

FAQs about Esther PTO Reporting

<b>My department rolled out PTO reporting in October. Should I go back and complete the July, August &amp; September reports in the Esther PTO app?</b>
No, you should not submit any monthly reports prior to your rollout date. The PTO accruals and usage for months prior to your rollout have already been captured on the PEARL form you submitted.
<b>I forgot my Esther user ID and password. What do I do?</b>
Your Esther user ID is your Rice E# (NOT your NetID). You may enter your user ID by typing “e” or “E” followed by the full eight digit number (e00001234 or E00001234) or by the four to five digit number without the leading zeroes (e1234 or E1234). Your password is set by you, but if you forgot, click the “Forgot PIN?” button on the login page and follow the instructions to be prompted for your hint.
<b>When does the Esther PTO Reporting go live?</b>
The Esther PTO Reporting app began live campus testing and rollout in July, 2016, and is expected to be completely rolled out in early 2017.
<b>How will I know when I can start using the PTO Reporting app?</b>
Your division or department administrator will relay this information to you when it’s time for your area to go live with the PTO Reporting app. If you click on the app and receive an error message, it means your area has not yet been activated.
<b>Do I need to submit a PTO Report every month – even if I didn’t use any PTO?</b>
Yes. It is required to affirm that your PTO usage was actually zero and to document any other absences from work.
<b>Will my annual PTO benefit change?</b>
No, it is still tied to your years of service as detailed in Policy 405 “Paid Time Off”.
<b>Where can I find a copy of Policy 405 “Paid Time Off”?</b>
When the new version has been fully approved, it will be posted on the Rice policies web site.
<b>Will my PTO accrue on a different schedule?</b>
Yes, it will accrue <b>twice a month</b> (each pay cycle) instead of once per month.
<b>How does that affect the accrual rate for full-time exempt staff?</b>
Rather than 1.75 or 2.17 days per month, your accrual rate will be 0.875 or 1.085 days per pay period. Both accrual rates annualize to 21 or 26 days, respectively.
<b>When I submit my PTO Report for approval, where does it go?</b>
It is directed to your supervisor’s PTO Reporting approval queue in Esther. An email is automatically sent to supervisors to inform them that a PTO Report is pending review and approval.
<b>What happens when my supervisor approves my PTO Report?</b>
You will receive an email advising you that your report has been approved. It also updates your PTO history by posting the PTO used during the reporting period just approved.
<b>What if I don’t submit my PTO report by the 10<sup>th</sup> of each month?</b>
After the 10 <sup>th</sup> of each month, your PTO will be locked with whatever entries you made and saved but can no longer be submitted for approval. At that point, the supervisor will need to make manual adjustments to your PTO usage as required.
<b>I saved my report before the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month, but my supervisor never received it. Why?</b>
Saving the report is not the same as submitting it. You must click the green “Submit for Approval” button in order the send the report to your approver for review.
<b>I submitted my report, but then realized I forgot to record some PTO that I took. What do I do?</b>
If the report has not been approved, and it’s before the 10 <sup>th</sup> of the month, you may update the report by adding (or removing) PTO days and click the green “Submit for Approval” button. Your previously submitted report will be overwritten by the report you just submitted.
<b>I submitted my report, but my approver says it can’t be approved. Why?</b>
You may submit a monthly report before the end of the month, but the report cannot be approved before the 1 <sup>st</sup> day of the following month. As a matter of fact, the “approve” and “reject” buttons will not display before the reporting month has ended. The reason is to minimize changes to reports that could have more easily been corrected by the employee before the month end.
<b>I’d rather submit PTO reports every three months instead of every month. Why can’t I do that?</b>
The Esther PTO Reporting app was developed, in part, in order to allow a monthly calculation of the university’s overall PTO liability in order to be in compliance with financial accounting requirements.
<b>I’d rather approve PTO reports every three months instead of every month. Why can’t I do that?</b>
Please refer to the answer above.

<b>Why do we have to do PTO reporting at all? We never used to bother with them in my department.</b>
<i>There are several reasons why PTO reporting is important: compliance with Department of Labor guidelines, and to provide the data for PTO liability reporting for the Rice financial statements. There is also the obvious reason that exempt staff and supervisors should have a mechanism by which to track accrued and used PTO time as prescribed by Rice policy 405 "Paid Time Off".</i>
<b>Will the PTO app make anniversary date maximum carryforward balance resets?</b>
<i>Yes, Esther will reset your carryforward balance on your anniversary date if the balance exceeds one year of accrual; that is 21 days for employees under 10 years of benefits-eligible service and 26 days for employees with 10+ years of benefits-eligible service.</i>
<b>How will the PTO app handle anniversary date maximum carryforward balance adjustments?</b>
<i>Esther has a routine that will check for the correct calculation of anniversary carryforward balances. The routine is triggered when the report for the anniversary month is approved, and will made adjustments to the PTO balance if required.</i>
<b>Can I submit a monthly report before that month has ended?</b>
<i>Yes. The approver cannot act upon the report until the reporting month has concluded, but the report can be submitted and will be held in the approver's queue.</i>
<b>I inadvertently submitted the wrong monthly report (November instead of October, for example)</b>
<i>The prematurely submitted report cannot be returned until the report month has passed. However, it can simply remain in the approver's queue until the reporting month is over. At that time, the approver can either approve the report or return it for corrections.</i>
<b>How will anniversary maximum balance carryforwards be handled?</b>
<i>As prescribed by policy, anniversary maximum carryforward balances are adjusted on the actual anniversary date – not at the end of the anniversary month. In the anniversary month, if PTO days are taken ahead of the anniversary reset that would have prevented the reset, an adjustment will be automatically made when that PTO Report is approved. This action is handled by a special Banner routine that will handle these situations.</i>

#### GENERAL INFO:

- A report should be submitted each month even if no PTO was taken.
- Emails will remind employees to submit a monthly report, advise an approver that a report is awaiting review, and confirm when a report has been approved.
- A report that has been submitted (but not approved) can be overwritten by resubmitting a revised report.
- Reports may be submitted prior to the end of the reporting month, but approvers cannot approve reports until the reporting month has completed.
- Approvers cannot change a report under review; instead it should be rejected (returned) with an explanation of what correction is needed.
- Monthly reporting due date is currently the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month following the reporting month.
- Approver due dates are currently open-ended; testing will determine the best practice for setting the approval due date.
- Only approvers can adjust PTO usage; adjustments must be documented.
- Anniversary maximum balance resets occur on the actual anniversary date (not at anniversary month end.)