Best Practices
Objectives:

• Receive a basic understanding of what to do with Effort Reports from notification to completion
ERS Notifications

• Effort Reporting System notifications are sent via the ERS Mailing List (ERS listserv).

• You can subscribe to this Mailing list via the ERS website
  http://ora.research.ucla.edu/EFM/Pages/ERSHelp.aspx.

• Through this Mailing List you will receive the following notifications
  • Quarter release dates
  • Deadlines
  • Training opportunities
  • Any other ERS related news
Gather tools required to start ERS verification process:

– The **Effort Report System**
– **ERS Detail Report (How To Instructions/Resource)**
– Current/Approved Budgets, Personnel Reports and Progress Reports for all Federal contracts & grants
– Copies of UPAYs or any other payroll transfer documentation used in your Dept. affecting the ERS Quarter’s payroll.
– Any other necessary documentation containing payroll and/or effort information (emails etc.)
Set-Up Searches

• Create Saved Searches specific to Dept codes, PI’s, employees, Projects and/or FAU’s.
• Usually only need to be set up once, depending on the criteria used.
Verification

• Every Effort Report should be reviewed & verified against the Payroll Ledgers.

• This reflects the paid effort and should match with the current/approved Budget and/or Progress Reports (Proposed Effort) for all Key Personnel.

• Required for EVERY single Effort Report.
Verification

- Make sure all the charges on the FAU’s are applicable by checking the Payroll Detail in ERS and ERS Detail report against your backup documentation (budgets, personnel reports, progress reports etc.)
  
  – To make sure the system is showing the correct paid percent, compare the Payroll % [A] in ERS with the payroll backup (Payroll Ledger, ERS Detail Report and the Payroll Detail in ERS)
Verification

– **Confirm all UPAYs/PETs**, if applicable, that have already been processed have been taken into account. NOTE: Although the Financial Web Reports are updated with payroll once a month, Payroll has three cycles (Bi-weekly 1, Bi-weekly 2 and Monthly). ERS is updated with each cycle’s information after it is processed in the payroll system (typically three times a month).

– Prepare necessary UPAYs/PETs ASAP, if applicable
Verification

- **Edit the Paid Effort % to Certify [B] if a payroll transfer will be submitted**, to show the new figures and have the report Certified. The status will read “Certified/AdjustReqd” and when the payroll transfer is picked up by the system, the Payroll % [A] should change to match the Paid Effort % to Certify [B] which will change the report to a “Certified” status.
Verification

• **Add Cost Sharing %** in the Cost Sharing Effort % to Certify [D] column, if applicable

• Comment – Once the Total Effort % to Certify [B+D] reflects the correct effort %, add a comment to the ERS Comment Log – “Report reviewed & verified by [Name] on [Date].” as well as any other descriptive comment.

