

Boston University Office of the Provost

Dr. Jean Morrison, University Provost



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Memorandum

To: Deans, Directors, Department Chairs, Principal Investigators, Project Directors,
and Departmental Administrators

From: Jean Morrison, University Provost and Chief Academic Officer
Karen Antman, M.D., Provost, Medical Campus
Martin J. Howard, Vice President, CFO and Treasurer

Date: March 21, 2011

Subject: Personnel Activity Reports (PARs) and Effort Certification Policy Reminder

The extraordinary breadth and vibrancy of Boston University's sponsored research reflects the strength of our faculty, students and staff who contribute to the research enterprise. Our increasing competitiveness at the national level for federal funding documents important gains in our efforts to continue to improve the quality of the university's research programs and supporting infrastructure. This steady increase in the quality of our research programs is one of the key factors in the university's rising visibility and stature. The federal funding associated with sponsored research, which comes primarily from the National Institutes of Health, National Science Foundation, NASA and the Department of Education, is the second largest source of revenue for the institution after tuition and as such is essential to the overall mission and success of the university. For all of these reasons, we must - as must all major research universities - ensure that we are conducting our research and related activities in strict accordance with federal government requirements.

As a recipient of federal funding, BU is required by the Office of Management and Budget to maintain a system that documents and supports payroll charges to sponsored projects. BU employs Personnel Activity Reports (PARs) as the official mechanism by which we certify that salary and wage charges to sponsored projects are commensurate with the level of effort provided and comply with the federal rules for calculating expendable effort.

PARs are administered by BU's Office of Post Award Financial Operations (PAFO). The most recent PARs were generated by PAFO for payroll periods through December 31, 2010 and sent to department administrators via campus mail in early February. It is expected that these PARs were subsequently distributed to faculty, Principal Investigators (PIs) and other sponsored projects personnel for their review and certification.

The deadline to return PARs to PAFO is Monday April 4, 2011. Please make every effort to return PARs by this date. Failure to certify effort by this date could indicate that the related salaries and wages charged to sponsored projects cannot be verified or supported and therefore are at risk of being transferred to your School/College unrestricted account.

All individuals involved in the PAR process should be aware of the **BU Effort Certification Policy** adopted in September 2010 based on existing sponsored agency requirements. We strongly encourage you to review the full policy, located here:

http://www.bu.edu/cfo/files/2010/09/Effort-Policy_Final.pdf.

As you review and certify your PAR, please pay particular attention to the following key elements from the policy:

- Who Can Certify Effort? All faculty must certify his / her own PAR. In addition, all non-faculty PIs must certify his / her own PAR. All other non-faculty and students PARs may be certified by the individual, the PI or other responsible official using suitable means of verification. **Department administrators are not eligible to certify the effort of faculty or research staff.**
- Maximum Effort: Most faculty are unable to devote 100% of their time to sponsored activities due to other responsibilities that include: teaching, clinic time, competitive proposal development, administrative work, etc. **Institutional funds must support these activities and a maximum amount of 90 – 95% of salaries and wages charged to sponsored projects is expected for full-time faculty.**
- Minimum Effort: Principal Investigators cannot certify 0% effort on a sponsored project and must certify at least 1% effort to reflect their leadership.
- Total University Effort: Total University Effort is the total amount of time that the individual devotes to all research, teaching, clinical, administrative, proposal writing, and other duties. It is *not* based on a “normal work week” or a “business day.” It is based on the total hours devoted by the individual to University work, regardless of the time of day or day of the week.
- Faculty with 9-Month Appointments: Faculty compensated for 9-month academic appointments are permitted to expend up to an additional three months of summer effort and earn up to three months of additional salary for that effort, subject to sponsor policies and the approval of the Department Chair, School / College Dean and the Assistant Vice President for Post Award Financial Operations. If a faculty member has administrative or other non-research responsibilities (including vacations) during the summer period, they are precluded from devoting 100% effort to sponsored projects and thus from requesting 3 months of salary from those sponsored projects.

Once you have completed and certified your PAR in compliance with the Effort Certification Policy and the PAR instructions, please return it to:

Boston University
Post Award Financial Operations
Attn: Effort Reporting
25 Buick Street, 2nd Floor
Boston, MA 02215

Alternatively, you may also send an electronic scanned version to effort@bu.edu.

If you have any questions about the Effort Certification Policy or PAR-related processes, please contact Andy Horner, Assistant Vice President, Post Award Financial Operations at (617) 353-4555 or Mary Moskofides, Effort Reporting Analyst at (617) 353-0883.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter in support of BU's ability to continue to receive federal funding.