Youth Guarantee Recesses

Here we are – nearly the end of April. TEC has released a second draft of how your performance with Youth Guarantee will be measured in 2012 and, credit where credit is due, this draft is much closer to the real world than the first attempt. We do, though, need your help if we are to build reports into Take2 to assist you with these performance measures.

In particular the method of counting student places appears to involve recess weeks and so we may need to modify Take2 to allow you to record recesses. Our understanding is that training providers manage recesses in one of two ways:

- On an institute-wide basis whereby all students in all Youth Guarantee programmes have recesses at the same time.
- On a programme-by-programme basis whereby students in one YG programme may have different recess dates from students in another YG programme.

Please let us know as soon as possible if you use any other method of managing recesses. You can email or ring us. Helpdesk@meta-office.com or 04 939-1267.

TEC Advice

Here’s a suggestion based on the experience of various clients over the years. The suggestion is simple: if you are getting advice from TEC GET IT IN WRITING AND KEEP A COPY.

We all know that TEC’s funding rules and conditions are difficult to understand and, what is worse, they are augmented by various TEC pronouncements via RSS feeds and web pages. Matters are further clouded when web pages suddenly disappear so that links you relied on display the dreaded “Page not found” message. The difficulty and frustration that you (and we) experience with this patchy means of communicating is of course shared by those who work at TEC. The result is that sometimes you may be given advice by a TEC staff member that later proves to be incorrect.

Unfortunately if you have relied on that advice in – say – managing an EFTS cap or deciding what data to return via the SDR, you may get a nasty surprise when it is proved to be wrong; possibly by an auditor or other TEC staff member. So, any time you get advice from TEC concerning funding, performance measurement, or compliance requirements (e.g. SDR, ERS, etc.) keep a copy.

Furthermore, if you think that the advice you are getting may be suspect, you may like to share it with us. We are building up a bit of a library of TEC ephemera.

Above all, do not rely on verbal advice from TEC.

SDR

It’s SDR (Single Data Return) time again. Most of us have been there before but, if this is your first time, here are a few important things to remember.

- Start work on the SDR as soon as possible. The later you leave it the more likely it is to cause you grief.
- Do make sure that all qualifications and courses for which you will be reporting SDR data are approved by TEC in the qualification and course registers. If you don’t know what this means ask your boss and, if your boss doesn’t know, contact the Take2 Help Desk.
- Remember that all your students must have a National Student Index Number and students who are enrolled in a formal qualification must have an active ISI status.
- Here at the Take2 Help Desk we will do all that we can to assist you in completing your SDR but as the deadline approaches (15 May) we get very busy, so please start work on the SDR as soon as possible.

Goodness Me!

Not being fully awake when a recent TEC release came through we initially thought that the allocation of EFTS to universities had suddenly increased by an order of magnitude.

A careful check of the release provided no clue as to what unit TEC has used in the table, so in the end we concluded it must be dollars, but then who knows? Maybe it is weighted student hours?
**Top Tips – For Hermes Users**

A special section for Hermes users this month. Good to have you on board. We hope the following information is useful for you.

**How Hermes Helps With Submitting an SDR**

Hermes helps you with three things: submitting your SDR, checking your Education Performance Indicator s (EPIs), and calculating your overall weighted EPI score to work out how this places you against the funding thresholds.

Let’s look at how Hermes helps with the SDR.

1. Use Take2 to produce your April 2012 SDR files and then check these in to Hermes. If the files are missing key data or are in an incorrect format Hermes will alert you to this. For Take2 users this is not generally an issue unless you are combining sets of SDR files or have manually edited them after extraction. For users of other student management systems these basic checks can be a great time-saver.

2. If errors are picked up use the Hermes tool to review the raw SDR data. The best way to spot missing data is to sort the raw data table in ascending order on a required field. This will move defective records to the top of the list because the relevant field is blank or zero for these records.

3. You can also check your SDR files for consistency by clicking Test SDR Files on the File Processing menu. Again, Take2 users will not generally find problems with consistency of SDR data but we have observed that users of other student management systems often do. Typically the type of error will be one where a course enrolment record has no matching course completion record or a course enrolment record has no matching student record.

4. Even with these checks you may find that you still get errors and warnings when validating your SDR files on the STEO website. Common errors relate to students’ NSI data and status or to course completion data. The STEO site lists all errors and warnings but the list is not very easy to deal with in a browser. You can also export errors and warnings from STEO as a CSV file from the STEO site but then you are confronted with a jumble of number and codes – not easy to work with! This is where Hermes can help you again. On the Tools menu use the SDR Validation Reports option to import the CSV file and produce reports that are easier to read and use. Providers with multiple course delivery sites will find this feature of Hermes particularly useful because a list of errors can be grouped by site code. This allows head office to identify errors by campus so that the relevant staff can be assigned to handle the errors.

**Up and Coming in the Hermes Releases**

Our intention is to continue to add new features to Hermes; features that become available to existing users. In our next release you will find the following:

- The ability to filter the participation and education performance indicator reports by funding source. Whilst your performance is currently monitored only for 01 funded enrolments most training providers will also want to know how international or domestic full fee-paying students perform.

- Excel audit worksheets to accompany the EPI reports. These will assist you in monitoring performance in the current year and – through the use of pivot tables – provide more analysis opportunities for you.