

Effort Reporting FAQs:

1. What is effort reporting? Why is it required?

ERS stands for effort reporting system. Effort reporting is a process mandated by the federal government in which Principal Investigators (PIs) or Co-PIs, certify that labor charges on their federally sponsored project(s) are correct and that those charges reflect the actual level of work performed.

2. When is the effort reporting timeframe? When is the certification timeframe?

Chapman's effort reporting timeframe runs from October 1st of the previous year through September 30th of the current year. Chapman requires effort reporting certification annually. The certification timeframe for 2024 runs from October of the current year until Monday December 2nd, 2024.

This means that starting in October PIs and Co-PIs can log into the ERS to certify the required forms which will report data from October 1st of the previous year to September 30th of the current year. **Your certification will be due on Monday December 4th.** If an effort report is not certified by the due date that individual will be considered out of compliance.

3. When is the effort report certification due?

The due date for the 2024 certification timeframe is Monday December 2nd.

4. Who is responsible for the certification? Who is included in the certification?

PIs and Co-PIs are responsible for certifying their own effort on federally funded projects. Salaried employees on a federally funded project will need to be certified by the lead PI only (not Co PI). Hourly individuals paid from a federally funded project are not required to be part of the effort reporting process. This includes student workers.

5. What does the effort report process look like?

There are two types of effort reporting forms. Individual certification forms are for PIs or Co-PIs. Individual certification forms will show all the effort for the individual in question across any funding sources.

Project certification forms are forms that a PI is responsible for certifying on behalf of their salaried employees on a federal grant. Project certification will show the % effort that the employee dedicated to that PIs specific project.

Once a PI or Co-PI has had the opportunity to confirm that the information on each form is correct, they will be asked to click the "certify" button on the bottom of each form.

6. How do I read the individual certification effort reports?

Individual certification forms will be broken up into two sections: "federal sponsored chart fields" and "all other chart fields". The only section that requires certification is the "federal sponsored chart fields". The "all other chart fields" section is included in the

report so that the PI or Co-PI can see how their effort across all funding sources adds up to 100%.

PIs and Co-PIs will be asked to look at each item under the “federal sponsored chart fields” section. Once confirming that all the federal projects during the reporting period are accounted for, and that each project listed is indeed a federally sponsored project, they can click on the hyperlinks for each project to see more information. Clicking on the payroll column hyperlinks will initiate a popup where the user can see how much they were paid per month from this project. Clicking on the chart field column hyperlinks will show more information about the project in question.

7. How do I read the project certification effort reports?

Project certification forms will show all salaried employees on a federally sponsored project that need to be certified by the project’s lead PI. By clicking on the employee's name, the PI will be able to see what project of theirs the employee worked on. By clicking the payroll column hyperlink, the PI can see how much this individual was paid per month from their project. This figure is also represented as a percentage. Using this information, the PI will be able to certify for the employee.

6. How do I verify that the percent effort the system is showing me is correct?

The actual percentage on each form is not what PI and Co-PIs are being asked to certify. This is the result of an equation that the effort reporting system completes for each individual.

What you ARE being asked to certify is that the amount that you or your employee were paid each month is correct. You can see these figures by clicking on the hyperlink in the “Payroll” column for each project.

7. Can I change an effort percentage on the form if I believe it is incorrect?

Yes, you can change the effort percentage by editing the last column. This column has a box for each project where you may edit the % effort if you believe it is incorrect. You can then continue the certification process.

By changing the % effort this will trigger our team to investigate this reallocation. If needed, you may be asked to complete an ERCR. If you do edit the % effort in the last column, our team will reach out to you to confirm the redistribution of funds and any additional paperwork that may be needed moving forward.

8. Can I make changes to my effort after I have certified if I find a mistake?

If you believe you have made a mistake and have already certified your report, please email ERShelp@chapman.edu. Be sure to include a description of the mistake, as well as your name, and the project ID for the project(s) in question.

9. What do I do if I find a mistake in my report, or I have a question? Such as a missing employee project certification form, a missing federal project, or a project in the incorrect spot?

If you have any questions about your effort reporting forms, please do not certify them yet and email ERShelp@chapman.edu or click on the “notify” button at the bottom of your effort report form. Please be sure to always include a description of the issue you have run into, along with your name, and the project ID for the project in question.

10. How does summer pay reflect on the effort report forms?

If you receive summer pay from a federal project, it will be notated under the “federal chart fields” section of your form. All other summer pay funds will be notated under the “other chart fields” section. If your summer pay is not broken down on your paystub by fund, but instead is grouped together into one payment, which makes it difficult for you to verify the amount of the federally funded portion, please reach out to ERShelp@chapman.edu and we will help you verify that the amount on your report is correct.

11. What do I do if I do not recognize a project on my report?

If you do not recognize a project, or a funding source on your effort report, please email ERShelp@chapman.edu. You can also investigate further by opening the payroll hyperlink associated with the chart field in question, click “details by transaction”, and find the “earn code” in the second column. You can compare this earn code to the ERS earn code descriptions sheet. This may help orient you to where this payment came from. Please remember – for the ERS process, you are only being asked to certify the projects that are federally funded – not any projects under the “other chart fields” section.

12. What do I do if a federal project of mine is missing?

If a federal project is missing from your report, you can add a line item to the individual certification form and include the % effort you believe should have been on this project. After that has been added, please click the notify button to let the central admin team know of this addition. We will confirm when you can continue with the certification process.

After the central admin team has confirmed that you can proceed with the certification, if the project you added has concluded, no other action is needed on your end. If the project you added is still ongoing, you may need to submit an ERCR to initiate labor changes for the timeframe outside of the reporting period.