

### Overview

The Single Data Return (SDR) is an electronic return made four times each year. The Ministry of Education (MoE) processes the return and uses the data it contains for various monitoring and reporting needs. The return is also passed to the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) which uses the data to manage funding and to measure performance.

All providers that receive funding from TEC that is for Student Achievement Component (at whatever level), Youth Guarantee, or Maori Pasifika Trade Training and/or have students with Student Loans and Allowances must report the SDR. All students enrolled by the provider, including non-funded students such as international students and MSD funded students must be reported in the SDR.

The Take2 student management software supplied by AdaptIT enables providers to make the return, and Take2 users are supplied with documentation that describes how to use Take2 for this purpose.

However, successfully completing a SDR involves more than just using Take2. There are other tasks to be carried out correctly and in sequence. This Tip Sheet is supplied to Take2 users to help them through the tasks.

### A Caution!

The Take2 software has been comprehensively tested by AdaptIT to ensure its compliance with the Ministry's specification. Take2 is has been certified by the Ministry as being compliant. But, as pointed out above, using Take2 is only one task in a series of tasks involved in completing the SDR. For example, another step is using the Ministry's validation software on the STEO web site to test the content (as opposed to the format) of the data files produced by Take2.

It follows, then, that that if you have problems with your SDR the cause of those problems is less likely to be related to software (Take2 or the Ministry's validation software) than to the quality of the data input into Take2 or the status of your Course Register or Qualification Register which are managed by the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC). Which is not to say that there are definitively no bugs in Take2 or the Ministry's software (we're confident but not stupid), but simply to say that the quality of data is the cause of most problems.

### Trial SDR

Given the caution above it is very strongly recommended that you do a trial SDR process through STEO before each return. Indeed, you might like to think about doing a trial SDR each month. Normally the trial will consist of preparing and validating your SDR files but not actually submitting them to the Ministry. In other words, go through all the steps but the last in the diagram below.

Note: from the August 2014 SDR TEC has mandated that a trial SDR is mandatory.

Remember too that Take2 has an Enrolment Validation report available from General Reporting in the Main Module. This will pick up many SDR validation issues.

### Overview

The diagram on page 4 below gives an overview of the tasks to be carried out to successfully complete the SDR. Until 2014 you made an SDR every four months as at the end of April, August and December. From 2015 the August return date was brought forward. From 2016 the April return date has been brought forward and an additional "Indicative" return has been added that happens earlier in the year.

The following section of this Tip Sheet (inside a border) is interesting and casts light on TEC and the Ministry's inability to communicate effectively, and TEC's incompetence in managing funding rules and conditions.

However it is rather boring so feel free to give it a miss and go straight to page 3.

The key message is simply this: we suggest that you no longer select the “Use Cut-Off” option when processing a SDR. In August 2016 that will mean unticking the field.



Historically the Ministry’s SDR Manual required that all students for whom a “Valid” enrolment had been made were to be included in each SDR round. The definition of “Valid” enrolment was not wonderfully clear but taken to relate the notion that a TEO would not be funded for enrolments that weren’t valid and that for PTEs this was determined by the so-called “10%, one month rule”. This was described in version 1.1 of the 2016 SDR Manual published in November 2015 and had been in all earlier versions of the SDR Manual.

Take2 has therefore incorporated a “Cut-Off” option that gave effect to this rule.

Accordingly when using the Cut-Off option the April SDR would include only students enrolled in part or in whole from 1 January to the April “As At” date (i.e. 15 April), plus course and qualification completions occurring in that period. Likewise the August SDR would include only records for the period from 1 January to the August “As At” date (i.e. 7 August). Take2 currently sets the option to be selected by default for these returns.

The Indicative and December return includes all records for the full year; i.e. Take2 does not automatically select the Cut-Off option. For the Indicative return this arrangement was specified by the Ministry of Education. For the December return the return date (31 January) is in any case more than a month after the “As At” date (31 December).

In late March 2016 (shortly before the April SDR round) a new version of the SDR Manual was released, although not widely disseminated. This was a version 1.2 and it replaced the concept of a “Valid” enrolment with the poorly defined concept of “Confirmed” enrolment. This was something that had popped up unheralded in TEC 2016 funding conditions.

