Take2 Newsletter

Ethnic Origin (Again)

If you read last month's Newsletter you will recall that we pointed out (in our usual subtle way) the absurdity of the discrepancy between the sets of ethnic origin codes currently used by the various government agencies. In the meantime things have just become even stranger.

In a "Technology Update" sent to software providers on 27 September we were told that TEC is moving to a new set of codes in line with Statistics NZ's new coding structure. The Update said that TEC "*will move to the new codes with the implementation of the Electronic Receipting System*." We were separately told that electronic receipting was to be implemented on 3 October 2005. The same Update told us that the Ministry's Single Data Return will change to the new ethnic codes in 2007 and that NZQA "*will adopt Stats codes at some point in 2006*".

Three agencies implementing the same change over three calendar years. Nice one!

We have looked at the cost of implementing the change. If all agencies changed at the same time we could cover the cost in the standard annual support fee. If the agencies change as indicated by the Update document the additional cost will be significant. We will need to manage data entry and reporting for two code sets, plus manage additional support requirements.

In a memo to clients in June this year we said that we would hold our standard support fee at its current level. We also gave notice that we would need to levy users an additional charge if any unannounced or unusual changes were introduced. We have pointed out to TEC and the Ministry that we consider that the ethnic origin code change falls into this category. The agencies have not responded to our concerns.

A Competition

We have a winner for last month's competition and the winner is….

Linda McCutcheon at Wellcare

Well done Linda, the fantastic prize will be on its way to you as soon as we round up the dog to autograph the picture.

You may recall that the competition involved you saying what course completion code should be use in a very specific case.

We had a good response. 18% or the responses said a code "3" should be used. 82% said a code "4" should be used. We asked a very similar question of the Ministry of Education and got two responses from them – one person said "3" and one person said "4". We also asked a person at TEC and that person said "3".

Given that the difference between a "3" and "4" may result in a provider getting their funding cut off, these results are very revealing.

For the record, if we had to give an opinion, we would have gone with the "4".

On the topic of course completion codes, we have remarked that one of the weaknesses of the use of these codes has been the change in definitions and usage from year to year. True to form TEC continues this fine tradition.

The 2005 Funding Guide defines "4 – Did not complete course" thus (our emphasis):

By the extraction date, all the academic requirements have not been met and the completion date for the course has been reached. (Withdrawals are reported as code 4 regardless of whether the course end date has been reached.) This enrolment will be captured as a course incompletion. This includes learners who have withdrawn after 10% or one month of the course, whichever is the smaller.

The 2006 Funding Guide defines "4 – Did not complete course" thus:

By the extraction date, the learner met all academic requirements and the completion date for the course has been reached. This enrolment will be captured as a course incompletion. This includes learners who have withdrawn after the withdrawal period, regardless of whether the course end date has been reached.

7.30am. Friday 9 September 2005

STEO Website

There are currently no issues with the STEO website. Please go ahead and validate your file(s) on Trial or Final Validation.

We apologise for any inconvenience this may cause.

Spotted recently on the STEO Web site. Nice to know they understand!

Take2 Newsletter

Public Trust Interface

The latest version of the *Take2* Main Module (downloadable from www.take2.co.nz) contains an enhancement to the *Take2* Public Trust FeeProtect interface.

A new field has been added to the file that is sent to Public Trust. The field contains a student's passport number. Obviously this is only relevant if you have international students.

Remember, the passport number is entered on the *Guest* form in the pastoral care section of *Take2*.

Version 8

We have been getting into more detail on what to include in *Take2* version 8. Here is a list of the major items. As ever, your comments and suggestions are appreciated. We will be writing separately to SQL Server users about version 8.

SDR Compliance
Although the 2006 SDR Manual has not yet been released it appears that there are no substantive changes for 2006. The only obvious problem is the question of ethnic origins, discussed on the previous page. If we have to accommodate multiple code sets there will be a lot of extra work to do.

Electronic Receipting
We intend to implement electronic receipting for TOPS and Youth Trainees (what now seems to be called "Targeted Training"). This involves quite substantial changes because the additional data items that will have to be collected for these trainees.

Students Online
We will be implementing the "Students Online" interface to Immigration New Zealand. This is essentially an online student permit processing facility that aims to speed up processing by certifying providers to process permit applications on campus.

NSI Interface
We hope to implement the XML interface to replace the COM interface which the Ministry of Education is phasing out at the end of 2006.

Strategic Relevance
We are working to try and come up with simple method for providers to record and report data that is relevant to demonstrating strategic relevance. This may be easier said

than done when TEC is on record as saying as recently as last week that it "*can't state data requirements for assessing strategic relevance*", but we will give it our best shot!

Internal Reporting
One particular area of concern for us over the years has been to try to provide the summary information you need to prepare your statement of objectives/statement of service performance (or whatever the wretched things are called currently). This has proved to be very frustrating because the measures keep changing and

We are therefore looking at building some type of pivot table reporting that will allow you to select from a whole library of measures and combine them is tables of statistics.

Take2 Tiny Top Tips

Moving sideways

Remember that you don't always have to go back to the menu in *Take2* to be able to move to a different form.

- On the *Single Student Outcome* form you can go to *Student Details* for the selected student by clicking the *Student Details* button. You can go to *Enrolments Details* by clicking the *Enrolment Details* button.

- Likewise, on the *Enrolment Details* form you can go to the *Single Student Outcome* form by clicking the *Student Outcomes* button and to *Student Details* by clicking the *Student Details* button.

- On the *Curriculum* form you can select an offered curriculum element, click *Students* to display a list of enrolled students, and then select one of those students and click *Goto Student* to open the *Students* form.