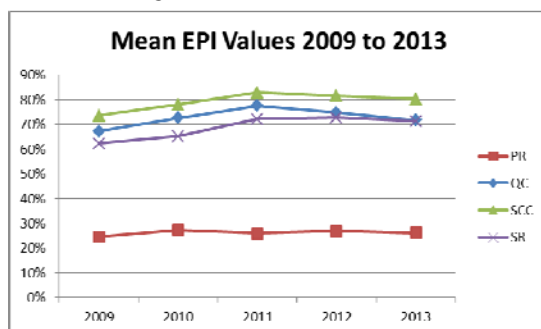


## SAC Funded Performance

TEC have now published the league tables for 2013 SAC funded providers. As ever the league tables provide amusing and interesting, if not exactly meaningful information. Here are some random observations about the PTE information from your deeply cynical and one-eyed correspondent.

- As published by TEC the league table for 2013 proves difficult to compare against the tables for earlier years because of name changes and confusion over provider names. For example "Safety N Action Limited" and "Safety 'n Action Limited" both have 100% course completion rates but the former has a 65% qualification completion rate, whilst for the former it is 100%. NZQA and the Ministry of Education as at August 2014 both know about "Safety 'n Action Limited" but not "Safety N Action Limited". So either there has been a name change not notified to those two organisations, or TEC is manually manipulating EPI data.
- The number of providers reporting qualification completions has increased from 185 to 202 from 2011 and 2013. In this time the proportion reporting a 100% qualification completion rate (QC) has risen from 16% to 20%. During the same interval the mean qualification completion rate has fallen from 78% to 72%. The median value, published by TEC at 80%, has not changed from 2011 to 2013.



- In the same period the median successful course completion rate (SCC) published by TEC has also held steady at 85%, whilst the mean SCC rate has fallen from 83% to 82%. For both QC and SCC, then, the variance in performance has increased significantly from 2011 to 2013. This could have had several causes such as the closure and merger of providers, the re-disaggregation of courses, and the effect of the variable performance component of SAC funding. So whilst the overall PTE performance figures had a definite

improvement from 2009 to 2011 that has now stalled and started to edge downwards, even for student progression (PR) and student retention (SR).

## YG 10% Rule

Those of you who deliver Youth Guarantee will be aware of TEC rule YG016 which states "The TEO must ensure that in relation to all new enrolments, students who already hold a qualification at level 1 or 2 on the NZQF do not comprise more than 10% of the TEO's enrolment at that level."

We wondered what was being measured here: the head count of YG students enrolling or the EFTS of those enrolments? We initially thought the later as TEC states "The rationale for this rule is to ensure that Youth Guarantee is targeted at the most at-risk learners and/or those without an existing foundation level qualification. This clearly aligns with the overarching policy intention of the Youth Guarantee initiative, which is to enable learners who have not been successful at school to achieve NCEA level 2 or equivalent and pathway onto higher levels of study, training or employment."

However, on enquiry TEC has stated that it is the number of students, not the number of EFTS that is being counted.

All of which makes you wonder. Say you have enrolled 17 students, does that mean that only 1.7 of them can already have a qualification? Where do we find 0.7 of a student?

And then your deeply cynical correspondent started to wonder whether, to maximise EFTS and improve completion rates, it would be best to enrol in the maximum possible EFTS those students who already have a qualification (and so are more likely to succeed), and enrol those who don't have a qualification (and who are therefore less likely to succeed) in the minimum possible EFTS?



Another policy to encourage perverse behaviour?

