Effort Reporting

The United States Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular A-21, Cost Principles for Educational Institutions, requires Morehouse College to maintain acceptable methods of certifying time worked on sponsored projects. The effort reporting system provides the principal means for certifying that salaries and wages charged to sponsored projects are in alignment with the requirements of the grant. Further, total compensated professional activity constitutes 100 percent effort.

Morehouse College utilizes an effort certification that is completed on a monthly basis by all personnel who are expending effort on sponsored projects. The Principal Investigator or Project Director (PI/PD) is responsible for certifying the amount of effort for personnel on the sponsored project. The Effort Report is to be completed and submitted to the Grants Accounting Office no later than (15) fifteen days after the month ends.

Effort is defined as the proportion of time spent on any activity expressed as a percentage of the total activity for which an individual is compensated. One hundred percent (100%) of effort equals the total time compensated. Effort certifications represent a reasonable estimate of an employee’s effort. OMB Circular A-21 states, “In the use of any methods for apportioning salaries, it is recognized that, in an academic setting, teaching, research, and administration are often inextricably intermingled. A precise assessment of factors that contribute to costs is not always feasible, nor is it expected. Reliance, therefore, is placed on estimates in which a degree of tolerance is appropriate…”

PI/PD’s are responsible for understanding and complying with sponsor requirements regarding commitments of effort. Each department has primary responsibility for compliance with this standard. Incidents of non-compliance are reported to the Compliance Office. Additionally, effort reports that are not submitted by the deadline may result in grant related funds being frozen until the reports are submitted.

An Effort Report is a legal document stating that the certifier confirms the effort on the sponsored project is accurate and appropriate. This document will be examined by auditors in the event of an audit. Therefore, suitable means of verification that the work was performed should be documented.