



SSP Confusion

One of our clients kindly pointed out to us that there appears to be a conflict in the material supplied by TEC in relation to the SSP.

The template Word document says that participation for EEO purposes is the number of students divided by the total number of valid student enrolments with a start date in the relevant year.

The accompanying Guidelines, at the top of page 5 note *“The term “enrolled”, as used in the Student Component Qualification Objectives template for qualifications delivered in 2006, is intended to refer to all students participating in a qualification during 2006 and not just to students who began a course event or qualification during 2006.”*

To date TEC has not been able to clarify what they really want. Common sense says that you should go back to the objectives you submitted in 2005 and determine whether you were basing your predications on the number of enrolments starting in 2006 (i.e. what the template suggests) or the number of students that would be reported in the December 2006 SDR (i.e. what the Guideline suggests). The less scrupulous amongst us may calculate both sets of data and use the one that is most advantageous.

Either way, the SSP report tool provided in Take2 allows you to compile the set of data you need. If you are going with start date, then use this option

Enter a Year:
Or: Qualification Enrolment Start Finish
Dates From: To:

And if you are going with the SDR year use this option

Enter a Year:
Or: Qualification Enrolment Start Finish
Dates From: To:

Investing in a Plan

So, TEC has come up with *“Investing in a Plan”*. Now, there’s an interesting idea. One wonders what we have been doing all these years with all the other variously named mechanisms? *“Investing in Chaos”*, *“Investing on a Whim”*?

The more paranoid amongst you are probably quite suspicious of a document which announces *“The Government has more direct influence under the new system, setting priorities and determining both the total level of funding and the amount available for each tertiary education sub-sector.”* This sounds like a recipe for pork-barrel politics and an excellent opportunity for bureaucrats to play favourites.



The Minister Releases the Plan

Data Quality Exercise

In fairness, though, even the paranoid would have to concede that the concept, described in *“Investing in a Plan”*, of measuring performance in an evidence-based manner is fair enough. The difficulty will be achieving the *“shared understanding of key performance indicators to be used in that measurement.”*

To this end TEC has initiated a data quality exercise that involves some but not all providers. You are asked to assess the accuracy and appropriateness of summary data about your organisation which has been compiled by TEC. Good luck! Unless you have very considerable resources (we’re talking person months here, not hours) you have no chance of commenting on the accuracy of the supplied information.

There can be little doubt, though, that the summary information is wholly inappropriate as a method of measuring performance for most TEOs. Poor old TEC really only has access to SDR data, which was recognised as inadequate even at the time of its introduction. What is more, the underlying philosophy of what is proposed for the KPI seems completely at odds with some of the fundamental concepts of the National Qualifications Framework. Maybe TEC should hire fewer university graduates.

Take2 Top Tips – National Student Index

In last month's newsletter we asked for comments on the following topic: *"We would be very interested to hear whether any providers are consistently relying on the NSI for evidence of identity or whether you are still requiring students to provide a birth certificate or passport at first enrolment."*

This struck a chord and thanks to all who responded. 80% of you still require all students to front-up with evidence of identity and residency. The other 20% use the NSI as their first option for verification, in some instances at least.

One provider told us *"TEC auditors require those documents (meaning passport, birth certificate) to be sighted [originals], verified and copies kept on file."* That's interesting because we have heard before of TEC personnel requiring providers to sight original documentation for all students. So what is fact is TEC's requirement? Well the TEC Funding Information tells us the following. We have underlined some word that we think are important.

Condition ENR028 says *"Tertiary Education Organisations (TEOs) are required to verify the identity of new learners (domestic and foreign students) where both of the following apply:*

- *The learner is enrolling in a programme of study leading to a qualification with an Equivalent Full-Time Student value of greater than 0.03.*
- *The learner does not have an active National Student Number."*

Condition ENR030 says about previously enrolled learners that *"Tertiary Education Organisations (TEOs) may accept active National Student Index records as evidence of a learner's identity and citizenship. Additional evidence is not required for learners with an active National Student Number."*

Condition ENR031 then says: *"TEOs must record sightings of documents of identity, date of birth, citizenship and residency. The person who sighted the documents must sign and date the learner's enrolment record."* and a note states *"TEOs do not need to retain copies of documents of identity, date of birth, citizenship and residency after they have recorded their sighting on the learner's record."*

Condition ENR033 tells us that *"A verified copy of an original document is acceptable for verifying identity. A verified copy is a photocopy that has been confirmed and signed by an authorised person who has sighted the original document. An authorised person is a person listed in the Oaths and Declarations Act 1957 as able to take declarations. This person could be a:*

- *Barrister or Solicitor of the High Court.*
- *Justice of the Peace.*
- *Notary Public.*
- *Court Registrar or Deputy Registrar.*
- *Member of Parliament.*
- *Land Transport New Zealand, Public Trust, or local authority employee designated for this purpose."*

Acknowledging that these conditions could be interpreted in various ways, they do appear to indicate two things:

1. It is acceptable for a student with an existing active NSN not to be required to front-up with documents of identity. Presumably a driver's licence with the student's name is sufficient to provide a name to be able to search the NSI.
2. For students who do not have an NSI it is acceptable to use appropriately verified copies of original documentation.

Some people might feel that a driver's licence isn't really a very reliable way for proving that someone is who they say they are. But the same could be said of a birth certificate – and indeed a birth certificate doesn't have a photograph so it would be easier for someone to borrow and use another person's birth certificate than it would be for them to use someone else's driver's licence.

Remember, too, that your enrolment form should require the student to sign a declaration that says: *"I declare that to the best of my knowledge all the information supplied on, and with, this enrolment form is true and complete, I agree to abide by the conditions described above, and I consent to the disclosure of personal information as described above."*

So far so good then, but the next consideration has to be the practicality of relying on the NSI. If you were, say, enrolling relatively few students and those students are a nice clean full-time cohort that starts on a given date and regularly comes to class then relying on the NSI is feasible – especially if your students are predominantly younger and therefore more likely to have an active NSI record. This may be true for a nanny school, for example. After all, if one or two students don't have an active NSN, then you can easily catch up with them and ask for documentation.

If, on the other hand, your students are part-time, older, don't all start on the same date, and rarely if ever come into class or near your office, then they are going to be very hard to chase up if they don't have an active NSN. It may also be true to say that many part-time students are less motivated than full-time students and so it will be harder to chase them for documentation if it is required.

So, figure out which option will cost you less in time and effort and go with that.