Wayne State University
Effort Reporting – Frequently Asked Questions

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

Effort reporting is required by the federal government, since Wayne State University receives federal funds to be used for sponsored research. Please note that effort reporting applies only 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)*. 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 WSU. We have been doing it for several years via paper-based "Payroll Certification" forms. We are now moving to an online system (a module contained within Banner) that will provide greater efficiency and better position WSU 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, except for Graduate Research Assistants (GRAs). For GRAs the Principal Investigator overseeing his/her work is required to certify. 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 either twice a year (faculty and staff with 12-month appointments) or three times per year (faculty with 9-month appointments). 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, WSU faculty and staff should consider "100% effort" to be the total time spent conducting professional activities for which the individual is compensated by WSU (i.e., University effort), irrespective of the normal work schedules. This includes worked performed outside of the '9 to 5' work schedule, work performed on vacation, off-hours and on or off campus.

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

In the past, this has been done through the paper-based "Payroll Certification" forms. This is about to be 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, and 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.

- **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 **March 7**. The goal is to have all certifications completed by **April 4**.

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

Prior to the launch of the new system online training materials covering its use will be distributed to research faculty and staff. Use of the system is relatively straight-forward and a simple online training guide should be sufficient. Training for departmental administrative staff has already been completed. There will also be ongoing educational session covering the use of the system and fundamentals of effort reporting. Educational materials related to effort reporting are available at http://spa.wayne.edu/grant/effort_reporting.php .

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

Within each department or center, designated staff are responsible for reviewing the effort reports prior to certification. They can provide assistance on specific questions related to projects, accounts, percentages/amounts and use of the new system.   Contact the Business Manager in your area for information on who specifically is in this role. The "Routing Queue" within the new system will also contain this information. Alternatively, certifiers may contact the office for Sponsored Program Administration.