Effort Certification

Effort

Certification

Reporting
OVERVIEW

- External organizations provide the university funding to conduct research, public service, and educational projects.

- The UT Effort Certification Reporting (ECR) System assures persons working on these projects account for their effort (“time”).

WHY?

- As a condition to receive federal funding, the university must maintain an accurate system for reporting percentage of effort ("time") that persons devote to projects.

- Every person who is paid from, or devoting effort to, these projects is required to certify the effort he or she expends on the project(s).

- The university utilizes after-the-fact certification completed by the employee, the principal investigator, or an official with suitable means of verifying that the work was performed.
NON-COMPLIANCE

- **Weaknesses and shortcomings identified as non-compliance by federal auditors include:** inadequate supporting documentation from employee or principal investigator; inadequate training; proposals with no delineated commitments of effort; lack of university policies defining suitable means of certification and verification; labor charges certified a significant time period after performance of work

- **Federal audits have found non-compliance resulting in penalties and withdraw of awarded funding at:**
  - Northwestern University $5.5 million
  - University of Alabama Birmingham $3.4 million
  - Harvard University $3.3 million
  - University of Southern Florida $4.1 million
DO I NEED TO CERTIFY?

**Biweekly Employees**
- You certify effort by signing your paper time sheet which contains project account numbers on which you worked
- No further action is needed

**Monthly Employees**
- If you work on an account (project) requiring certification you should access the ECR website and certify your effort online each month
Monthly employees receive an email when effort certification is required. The link in this email takes you to the ECR website.
QUESTIONS

Departmental Contacts

- Your department’s business manager or human resource staff can answer most questions

Administrative Office Contacts

- AgResearch – Meshelle Lowery llowery3@utk.edu
- Extension – Audrey Dew adew4@utk.edu
- Veterinary Medicine – Tonya Kenley tcromwel@utk.edu