Effort Reporting

Procedures

The following procedures must be followed for reporting the effort of UNC Charlotte employees that have salary charged to a Sponsored Project Fund during the academic year and/or summer term. It does not matter what type of sponsor is funding your grant or contract or that its program purpose is research, training, or other sponsored activities.

A sponsored project fund is identified in our Banner Financial System with a fund number assigned within the 5XXXXX fund number range.

Proposing Effort and Requesting Salary Support

Levels of effort proposed in any sponsored project application should be consistent with the actual effort that each employee is expected to expend on the project during the relevant project period(s). The amount of salary support requested shall be determined by multiplying the proposed level of effort by the employee’s Institutional Base Salary, as defined in their Faculty Contract or other employment agreement. The total amount of effort committed to the project must be provided and ultimately certified. Sponsors generally consider estimates of effort (and corresponding salary requests) in project proposals to be commitments if such proposals are subsequently awarded. Principal Investigators and other key personnel for whom such commitments have been made are responsible for ensuring that the commitments are met.

Effort Charged to Sponsored Projects during the Academic Year

Salary distributions for the PI and other key personnel consistent with the committed effort shall begin on sponsored projects funds concurrently with actual project effort. It is each faculty member’s responsibility to be aware of his/her level of effort and to communicate any significant changes in level of effort to his/her respective Department Chair and Departmental Administrator to ensure that salary distributions are reviewed and updated on a timely basis.

Personnel with effort reporting responsibilities should be familiar with 2 CFR 200.430 – Compensation – Personal Services definitions of types of effort. Effort categories are divided into two major groups, Sponsored and Non-Sponsored (University funded).

Effort Charged to Sponsored Projects during the summer

A faculty member that is employed by the University as a 9-month faculty, that performs research as well as teaches during the academic year, can request a summer salary for up to a total of 12 weeks, depending on the granting agency, for performing research during the summer.
Office of Grants & Contracts Administration

period. This total is a culmination of salary from research grant(s) and any other salary they may receive outside of their 9-month contracted pay during the summer period.

The period for summer salary consists of May 16th thru August 15th of the same calendar year. This timeframe covers the two 6-week summer terms for a fiscal total 12 weeks.

**How is Effort Reporting Established for Employees?**

At the beginning of the grant period a plan is established, and the appropriate Personnel Action Form (PAF) is completed for each employee, showing the commitment of their effort and whether the time is contributed or charged directly to the grant. They are then submitted to Post Award Management by the hiring department for budget availability and allow ability relative to the approved project scope of work. Post Award Management will forward the approved form to the Budget Office for entry into the Payroll system.

UNC Charlotte has various Personnel Action forms for Faculty/Staff and Students. Please see the [UNC Charlotte Human Resource Forms](#) required for appointing faculty, staff and students and [University Personnel Action Forms](#) (under Forms) on the Financial Services websites.

**Completion and Certification of effort Reports**

UNC Charlotte performs effort certification periodically on at least an annual basis. At the end of reporting period effort reports are generated from data uploaded from the Banner Payroll system into the Effort Reporting System. Effort should correspond to payroll records and grant activities, and is certified each period by the project principal investigator or a person (supervisor) with first-hand knowledge of the employee's activities. An employee's effort distribution must equal 100% across all sources.

After effort reports are generated by Grants & Contracts Administration they are released to Departmental Administrators for Pre-review. Once these effort reports have been pre-reviewed they are forwarded to assigned Certifier to certify that charges made to sponsored funds and effort expended toward those projects are correct. This certification MUST be completed within eight (8) weeks from the release of the reports to campus.

The current link to the Maximus ERS effort reporting system for UNC Charlotte is:


**Changes in Effort During the Reporting Period**

Should the planned effort change during the reporting period, a superseding Personnel Action Form (PAF) is prepared by the department indicating the effective date of the change, the revised salary distribution, and a brief justification for the change. It is then approved by GCA for
budget availability and allowability relative to the approved project scope of work and sent on to Budget for entry into the Payroll system.

The change in effort is then imported into the effort Reporting system, through payroll redistribution from Banner Payroll. In all cases, the employing department is responsible for communicating correct effort to GCA employees in association with contract or grant activities. The principal investigator is ultimately responsible for the activities of project employees and the allowability of grant-funded expenditures, including salary charges.

