

Effort Reporting – What is a Variance and How Do I Clear It?

The Basics:

- A certified effort report should confirm that the amount of money paid to an employee over a period of time is accurate.
- A variance on a certified effort report occurs when the percentage certified on an individual report does not agree with the amount of salary paid to an employee during the reporting timeframe.
- Nightly, the effort reporting system runs a Variance check and compares the certified percentage with the data in HCM. Any difference of 5% or greater is flagged as a variance and added to the Variance list in Spiderweb. The variance must be resolved or explained.
 - If a salary adjustment is done that resolves the variance, it will automatically drop from the variance list.
 - If an explanation/correction is added by the department, ORA reviews and will help determine the next steps to resolve the issue (known as “clearing the variance”).

Finding Variances:

The Variance Report is housed in Spiderweb along with the effort reports. If you have access to review and release the effort reports, you will have access to the Variance Report.

- From the Spiderweb homepage, click the link to “Effort Administrative” in the left side menu to get to the Effort Reporting homepage.



CASE WESTERN RESERVE UNIVERSITY EST. 1826

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Welcome

Spiderweb is a collection of tools listed on the left-hand side of the page. You can view information, report Effort or complete training, search for tools, and manage personal profile data including ORA.

The Office of Research Administration has replaced the Office of Research Administration to create and submit proposals.

- Select the appropriate reporting period that you wish to review (Spiderweb will always default to the most recently open reporting period. To change, select the appropriate periods from the dropdown menu and click “Go”.) Then click the link “View” under the Variance header in the menu bar.

Case Western Reserve University Effort Reporting

Manage		Additional Compensation		Variance
Department	Stats	Enter/View	Certify	View

9 Month Appointments

12 Month Appointments

Department Selection
Community

- If there are reports with variances in your department, they will appear in a list on this page. Remember, only reports that have a variance of 5% or greater will appear.

Case Western Reserve University Effort Reporting

Manage		Additional Compensation		Variance
Department	Stats	Enter/View	Certify	View

Change View

- Show Variance Cleared
- Show Department Reviewed
- Show SPA Reviewed

Variance					
Name	Department	Date Certified	SPA Review	Dept Review	Variance Cleared
Employee1	Community	08/04/2016	N	N	N
Employee2	Community	08/04/2016	N	N	N
Employee3	Community	08/04/2016	N	N	N

- Each employee name will be hyperlinked. Click on each employee to open the Variance Report. It is similar in appearance to the certification form, however it has an extra column that will show the payroll data from HCM and the difference between the certified percentage and the percentage of payroll (the variance).

Employee1									
Effort Report Variance Summary									
Reporting Period	Status	Date Created	Date Certified	Certified by	Variance Exists	Variance Cleared	Date Cleared		
2nd Half 2015 (Community)	Certified	04/20/2016	08/04/2016	Employee1	Y				
1st Half 2016 (Community)	Not Certified	08/23/2016			N				

2nd Half 2015									
Certified						Adjusted from HCM/3rd Party			Difference
Activity	Sponsor	Committed Effort	Direct Effort	Cost Share	Certified Effort	Payroll	Cost Share	% Effort	Cert - Adj
RES123456 - Test Project Title	NIH - National Institutes of Health	0.00%	100.00%	0.00%	100.00%	\$245.16	\$0.00	40.00%	-60.00%
Comments:						<input type="text"/>			
Academic Responsibilities Other Than Sponsored Projects									
Instruction, Institutional Service, Departmental Research			0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	\$367.74	\$0.00	60.00%	60.00%
Comments:						<input type="text"/>			
Clinical Service (UHHS, VA, MHMC, CCF)									
Patient care related to an affiliated hospital, training, GME, etc.			0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	\$0.00	\$0.00	0.00%	0.00%
Comments:						<input type="text"/>			
Total Effort					100.00%	100.00%			
Update		Cancel							
Notify SPA this is ready for review									

How to Interpret the Report

Using the sample report on the previous page, let's take a look at the various parts of the Variance report.

Employee1							
Effort Report Variance Summary							
Reporting Period	Status	Date Created	Date Certified	Certified by	Variance Exists	Variance Cleared	Date Cleared
2nd Half 2015 (Community)	Certified	04/20/2016	08/04/2016	Employee1	Y		
1st Half 2016 (Community)	Not Certified	08/23/2016			N		

- Header – this will show the employee name and list all previous variance reports for that employee.
 - For Employee1, the only effort reports that exist are the 2nd Half 2015 report, that was certified by the employee on 8/4/2016.
 - The last three columns show the summary variance information. In this case, the 2nd Half 2015 report has a variance that hasn't been addressed. We know this because there is no information in the "Variance Cleared" or "Date Cleared" fields.