After feedback TEC conceded that what was being asked was unclear and unreasonable in such a short timeframe, and on 5 July a version 1.3 of the SDR Manual was announced but has not been released at the time of revising this Tip Sheet.

**We therefore feel that the best advice we can provide is to no longer use the Cut-Off option. Untick it before preparing your August SDR.**

### **Return Dates**

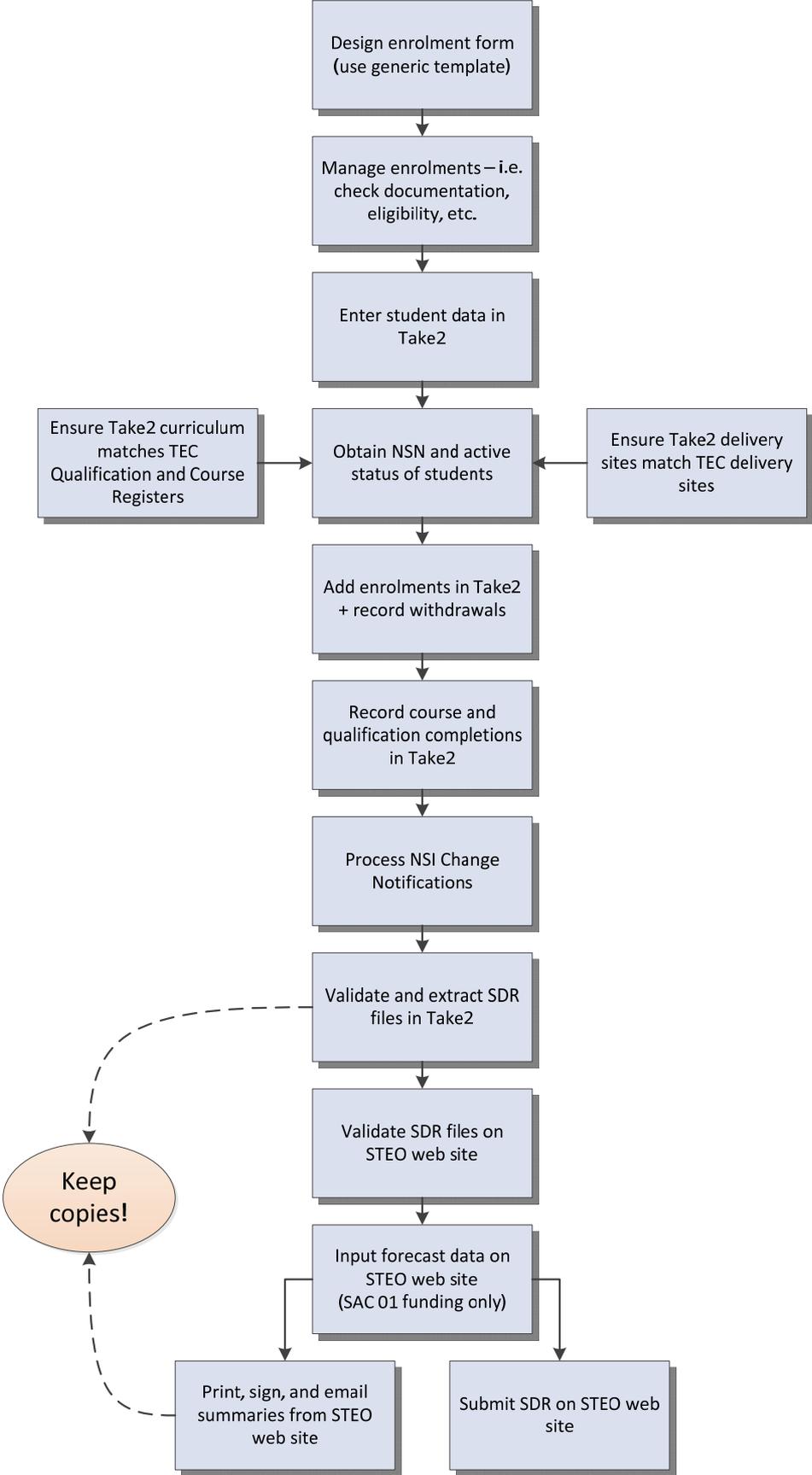
The Indicative SDR has an “As At” date on the 9<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of the year and a Return date on the 10<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of the year. It does not include completion data, but does include all enrolments in your system for the year to 31 December – i.e. it could include future enrolments that start after the 9<sup>th</sup> Wednesday.