• **Save changes**
Verification Overview

**1) Compare Payroll % [A] with Payroll backup/ERS Detail**

**2) Edit Paid Effort % to Certify [B] if incorrect (Submit UPAY’s if necessary)**

**3) Add Cost Share Effort % to Certify [D], if applicable**

**4) Comment – Add description of what action was taken on Effort Report**

**5) Save**

**6) Meet with Certifier to Review & Explain Total Effort % to Certify [B+D] Column prior to certification**

### Federal and Federal Flow-Through Sponsored Projects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project ID</th>
<th>Start Date</th>
<th>Payroll %</th>
<th>Paid Effort % to Certify</th>
<th>N/A to UCLA</th>
<th>Cost Share Effort % to Certify</th>
<th>Total % [A+C]</th>
<th>Total Effort % to Certify [B+D]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4-441356-EC-RAND/NIH 9920070108</td>
<td>4/11</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td></td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-441356-EC-RAND/NIH 9920060082 26%</td>
<td>2/12</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td></td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-441356-CM-FDP-NIH AG021084</td>
<td>8/10 26%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td></td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Total Federal and Federal Flow-Through Sponsored Projects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>5%</th>
<th>59%</th>
<th>59%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Report requires multiple certifications.</td>
<td>Report allows for Cost Sharing Offset Against Other Sponsored Projects</td>
<td>Report is under preliminary review</td>
<td>ADD ADDITIONAL SPONSORED PROJECT</td>
<td>UPDATE CALCULATION</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Add a comment: Report reviewed &amp; verified by Cathy on 12/01/11.</td>
<td>Cost sharing of 5% added from unrestricted fund to NIH Award # AG021884 to reflect 10% effort, as budgeted, on NIH project.</td>
<td>Comments can be up to 255 characters long. (Total characters: 173)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• Set up a time *prior to* the Quarter’s ERS certification deadline to sit down with the PI/Certifier to review & explain each individual Effort Report s/he is responsible for completing

• If sitting with the Certifier is not possible, notify the certifier that the effort reports are ready for review and certification

• Explain any complicated reports and let them know if any reports should not be certified because they need further action or review

• If the Certifier sees the need for any changes to the reports, they should contact the reviewer to discuss the changes *before* certifying the reports
Certification

• PIs *must* self certify.
  (Names *highlighted in yellow* in ERS)

• Staff members *may* self certify

• It is also recommended that PIs certify for staff for which they have primary oversight of the project since they have first-hand knowledge of the work performed
The Effort Reporting process is **NOT** over once all Reports have been certified. Fund Managers/Effort Reporting

- Coordinators should log into ERS from time to time to review their list of Saved Searches. Certified Effort Reports may reopen due to late payroll transactions.
In Summary – some hints & tips...
• Start early!

• Good ERS management starts with good fund management/monthly reconciliation.
  – Minimize payroll cost transfers (UPAYs) by monitoring projects on a monthly basis.
  – Check Salary Cap Overpayment/Disallowance Report regularly, if applicable.
Start required UPAYs/PETs in a timely manner

- Processing UPAY’s/PET’s in a timely manner allows the user to see the changes to ERS before certification. Wait for these UPAYs to hit ERS prior to changing the Paid Effort % to Certify [B].
- If not processed in a timely manner, the Paid Effort % to Certify [B] should be edited and report certified prior to ERS picking up the transaction so certification deadlines are met. The status will read “Certified/AdjustReqd.” When the ERS picks up the transaction and the Payroll % [A] changes to match the Paid Effort % to Certify [B], the status will change to “Certified”.

• Payroll % [A]& Paid Effort % to Certify [B] columns have to match to have a “Certified” status

• When Effort Reports are initially generated, Columns [A] & [B] automatically match.
  – If [B] % remains unchanged, it will continue to change to match [A].
  – If [B] % is changed & saved, any type of change to [A] will not automatically update [B] to match.
  – If the [A] and [B] %’s do not match and the report gets certified, it will change to a status of “Certified/AdjustReqd.” Both columns have to match to have a “Certified” status
• **Review Saved Searches even during off ERS certification cycles to ensure there are no Open ERS.**

  – A Certified/AdjustReqd status is still considered Open.

  – The priority during an ERS certification cycle is to first complete the *current* open quarter/s before the deadline to be in compliance with University policy. Then work on any overdue/non-certified Effort Reports from prior quarters to achieve the 100% compliance goal.

  – Another priority is to ensure the completion of all effort reports on awards that are closing
ERS Resources and Information

Effort Reporting Website
http://ora.research.ucla.edu/EFM/Pages/EffortReporting.aspx

The Effort Reporting System (ERS)
https://ers.ais.ucla.edu/EffortReporting/enterERS.do

ERS Training Modules
http://ora.research.ucla.edu/EFM/Pages/ERSTraining.aspx

ERS FAQ
http://ora.research.ucla.edu/EFM/Pages/ERSFAQ.aspx

ERS Detail Instructions/Resource
http://ora.med.ucla.edu/workfiles/postawardmanual/ERS-Calculations.pdf

ERS Help Desk
ershelp@research.ucla.edu