## Top Tip – Valid Enrolments

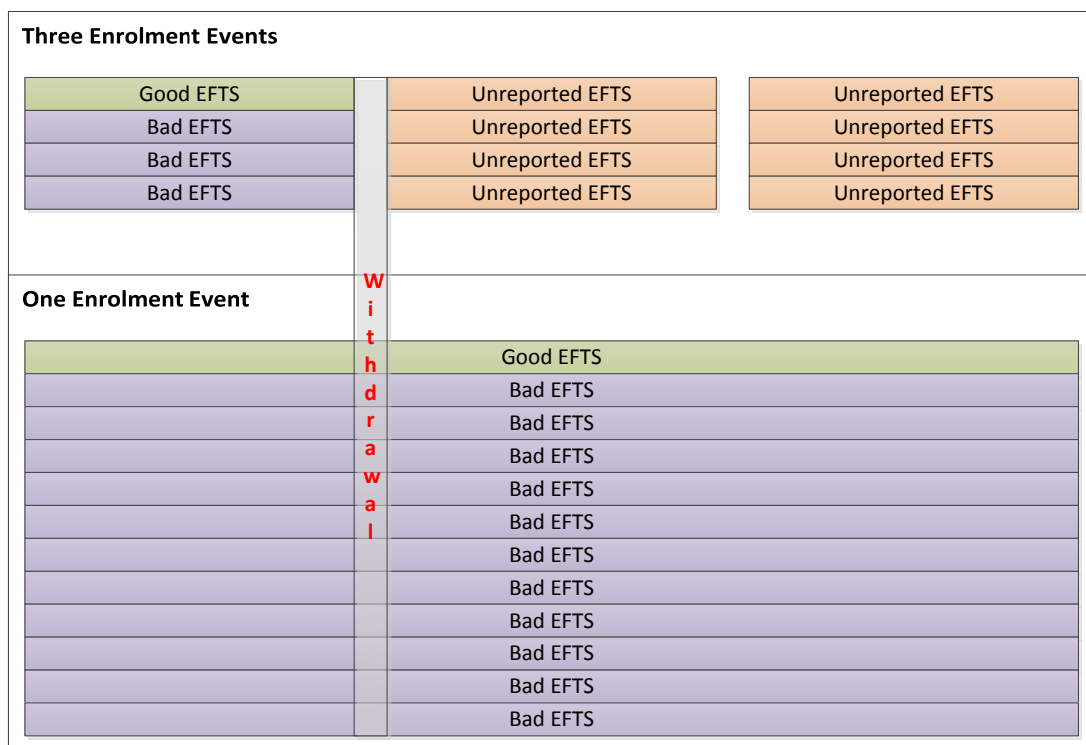
TEC seems to be encouraging Youth Guarantee (YG) providers to manage the enrolment of students in a manner that will result in higher completion rates. This is extremely good advice, assuming that meeting your EFTS target remains viable. As we understand it the advice is to enrol students in a sequence of what we call “enrolment events”. Break the student’s programme of study into distinct periods of time (maybe you could call them “terms”) each of which involves the student undertaking a cluster of units. If at the end of the first “term” (i.e. enrolment event) a student has been successful, enrol them into the next cluster. If the student was not successful they can repeat the unachieved units.

Now here’s the interesting thing. You are required to report all valid enrolments through the SDR. A valid enrolment is defined on page 31 of the SDR Manual and the operative clause for YG is that “A specified period has passed or, a student has attended for greater than the specified period in which a student can withdraw and receive a full refund of tuition fees/course costs. Where a TEO does not set a defined period for changes of enrolment, including withdrawals, domestic students will count for tertiary tuition calculations after they have completed 10% or one month of the course for which they have enrolled, whichever is the smaller.” YG students don’t pay fees, so the 10% or one month rule applies.

So, say you had 12 week terms and the student’s programme of study was to comprise three such terms. Each term has four unit enrolments. Say you had enrolled a student starting on 7 April and ending on 30 June, if they withdrew on 5 May their enrolment still has to be reported via the SDR. The student has achieved one unit in term one, but not the other three. The three units that were not successfully completed would be reported with a course completion code of “4 – did not complete”. In this case the student doesn’t return to repeat units – they withdraw at the end of term one – so they are not validly enrolled in the second or third term. You don’t earn the EFTS for the unit enrolments planned for those two terms but, equally, you don’t get a “4 – did not complete” outcome for them either. The student has a 25% successful course completion rate.

On the other hand, if you had enrolled the student into all twelve of the units for the whole programme of study with an enrolment event start date on 7 April, ending on 15 December, and the student withdrew on 5 May, eleven units are not successfully completed and so will be reported with a course completion code of “4 – did not complete”. The student has a successful course completion rate of 8.3%.

The diagram below illustrates both scenarios. “Good EFTS” is EFTS reported through the SDR with a course completion code of “2 – successfully completed course”. “Bad EFTS” is EFTS reported through the SDR with a course completion code of “4 – did not complete”. “Unreported EFTS” is EFTS not reported through the SDR because the enrolments were never valid. **You are not funded for these enrolments.**



There are a couple of points that need to be made here.

- YG students are required to have a programme of study of not less than 0.5 EFTS and not more than 1.0 EFTS per annum. So whilst you can enrol students term-by-term, the intention must be that the students will have an overall programme of study that meets this requirement.
- The December SDR is the authoritative data set for counting EFTS delivered, and no course completion data is expected if the enrolment and the associated course completion record are not reported in the December SDR.
- The scenarios described here are based on information supplied by TEC, and our understanding of that information. We suggest that you check TEC’s information (the Rules and Conditions on their web site, and the SDR Manual) before changing your enrolment practices.