

Time and Effort Quick Guide

What is Effort?

Effort=Time. On grants, the time spent working on the project must be reasonable in relation to the salary charged to the project.

Effort:

- Is not based on actual number of hours worked OR a 40-hour work week
- Varies from person to person
- Always equals 100%
- Is based on the Institutional Base Salary (IBS)
- Is not an exact science, reasonable estimates are expected

What is Effort Reporting?

The means of documenting that salaries charged to sponsored projects are reasonable in relation to the activities performed on them.

Why is Effort Reporting important?

Federal regulations require it. Effort reporting is essentially providing a 'receipt' to the government to show it got the time that it paid for.

Reasonable Estimate

Federal guidelines recognize that instruction, administration, research and service are "inextricably intermixed". Faculty should consider the effort they certify as a reasonable approximation of value to the project and that the time is reasonable against other university activities (including cost share).

How often do we certify effort?

NIU certifies effort twice a year. The first certification period (TE1) covers July 1-December 31, and the second certification period (TE2) covers January 1-June 30. SPA distributes Effort Statements approximately four months after the close of the certification period.

Due Dates

Effort Statements are due within 30 days of SPA distribution. For TE1 the due date would be around June 1. For TE2, the due date would be around December 1.

Institutional Base Salary (IBS)

Percentages of effort presented on Effort Statements are based on the definition of Institutional Base Salary used for this purpose.

IBS is the regular compensation paid to faculty for all NIU duties.

It excludes:

- One-time payments
- Reimbursements
- Outside Consulting

Who signs effort statements?

Everyone is expected to sign their own report as they are generally the best person to know how they spent their time. When this is not possible, the individual's supervisor is usually the best person to sign. In all cases, the individual signing must have first-hand knowledge of the work performed.

Who certifies effort?

All salaried faculty, staff and students who receive pay from a federally sponsored award (direct or pass through). Hourly employees verify their time via their timesheets.

How will I receive my effort statement?

You will receive your Effort Statement from your college or division business office.

Activities That Can be Captured as Project Effort

- Directing or participating in any aspect of the research related to the specific report
- Writing a progress report for the project, sometimes called a continuation or non-competing proposal
- Holding a meeting with lab or program staff to discuss the specific project
- Activities contributing to and intimately related to work under the agreement, including:
 - Participating in appropriate seminars
 - Consulting with colleagues about specific aspects of the project
 - Delivering special lectures about specific aspects of the ongoing activity
 - Attending a conference held by an outside professional society to present research results from the project
 - Reading research journals to keep up to date with the latest developments in one's field
 - Mentoring graduate students on the specific project
 - Making an invention disclosure and other activities related to pursuing intellectual property (IP)-if the IP is directly related to the project and the effort occurs within the project award period

Activities That Cannot be Captured as Project Effort

- Proposal Writing, except for non-competing continuations (progress reports); this includes:
 - Developing necessary details to support the proposal
 - Writing, editing and submitting the proposal
- Administration, including service as a department chair or dean
- Instruction, office hours, advising students, and mentoring graduate students on something other than a specific project
- Service on an IRB, IACUC, selection committee, or another similar group
- Course or curriculum development not specific to your project
- Writing textbook chapters
- Fundraising
- Lobbying
- In addition, work that falls outside of the definition of NIU Effort would not be allocated to a sponsored project. This includes:
 - Service as the primary editor of a journal
 - Peer review of manuscripts, regardless of whether compensation is received
 - Advisory activities for sponsors, including service on a NIH study section or NSF review panel, regardless of whether compensation is received