



## Effort Reporting – Frequently Asked Questions

- **What is effort reporting, and why am I required to certify an effort report?**

Effort reporting is a process mandated by the government to verify that direct labor charges to, or cost shared on, sponsored projects are accurate, timely, and reflect the actual level of work performed. 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). All faculty and PI's who receive sponsored project funding or commit effort to any sponsored projects are required to certify their own effort. Principal investigators are required to certify the effort of postdocs, graduate students and staff funded by their grants. 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.

Effort reporting is not new to Lamar. We have been doing it for years via paper-based "Effort Certification" forms. We are now moving to an online system (a module contained within Banner) that will provide greater efficiency and better position Lamar to meet its compliance requirements. The sole purpose and capability of the new system is effort reporting compliance.

- **Who can certify an effort report?**

The employee listed on the certification is expected to certify for him or herself. 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.

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

Effort must be certified twice a year at a minimum. An e-mail notification will be received that an effort report is ready for certification, and it is expected that the report be reviewed and certified in a timely manner (typically, within no more than 30 days).

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

For purposes of proposing and certifying effort, Lamar faculty and staff should consider "100% effort" to be the total time spent conducting professional activities for which the individual is compensated by Lamar University (i.e., University effort), irrespective of the normal work schedules. This includes work performed outside of the '9 to 5' work schedule, work performed on vacation, off-hours and on or offcampus.

- **How do I certify an effort report?**

In the past, this was accomplished through the paper-based "Effort Certification" forms. This is being replaced with a new online system. Research faculty and staff will receive notification via email that their effort reports are available for certification. The online effort report forms will contain 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 report form, to determine whether those percentages reasonably correspond (*within about 5%*) to the percentages of the *individual's actual effort on each project or activity*. If salary percentages reasonably reflect the actual effort, the person completing the form (certifier) should certify the report. If the percentages do not reasonably reflect the actual effort, the system will offer the certifier the ability to notify departmental administrative personnel that a change in labor distribution may be required.



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- **When will we begin using the new effort reporting system for certification?**

Research faculty and staff who have effort reports eligible for certification will be notified via a system-generated email on or about **June 1st**. The goal is to have all certifications completed by **July 1st**.

- **How is training for the new effort reporting system being handled?**

Prior to the launch of the new system, training via Microsoft Teams has been offered. There will also be ongoing educational sessions covering the use of the system and fundamentals of effort reporting.

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

Certifiers may contact Ronald Johnson [RDJohnson2@lamar.edu](mailto:RDJohnson2@lamar.edu), extension 7015 in the office of Post Award Administration or [Post\\_Award\\_Admin@lamar.edu](mailto:Post_Award_Admin@lamar.edu)