The December SDR is “final” in the sense that it is the definitive return for the year and incorrect data reported in the April and August returns can be corrected by the December return.

| <i>As At Date (also known as “Extract Date”)</i>  | <i>Return Must Be Submitted by this “Return Date”</i> |
|---|---|
| 15 April  | 29 May  |
| 7 August  | 21 September  |
| 31 December   | 31 January  |
| Indicative Return<br>Take2 calculates the “As At” date. The dates for the next three years are:<br>2016 – 2 March<br>2017 – 1 March<br>2018 – 28 February | One week later  |

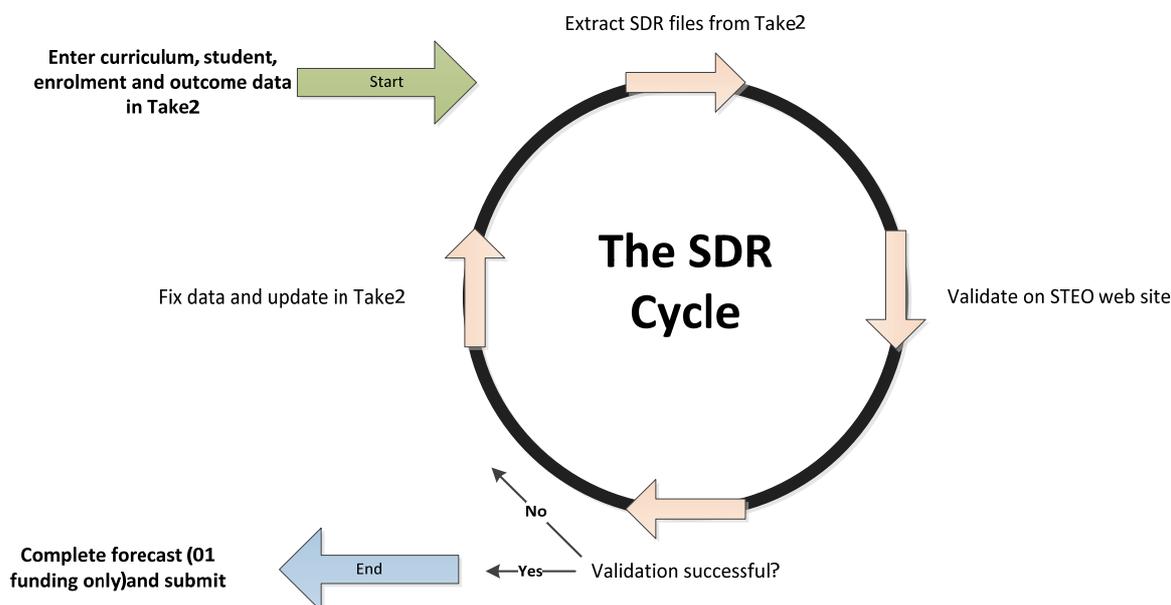
Note – it is also possible to include course and qualification completions from prior years in any April, August or December SDR round.

**Sequence of Tasks**



## The End Game – Submitting the SDR Files

Depending on the quality of your data the process of actually submitting the SDR files can involve a number of attempts.



## Getting Help

Take2 users who subscribe to the help desk service offered by AdaptIT may contact the help desk on any working day between 8:30am and 5:00pm. We will do our best to help you, not only with using Take2 but also with the other tasks associated with preparing the SDR.

