Frequently Asked Questions
ECRT

Note: For the purpose of brevity, this FAQ uses the term “faculty” and “faculty member(s)” to encompass all Officers of Instruction and Officers of Research, exclusive of Postdoctoral Officers of Research.

ECRT FAQs

1. Exactly what is ECRT?
   Answer: ECRT is the University’s on-line effort reporting tool that is used by faculty and PI’s to facilitate the annual effort certification, as well as to provide information during the course of the year to assist faculty and others in monitoring effort, so that appropriate adjustments to salary distributions are made on a timely basis. Salary distribution throughout the fiscal year can be viewed month-by-month and year-to-date in order to allow for monitoring of charges, and salary allocation modifications as necessary. ECRT training and resources are available for Effort Coordinators and faculty. Click here for additional information.

2. How do I access ECRT?
   Answer: ECRT is accessible directly at https://ecrt.columbia.edu or through the Effort Reporting website at www.effortreporting.columbia.edu using the 'ECRT' tab.

3. What is an Effort Card?
   Answer: The effort card is an ECRT screen that shows all of the effort information for each individual, including the sponsored accounts funding an individual's salary during the year (project name/number and FAS account number), the percentage of salary funded from each such account, cost sharing information and much more. When it is time to certify, the effort card becomes the Effort Certification Form itself.

4. What is my Username?
   Answer: Your Username is your UNI. Please visit http://uni.columbia.edu for all UNI issues or contact the following CUIT offices for immediate assistance:
   Morningside (212) 854-1919
   CUMC (212) 305-4357

5. What is my UNI Password?
   Answer: Please visit http://uni.columbia.edu for all UNI issues or contact the following CUIT offices for immediate assistance:
   Morningside (212) 854-1919
   CUMC (212) 305-4357

6. When I log into ECRT I am seeing the following message: “Forbidden, you don’t have permission to access/on this server.” What is wrong?
   Answer: Please ensure that the web address is correct (and in particular, that the “s” following “http” is entered). ECRT can be accessed through https://ecrt.columbia.edu.

7. Why can't I get into ECRT?
   Answer: Please ensure that the web address is correct. ECRT can be accessed through https://ecrt.columbia.edu. If this does not resolve the problem, please send an email to effort-reporting@columbia.edu and the Effort Reporting Team will review your access privileges.

8. I am typing data and pressing enter, why is nothing happening?
   Answer: When entering data into certain fields, such a department or PI name, the system is equipped with "smart keys" which generate suggested values when at least 3 characters are entered. After typing in your search criteria, please allow a few seconds for the system to identify your data. Once the data box returns a value, select on the appropriate selection, and click the submit button.

9. How are employees assigned to departments in ECRT?
Answer: Employees are assigned to departments in ECRT based upon their “home” or “admin” department assignment in PeopleSoft (PAC).

10. How are accounts and awards assigned to departments in ECRT?
Answer: Accounts/Awards are assigned to departments as they are assigned in the Financial Accounting System (FAS).

11. How do I fix incorrect data, such as the PI on a particular sponsored project or an incorrect home department, in ECRT?
Answer: Incorrect data must be corrected in the source system for it to be corrected in ECRT. For example, an incorrect home or admin department of an employee must be fixed in PeopleSoft. If a PI is incorrect in ECRT, please email effort-reporting@columbia.edu and the Effort Reporting team will review your request to correct the PI with Sponsored Projects Administration. Please include the following information in your email request: account name, FAS account number, PI name and UNI as appears in ECRT, and correct PI name and UNI. For any other errors please describe the problem in an email and send it to effort-reporting@columbia.edu.

12. Under the “Manage Department” menu, there is a section called “Child Department(s).” What is a child department?
Answer: A child department is a sub-department that is related to a department. Our system terminology calls sub-departments that are related to a department ‘child departments’ (the relationship is called a ‘parent-child’ relationship). All child departments have parent departments to which they roll up in reporting.

13. When I click on “View the Research Staff of a PI” page, type a PI’s name and hit “Enter” and nothing happens. Why don’t I get a result?
Answer: The system is equipped with “smart keys” which generate suggested values when at least 3 characters are entered. After typing in your search criteria, please allow a few seconds for the system to identify your data. Once the data box returns a value, select on the appropriate selection, and click the submit button.

