

Technology Update

05

For Developers of Student Management Systems

14 December 2005

ERS System Uptake

TEC are very pleased with the rate of the spontaneous uptake of ERS by providers. A recent count showed that 231 distinct TEOs and 446 distinct users are registered for access to the system.

A number of providers have told us that the ability they now have to manage these processes themselves is adding great value. The web forms applications have been stable on their initial release with most reported problems relating to access and registration issues.

An update to fix an internal data error relating to travel amendments will be implemented in the next few days.

We know a number of providers are waiting for the ERS features to be available in Student Management Systems and we are looking forward to further uptake when these become available.

Registration process

Experience is showing that the registration process with the Ministry of Education can take several weeks. This is complicated by users needing to be registered for NSI access also.

We would ask you to encourage your providers to apply for registration as early as possible, even if they are not currently using ERS, to avoid any delays later. Providers who already have NSI access will find their approvals simpler, as ERS registration is nominal after NSI access is gained, however there is always the size of the applications backlog at any given time to be considered.

Web Services Guide and Schemas

Extensive testing is now being carried out on the web services interfaces to ensure that the documentation and sample material which will be provided to you is as stable as possible. While the changes to the ERS schemas are relatively minor, the testing, changes and subsequent re-testing has produced a delay in the targeted publication date.

Our development and testing team has undertaken that the schemas will be available for release no later than 16 December 2005.

The schemas will be released to you in parallel with their final UAT testing round, on the basis that no further issues or changes are expected, and that an earlier release with a very small risk of change will be more helpful to you than withholding the schemas for up to another two weeks. We may, in the worst case, have to notify of any last minute updates before we freeze the schemas in the 3rd week of December.

We have completed the development of a set of sample code, using a Microsoft environment. This source code and executables will be released to you along with the other web services material we are preparing. It contains a library framework and a test application that operates through the framework, and sample xml messages. TEC will not warrant the code, but you are free to use and distribute whatever parts of the code that you find useful. We have included this library to assist you in reducing learning curves in managing the XML and in accessing the ERS application.

Have you noticed...?

Amending student details

Some of you may have noticed that the ERS form for amending student details sometimes does not display the travel details section. This is a feature of the ERS that checks if the student is currently enrolled, and it alters the display accordingly. This ensures that banking and/or travel payment details are only entered for active students.

SMS-generated enrolment forms

During the roadshow a number of providers asked about forms generated by their SMSs. We are pleased to confirm that we will work with SMS vendors to formally approve SMS-generated forms.

The *Funding Guide* will be amended to indicate to providers that approved SMS forms are acceptable for enrolments and amendments. The TEC will implement a very 'lightweight' process to check and approve the use of forms submitted by vendors.

The approval will ensure that replicated forms:

- Correctly display the TEC logo and name
- Correctly identify the relevant fund, for enrolments
- Display all relevant information for transaction (enrolment or amendment)
- Accurately replicate the learner and provider declaration text, where appropriate
- Provide appropriately placed areas for student and provider signatures.
- Contain sufficient vendor identification and version number.

Forms may be submitted for approval and we will reply promptly with a formal approval or detailing changes required.

Once the form has been approved, the wording "TEC Approved [date] xx/xx/xx" must be included at the foot of the first page of the form as proof of approval and as a version control method.

Please forward your draft forms to Esther Calley, Northern Regional Manager.
email: esther.calley@tec.govt.nz
