

Effort Certification Frequently Asked Questions

1. How do I access Project Effort? Is training available?

Project Effort can be accessed through Cayuse using the [Cayuse Project Effort link](#). Virtual training sessions are available throughout October on [Mondays](#) at 1:30pm and [Thursdays](#) at 9:30 am. Individual training may be requested by emailing RISGA@usm.edu. Written instructions and video tutorials are available on the [ORSD Effort Certification webpage](#).

2. My effort record is incorrect. Should I certify now and make changes later?

No. Effort certification should not be completed until the record accurately reflects the work performed during the reporting period. Complete a [Project Effort Correction Request Form](#) and submit it to RISGA@usm.edu. Ensure related payroll corrections and updated PAFs have been processed.

3. Why must payroll cost transfers be completed within the same quarter?

Effort certification is based on payroll charges recorded during a specific quarter. Payroll cost transfers affecting effort must be posted within the same quarter. For the final month of each quarter (September, December, March, and June), transfers must be completed before month-end close. Review PDRs regularly and submit PAFs promptly to reduce corrections.

4. I am waiting on a no-cost extension or supplemental funding. How do I keep project personnel funded?

ORSD offers an [At-Risk Spending Request Form](#) that allows project expenses to continue while an award action is pending. Timely submission can prevent funding gaps and reduce the need for payroll cost transfers.

5. Do I need to certify effort for graduate students paid by stipend or remittance voucher?

No. Effort certification is only required for individuals paid through USM payroll. Contact your post-award administrator for sponsor-specific reporting requirements.

6. Can a department administrator or financial manager have access to Cayuse Project Effort?

Currently, Cayuse does not provide a view-only role for Project Effort. Users may [generate and share reports](#) from Cayuse for review.

7. I see funding sources for projects that I do not lead. What am I responsible for certifying?

You are only responsible for certifying effort for projects on which you serve as the Principal Investigator (PI). Review the Certification tab within each effort record to see your assigned projects.

8. Why can I see an employee's full salary distribution instead of only the portion charged to my grant?

This visibility is intentional and consistent with standard effort certification practices. It allows PIs to confirm that overall effort commitments are reasonable and accurately represented.

9. My project is in pre-award spending status. Do I still need to certify effort?

Yes. Effort certification is required whenever payroll expenses are charged to a sponsored project, including projects operating under approved pre-award or at-risk spending authority.

10. I found an error after I certified effort. Can it be corrected?

Contact RISGA@usm.edu as soon as the error is identified. The appropriate corrective action will depend on the circumstances.

11. What happens if I do not certify effort by the deadline?

Effort certification is a compliance requirement for sponsored projects. Failure to certify by the established deadline may result in a spending hold on all active sponsored projects for which you are responsible. The spending hold will remain until all overdue certifications have been completed.

12. How often is effort certification completed?

Effort certification is completed quarterly: Q1 (July-September), Q2 (October-December), Q3 (January-March), and Q4 (April-June).

13. Can a department administrator certify effort on behalf of a PI?

No. The PI is responsible for certifying that the effort performed on a sponsored project reasonably reflects the salary charged to that project. This responsibility cannot be delegated, although departmental personnel may assist with review.