

Mississippi State University
Mississippi Agricultural & Forestry Experiment Station (MAFES)
College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (CALs)
Faculty Time and Effort Best Practices

PURPOSE

The purpose of this standard operating procedure is to provide guidance for the activities of MAFES and CALS faculty funded from “soft” funds with respect to writing, submitting, and participating in new funding opportunities, as well as other university non-project related activities (committees, student advising, etc.), and to establish time and effort ‘best practices’ for both hard and soft funded faculty.

BACKGROUND

“Soft” funding is defined as a restricted revenue source from externally sponsored agreements. Faculty hired and funded on 100% ‘soft’ funds are restricted to working on those projects only. For faculty to be able to participate in other activities, salary funding must be partially from a “non-soft” fund source. Ensuring that funding for the faculty member allows for participation in other activities is the responsibility of the home/hiring/originating unit and must be planned prior to faculty being hired or engaging in such extraordinary activity. Overcommitment of time and effort (committing more than 100% effort on all sources combined), directly or indirectly, is a serious audit issue with significant professional and financial consequences.

GUIDANCE

To facilitate faculty to write, submit and participate in new funding opportunities, as well as other university non-project-related activities (committees, student advising, etc.), it is recommended that at least 5% of the faculty member’s salary be budgeted on (preferred) or redistributed to an unrestricted fund source while pursuing unrelated funding opportunities. Effort must be balanced to ensure that the faculty member is able to meet all commitments.

Departments are expected to manage funding such that flexible funds are always available within the department to allow redistribution of effort to allow faculty to seek funding opportunities. In cases where department flexible funding is proven to not be available, the MAFES Director has the discretion to support efforts toward F & A-generating federal competitive proposals, and is willing to consider Department/Unit Head time-and-effort release requests of a limited nature when the proposal

- is federal and competitive,
- includes salary release,
- carries F & A,
- will flow through as a MAFES award,
- furthers strategic research, and
- when the request is made in advance of writing and submitting the proposal.

In the event of a successful proposal, the IAS for the award must include language that reimburses the MAFES Director for this one-time commitment, either from release or shared F & A.

Release effort in support of preparing **non-federal** proposals will only be considered where the MAFES award will be greater than \$500,000 dollars and follows the guidance above.

Awards should not be accepted and IAS's will not be approved if sufficient time and effort is not available to support the activity.

All faculty, including full or partial hard-funded faculty, have the responsibility, along with their unit head, to pro-actively monitor time and effort prior to initiating a new proposal/project.

MAFES Contracts and Grants staff are committed to assisting scientists in verifying "current and pending" effort as part of our pre-award process.



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Date