

PERT Frequently Asked Questions

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1. How does effort or employee time become “committed”?

Commitments of faculty or USF employee time typically occur in the proposal process. A commitment of effort is usually made in the proposal budget, but it may also be made in the proposal narrative or communication with the sponsor. In some cases, sponsors will include expected levels of commitment or work effort within their award or agency guidelines. Once an award occurs, the effort noted within the proposal, sponsor guidelines, or communications with the sponsor becomes committed effort.

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2. Is committed effort equivalent to cost sharing?

Committed effort may be EITHER cost sharing (work on an award that is funded by USF), direct charges (work on an award that is funded by the sponsor), OR a combination of the two. Cost Sharing may also be required for committed effort when an employee is over the NIH Salary Cap.

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3. How should research be reported if funded by the University?

If the work performed is committed as cost sharing, salaries and wages should be distributed to the appropriate cost sharing accounts for the individual award. If the work performed is not based on a sponsor obligation or commitment of work effort or it exceeds the level of commitment, the work performed is classified as voluntary uncommitted effort and need not be separately reported, per the January 2001 Office of Management and Budget clarification memo.

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4. How should voluntary effort or time spent in excess of a 40-hour work week be reported?

Effort reports must include 100% of all work performed. This does not equate to a set number of hours per week, e.g., 40 hours per week. Total effort is the summation of all University compensated activities. Effort reports are not generated for employees paid on Salary Plan 01.

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5. What happens if an employee refuses to certify their effort report?

By accepting federal awards or committing to cost sharing, the University and its Principal Investigators have agreed to comply with Federal effort reporting requirements. Employee responsibilities do therefore include review and certification of federal effort reports. In the absence of effort certifications, the employee's salaries and wages must be removed to a College unrestricted account. Research Financial Management will address such instances with the Dean, Chair, Vice President, or Director, as appropriate. (See [CCHIP#005](#) .)

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6. How should faculty manage effort commitments that exceed 100%?

When submitting proposals, faculty may propose commitments to several awards that if awarded and combined with existing commitments could exceed 100%. Since research proposals are not always funded, there is no reason for concern unless the commitments of existing awards and new awards received exceed 100%.

If effort commitments exceeding 100% are identified, contract/grant or faculty assignment changes **MUST** be made. Sponsored Research will work with the department and sponsor to modify any award commitments as needed. Any proposed changes to faculty assignments should be directed to the Chair of the department.

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7. What level of effort is expected from a Principal Investigator on his/her sponsored award?

Sponsor expectations as to a Principal Investigator's level of effort may be detailed within the award, contract, or sponsor guidelines. In the absence of other requirements, the University expects a minimum level of effort (1%) be provided by Principal Investigators. Equipment grants or conference, training, dissertation support, and other student support awards are excluded from this expectation. The [January 2001 Office of Management and Budget memorandum](#) on effort establishes the expectation that faculty members and senior researchers on sponsored research awards WILL make a commitment of their effort to an award.

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8. When is it necessary to correct an effort report?

The Federal government recognizes that measuring effort is not an exact science. Therefore, the University has determined that actual effort can vary from the percentage of supported salary by less than 5% and \$500. Both conditions must be met in order to be deemed insignificant.

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9. When can retroactive changes be made to a certified effort report?

Once effort has been certified, no changes can be made or allowed without the existence of extremely unusual circumstances. If you believe you have an extremely unusual situation, please contact Research Financial Management for consideration of your situation.

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10. What should I do if I forgot to change pay distribution for an employee who worked on a federal award and provided cost share?

You will need to contact Research Financial Management. If not over 90 days, you may be allowed to submit a retroactive payroll expenditure transfer request to redistribute the charges to a cost share account for the individual award. If the employee did not have an effort report generated for this time period, a report will then be generated once the transfer has posted in GEMS. If the transfer is posted in GEMS before the applicable PERT certification period has ended, a weekly process should pick up the transfer and generate the report automatically.

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11. What tool is available to assist me with reconciling payroll to PERT?

As soon as a payroll cycle posts for a reporting period, the View Pay History (Effort Report System>Certify>View Pay History) will reflect the payroll and PERT Pay details needed to reconcile the effort against the payroll distribution.

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12. How do I know if the payroll was prorated for either of the boundary pay periods within a reporting period for a specific effort report?

When accessing an Effort Report through the Admin Review page, you should see a button on the report labeled "View Current Payroll History". This summary

of current payroll will also display the prorated amount and will identify the pay period that was prorated for a boundary period (see Figure 1).

Figure 1

Pay End Dt	Pay Period	% of PP in Term	GEMS Acct Code	Project ID	RET Status	Ret Seq#	Trans Date	Earn Code	Gross Earnings	Amt If Prorated	pp Included?	Eligible Earnings	Earnings Used
1 08/19/2010	1104	90.00	000096381		0	0	08/27/2010	REG	\$670.8	\$603.45 PRORATE	Y	\$803.45	

In addition, on the Effort Report Detail tab of the PERT report will display the included prorated payroll for each boundary pay period. These comments are located in the “DA Comments” section as seen below.

Proj/Grt	Fund	*Combo Code	Cost Share A/C Descr	FAST Descr	Payroll%	Cost Share%	Effort%
1	94627	000096381		UMSA Child Protection Team	50		50
2	6119119900	20000	000186177	Victims of Crime Act (VOCA)	10		10
3	6119119900	94627	000186196	COSTSHARE CONVENIENCE ACCT	10		10
4	6119124800	20000	000209918	Victims of Crime Act (VOCA)	30		30

FTE: 1.000000 Totals for Payroll%: 100 Effort%: 100

DA Comments: PERT Comment: Pay ending 19-AUG-2010 was included at 90 percent. Pay ending 23-DEC-2010 was included at 80 percent.

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13. What else do I need to know regarding payroll?

The “View Current Payroll History” will reflect payroll for that employee and empl rcd# during the reporting period. It will display the earnings code information and whether or not those dollars should be included as PERT eligible earnings as determined by the following earnings codes:

- REG – Regular
- OVT – Overtime Earnings
- PPH – Prior Pay Period Hours
- RTA – Retro Earnings Adjust
- SAH – Salaried Ees Additional Hrs
- DOC – Dock Earnings

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14. How do I acquire GEMS/PERT access?

Departmental Representatives requiring GEMS/PERT access should complete the GEMS Access Form available on the [GEMS website](#), check Effort Representative as the Role being requested and submit according to the instructions on the form.

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15. What about access to GEMS/PERT for the employees who need to certify or supervisors/ Pls/Dept Chairs?

The link on our website for [Technical assistance](#) contains a variety of support information including how to access PERT as a Certifier or Representative.

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16. Whom do I contact regarding application support issues?

GEMS/PERT users with password resets, problems or remote access should follow the Logon ID & Password Create/Reset procedures located on the [Business Systems Reengineering \(BSR\) website](#).

For other PERT navigation/use issues refer to this training guide or the Quick Reference Guide. If you require additional assistance, please contact [RFM Compliance](#).