Certifying Effort: What a certifier should do and know

1. When effort is promised and salary is charged to the sponsor
   a. Simple example: actual effort equals promised effort
   b. What about extra effort?
   c. What if the effort percentage is less than the payroll percentage?
      i. To meet a commitment, actual effort can vary over time
      ii. Salary must be congruent with actual effort, except for short-term fluctuations
      iii. The acceptable variance between actual effort and certified effort
   d. What if the effort percentage is less than the commitment?

2. When effort is promised and salary is NOT charged to the sponsor
   a. Faculty member with mandatory cost sharing
   b. Voluntary committed cost sharing for the PI
   c. Voluntary committed cost sharing for a key person who’s not the PI
   d. Both mandatory and voluntary committed cost sharing for the same project

3. When there's an "implied" promise of effort to the sponsor
   a. What if the proposal isn't specific about the commitment level – or if there is no "proposal"?
      i. Vilas Award

4. Key persons with both paid and cost-shared effort
   a. Paid effort and mandatory cost sharing
   b. Paid effort and voluntary committed cost sharing

5. People WITHOUT commitments who are paid from sponsored projects
   a. Simple example: actual effort percentage equals payroll percentage
   b. What about extra effort?
   c. What if the effort percentage is less than the payroll percentage?
   d. Short-term fluctuations
   e. Reasonable estimates and the acceptable variance
   f. 100% of salary charged to sponsored projects
   g. De minimis effort
Questions that a certifier should ask him/herself when certifying

1. Did I have a commitment?
2. If so, what was my commitment level?
3. To what time period did the commitment apply?
4. Did I meet the commitment during the effort certification period?
5. What if I didn't meet the commitment?
6. What if I devoted more effort than my commitment required?
7. Given my commitment, and what I see on the statement, and my actual effort, how much effort should I certify?
   a. Is my actual effort within the acceptable variance between actual effort and certified effort?
8. Did I receive salary from the project?
9. If so, did I devote enough effort to justify the salary charges?
10. What if I didn't devote enough effort to justify the salary charges?
11. What if I devoted more effort than I was paid to devote?
12. Given the salary charges I see on the statement, and my actual effort, how much effort should I certify?
13. Did I have any non-sponsored activities during the period?
14. If so, did I have more than a "de minimis" amount of non-sponsored effort?
15. Did I spend any time on proposal-writing during the period?
16. Given that projects start and stop at a variety of times, and that my effort level may vary during the course of a project, how much effort should I certify for the six-month effort period?
17. What if I want to change my commitment?

Effort principles that a certifier must understand

1. UW Effort versus Non-UW Effort
2. Activities that are allocable to sponsored projects
3. Non-sponsored activities
4. Effort that's too small to count
5. Reasonable estimate
6. Acceptable variance between actual effort and certified effort
7. Allowable short-term differences between paid effort and actual effort
8. Nine month appointments, summer salary, and the impact of these on calculations of effort percentages