Effort Reporting – Common Questions, Issues, and a Few Tips

Below are a few of the most common questions we receive regarding effort reporting as well as some tips that may come in handy. If something contained in the information below is unclear or you have a question that is not listed, please reach out to us at effort@case.edu. This email address goes to everyone on the Effort Team, so there is always someone monitoring the inbox. Our goal is to respond to every email within one business day.

Look for this label to identify items that have been added since the previous effort cycle.

We are available to meet with you to discuss the effort reporting process. If you are new to the process or have questions, please let us know and we will be happy to meet you at your office or ours and help out.

**Common Questions:**

*An employee in my department moved here from another department in the middle of the effort cycle. Who is responsible for completing the report?*

- Reports for faculty and staff should be completed in the person’s current department. While you won’t have direct knowledge of the employee’s effort while in the previous department, you will have access to the salary distribution history which can be used as a baseline when discussing the effort with the employee. Additionally, our office is able to help coordinate between the departments to confirm the effort between the old and new Administrator.
  - Please note that this is different than the process for students who work in or move between departments during a reporting period. For students, they should have an effort report for each department in which they worked during the cycle. You will only certify for the effort completed in your department.

*The employee’s report shows 100% effort in Academic Responsibilities Section. Does this report need to be released to the employee and certified?*

- If the employee had no effort on a reportable sponsored project during the reporting period (this would be effort on a project with an RES, TRN, or restricted SPC speedtype), then the report does not need to be released to and certified by the employee. In these cases, send an email to effort@case.edu and the Effort Team will review and remove the report if appropriate or contact you with additional questions.

*An employee’s report contains a duplicate line that is causing the effort to be greater than 100%. If I try to remove one of the duplicated lines, both get removed. What do I do?*

- In a small population of reports, there is a known issue of one or more project lines being duplicated. For example, the line for project RES123456 will be listed twice in the report and will be summed in the total effort at the bottom of the report. If you try to remove one of the two lines, both get deleted. Our IT Team is working to identify why this happens to some reports.
  - There is a workaround for these cases. Once the correct effort is listed on the report in the duplicate lines (if employee had 10% effort on RES123456, then both lines for RES123456 should reflect 10%), click the “Printable” button at the bottom of the page. The pdf that is created should only show one line and total 100% overall effort. Please have the employee sign the paper report and return that to effort@case.edu. Our office will hold onto the report and upload once the duplicate issue has been resolved.
  - Please note that the report will still show as uncertified in Spiderweb, but we will do our best to not include those reports in any follow up we may have with you regarding uncertified reports.

*Should tuition be included in the effort calculation?*

- Tuition paid under a salary account code (512XXX) is considered compensation for work performed at Case. Therefore it should be **included** in the effort calculation.
- Tuition paid under the Scholarship (571XXX) or Fellowship/Trainee (572XXX) account codes are considered a cost of living allowance, not compensation, and therefore should be **excluded** from the effort calculation.

*A faculty member received incidental additional pay during the reporting period. Will that create a variance?*
• No. Additional pay is not normally taken into consideration in the variance calculation. Since it is received for work done outside of an employee’s contractual duties, it is not part of the 100% effort of that employee and is excluded from the calculations.

What causes an effort report to be generated?
• Generally, an effort report will be created if an employee received salary from an RES, SPC, or TRN speedtype during the reporting period. Additionally, reports are generated for anyone listed as the PI or as Key Personnel for an active RES, SPC, or TRN speedtype. Any person who expends effort on a sponsored project should complete an effort report.

I don’t see an effort report in my list for an employee that I know should have a report.
• Please send an email to effort@case.edu and our team will review the issue.

An employee has an effort report, but this person:
• Did not have any effort on sponsored projects.
• Is no longer with the University.
• Has transferred to another department.
• Is no one that I recognize.
  ○ In any of these cases, please send the name to effort@case.edu. The Effort Team will review and assist with a plan of action which could include removing the effort report for the open period, moving the employee to another department, or liaising with multiple departments to confirm effort across Management Centers.

An error has been discovered on a report that has already been certified. How can this be corrected?
• If the deadline to complete the effort certification has not passed, please send an email to effort@case.edu and we may be able to remove the certification and to allow for edits.
• If the deadline to complete the effort certification has passed, any removal of certification to allow edits will be due to extraordinary circumstances. Simply discovering a variance is not sufficient justification for removing a certification. If the effort certified is less than the amount paid in HCM, the overage can be moved to cost share or another speedtype so long as it does not impact any other reporting lines. The Office of Research Administration will review requests to recertify and discuss the decision with the effort administrator submitting the request.
  ○ To request a certification be removed to allow for recertification of a report:
    ▪ The Effort Administrator should print a copy of the certified printable form from Spiderweb
      • There is a button – “Printable” – at the bottom of the employee form that will generate a pdf of the certification.
    ▪ The correct effort percentages should be written to the side of the certified values. These new percentages should equal 100% and indicate either Direct Effort or Cost Share.
    ▪ The following questions should be addressed, either on the pdf or on a separate sheet of paper:
      • Why was the effort report certified incorrectly on the original report?
      • How was it determined that the certified effort was incorrect on the original report?
      • What processes and/or procedures have been established in order to prevent this from recurring within the department?
    ▪ The person who certified the original form must sign and print their name on the edited form.
    ▪ The request and explanation should be forwarded to effort@case.edu for review.

 Helpful Tips:
• Release and Certify Early! The earlier the reports are reviewed, released, and certified, the more time our office has to assist with any issues that may arise. In the previous cycle, we did our best to review and comment on variances early and we were able to reconcile a number of issues that would’ve required a recertification request had it been discovered after the reporting deadline.
If you can’t get to the effort reports right away, please be a good campus neighbor and do a cursory review of the reports in your queue to make sure that they all belong in your area. If any need to be moved to another department, you can let us know at effort@case.edu and we will investigate and move the report quickly. Imagine getting a phone call from our office the day before the deadline with the news that you have three more reports to do because they were just discovered in another department’s queue. That’s no fun at all!

The salary distribution report is a useful tool in helping you determine whether you have all the necessary reports in your queue. If someone shows up on the salary distribution as having payroll on a sponsored project and you don’t have a report in your queue, please let us know and we can review and get that report created if it’s needed.