EFFORT CERTIFICATION (EFC) OVERVIEW

Effort Certification is a requirement to review and certify the effort performed in support of a sponsored project that is paid for with grant funds, or with University funds that are designated as cost share/match. A systematic certification process and formal effort report is essential to ensure that we are always prepared to respond to sponsors and auditors with the required information.

Effort Reporting is a critical compliance issue. Signed Effort Reports are considered legal documents in which an individual attests to the accuracy of the effort spent on sponsored projects. Effort reporting is a federally-mandated process by which the salary charged to a sponsored project is certified as being reasonable in relation to the effort expended on that project. Sponsors use these reports to confirm that effort expended by an individual working on the project supported what the sponsor paid.

The South Dakota Board of Regents has implemented an Effort Certification Policy for the following purpose “To ensure compliance with sponsored project effort reporting requirements, which includes the appropriate allocation of time and costs and certification of effort, by each university, its departments, and individual employees.” Section C.3., item 3.1 of the BOR Policy states, “The Principal Investigator – The PI has the responsibility for the fiscal management of a sponsored award including associated effort reporting. Responsibility may be delegated but accountability remains with the PI”.

- **Actions** - A button to click on an effort report. Review actions are mandatory, Acknowledge actions are optional.
- **Routing Queue Members** - Individuals who can view and complete actions for a specific effort report.
  - The routing queue of an effort report comes from the grant accounting setup. This means that all employees paid from the same grant, even if paid from separate grant funds, will pull in the same queue members. We have limited capability to manually adjust a routing queue for an individual effort report on a case-by-case basis.
  - The routing queue of an effort report is unique to each effort report, since it is a combination of routing queues from each grant from which the employee is paid. This includes cost share payroll, as well as employees with wages from other SD Regental universities – i.e., shared employees.
- **Effort Report Periods** - Pre-Review – Certify – Post Review. The three Periods for reviewing and certifying effort reports during which various routing queue members will complete required or optional actions. All required actions within each Period must be completed to move to the next Period. Post-Review is for grants administration to lock effort reports.
- **Pay Periods** - Example: MN0517 is the pay period from 4/22/17 to 5/21/17. It indicates “Paid Monthly- May, 2017”.
- **Effort Percentage** - This is the percentage of wages distributed to each fund source to indicate work performed, and should be a “reasonable” reflection of effort expended on each fund source. Effort reports display only percentage of effort, not the amount of wages paid to the employee. Therefore, it’s possible for an effort report to display the correct effort (labor distribution percentage) even if the employee was paid an incorrect amount. For example, employees paid solely from your grant fund will display 100% effort to your grant regardless of the amount paid to them.
- **Payroll Detail Report (PZRPAYR)** - The accounting report sent to grant PIs monthly, reporting payroll for each employee paid from your grant. You must verify all payroll charges to your grant as well as completing effort certification.
- **Review** - An action button to “sign” that the effort percentages reported are a reasonable reflection of effort for work paid from your grant fund. The Status will be “Under Review” until all required reviewers click their Review button.
- **Certify** - An action button to “sign” that the effort percentages reported are a reasonable reflection of effort for all work paid from all the employee’s fund sources. Only one of the users with certify authority will certify the report (whomever clicks their Certify button first). The Status will be “Awaiting Certification” until someone clicks their Certify button, after which the status will be “Certified”.
- **Request Changes** - An action button that can be used at any time until an effort report is locked, to indicate corrections are needed, or that you have a question. This action places the report on hold, preventing others from completing any other actions until the corrections have been processed, or the request has been cancelled. Clicking the Request Changes button creates a pop-up email in Outlook with a default subject line referencing the effort report in question.
- **Clear Changes** - An action button that removes the report from on hold, and can be completed only by the person who clicked the Request Changes button.
- **Update** - An action button used to update the report after a payroll correction has been processed. The Status of the report will be “Awaiting Refresh” until you click the button, and afterwards, the Status will be “Under Review”. All previously completed actions will be reset to pending, and the effort report must repeat the entire routing process from the beginning.
- **Add Comment** - An action button to add permanent information regarding unusual circumstances – use with caution.
STEP-BY-STEP INSTRUCTIONS – see additional information with print screens later in this document