14. As the Effort Coordinator for my department, how do I check who has or has not certified?
Answer: Under the “Effort Data and Workflow” menu, select the option “Manage Departments.” By clicking on the “+” next to “Sponsored” under Certifiers Associated to this Department, the icons under “Statements” indicate the status of each of the individual’s effort cards.

15. As the Effort Coordinator for my department, how do I check the status of effort cards for a particular PI?
Answer: Under the Certification menu, select the option “View the Research Staff of a PI”. Type in the first few letters of the PI name, and wait until a value is returned in the data drop down box. Select the appropriate PI and click the submit button. The icons under “Statements” indicate the status of each of the individual’s effort cards.

16. How do I handle situations when someone who worked on one or more of my projects also worked on projects directed by other Principal Investigators during the year.
Answer: The “Certify My Researchers-Group View” has been created to facilitate the certification process. This view allows you to view the entire effort card for individuals who worked on your accounts, but only permits you to certify for accounts in which you are listed as the PI. Once your accounts are certified, the PI on the remaining accounts must certify for their portion. The Effort Coordinator of the individuals home department is responsible for making sure each PI performs their certification.

17. What is the difference between “Certify My Researchers-Single View” and “Certify My Researchers-Group View”?
Answer: Certify My Researchers-Single View is the same view that was available for the FY’07 effort certification period. In this view, you must enter each individual’s effort cards one by one. The Group View allows you to see all of your researchers on one screen, and you can certify 10 researchers at a time (but only certify accounts where you are listed as the PI).

18. What is account “000000”? Why is it showing up on my effort statement?
**Answer:** The effort card encompasses both the sponsored (i.e., grants and contracts) and non-sponsored effort of an individual. The account number of each sponsored project is listed on the effort card; for non-sponsored activities, the individual accounts that fund the non-sponsored portion of an individual’s salary are rolled up as a single percentage, and are labeled Account 000000. The percentage displayed for account 000000 represents in total the proportion of an individual’s Institutional Base Salary that was charged to non-sponsored sources (i.e. departmental funds, gifts, etc.) for that individual during the fiscal year.

19. I cannot put a check in the checkbox on the Effort Card. What’s wrong?
**Answer:** After entering a percent into the “Certified” box, the system will automatically check the box next to the percentage when you tab out of the box. By entering the percentage and subsequently clicking the checkbox, you are unchecking the box. Make sure all check boxes are checked before hitting the certify button. Clicking on “All” will check all boxes.

20. I am the Effort Coordinator for my department. How do I process a cost transfer?
**Answer:** Cost transfers are necessary when the certified effort on a sponsored project is lower than the percentage of salary charged to that project, as indicated in ECRT. ECRT does not process salary adjustments. You must use the paper PAT form to adjust salary expenses where applicable.

The PAT form can be found on the Controller’s website at [http://finance.columbia.edu/forms/index.html](http://finance.columbia.edu/forms/index.html) within the Payroll/HRPC section. PAT instructions and an example can be found within the Effort Reporting website [http://www.effortreporting.columbia.edu](http://www.effortreporting.columbia.edu) under the ‘Resources’ tab.

21. I am the Effort Coordinator, reviewing an Effort Card with a calculated cost transfer which is out of balance by a penny or two due to rounding. ECRT will not allow me to process the certification because it is out of balance. How do I get it to balance in ECRT?
**Answer:** Simply change the non sponsored cost transfer column so the Grand Total is .00. You will then be able to process the certification.

22. I am the Effort Coordinator for my Department and I am completing the PAT form to reflect the required cost transfer resulting from the certification. What account number do I assign to cover the necessary transfer to non-sponsored funds?
**Answer:** When completing the PAT form for a cost transfer, you cannot use the account #000000 – Total Columbia Support. A valid departmental account and sub-code must be used to transfer money to a Non-Sponsored account.

23. Who should I contact if I have questions or concerns about effort and effort reporting that are not addressed in this Q&A?
**Answer:** The University has created a separate website, [http://www.effortreporting.columbia.edu](http://www.effortreporting.columbia.edu), that contains a great deal of additional information about effort reporting and certification requirements. In addition, a dedicated email address, effort-reporting@columbia.edu, has been created to expedite responses to any additional questions or concerns you may have. All questions will be promptly answered.