

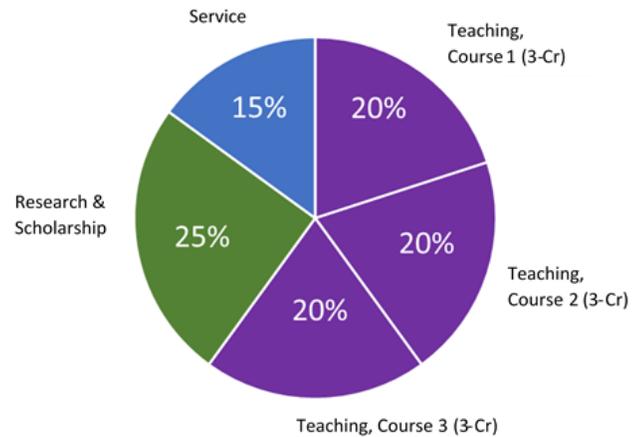
## Frequently Asked Questions: Effort Allocation & Certification

Created: March 15, 2019

For more information contact the UNI Office of Research & Sponsored Programs

**Q: What is “effort”?**

**A:** **Effort** is the amount of time spent on a university activity (e.g. teaching, grant work, service, non-grant research, etc.) during any set period of time (a day, month, semester etc.). Effort is expressed as a percentage. For salaried faculty and staff, regardless of how much actual time is spent on university activities during the set period of time, the grand total effort for all activities is “100% effort”. Each distinct activity performed within the 100% effort has a corresponding percent effort that, when added together, equals 100%. At UNI, a typical breakdown of a faculty’s semester/academic year is provided in the pie chart to the right:



**Q: What is the difference between effort “allocation” and effort “certification”?**

**A1:** **Effort allocation** is the act of setting forth an anticipated percentage of time that will be devoted to achieving each university activity comprising 100% of the university effort in a given amount of time. Effort allocation takes place before the work to achieve the activity takes place.

**A2:** **Effort certification** is the act of verifying that the actual effort expended to achieve each university activity matches the anticipated effort allocation set forth prior to beginning the work on each activity. Effort certification occurs after the effort allocation period of time has expired or at another set period of time (UNI certifies effort twice a year).

**Q: When does effort certification take place at UNI?**

**A:** **UNI certifies effort twice a year:** Effort for the spring semester and the summer months is certified during the following fall, usually in November. Effort for the fall semester is certified during the following spring, usually in March.

**Q: Why do I have to certify my effort? Didn’t I already do that when I created the PAF?**

**A:** **Effort certification is required by the federal government.** The rules for effort certification can be found in the Office of Management and Budget Code of Federal Regulation 2 CFR 200.430. In lieu of providing weekly or monthly time cards to document program effort, the federal government allows UNI to allocate effort in advance of performing the work (through UNI’s PAF) and then twice a year provide a certification that the pre-work allocation was accurate. Twice-a-year certification is substantially less work and risk to the university than routine time cards for salaried faculty and staff.

**Q: Where do the percentages of effort on the certification form come from?**

**A:** **RSP prints effort reports directly from the employee’s UNI payroll records.**

**Q: What do I do if the effort certification form is incorrect from what my actual effort was?**

**A: Do not sign the form and “fix it later”. Instead, that the following three steps:**

- Immediately notify your supervisor that the actual effort does not match the effort report’s allocated effort.
- Work with your PAF creator to create a change PAF to correct the effort allocation.
- Notify RSP of the changes so that a new effort certification form can be generated for certification.

**Q: The employee who is supposed to certify this effort is no longer employed at UNI, what should I do?**

**A: Indicate that the employee is no longer employed by UNI** in writing on the employee signature line and then have the ex-employee’s supervisor sign and return the certification form.

**Q: What happens if I do not certify my effort in a timely manner?**

**A: In the eyes of the federal government, uncertified effort “never happened”.** Uncertified effort is removed from the sponsored project(s) by RSP and allocated to the employee’s non-grant/contract PAF default account.

**Q: I want to allocate 100% of a summer month to one of my grants so that I can earn my full 1/9 salary during that month.** Why does RSP recommend allocating effort at a percentage that is less than 100% effort to the grant for that period of time?

**A: For salaried faculty 100% effort during a pay period includes all of the faculty’s university compensated effort, regardless of how many hours are worked.** Grants/contracts are part of the faculty’s university compensated effort. Thus, when 100% effort, across a full pay period, is made to a grant/contract the allocation is stating that all university compensated effort was in support of the grant/contract. However, even in the summer, it is common for faculty to interact with students regarding non-grant/contract topics, spend time answering unrelated emails, write journal articles, attend department meetings, or write grants or non-related grant reports, etc. Such activities, however, are generally not allowable on most grants/contracts, but they occur with routine and sometimes outside of the faculty’s control. As such RSP, like most institutions of higher education, rely on an industry best management practice of avoiding 100% effort allocation for a full pay period unless it can be clearly demonstrated, and most importantly certified, that the only activities during the 100% effort pay period were in support of the grant/contract.