

EFFORT REPORTING GLOSSARY

Committed Effort

The amount or percentage of time a university employee has agreed to work on a specific sponsored project. It is not necessarily the actual effort expended each month, but a projected amount to be achieved over a period of time (for example, a semester or a year). This commitment is set at the time of the proposal or the award and can be revised during the award. Committed effort may be adjusted without the approval of the sponsoring agency, unless the adjustment represents a reduction of 25% or more from proposed total commitment of the Principal Investigator and possibly other key personnel depending on the sponsor policies.

Contact Hours

As defined by the Florida Board of Governors, a contact hour is a standard one-hour (at least 50 minutes) classroom period.

Cost Sharing

The portion of the total costs of a sponsored project that is not borne by the sponsor. This can take the form of salary support for project personnel or other material contributions such as equipment or third party donations.

Mandatory Cost Sharing

Cost sharing that is required by the sponsor as a condition for proposal submission and award acceptance.

Voluntary Committed Cost Sharing

Cost sharing not required by the sponsor as a condition of proposal submission, but proposed in the sponsored project budget or budget justification. Once offered by the institution and agreed to by the sponsor, this becomes an obligation that the institution must fulfill.

Cost sharing that is proposed in the budget or the budget justification and is not amended or deleted in the contract becomes a commitment upon execution of the award agreement.

When cost sharing proposed in the narrative is specific and quantified, it also becomes a binding commitment upon execution of the award agreement.

Voluntary Uncommitted Cost Sharing

Cost sharing that is not in the proposal or award that is voluntarily contributed to the project. There is no requirement to track such cost sharing in relation to the project.

Departmental Effort Coordinator

Administrators at the department level who facilitate the distribution and submission of effort reports.

Effort

The proportion of time spent on any activity and expressed as a percentage of the total professional activity for which an individual is compensated by Institutional Base Salary. Total effort for an employee must equal 100%.

An individual's total time compensated by Institutional Base Salary serves as the basis for determining their total effort. In other words, if an individual who is being compensated for a 100% appointment works 60 hours in a week, then 30 hours would represent 50% of their professional effort.

Certification

The process whereby the employee or a person with first-hand knowledge indicates that the effort report is "a reasonable estimate of all work performed by me (the person certifying the report) during the period covered by this report." Each effort report must be certified by either the employee, or a knowledgeable person who is in a position to confirm the reported effort.

Full Time Equivalent (FTE)

A numerical designator for an appointment based on 100% for full time. An FTE for a full-time employee is 1.00.

Institutional Base Salary

The base annual compensation set by the University for an employee. It includes salary increments, augmentations and paid overtime. It does not include non-service payroll items such as awards, overload payments, bonuses or other incentive payments.

K Award

A National Institutes of Health (NIH) supported career development award. K Awards require that recipients devote a specified minimum percentage of their full-time professional effort (in most cases 75%) to the goals of the career award. In addition, NIH policy requires a full-time appointment at the applicant organization, with salary based on a full-time, 12-month staff appointment.

Key Personnel

Personnel considered being of primary importance to the successful conduct of a research project, such as the PI or Co-PI. The term usually applies to the senior members of the project staff; however, sponsors may have differing definitions of Key Personnel.

Lump Sum Payment

Non-service payroll that includes employee benefit accounts, trainee job class codes, overload payments, bonus payments and unused vacation payouts.

Notice of Award (NOA)

A document that provides information regarding the award's important terms and conditions. It should be referred to by PIs and departments to provide guidance in managing the project.

NIH Salary Cap

A legislatively mandated provision limiting the direct salary that an individual may receive under an NIH grant to Executive Level I of the Federal Executive Pay scale. For the purposes of the salary limitation, the terms "direct salary," "salary," and "institutional base salary" have the same meaning.

NSF Salary Limitation

A salary compensation limit that applies to all National Science Foundation-funded grants. As a general policy, NSF limits salary compensation for senior project personnel to no more than two months of their regular salary in any one year.

OMB Circular A-21

A Federal Circular from the Office of Management and Budgets that establishes principles for determining costs applicable to grants, contracts, and other agreements with educational institutions. A-21 is the principal guiding document for Federal requirements for effort reporting.

Over-commitment

Occurs when an individual has committed him/herself more than 100%. This can occur when a faculty member applies for three proposals at 50% FTE each, thinking that not all three will get funded, but all three proposals are funded. Because the faculty member can only have a commitment of 100%, he or she would not be able to accept one of the three awards mentioned in the example above or renegotiate effort requirements on one or more of the awards.

Overload

An appointment type used when a faculty member has an approved compensation for hours in excess of 1.00 FTE.

Overload Payments

Compensation to academic personnel (Faculty and Professional Academic) for work that exceeds the normal scope of their appointments, e.g., extension instruction classes, continuing education.

Retroactive Pay

Pay received for work performed in prior pay periods.

Sponsored Projects

An externally funded activity that is governed by specific terms and conditions. Sponsored projects must be separately budgeted and accounted for subject to terms of the sponsoring organization. Sponsored projects include grants, cooperative agreements and other types of funding vehicles.

Suitable Means of Verification

The standard of documentation required by the Federal government in the event that someone other than the employee is certifying the employee's effort. Suitable means of verification must take into consideration and be consistent with other documentation in existence, and be sufficient to support a reasonable estimate of effort expended by the employee. Documentation of the means of verification must indicate the employee worked during the period covered by the effort report and the percentages on the report are a reasonable estimate of the employee's effort. Examples of such documentation may include, but are not limited to calendars or timesheets where the employee tracked his/her effort by activity/project, dated email messages where the employee has indicated or confirmed his/her activity, or signed/dated reports, notes, etc., where the employee has indicated or confirmed his/her activity.

Twelve Hour Law

Florida Statute 1012.945 states, "Each full-time equivalent teaching faculty member at a university who is paid wholly from state funds shall teach a minimum of 12 classroom contact hours per week at such University." Faculty who are not paid wholly from state funds or who have been assigned other duties, may teach proportionally less than 12 classroom hours per week.