**Effort Report Certification**

The appropriate Certifier for an effort report is usually the employee named on the report if the employee falls in the following professional classifications and has a suitable means to verify that the work was performed on the Sponsored Funds:

- Faculty
- Principal Investigator
- Permanent Exempt EPA & SPA Staff

Non-professional, non-exempt SPA Staff, Graduate Assistants, and Post-Doctoral Researchers whose salaries have been charged to Sponsored Funds must be certified by their Supervisor (e.g. Principal Investigator).

A responsible University Official (e.g. Department Chairperson or College Dean) who has a suitable means to verify the work was performed may also certify an effort report on behalf of faculty or other employees in their department in unusual circumstances where the employee is unavailable to certify their own effort report in the allotted 60 day time period.

**Salary Reallocations and Recertification**

Salary reallocations made as a result of the effort certification process must be made in accordance with University policies and procedures on salary reallocations and cost transfers. Once an effort reporting period is 100% certified and closed, payroll redistributions to sponsored funds are not permitted EXCEPT under unusual circumstances. In such cases, documentation must provide a detailed explanation of the need for the salary adjustment and subsequent recertification, and approval for the redistribution into the previously closed and certified period must be obtained from the Executive Director of Grants & Contracts Administration.
Effort Reporting Responsibilities (* terms used in the effort reporting system)

The principal investigator is ultimately responsible for the activities of project employees and the allowability of grant-funded expenditures, including salary charges. It is the responsibility of the PI to notify the Departmental Administrator to process any Payroll paperwork PRIOR to the period they or their employees are to begin or end working on the grant.

The employing department is responsible for processing the proper PAF’s in a timely manner and forwarding to Post Award Management for their action. It is also the employing departments’ responsibility to monitor payroll expenses monthly and inform GCA of any changes in association with contract or grant activities.

The Office of Grants & Contracts Administration, Cost Analysis is responsible administration of UNC Charlotte’s web based effort reporting system (Maximus ERS) and is responsible for generating effort reports within a reasonable time period following the end of a reporting period. Cost Analysis will also send notice to all College Business Officers and Department Administrators (DA*) upon opening a new reporting period. Cost Analysis is also responsible for importing payroll redistributions as necessary and notifying DA’s of the new effort reports.

The Department Administrator (DA*) for each Academic Department is responsible for Pre-Reviewing all effort reports for their department to ensure the effort report reconciles to the approved Personnel Action Forms for their employees. They then notify Certifiers the effort forms are available to be certified. The timeframe for this should be no longer than four (4) weeks from the opening of the reporting period.

Effort reports are automatically generated for all employees paid from at least one sponsored funding source during the reporting period. For employees whose effort is cost shared by UNC Charlotte and are not paid from a sponsored funding source, the DA is responsible for notifying Cost Analysis to generate an effort report for reporting cost share.

Certifiers are responsible to certify their effort reports within four (4) weeks of the end of each effort certification period. The DA should assist Certifiers as needed with certification of effort within this time frame.

TIME AND EFFORT Definitions

Cost Share % - If the effort an individual expends on a specific sponsored research project is mandated by the sponsor to be funded by UNC Charlotte or if cost sharing was offered and accepted at the time of proposal/award, mandatory/voluntary committed has become a binding term of the award. The cost shared effort must be reported on the effort report as cost share.
Effort % - Effort is measured as a percent of the individual’s total University employment obligation. Percent effort represents the proportion of time an individual spends on each University activity and is expressed as a percent of the individual’s total University activity.

The percent effort is not based on a typical 40-hour work week. Total University effort for an individual is 100% regardless of the total hours worked. Total effort should include only those activities for which an individual receives University compensation, including work performed on sponsored projects, whether reimbursed by a sponsor or University funded. An individual may not report effort that is less than or in excess of 100%.

Payroll % - Payroll % represents the salary distribution for an employee per the employee's most recent approved budget form submitted to Payroll.

Each employee's payroll charges to Sponsored and Non-sponsored funds are divided by the employee's institutional base salary to provide a Payroll % reflecting all of the activities on which the individual worked for the period.

Payroll Redistribution – A change in payroll distribution caused by the department preparing a superseding personnel action form moving salary from one fund to another. This results in the redistribution percentage of effort the person is performing. Payroll redistributions to sponsored funds can result in the need for generation or re-certification of an effort report.

Release Time – A period of time requested by faculty to be released from a segment of his/her academic obligation to perform other duties, including research.