1) Access EFC from the SNAP Employee tab and scroll down to click on the link under EFFORT CERTIFICATION.
2) Open one of your own effort reports, if any.
3) OR click on the link for Review or Certify Reports (same as Advanced Search) to search for reports for others paid from your grant. Choose one or more search options beginning with Chart of Account Code = S. DO NOT search by Status or State at this time (due to a defect).
4) Double-click an effort report from the list to open it. Note the information in the Effort Report Overview section (Effort Period Code, Status-State, Comments Exist, etc.). If there is an Update button, this indicates a payroll correction has posted to accounting, and you must click the Update button, and the report will immediately change to reflect the new information. At that time, all previously completed actions will be reset to pending, and the certification process will start over from the beginning.
5) You can switch between the 4 screens within each effort report by clicking one of the links at the top of the report (Effort Report; Pay Period Summary; Comments; Routing Queue).
   a. If there are comments, go to the Comments screen to read them, as there may be specific instructions or information needed regarding issues with the effort report.
6) Before clicking any action buttons, navigate to the Pay Period Summary screen.
7) Then click on the underlined link for Pay Period in the upper left corner (i.e. Monthly 5 2017)
8) Verify the Fund, Organization, Program, (and Location Code if applicable), then close the window, and click the Effort Report link to return to the Effort Report screen.
9) If you notice any errors or have questions, click the Request Changes button (to put the report on hold).
   a. If no corrections are needed, and you have no more questions, click the Clear Changes button to resume the process. If corrections are needed, contact the appropriate department to process payroll corrections.
   b. After corrections have posted to accounting, the report will be Awaiting Refresh. In that case, go back to Step 5 and click the Update button in the Effort Report Overview section.
10) If all the information for your grant is correct, click your Review button to sign the report (this is the review signature).
11) After all routing queue members with required review have clicked their Review buttons, one of the certifiers will certify the report when they click the Certify button (this is the certify signature).
12) Click the X in the upper right corner to exit the report, which returns you to the search list.
13) From there, you can select another effort report OR click Advanced Search in the upper right corner to select new search criteria, OR sign out if you are done.
14) NOTE – The effort report can still be changed after certification due to subsequent payroll corrections. If this occurs, the effort report will begin over, with no indication of prior review & certification. You should occasionally search for prior/old effort reports to make sure there were no changes. Locked effort reports are completed and can’t be changed except by a Superuser.

![Advanced Search]

Input:
- ID
- Name
- State
- Status
- Chart of Account Code
- Effort Period Code

Output:
- Select Grant Code
- Select Period Code
SEARCHING & SORTING

Access Effort Certification from the SNAP Employee tab, and scroll down to click on the link under Effort Certification. The first screen will display all of your own effort reports, if any.

To search for effort reports (other than your own), click on the link for Review Or Certify Reports.

The next time you need to search, you will click on Advanced Search.

The search link opens a pop-up window. You can search for effort reports using one or more search criteria **EXCEPT** for Status & State, which are currently not functioning properly. If used, you might have to exit the system and re-start EFC.

Enter S in the Chart of Account Code box, then choose one or more additional search options. You can search by Grant Code, Effort Period Code (payroll period), Employee Banner ID, or by Name. You can search on a full or partial name, and the results will be a list where either the first name or the last name contains the search criteria.

The drop-down arrows for Grant & Effort Period display a list of all possible search criteria for all SD Regental universities (both current & past, and also for future Effort Period Codes). Therefore, you will not have access to every item in the drop-down list. For example, if you select a grant code for which you are not in the routing queue, the search results will be null.

Click Go, and wait for the system to generate a list of effort reports.
SEARCHING & SORTING - continued

There are various miscellaneous glitches in the search results list and page navigation buttons. It appears the best results occur when using the default per page count of 50; lists that are not more than one page long; and searches that return no more than about 10-20 reports.

Scroll down to the bottom of the list and make sure you have the page navigation buttons. If they are missing, go into full screen mode. If they are still missing, exit the report and then open it up again. If that doesn’t work, sign out and then sign back in before continuing.

You can sort by any column except the Name column. However, as you open and close individual effort reports, the list will not remain sorted as selected – it will revert back to the original default sort.

When sorting a multiple-page list, each page is sorted separately and independently of the other pages. The sort feature won’t sort the entire list, so you won’t see all your sorted results together on one page.

If you want to begin a new search, click on Advanced Search in the upper right corner.

Below is a multiple-page list showing the result of searching on the partial name “joh” (search is not case-sensitive).
The default screen (view) for effort reports comes from the Effort Report link. This screen displays most of the information needed to review and certify the report, including the action buttons. Navigate between the screens by clicking the links at the top of the screen (Effort Report, Pay Period Summary, Comments, and Routing Queue).

The Effort Report Overview section displays information about the report, such as the Pay Period, Status-State, and if Comments exist.

If you see that comments exist, you should click on the Comments link to read them. Comments are used to explain unusual circumstances, and can’t be deleted. You may see a comment asking you to enter your own comment acknowledging that you have read and/or agree to the other comments. This is used as additional information to certify a report that does not display the correct information, but can’t be corrected through accounting in a manner that will generate an accurate effort report.

To verify the Fund/Org/Program, etc., you must go to the Pay Period Summary Screen, and from there, click on the link that references the Monthly Pay Period, i.e. Monthly 5 2017. A pop-up screen will appear displaying payroll details, including the entire accounting string (FOAPAL). If all is correct on this screen and on the Effort Report screen, you can click the appropriate review and certify buttons (the review signature and the certify signature).
EFFORT REPORT SCREENS – Routing Queue

The Routing Queue screen shows the routing queue members divided into each of the 3 Effort Report Periods – first the Pre-Reviewers, then the Certifiers, then the Post-Reviewers. The action they will complete (button to click) is also listed after each name. Review is a required action, and Acknowledge is an optional action.

When the action has been completed, a green check mark will appear next to the action, and the date & time of completion will be recorded to indicate who completed the action. Optional actions, which were not completed before the required actions, will no longer be available, and their status will remain “pending”.