Take2 Helpdesk contact details: Phone 04 939-1267  
Email [helpdesk@meta-office.com](mailto:helpdesk@meta-office.com)

The Ministry of Education runs a Service Desk which can help you with the process validating and submitting the SDR: Phone 0800 422-599  
Email [moe.servicedesk@minedu.govt.nz](mailto:moe.servicedesk@minedu.govt.nz)

TEC runs a Sector Helpdesk which can help you with Course Register issues and more general questions relating to the SDR. Phone 0800 601 301  
Email [sectorhelpdesk@tec.govt.nz](mailto:sectorhelpdesk@tec.govt.nz)

Tip: When contacting the TEC Service Centre make sure that you keep a note of the person with whom you spoke and the subject of your conversation. If a TEC staff member gives you advice or a direction, **make sure that you get it in writing** and keep a copy of the email.

## Documentation

If you are preparing a Single Data Return you should have copies of these documents:

- The latest version of the Take2 User Manual – available on our web site ([www.take2.co.nz](http://www.take2.co.nz)) or via our help desk ([helpdesk@meta-office.com](mailto:helpdesk@meta-office.com)).
- The latest version of the Single Data Return Manual jointly published by the Ministry and TEC and available on the STEO web site: <http://www.steo.govt.nz/sdr/sdr-manuals/>. This site also provides [other guides](#) and the Guide to Completing Your SDR would be especially useful if it was up-to-date.

- TEC no longer publishes coherent documentation covering funding rules and management of the Course and Qualification Registers. The best you can do is carefully read Investment Plan Funding letter and appendices that you should receive for each year, and use [Fund Finder](#) on the TEC web site to look at fund specific conditions.

## Jargon

Tertiary education is full of jargon. TEC and the Ministry of Education publish glossaries intermittently but they seem to change over time and are not always consistent.

Here is our list of some acronyms and terms you may come across when dealing with the SDR.

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| Completion  | <p>The word “completion” is used by the Ministry of Education and TEC with different meanings in different contexts, so BEWARE.</p> <p>A <u>qualification completion</u> is achieved by a student who has passed all the academic requirements for the completion (i.e. “award”) of a recognised qualification.</p> <p>A <u>course completion</u> is something else again. A student completes a course when they have been delivered tuition and been assessed. If they pass the assessment then they have “completed successfully”. If they do not pass the assessment they have “completed unsuccessfully”. If a student withdraws from a course before their planned finish date, they have not completed the course.</p>   |
| Course      | <p>A qualification is broken into a number of courses. There are two uses for courses and it is important to understand both uses.</p> <p><b>Academic</b> - For academic purposes, a course constitutes a block of work for which some type of assessment is performed to determine whether a student completes the qualification of which the course is part. In this context a course may also be known as a “subject”, “unit”, or “module”, and so an NZQA Unit Standard is a course.</p> <p><b>Funding</b> - For funding purposes however, TEC assigns a special meaning to the term “course”. The division of qualifications into courses for funding purposes is known as “disaggregation”. TEC maintains a “Course Register” of courses, each of which must have an “EFTS Factor”, “Classification”, “Category” and various other attributes.</p> <p>Historically TEC did not like qualifications composed of Unit Standards to be disaggregated by Unit Standard. It was TEC’s preference for artificial courses to be created, each of which represented a cluster of Unit Standards. This practice is not recommended for two reasons: firstly it involves a lot of extra work and, secondly, it results in lower successful course completion rates. We strongly recommend that you disaggregate your qualifications into Unit Standards, meaning that each Unit Standard is a course in TEC’s Course Register.</p> <p>An important thing to note about courses is that one course can be part of many qualifications. For example Unit Standard 101 (<i>Develop and use keyboarding skills to enter text</i>) is part of many qualifications.</p> <p>Students are enrolled into courses in Take2.</p> |
| EFTS Factor | <p>A course has an EFTS factor. It is a number (to 4 decimal places) that corresponds to the proportion of 1 EFTS that a student’s enrolment in a specific course generates.</p>  |

