

Implementation News

Welcome to the second issue of our bulletin for tertiary education organisations using ERS, or preparing to use ERS.

A *Technology Update* for developers of student management systems is also available by email and from the ERS section of the TEC website, www.tec.govt.nz

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ERS enhancements need down-time

A range of ERS enhancements and a major upgrade of the TEC's ERS server capacity are scheduled to take place in late December 2005 and early January 2006.

This will require a brief down time, during which ERS will not be available, so that these enhancements can be installed and tested. We suggest you diary this time now:

ERS will be unavailable from 3.00pm on 22 December 2005 to 9.00am on 23 December 2005.

ERS will then be available throughout the Christmas break, but the Helpdesk team won't be available between 12.00pm on 23 December 2005 to 9.00am on 4 January 2006.

Christmas payments

As part of Payment Cycle A, the TEC has a payment run scheduled to occur on 23 December 2005. Because of the closeness to the Christmas break, the TEC will move the payment run forward by two days to 21 December.

Action Plan:

- **Monday 19 December 2005:**
All placements and withdrawals must be entered into ERS by close of business on this day. The payment processing will run overnight to generate provider payments.
- **Tuesday 20 December 2005.**
The payment processing will run overnight to generate learner payments.
- **Wednesday 21 December 2005.**
TEC will authorise all payments.
- **Thursday 22 December 2005.**
Payments will be verified.

This means that payments will be in TEO and learners' bank accounts four days earlier than usual. Because of this revised process, the next payment run will be 2½ weeks later (6 January 2006).

Use your local TEC for assistance

At the ERS roadshows held earlier this year, the TEC discussed the various levels of assistance which were available to ERS users. Although the TEC suggested that calls or e-mails relating to [enrolments and eligibility](#) should be directed to the TEC area offices, a number of calls about these issues are coming directly to the ER Helpdesk.

Area office TEC staff are ready to assist TEOs in resolving these queries, so this message is a reminder that TEOs should make their local TEC staff the first point of contact for non-technology-related matters.

'Active' and 'inactive' Work and Income clients

An upcoming change to the eligibility criteria was also signalled at the ERS roadshows. This will enable the enrolment of *inactive* Work and Income clients (e.g. those on domestic purposes, sickness or invalid benefits). TEC is currently working on the development of a new ERS release which will enable the enrolment of inactive clients from January 2006.

Client basic details forms

Because the circumstances of Work and Income clients may change over a period of time, it is possible that the details (e.g. duration, benefit type etc) on a client basic details report obtained from Work and Income may also alter. Such alterations may mean that a learner might be eligible at one point, but then subsequently become ineligible for training. The TEC and MSD agree that in order to minimise the chances of ineligible people being enrolled on programmes, client basic details reports used as evidence to support learner eligibility should be no more than **two** weeks old.

Discretionary approval requests

TEOs have asked for more clarity on the circumstances under which the TEC may consider granting discretionary approval to enrol an otherwise ineligible learner.

By its very nature, discretionary approval (DA) means that Area Managers have discretion to allow any enrolment which they see fit, and because of this it is not possible to specify every circumstance under which a TEC manager may approve such applications! However, there are three areas which are standard across TEC areas and these are as follows:

- **SL16/17** – Applies only to enrolment on TO programmes. DA could be given for this category when a potential 16 or 17 year old learner has left school and wants to undertake a specific training pathway (e.g. engineering) but the only programme available in the local area of that kind is in TO (i.e. there is no YT programme in engineering).
- **EXPT_YT** – Applies only to enrolment on TO programmes. DA could be given for this category when a potential learner (no age restrictions on this one) has left a youth training programme in the last 3 months and wants to undertake a specific training pathway (e.g. engineering) but the only programme available in the local area of that kind is in TO (i.e. there is no YT programme in engineering).
- **Other** – It also is possible to enrol young people with high quals under the YNYOUTH category, as 15% (nationally) of learners in this category may have high quals. This 15% limit has to be monitored of course, and therefore in order to permit such enrolments through ERS, DA is required. In such circumstances, TEOs should apply under the “**other**” category.

Area Managers are also likely to support a DA request for learners who are just outside the eligibility criteria (e.g. they have 23 weeks registration and not 26) and who may be disadvantaged by an enrolment delay. Full information to support any requests for DA under the “**other**” category should be accompanied by the necessary supporting documentation.

Using ERS while awaiting student management system updates

A number of TEOs are keenly awaiting the expected upgrade to their student management system (SMS). The TEC is actively working with SMS vendors with a view to supporting the development of the ERS interface that an SMS will provide.

There is no requirement for TEOs to use ERS and the TEC is happy to act on behalf of a TEO while the SMS upgrade work is in the pipeline.

SMS-generated enrolment forms

During the ERS roadshows, a number of providers also asked about forms generated by their student management systems (SMS).

The TEC has been open to the use of SMS-generated forms which relate to withdrawal, outcomes and amendments, but a little cautious about the use of SMS-generated enrolment forms. However, further to a review of legal advice received, we are pleased to confirm that we will work with SMS vendors to formally approve *all* SMS-generated forms.

Note that this is a change to our advice in the previous ERS implementation guide.

Once the particular SMS that a TEO is using is approved to generate TEC forms, the TEO will be able to print off the forms from the SMS, ensure the required signatures are obtained and then file these forms away. There will be no need to complete a manual TEC enrolment form.

The Funding Guide will be amended to indicate to providers that approved SMS forms are acceptable for enrolments and amendments.

Website resource

The ERS page on the TEC website is the place to go for links to ERS-related websites, this issue and previous copies of *Implementation News* and other resources for TEOs and vendors of student management systems. We suggest you add this address to your Favourites folder:

<http://www.tec.govt.nz/funding/training/er/er.htm>