What is effort reporting?
Effort reporting is the federally-mandated process by which the salary charged to a sponsored project is certified as reasonable in relation to the effort expended on that project. This Reference Guide provides step-by-step instructions for how PI’s can certify the effort of their research staff using ECRT, Columbia’s web-based effort reporting tool. If you have questions about effort reporting policy and process, please visit Columbia’s Effort Reporting Website, at www.effortreporting.columbia.edu, where you will find additional Reference Guides, policies, FAQs, and links to ECRT and the required effort reporting trainings.

How to Certify for Others in ECRT

Section A: ECRT Access and UNI Login
1. Using your internet browser, access ECRT at https://ecrt.columbia.edu
2. Login using your UNI and Password.

Tips:
• Make sure the web address uses 'https'.
• Any UNI issues can be addressed via the web at http://uni.columbia.edu/

For Morningside, employees will need to contact CUIT at (212) 854-1919.

For CUMC, employees will need to contact CUbhis at (212) 305-4357.

Section B: ECRT Welcome Page
3. The ECRT Welcome Page provides basic information on the ECRT system.
4. At the bottom of the page, select the ‘Continue’ button.

Tips:
• The left hand portion of the screen (blue area) provides ‘Helpful Links’ to useful material.

• The Effort Reporting Website contains Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs), ECRT Instructions, and Reference Guides on common policy and process scenarios.
Section C: ECRT Homepage

5. You will see the 'ECRT Home Page' with a lifecycle (e.g., circle) in the middle of the page.

6. On the 'Certification' section of the lifecycle, click on 'Certify My Researchers-Group View'.

Tips:
- The functions that a user can perform are shown around the circle. Clicking any of these links will take the user to the page related to the function.
- The blue navigation squares at the top are present on every screen within the system. When the cursor is positioned over one of the squares a drop down menu appears. The drop down menu contains the same links as appear in blue around the circle.

Section D: Certify My Researchers-Group View

7. You will see the 'Certify My Researchers-Group View' page. This page displays all of the Non-Self Certifiers that work on your projects. You will certify each person’s effort on your awards.

8. This page displays 10 researchers’ effort cards at a time. If you have more than 10 researchers, they will be shown on additional pages (accessible by clicking next above and below the shown listed cards).

9. You also have the option to view an individual’s effort card in full view by selecting ‘View Effort Card’ from the top right corner. If you are the only PI for an individual with some portion of their salary charged to a non-sponsored account, you can certify the entire card using this view. This will take you out of the Group View and you will have to re-enter to certify for the remaining individuals.
Tips:

- Starting in FY'09, casuals and work study students, like other non-self certifiers, are certified by the PI in ECRT.
- If you are unfamiliar with a name when certifying your researchers, “Use the View Effort Card” link described above to determine if this employee is a casual/workstudy student. You will see a notification in the 'Appointment' field on the employee’s effort card.
- By selecting the ‘Dollar View’ or ‘Certification Payroll Reporting’ option, you can determine the dollar amount charged to your accounts for these individuals.
- Determine if the dollars charged are reasonable in relation to the effort performed by these individuals.
10. Review ‘Payroll’, ‘Cost Share’, and ‘Computed Effort’ columns for each researcher (see definitions in the ‘Tips’ below.)

NOTE: In Certify My Researchers-Group View, you are only able to certify for accounts for which you are listed as the PI. Accounts that are grayed out belong to another PI and will be certified by that PI. There is also an indication at the bottom of each effort card that states whether multiple PI’s are associated to this researcher or whether you are the only PI that must certify.

NOTE: If you are the only PI for an individual with some portion of their salary charged to a non-sponsored account, we recommend using the ‘View Effort Card’ option at the top of the effort card and certifying the entire effort card.

11. Enter whole numbers in ‘Certified’ column for each researcher you would like to certify at this time and mark the certified checkbox. Only researchers whose checkboxes are marked will be certified. You do not need to certify every researcher on this page at one time.

12. If you are not ready to complete the certification, you can close out of this screen. Changes will only be saved if you select ‘Save All’ at the top or bottom of the screen. You must ‘Save All’ or ‘Certify All’ before proceeding to next page of researchers.