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| Course Register | A list of courses offered by providers, maintained by TEC. At each SDR you supply details of the courses you students are enrolled in. This data must match the courses in the TEC Course Register. You can update your Course Register at any time on TEC's secure website. At this site you can enter details of new courses and submit changes for existing courses.   |
| Data Files      | These are the computer files that you must return to the Ministry as part of the SDR. The other thing you have to return is a signed summary. There are five data files: the student file, course register file, course enrolment file, and course completion and qualification completion file are returned each four months as at April, August, and December.  |
| Delivery Site   | No, not the maternity suite. TEC requires that every enrolment is assigned to a course delivery site. You should have assigned a code for every course delivery site (i.e. location in which teaching, instruction, and learning occurs) for your courses. You should have entered details of the course delivery sites on the TEC secure website The code is then used when creating an enrolment in Take2.<br><br>Normally all providers have a "Main Campus" with the code "01". Other campuses will be "02", "03", etc. Distance education students are assigned to delivery site code "98".                                    |
| Disaggregation  | Breaking up a qualification into courses, each of which has an EFTS factor  |
| EFTS            | Equivalent Full Time Student. A full time student who studies for one year generates 1 EFTS.  |
| EFTS Value      | A qualification has an EFTS value agreed by the provider and TEC. For example, a three-year diploma would normally have an EFTS value of 3.0000.  |
| NSN Status      | Students reported in the SDR must have a National Student Index Number or NSN. This number doubles as the Record of Learning (ROL) Number used by NZQA. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A student has a "Verified" NSN if their identity and residency status have been verified on the NSI database. This was previously known as an "Active" status.</li> <li>• An "Unverified" NSN is where some of the data on the NSI record is missing or some or all of the data is unverified.</li> <li>• An "Inactive" NSN is where the record relates to a deceased or fictional person and should no longer be used.</li> </ul> |
| NZSCED          | New Zealand Standard Classification of Education. From 2001 all courses in your Course Register must be classified using this new system.   |
| Programme       | From 2013 TEC has taken to using the term "programme" to mean the set of qualifications that a Youth Guarantee or SAC Level 1 & 2 funded student may undertake. The concept of a "programme" is not relevant to the SDR.  |
| Qualification   | A qualification is the largest curriculum element into which a student can enrol. A "Diploma in Business Studies" or a "National Certificate in Agriculture" is a qualification.<br><br>TEC funds qualifications.<br><br>When an organisation reports via the SDR every qualification MUST have a Qualification Code such as "PC3451" (for a local qualification), "NC4281" or "ND4567" (for a national qualification), "NZ1234" for a (New Zealand   |

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|                         | <p>qualification). Each qualification must also be assigned to a register level, have a qualification award category and an EFTS value. TEC maintains a “Qualification Register” of all qualifications which stores all this data (and more).</p> <p>Students are enrolled into qualifications in Take2.</p>  |
| Qualification Register  | A database maintained by TEC which lists all qualifications approved for funding by the TEC and offered by tertiary providers. The Qualification Register used to be known as “Prospectus”.   |
| SAC 3+ Funding          | Student Achievement Component funding used to be called “EFTS funding” and you will still hear people refer to it in this way, or as “01” funding. Student Achievement Component 3+ funding is based on the classification of courses and is paid by TEC to providers with appropriately approved qualifications. The SDR is the mechanism whereby providers inform TEC of the number of EFTS they have generated, and therefore the funding to which they are entitled.  |
| SAC Level 1 & 2 Funding | This is also Student Achievement Component funding but the funding is based on classification of the qualification.   |
| Type D Students         | This is a tricky one. The amount of data that has to be reported in the SDR for each student varies depending on what “type” of student it is. There are three types, B, C, and (you guessed it) D. What defines each type of student is described in detail in the SDR Manual but, in a nutshell, it’s a student enrolled in a formal qualification (either a national or local qualification) who studies for the equivalent of a week or more full-time. The thing about type D students is that they must have a verified NSN before they can be included in the SDR. |
| Validation              | A process of checking items of data to ensure that they comply with a specification. For example, when the student data file is validated, one check is to ensure that each student has a gender code that is either “F” or “M”. Each validation check returns one of three outcomes: “E- Error” – the data fails miserably and therefore you cannot submit it in an SDR or “W – Warning” the data doesn’t fit the specification but the Ministry and TEC will accept it. The third outcome is “no problem”, i.e. the data fits the specification.                        |
| Zip File                | If the SDR files that you create with Take2 are large it is sensible for you to “zip” them up into a single zip file. This is a special file format that compresses one or more large files into less disk space.   |