2nd Half 2015										
Certified						Adjusted from HCM/3rd Party			Difference	
Activity	Sponsor	Committed Effort	Direct Effort	Cost Share	Certified Effort	Payroll	Cost Share	% Effort	Cert - Adj	

- Variance Report Columns – While the first few columns are the same as the effort certification, the Variance Report has an additional 4 columns on the right side of the report:
 - Adjusted from HCM/3rd Party – these columns will show the payroll data from HCM and any entered 3rd Party Pay (if applicable).
 - Payroll – Amount paid during the reporting period per HCM.
 - Cost Share – Any amount paid via the associated CSR speedtype (salary was charged directly to the CSR speedtype either through the distribution or adjustment).
 - % Effort – Calculation done by Spiderweb that divides the Payroll column by the total salary paid during the reporting period from all sources (CWRU and any 3rd Party Pay).
 - Difference
 - Cert – Adj – Calculation done by Spiderweb to determine the difference between the amount of certified effort and the percentage of salary charged to the speedtype.

2nd Half 2015									
Certified						Adjusted from HCM/3rd Party			Difference
Activity	Sponsor	Committed Effort	Direct Effort	Cost Share	Certified Effort	Payroll	Cost Share	% Effort	Cert - Adj
RES123456 - Test Project Title	NIH - National Institutes of Health	0.00%	100.00%	0.00%	100.00%	\$245.16	\$0.00	40.00%	-60.00%
Comments:						<input type="text"/>			
Academic Responsibilities Other Than Sponsored Projects									
Instruction, Institutional Service, Departmental Research			0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	\$367.74	\$0.00	60.00%	60.00%
Comments:						<input type="text"/>			
Clinical Service (UHHS, VA, MHMC, CCF)									
Patient care related to an affiliated hospital, training, GME, etc.			0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	\$0.00	\$0.00	0.00%	0.00%
Comments:						<input type="text"/>			

In the report above, we see that on RES123456, Direct Effort was certified at 100% (red oval), meaning that during the reporting period, this employee spent all of their time working on this project.

However, when the payroll data from HCM was imported, we see that the employee was paid a total of \$612.90 - \$245.16 from RES123456 and \$367.74 from unrestricted funds summed in the Academic Responsibilities section (green boxes).

Using this HCM data, Spiderweb calculates the effort percentages that reflect the way payroll was distributed: \$245.16 divided by \$612.90 equals 0.4, or 40%. That is the percentage of salary paid by RES123456, and therefore we would expect to see effort certified at this same percentage.

The variance for this speedtype is 60% - the employee certified at 100%, but there is only 40% of her salary being charged to the speedtype. 40% payroll - 100% certified = -60%. The variance for the Academic section is 60% payroll - 0% certified = 60%.

Activity	Sponsor	Committed Effort	Direct Effort	Cost Share	Certified Effort	Party			Cert - Adj
						Payroll	Cost Share	% Effort	
RES123456 - Test Project Title	NIH - National Institutes of Health	0.00%	100.00%	0.00%	100.00%	\$245.16	\$0.00	40.00%	-60.00%
Comments:						<input type="text"/>			
<u>Academic Responsibilities Other Than Sponsored Projects</u>									
Instruction, Institutional Service, Departmental Research			0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	\$367.74	\$0.00	60.00%	60.00%
Comments:						<input type="text"/>			

Since the variance here is 5% or greater, it needs to be cleared. The resolution will depend on the nature of the variance. All speedtype lines have a comment box that you can use to add any information you think necessary to help explain the variance and how it will be resolved.

- If the variance is positive (meaning the effort certified is less than the percentage of salary paid), the correction would be to move the excess salary to the cost share/discretionary speedtype or request to reopen the report so that it can be recertified (more information on recertification follows this section).
 - A late cost transfer justification is not needed when moving salary from a sponsored project to a discretionary speedtype such as a CSR, OPR, INS, etc.
- If the variance is negative (meaning the effort certified is greater than the percentage of salary paid), usually only an explanation is needed. In the majority of cases, the excess effort is cost share that was charged to another discretionary speedtype rather than the cost share. While this is not ideal, this may be acceptable so long as it is explained in the comments.

Once it is determined what action will be taken, enter a comment in one or more of the comment boxes explaining why the variance exists and how you will correct it.

After the comments have been entered, click the "Update" button at the bottom of the screen to save everything. Then click "Notify SPA this is ready for review". This will let us know that we can review the proposed changed. If you are making salary adjustments, please make sure those have been entered into HCM before you notify for review.

Total Effort 100.00%

The Effort Team will review the explanation and correction and determine if the correction is acceptable. The variance will either be cleared by the Effort Team or you will be contacted for additional information.

Request to Reopen a Report for Recertification

If extraordinary circumstances exist, it may be possible to reopen the report so that the effort percentages can be corrected. Simply discovering a variance is not sufficient justification for removing a certification. The Office of Research Administration will review requests to recertify and discuss the decision with the effort administrator submitting the request. All requests to recertify are reviewed by the Assistant Vice President for Sponsored Projects who determines the approval or denial thereof.

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.