

Effort Reporting

Faculty¹ with Greater than 90% Sponsored Grant Allocations

The University's Policy on Effort Reporting requires that salary charges to sponsored projects be commensurate with the effort devoted to those projects, and that the annual effort certification reasonably reflects the actual effort devoted to both sponsored and non-sponsored activities.

For many University employees, it is not uncommon for the vast majority of their effort to be devoted to sponsored projects. In particular, this could include Officers of Research, Student Officers and certain groups of Officers of Administration such as technicians and other research support personnel. With respect to Officers of Instruction, however, it is generally the case that in addition to carrying out their sponsored project activities, nearly all perform other activities such as teaching, administration, serving on various University and School committees, and writing competitive grant proposals. Additionally, many faculty members engage in clinical practice.

While the University's Effort Reporting Policy does not limit the percentage of effort that individuals may devote to sponsored activities (although some Columbia schools may), the University has adopted certain additional procedures to be followed when certified sponsored effort exceeds 90%. It is important to note that while the University is requiring these special procedures based on the 90% threshold, it is not suggesting that 90% is the appropriate allocation of effort, since this determination must be made on a case by case basis. Rather, the University is using the 90% threshold as a basis for requiring further review.

Specifically, the Policy requires:

- (1) Departmental lists of Officers of Instruction, and Officers of Research who are Principal Investigators, who have certified that more than 90% of their effort was devoted to sponsored projects, will be sent to the appropriate Dean, departmental chair, director or other individual with similar authority who will be required to review those lists and sign a statement that the sponsored effort percentages, as certified, are reasonable in light of any teaching, administrative, clinical or other non-sponsored duties, including the writing of competitive grant applications.
- (2) For Officers of Research who have certified that 100% of their effort was devoted to sponsored projects, the University will, on a sample basis, require written confirmation that they have no non-sponsored responsibilities. The purpose of this sampling approach is to ensure that, in certifying 100% sponsored effort, those individuals have appropriately considered all of their University responsibilities. Accordingly, based on results of the sample, the University may deem it appropriate to extend the sample size as necessary to ensure compliance.

To the extent that either of these additional procedures identifies an insufficient allocation of effort to non-sponsored activities, the affected department(s) will be required to reduce charges to sponsored projects; additionally, it may be necessary for individuals to recertify the effort in accordance with those findings.

For additional information, please contact effort-reporting@columbia.edu.

¹ All references to "faculty" refer to those individuals who are appointed as Officers of Instruction or Officers of Research (exclusive of Post-Doctoral Officers).