To: Deans, Directors, and Chairpersons

From: Michael Meunier, Assistant Controller
Cost Accounting Services

Date: August 17, 2015

Subject: FY15 Effort Certifications Requested

Personnel whose payroll was charged directly or as cost share on sponsored agreements in FY15 (July 1, 2014 through June 30, 2015) must certify their FY15 effort on sponsored agreement(s) as being reasonable in relation to work performed on them.

All effort forms must be certified in the University’s Effort Reporting System (ERS).

Your prompt cooperation is requested to ensure that the FY15 effort reporting certifications for your respective unit occurs by the October 15, 2015 deadline. Payroll distribution changes resulting from reviewing the effort information should be expedited to ensure the University’s HR system official records are consistent with certified effort.

**Purpose of Effort Certifications**

Timely certification on sponsored agreements is required by federal law as well as University policy. Certified effort forms are the equivalent of sworn statements about the correctness and substantial accuracy of commitment of labor to each sponsored agreement. Our ability to justify these time records could be the source which prevents serious difficulties for both the University and individual researchers. Therefore, a diligent review of effort information for accuracy, allowability and proper allocation is warranted prior to certifying an effort form in ERS.

**Certification Process**

1) Certifiers will log into the University’s web based Effort Reporting System (ERS) and review the effort information on their assigned effort form(s) for reasonableness.

2) Upon satisfactory review, certifiers will certify their assigned effort forms in ERS

Certified effort forms are archived in ERS and is the official repository of UVM’s certified effort forms.

**ERS Certification Training/Outreach** - Designated administrative personnel within the affected units have attended ERS training and will support certifiers on the use of ERS. Open labs are available to obtain additional guidance from Cost Accounting Services.
Frequently Asked Questions

Is there any web based training available on effort management and reporting?

Yes. A web based tutorial covering effort management and reporting topics including effort certification in ERS may be found at the following web site. Encourage your faculty and staff in your unit to take the tutorial prior to reviewing/certifying their assigned effort forms:

https://www.uvm.edu/~cntrllrs/cas/ers/effort_tutorial/

Are job aids available for faculty and staff on how to access and interpret their assigned effort forms in the ERS system?

ERS usage instructions, job aids and related FAQs for certifiers and departmental effort administrators are available on the following ERS website.

https://www.uvm.edu/~cntrllrs/cas/ers/

If an effort change is warranted, what action does my unit need to take?

If a change is made on an effort form in ERS by a Certifier, a FY15 salary distribution form must be revised, signed by the employee, and submitted for processing per the University existing procedures. Per the University’s cost transfer policy, thorough and documented justification is required for any retroactive cost transfer request.

Is there a way to obtain effort commitment and certification status for my unit in ERS?

Yes. ERS has two modules. The active effort plans by PI’s and key personnel in the Committed Effort Module (CEM) are available for reference. The Effort Certification module (CERT) in ERS has a report which summarizes the certification status of effort forms for a unit. Effort administrators have access to these reports and can provide you with the current status of faculty effort plans on sponsored agreements (CEM) and certified effort forms (CERT).

What support is available for faculty and staff to interpret/certify effort in ERS?

Department effort administrators have received hands-on training in the ERS Certification module and will be the primary support for faculty and staff. Cost Accounting Services will be available to provide additional support as required. Contact Dawn Caffrey at 656-1336 (Dawn.Caffrey@uvm.edu) or Michael Meunier at 656-1375 (Michael.Meunier@uvm.edu).