The PI is usually designated as an Alternate Certifier (through grant accounting setup). The PI will determine which “certifier” will click the Certify button. The employee paid from the grant is, by system default, always the Certifier. After one of them clicks the Certify button, the report moves to the Post-Review Period.

If requested by the PI, other individuals may be included in the routing queue through the grant setup. These members are usually Co-PIs or administrative staff with knowledge of the grant personnel payroll. These queue members are usually assigned the action of Acknowledge during the Pre-Review Period, which is an optional action.

The first example shows an employee paid from one grant, with the basic minimum routing queue setup. The second example is for an employee paid from 5 grants with 4 different PIs. Following that are the corresponding effort report print screens.

In the example to the right, each of the 4 PIs is a Pre-Reviewer with required Review Action. Each PI is also an Alternate Certifier. One PI has administrative staff who verifies the payroll and FOAPAL information for this employee, and clicks their Acknowledge button to let the PI know he can complete his required review action.

Either of the PIs, or the employee, can click their Certify button. The PIs will work together to make the determination as to who will certify the report. Often, one of the PIs is the employee’s supervisor, and will choose to certify the report. In this case, one PI certified the report. If the PI wants the employee to certify his/her own report, the employee must receive training on use of the EFC system.

In this case, the PI certified the report on behalf of the employee. A green check mark appears next to the PI’s name and the employee’s name, with the date and time of the signature. The Alternate Certifiers, as well as any Pre-Reviewers with optional Acknowledge actions who didn’t complete their action, will remain “Pending”.

The email link next to the queue member’s name makes it convenient for routing queue members to communicate, if using Outlook email.
EXAMPLE OF EFFORT REPORT SCREENS - for an employee paid from multiple grants, with different PIs.

**Effort Report screen**

**Pay Period Summary screen**

**Monthly Pay Period Pop-Up window (drill down from Pay Period Summary screen)**
OTHER INFORMATION

The funding data on the Effort Report screen is divided into 2 sections, and a section will only be displayed if there is payroll for it. The first section is Sponsored (paid directly from grant funds), and the second section is Non-Sponsored (paid from other university funds). Cost-share is displayed in the Non-Sponsored section, since it is normally paid from non-grant funds.

The Print button is used to print or download a copy of the report. It will display the information from the main Effort Report screen, and the routing queue information for those who have acknowledged, reviewed and certified the report. Pending actions from queue members will not be displayed.

There are some action buttons and links that are either not being used, or they are reserved for Administrative use. These include Add New Funding, Add Member, Proxy and Superuser. (Add Comment is to be used sparingly for special circumstances.)

You can shrink the size of the EFC screen up to a certain extent, and the information will re-arrange accordingly. However, the search results screen for EFC does not display the results properly on a screen that is too narrow, and sometimes does not work well with the page navigation at the bottom of the screen. The first example below is from the search screen, the second is from the search results screen (list of reports), and the third is from an effort report screen.

Time Out Warning
EXAMPLE OF LOCATION CODE USED FOR COST SHARE

BHSU, through the Board of Regents accounting system (Banner), uses a string of 6 elements to code each financial transaction, referred to as FOAPAL. For grants, the Account is usually an expense account, and the Activity is usually not used. In many cases, the grant PI only needs to identify the FOP (and L if applicable). For grants, the BHSU fund number will begin with 64xxxx.

The cost share example below is specific to payroll expenses, but the same principle applies to all cost share expenses. However, BHSU accounting processes do not accommodate the use of Location code with all types of expenses (i.e. Location codes can’t be used with the University process for interdepartmental postage expenses).

Cost share expenses are not charged to the grant FOP. Instead, they are charged to a non-grant University FOP, with a Location code at the end that matches the 6-digit grant fund number. The cost share FOP provides cost share to the grant, and the Location code at the end of the cost share FOP identifies which grant receives credit for cost share.

The example below shows what a PAF would look like if an employee is paid 20% from a grant, with 10% payroll cost share, and the remaining 70% paid from their usual BHSU payroll FOP. The account code would be for the wages expense account that goes with the employee’s position.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Fund</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Account</th>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Location Code</th>
<th>Labor Distribution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Payroll charged directly to the grant</td>
<td>640123</td>
<td>642123</td>
<td>xxxxxx</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>blank</td>
<td>blank</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee’s regular University payroll</td>
<td>610000</td>
<td>601234</td>
<td>xxxxxx</td>
<td>04</td>
<td>blank</td>
<td>blank</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FOPL used to pay cost share payroll</td>
<td>610000</td>
<td>601234</td>
<td>xxxxxx</td>
<td>04</td>
<td>blank</td>
<td>640123</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This Fund-Location combination is NEVER allowed</td>
<td>640123</td>
<td>642123</td>
<td>xxxxxx</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>blank</td>
<td>640123</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cost share FOPs will vary, as they are provided by whichever Dept or Dean agrees to cover the cost share expenses with their FOP. Payroll cost share is usually charged to the FOP from which the employee is ordinarily paid. However, any appropriately budgeted FOP may be designated as cost share with the proper authorization from the Fund Manager (Dept Chair, Dean, VP, Director, etc.).