Effort Reporting Overview

What is effort reporting?
Effort reporting is the federally-mandated process by which Officers of Instruction and Officers of Research other than Postdoctoral Officers of Research (hereinafter jointly referred to as “faculty”) verify that the salaries and wages charged or contributed to sponsored projects are reasonable and consistent in relation to the effort committed and devoted to the projects.

Why do effort reporting?
Certified effort reports constitute the primary auditable document to support salary costs on a sponsored project.

What does Columbia’s Effort Reporting Policy say?
Columbia’s current effort reporting policy and processes include:
- The requirement that faculty monitor their own effort quarterly and certify annually.
- The requirement that principal investigators monitor quarterly and certify annually the effort of their postdocs, graduate students, and staff funded by their grants.
- Training requirements for faculty (web based) and Effort Coordinators (in person).
- An online effort certification system (ECRT).
- Chair/Dean validation of faculty effort where sponsored effort exceeds 90%.

What are other schools doing?
Columbia’s peer institutions similarly require faculty to certify their own effort and many have already rolled out similar programs.

Resources
Several resources are available for faculty, PIs and Effort Coordinators to assist with effort reporting and certification responsibilities:

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

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

Critical Issues
The following issues may be of particular concern, so we have prepared reference guides for each of the topics listed below. The reference guides may be accessed via the website at http://www.effortreporting.columbia.edu.

- Roles and Responsibilities of Faculty and Effort Coordinators
- Definition of Total University Effort
- Classifications of Common Columbia Activities
- Certifying for post-docs, graduate students, and research staff
- Cost sharing
- Summer salaries
- Training Grants and K Awards
- Faculty with greater than 90% sponsored effort