

1. What percentage should you list in the “certified effort” column and certify?
 - a. The payroll percentage listed on the effort card.
 - b. The commitment that I made to the sponsor.
 - c. The percentage my effort coordinator/departmental administrator told me to list.
 - d. The percentage listed on my Personnel Action Form (PAF).
 - e. The percentage that reflects the actual effort expended during the period of performance.

If “a” is answered: Incorrect. Auditors look for indications that certification is based on things other than the actual effort expended. Actual effort should be certified, not what was budgeted, or “estimated”.

If “b” is answered: Incorrect. Though you should be monitoring your commitments over the course of the sponsored project period, you should always certify the actual effort expended during the period of performance you are certifying. Your actual effort may fluctuate over each quarterly period of performance. Auditors look for indications that certification is based on things other than the actual effort expended.

If “c” is answered: Incorrect. Your effort coordinator/departmental administrator does not have the suitable means of verification to know the effort that you (or your staff) expended on sponsored projects. Your effort coordinator/departmental administrator can help you with calculations, but you must determine the actual effort percentage worked over the period of performance. Auditors look for indications that certification is based on things other than the actual effort expended.

If “d” is answered: Incorrect. The percentages listed on the Personnel Action Form (PAF) are used as estimates of effort to set up your salary being charged to the sponsored project. We use the ECRT system to certify the actual effort expended on the sponsored project during the period of performance. Auditors look for indications that certification is based on things other than the actual effort expended.

If “e” is answered: Correct! You should always certify the actual effort expended during the period of performance.

2. When calculating the actual effort expended on a sponsored project, what activities should be included?
- a. All direct activities expended on the sponsored project.
 - b. Effort spent writing a proposal related to the sponsored project.
 - c. Effort spent serving on institutional research committees (example: IRB).
 - d. A and B
 - e. All of the above

If “a” is answered: Correct! You should only include the activities that are directly expended on the sponsored project. These activities would not occur if the project did not exist.

If “b” is answered: Incorrect. Effort spent on proposal writing is never allowed to be charged to any sponsored project, regardless of its relation to the project. Proposal writing should be allocated to your non-sponsored or departmental effort.

If “c” is answered: Incorrect. Effort spent serving on institutional activities, even if they are related to research, is never allowed to be charged to sponsored projects. These activities should be allocated to your non-sponsored or departmental effort.

If “d” is answered: Incorrect. Effort spent on proposal writing is never allowed to be charged to any sponsored project, regardless of its relation to the project. Proposal writing should be allocated to your non-sponsored or departmental effort.

If “e” is answered: Incorrect. Effort spent on proposal writing is never allowed to be charged to any sponsored project, regardless of its relation to the project. Effort spent serving on institutional activities, even if they are related to research, is also never allowed to be charged to sponsored projects. These activities should be allocated to your non-sponsored or departmental effort.

3. When calculating the actual effort expended on a sponsored project, I should base the calculation on a 37.5 hour NSU work week.
 - a. True
 - b. False

If “a” is answered: Incorrect. Your calculation of actual effort expended should be based on the total hours that you worked during the period of performance that you are certifying to. It should not be based on the standard NSU work week of 37.5 hours, it should be based on the amount of hours that you typically work during the week or on the total number of hours worked during the quarter. You would then calculate the number of hours worked on the sponsored project in the week or the quarter and divide that number by the total. If you are calculating by week, you would average your weekly calculations of effort to arrive at the average effort over the quarter.

If “b” is answered: Correct! Your calculation of actual effort expended should be based on the total hours that you worked during the period of performance that you are certifying to. It should not be based on the standard NSU work week of 37.5 hours, it should be based on the amount of hours that you typically work during the week or on the total number of hours worked during the quarter. You would then calculate the number of hours worked on the sponsored project in the week or the quarter and divide that number by the total. If you are calculating by week, you would average your weekly calculated to arrive at the average effort over the quarter.

4. A sponsored project that I expended effort on during the period of performance is not listed on my effort card, what should I do?
 - a. Certify effort to only to the projects listed on the effort card.
 - b. Use the “Add Account” feature in ECRT or add an effort note to document the missing account and associated actual effort expended.
 - c. Wait to certify until the sponsored project account is added.

If “a” is answered: Incorrect. You must document effort on all the sponsored projects that you expended effort on during the period of performance at the time of certification. Your effort certification becomes the final attestation of effort expended and therefore, is the tool used to finalize the salary charges posted to sponsored projects. You should always make a note or add the missing account so that you can fully document 100% of the effort expended during the period of performance. If you do not add the account or make a note, you will not be able to charge the effort to the sponsored project and the effort will have to be covered by your department.

If “b” is answered: Correct! You must document effort on all the sponsored projects that you expended effort on during the period of performance at the time of certification. Your effort certification becomes the final attestation of effort expended and therefore, is the tool used to finalize the salary charges posted to sponsored projects. You should always make a note or add the missing account so that you can fully document 100% of the effort expended during the period of performance. If you do not add the account or make a note, you will not be able to charge the effort to the sponsored project and the effort will have to be covered by your department.

If “c” is answered: Incorrect. Though you are correct in that you should not certify until the sponsored project account is added, but this will delay your certification. You should always make a note or add the missing account so that you can fully document 100% of the effort expended during the period of performance. It is important to note that you must document effort on all the sponsored projects that you expended effort on during the period of performance at the time of certification. Your effort certification becomes the final attestation of effort expended and therefore, is the tool used to finalize the salary charges posted to sponsored projects. If you do not add the account or make a note, you will not be able to charge the effort to the sponsored project and the effort will have to be covered by your department.

5. I am reviewing an effort card of one of my research staff and I see that an account I do not recognize is listed on the effort card, what should I do?
 - a. Certify the effort card based on the payroll percentages listed.
 - b. Consult with my effort coordinator and the research staff member to assist in gathering the information needed to properly document the actual effort expended.

If “a” is answered: Incorrect. If you were to certify based on the payroll percentages listed, or the “estimates” of effort, you will be attesting to effort incorrectly for which you do not have suitable means of verification over the work that was performed. You should consult with your effort coordinator and the research staff member who can assist in gathering the information needed to properly document the employee’s entire effort picture for the period of performance.

If “b” is answered: Correct! You should consult with your effort coordinator and the research staff member who can assist in gathering the information needed to properly document the employee’s entire effort picture for the period of performance. If you were to simply certify based on the payroll percentages listed, or the “estimates” of effort, you will be attesting to effort incorrectly for which you do not have suitable means of verification over the work that was performed.