1. What is Effort?

**Answer:** Effort is the time spent by an individual on University activities for which he/she is compensated based on their appointment and Institutional Base Salary.

2. What is Effort Reporting?

**Answer:** Effort reporting is a process mandated by the federal government to verify that direct labor charges to, or cost shared on, sponsored projects are accurate, timely, and reflect the actual level of work performed. Certification of effort reports in the ECRT system by the Principal Investigator or employee represents agreement that the percentages reasonably reflects the amount of effort expended on sponsored awards and other activities for which they were compensated by North Carolina A & T State University.

3. Why do Effort Reporting?

**Answer:** North Carolina A & T State University (NC A&T) has implemented the Huron ECRT system for reporting the percentage of time (i.e., effort) that employees devote to all extramurally sponsored programs to comply with the federal regulations requirements regarding compensation charged to federally funded awards. These federal regulations require that institutions receiving federal funds must maintain processes, procedures and records that are supported by a system of internal controls which provide reasonable assurance that the compensation for salary, wages, and benefits charged to sponsored programs are:

- Properly allocated.
- Reasonable for the project.
- Allowable under the sponsored award documents and federal regulations.
- In conformity to the established policies and procedures of NC A &T.
- Consistently applied regardless of the source of funds.
- No more than the percentage of effort actually devoted to the sponsored award.
- Based on a compensation rate that does not exceed 100% of the Institutional Base Salary.

Finally, sponsors and auditors must also be able to verify that committed effort cost sharing has been provided during the period of performance. The effort reporting system ECRT is the mechanism the university uses to document effort cost shared expenses.

4. How often must I certify my effort?

**Answer:** Faculty members that are on 9 or 10 month academic contracts must self certify their effort. In addition to a Principal Investigator is required to certify the efforts of non-hourly
students who devote effort to his/her sponsored project. The certification periods are Fall Semester, Spring Semester and Summer.

Twelve month employees who devote effort are required to self-certify for the quarters ending September, December, March and June.

5. What is 100% effort?

Answer: The total amount of effort expended to accomplish the professional activities of faculty, staff and students regardless of the actual number of hours on those activities. One hundred percent effort is not defined as a single, standard number of hours or days per week since it will likely be different for each person and may vary during the year. The number of hours implicit in an individual’s 100% effort must be reasonable and supportable to department, school, university and external reviewers if requested.

6. I work on a non-federally funded sponsored project only. Do I need to certify my effort?

Answer: Yes, certification is required for anyone who works on federal or non-federal sponsored projects.

7. Can the total effort listed on the Effort Certification Form be less or greater than 100%?

Answer: No, refer to Question 5.

8. What certifications are PI’s required to complete?

Answer: PI’s are required to complete their effort certification and those for non-hourly students working on their awards. All other employees certify their own effort.

9. What individuals are not required to complete certifications?

Answer: Students and temporary employees who are paid by the hour.

10. Does cost shared effort have to be certified?

Answer: Yes, cost shared effort must be documented in the same manner as funded effort.

11. What is not included in institutional effort?

Answer: For Faculty with academic year appointments, institutional effort does not include the summer period nor does it include short-term, special activities for which compensation may be provided but is not reflected in the institutional base salary, e.g., overload or extra services approved by their chair and dean. Also excluded are those activities for which external compensation is received including consulting services.

12. How many hours per week are faculty members expected to work?
Answer: The University does not specify the number of hours that faculty members are to work each week and recognizes that this number may vary with discipline.

13. Can any work which is part of my Total University Effort be said to be done “on my own time”?

Answer: No

14. What is committed effort?

Answer: Committed effort is that proportion of an individual’s institutional effort that will be devoted to a sponsored activity. Effort proposed for a PI or other key personnel in a grant or contract application, typically in the budget and/or budget narrative becomes a commitment (or obligation) the University must fulfill unless explicitly modified during award negotiations with the sponsor.

The cost associated with committed effort may be borne by a sponsor (charged to the grant or contract) or by the University (documented as cost sharing).

15. Can compensation for academic year sponsored projects effort be deferred to the summer?

Answer: Effort expended during the academic year for sponsored projects must be either charged to the sponsor, identified as project related cost-sharing and charged to the University or some combination thereof for the corresponding time period.

16. My effort distributions indicates that I am spending 75% of my time on sponsored projects, but I am actually spending 90% of my time performing other activities? What should I do?

Answer: Your effort must be adjusted. You will need to enter your actual effort percentages in the effort statement. Work with your administrative personnel to submit revised salary documents to accurately transfer salary cost.

17. What happens if I don’t complete my certification?

Answer: All individuals that are required to certify must do so within the timeframe mandated by the University. Failure to do so may result in the suspension of associated projects, with the exception of student payroll. Continued failure will result in the removal of charges from sponsored projects for those individuals with uncertified effort.

18. What is ECRT?

Answer: ECRT is the University’s on-line reporting tool used to facilitate effort reporting.

19. How do I access ECRT®?

Go to NC A & T Homepage
Click on Research

Click on ECRT located under the further information section to the right

Add the link here.

20. What web browser should I use to access the system?

**Answer:** It is recommended to use Mozilla Firefox or Google Chrome.

21. How do I sign-on to ECRT?

**Answer:** Use your Aggie Oneld credentials to sign-on to ECRT. If you are unable to sign on, please contact the [helpdesk@ncat.edu](mailto:helpdesk@ncat.edu) or phone (336) 334-7195 to validate your sign-on credentials.

22. What is the Work List box?

**Answer:** The Work List box identifies the effort certifications the certifier is responsible for certifying.

23. What is the Effort Statement Status box?

**Answer:** Identifies the various stages of an effort an effort statement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Icon</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Need certification</td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Red Icon" /></td>
<td>Not Certified, Not Processed</td>
<td>This is the status for a statement that is ready to be certified.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In Progress</td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Green Icon" /></td>
<td>In Progress For Certification</td>
<td>The effort statement is not yet ready for certification. This occurs while payroll and profile data are being loaded and during the pre-review period just prior to the certification period.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historical</td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Green Icon" /></td>
<td>Certified, Processed</td>
<td>This is the status for a completed, finalized statement. All certified statements should be in this status by the end of the certification period.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Green Icon" /></td>
<td>Auto Approved</td>
<td>Indicates effort statements that are finalized automatically by the system, because the employee does not have any effort or payroll on a sponsored account.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

24. What are the elements of the effort certification?

**Answer:**

Funds = Identifies the funding sources associated with an individual via payroll or cost share commitment.

Payroll = Identifies the amount of compensation received expressed as a percentage for the certification period.
Cost Share = If applicable, identifies cost share commitment for each sponsored award.

Computed Effort = Sum of Payroll + Cost Share.

Certified Effort = Actual effort expended for the certification period.

25. What if my computed effort does not equal 100%?

**Answer:** Due to rounding, the computed effort may range from 99% to 101%. The certified effort must equal 100%. You can adjust a line +/-1% to ensure that the certified effort equals 100%.

26. How do I complete the effort certification?

**Answer:**

1. Enter the actual effort in the “Certified Effort Column”. The total must be 100%
2. Click the “Certify” button.
3. Read the attestation statement and click “I Agree” to the statement.

If you have any questions please contact Erica Knight at (336) 285-3182 or Lavonne Matthews at (336) 285-3012 for assistance.