Time and Effort Policy

Objective

As a recipient of federal funds, Mercer University must comply with the Office of Management and Budget Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (Uniform Guidance) as well as other federal requirements for certifying effort expended on sponsored awards. Mercer University realizes the importance of providing accurate effort certification records and is aware that severe penalties and funding disallowances may result from erroneous or incomplete reporting.

University faculty and staff are expected to charge their time to sponsored awards commensurate with the committed effort expended on all activities they perform. All individuals who receive any compensation or have a cost share commitment from federal or a non-federal award are required to certify their effort. This process ensures that salaries and wages are properly expended and that actual effort is consistent with the committed and budgeted effort.

Policy Statement

Time and Effort (T&E) reports shall reasonably reflect the percentage distribution of effort expended by Mercer University employees involved in Sponsored Projects. The T&E report must represent, in percentage totaling 100% a reasonable estimate of an employee’s effort for the period being reported. These reports shall reasonably reflect the activity for which the employee is compensated and shall encompass all activities. Effort includes all administration service, teaching, research, and any other activity for which an individual’s time is committed.

Mercer University may contribute certain Cost Sharing resources in sponsored proposals when appropriate. All cost sharing must be pre-approved. When cost sharing of faculty or staff time are committed and budgeted for in a proposal or sponsored agreement, the external sponsors consider the proposed cost sharing to be institutional committed if such proposals are funded.

All faculty and staff whose time is partially or fully committed to a sponsored project shall complete T&E reports to the University Grants and Contracts Office on a quarterly basis. Reporting is required regardless of whether such time is paid by the sponsor, or is an unpaid contribution such as cost share match. Committed cost sharing must be included in the effort reports. A T&E report is required for each month but may be submitted quarterly. The reports are due on the 10th day of the month after each quarter end. The quarter effort periods are as follows: July-September, October-December, January-March, and April-June. A T&E report is required in the interim if there is a significant change (5% or more) in actual effort before the quarterly reporting deadline.
All faculty and staff working in support of MERC contracts shall submit timecards to MERC by close of business each Wednesday. All faculty and staff working in support of University contracts administered by MERC shall submit T&E reports to MERC Administration by the 15th of each month for the prior month’s effort.

Mercer University uses “after-the-fact” effort reporting to certify that salaries charged or cost-shared to Sponsored Projects are reasonable and consistent with the work performed. This indicates that the distribution of salaries and wages will be supported by activity reports certified by the employee or by a responsible official with direct knowledge that the work was performed, generally the Principal Investigator (PI).

The T&E reports are compared by a Grants Accountant to the corresponding payroll report for the period reported and any discrepancy of effort reported less than the percentage of salary charged to the sponsored project are reviewed and resolved. If differences between the charges and actual distribution are reported, the charges will be promptly adjusted to reflect actual activity. Reports of effort to a sponsored project without payroll expenses are deemed cost share and logged as such.

Mercer University expects the PIs will complete T&E reports completely and in a timely manner. Failure to comply with this policy may result in a freeze of sponsored project expenditures until the situation is rectified.