#)
- [Effort Calculator](#)