

## Effort Reporting Certifications - Frequently Asked Questions

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**Question:** Is the budget a reasonable method for allocating payroll distribution charges and certifying effort on restricted sources?

**Answer:** No. An individual's salary distribution should be charged and certified on the project(s) where the actual work was performed.

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**Question:** Does cost shared effort on a federal award have to be certified?

**Answer:** Yes.

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**Question:** What happens if effort is not certified?

**Answer:** A variety of possible outcomes could occur, such as audit findings, disallowance by sponsors, large settlement amounts, and newspaper headlines. There is also a risk of extrapolation of findings to other grants.

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**Question:** Can my total effort percentages be something other than 100% on the report?

**Answer:** Yes. Due to the rounding process within ecrt®, occasionally, you may see a total that is less than or above 100%. The underlying payroll amounts are provided for assurance of the basis for the percentage.

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**Question:** Can I reallocate effort simply to use up unspent funds or to clear a deficit on a federal project?

**Answer:** No, however, a person's effort must be charged to the project(s) or COA(s) where the actual work was performed. If you have any "unfunded" effort on a federal award, it should be allocated to a cost sharing project associated with that award. By so doing, the effort is appropriately associated with the sponsored project even though it is funded by other sources.

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**Question:** In my proposal, I committed 5% of my time to an NIH research grant without requesting salary support. Can I leave that off my distribution for the project since I didn't request salary support?

**Answer:** Since this effort was committed (regardless of whether salary support was requested), the effort you actually worked on the project must be reported on your effort report. Since there was no salary support for this effort, it must be reflected as cost shared effort. It should be charged to the cost share project for the award which will allow the effort to be certified as cost shared on the award.

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**Question:** Is effort related to service on review panels or other advisory activities for federal or non-federal sponsors included in my total effort?

**Answer:** No. Effort related to review panels or other advisory activities for federal or non-federal sponsors that may or may not include an honorarium, per diem, and/or travel reimbursement is excluded from your total Vanderbilt effort. Activities excluded from effort reporting are activities such as consulting, volunteer/community/public service that are conducted outside the terms of your Vanderbilt employment because whether you do them or not, they do not affect your Vanderbilt institutional base pay.

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**Question:** How do I classify effort related to thesis committees, search committees, admission committees, and similar activities?

**Answer:** Generally, these types of activities are considered to be administrative or instructional and should not be charged to sponsored projects.

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**Question:** For the purposes of effort reporting, what does "administration" mean?

**Answer:** Administration includes effort incurred that benefit common or joint, school or departmental activities or objectives in deans/ vice-chancellors' offices, academic departments or programs and divisions, and organized research units. Effort related to administration is included in your total effort but should not be charged to externally sponsored projects.

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## Related Documents

VU Introduction to ecrtr® - [click here](#).

Effort Reporting – Guide for Faculty and Principal Investigators – [click here](#).

Uniform Guidance – <https://www.ecfr.gov>

NIH Grants Policy Statement - <https://grants.nih.gov/policy/index.htm>

NSF Requirements - <https://www.nsf.gov/bfa/dias/policy/>