13. Selecting ‘Save All’ will save changes for anyone for whom you have entered certified effort and will bring you back to the top of the screen.

14. If you are ready to complete the certification, select ‘Certify All’.

15. To complete certification, select ‘OK’ to the confirmation pop-up message.

16. After selecting ‘OK’, you will return to the ‘Certify My Researchers-Group View’ page. If you have additional researchers to certify, they will be displayed on screen. If you have completed all of your researchers’ certifications, it will indicate that you have no researchers to certify at this time.
Tips:
• Sponsored activity appears in the top part of the card and the Non-Sponsored activity appears in the bottom part of the card. There are subtotals for both areas and a Grand Total at the bottom of the screen.

• Each sponsored project that was charged salary for the certifier or that had cost sharing recorded by Sponsored Project Administration (SPA) is displayed. The Computed Effort column displays the sum of the Payroll and Cost Sharing and should represent the total effort devoted to the sponsored project.

• If a project is missing, or the cost sharing information is incorrect, contact your Effort Coordinator, who will submit the information to Sponsored Project Administration (SPA).

• The Non-Sponsored activity is reported in one line. The total institutional support, regardless of type of activity, and whether funded by one or more non-sponsored FAS accounts, is consolidated on this single line.

• Although ECRT displays Payroll and Cost Share percentages at the two-decimal level, you are not expected (or even able) to certify effort using this level of precision. The certifier will enter percentages in whole numbers. There may be minimal rounding differences between the two numbers.

• Be aware that if you certify to a percentage that differs from the percentage displayed in the “computed” column of the form, and this necessitates a cost transfer, once that cost transfer is processed, you will be asked to confirm that the certified percentage and the calculated percentage are now in agreement by recertifying your effort. For more information, see below ‘Section G: Recertification’ (e.g., steps 17 – 20).

• The Certification Payroll Report provides detailed payroll information, including the dates salary charges were accrued. It will be accessible by double clicking on the gray box in the upper right hand portion of the effort card after selecting 'View Effort Card'.

• Below are definitions for the main column headers on the ‘Certify Effort’ screen:
  Note: All columns contain percentages.

  a) ‘Payroll’ is the salary that was charged directly to this account as payroll charges.

  b) ‘Cost Sharing’ is defined as the portion of activity that is supported by another funding source.

  c) ‘Computed Effort’ is the sum of Payroll and Cost Sharing.

  d) ‘Certified’ is the percent of effort that the certifier actually expended on this activity.
Section G: Recertification
(To correct a previously completed certification, or to validate that accounting changes have been processed)

You may need to recertify your effort if you need to correct certification you previously filed, or if the certification you previously filed reflected percentages different from those that were reflected in the “computed” column of the effort report.

17a. If you made an error in the certification which you previously completed, you must ask your Primary Effort Coordinator to reopen your certification form in order to recertify.

17b. If the certification you previously filed reflected percentages different from those that were reflected in the “computed” column of the effort report, and those changes necessitated a cost transfer, you will have to validate that the changes were made by recertifying. The recertification is an opportunity for the certifier to confirm that any and all necessary salary adjustments were made to reflect the correct effort.

18. In either of the above cases, if a recertification is required, you will receive an email asking you to recertify, and you will need to login into ECRT (Steps 1 – 6).

19. Review the effort card and make sure that the certified effort and the computed effort column are accurate.

20. If the certified effort and computed effort columns are correct, complete steps 10-16.

Video Simulation – “Show Me”
For additional instructions, we have created a reference guide containing a video simulation that provides a step-by-step tutorial on how to certify for researchers in ECRT. You can access the reference guide on the Effort Reporting Website at http://www.effortreporting.columbia.edu/ecrt_tool.html. Note the video has sound effects, but not narration.

Resources
If you have questions about the effort certification process, the following resources are available to assist you:

For general information about effort reporting policy and process and FAQs:
Effort Reporting Website: http://www.effortreporting.columbia.edu

For complex questions:
Effort Reporting Email: effort-reporting@columbia.edu