



Workgroup on Extramural Training Systems (WETS)

Date: July 8, 2004
Time: 10:00 a.m.–Noon
Location: Rockledge 2, Room 3502
Advocates: Barbara Huffman, Rick Ikeda, (Dr. Walter Schaffer)
Next Meeting: TBA, 10:00 a.m.-Noon, TBA

Action Items

1. (Maria Burowski) Evaluate data to see how many records are reappointments and how many are new. Identify which institutes are entering FOT codes and which ones are not.

X-Train

Who has the authority to enter the social security number, racial, and ethnic background information?—This is the main unresolved issue with X-Train. A letter was drafted to the universities concerning this issue. Walter Goldschmidt reported that the letter was put on hold until a meeting could be held with David Wright, Wally Schaffer, and Izja Lederhendler to make an internal decision on whether it was an option to bypass the trainees. He also said that a decision needs to be made on how to design the system so that it is more user-friendly. This meeting is scheduled to take place next week.

Historically, providing social security number or ethnic background information for any individual receiving NIH funding has and continues to be optional. NIH can strongly encourage compliance, but NIH cannot require compliance. With privacy concerns and other rules that are now on the books, including information entered by a third party, entering this information is becoming an issue. In particular the issue is the SSN—a data element commonly used to help distinguish between individuals with the same/similar names. The group said that if trainees do not enter this data, the system may duplicate records. Trainees will be requested to enter the information electronically, which will involve setting up an account for them. It is hoped that the electronic version of X-Train will run as efficiently as the current paper process.

Linda Katzper and David Turner presented a demonstration on proposed changes to the X-Train application. A hard copy of the proposed changes was also distributed to the group. There was a discussion with suggestions for changes to make the screen easy to understand. For example, a warning should be added to let the user/specialist know that accepting a trainee profile without a social security number may generate a duplicate profile.

NIH eRA Commons

Processing Termination Notices for fellows and trainees who are registered in the NIH eRA Commons is an issue. At the point of termination, the TA system requires that the address should be verified due to possible address changes. However, if there is a Commons account established and verified by the individual, then the address data is frozen from edit by NIH staff. As an

interim solution, the group recommended that in TA the edit check for this field will now appear as a **Yellow** warning when a Commons account has been established, verified, and consequently coded "PERM". When a Commons account does not exist, the edit check will remain as initially programmed, causing a **Red** failure if address verification has not happened.

There was discussion about making the email address or the residential address a requirement. The group decided that the residential address was most important and should be a requirement because users will probably change their email address before changing their residence; furthermore, the residence address is needed to mail billing statements. It was also suggested that the email address could be used for day-to-day contact.

Field of Training Codes (FOT)

In 2002 the DSF code was supposed to be phased out and users were supposed to start using the FOT code for T32s, appointments on the T32s, Fs, and K awards. The database is showing that FOT codes are not being entered by the user at the same percentage that is entered for the DSF codes. Sometimes users are entering both codes.

The FOT codes identify what areas of science and sub areas of research that the NIH is funding in research training. The National Academy does an analysis every 5 years for the National Research Service Award and will be publishing their report this fall.

Walter Goldschmidt proposed two questions to the group:

- 1) How do we move to the next level where the users involved can be educated on the importance of inputting the FOT codes?
- 2) What time period do we have to approach this and what would be the best approach?

He made a proposal to the group that entering the FOT codes should be made mandatory and that the system should reject the DSF code. Rick Ikeda reported that the TA User Guide states that "the DSF code is required." Linda Katzper said that she put in a request to turn off the DSF code. Rick Ikeda was not sure if authorization to turn off the DSF code should come from the Training Advisory Committee (TAC). Walter Goldschmidt reported that the FOT codes are needed for Ts, Fs, and Ks. He asked what could be done to educate the users on the importance of entering the code. Marcia Hahn said that turning off the DSF code requires communicating with Grants Management because they would have to turn it off in the Grants Management system and the TA system. The discussion on this issue is the challenge with the Multi-disciplinary and Inter-disciplinary training as it becomes more prevalent. The questions are constantly being raised:

- How much is happening on training grants?
- What are the patterns on training grants?
- Do some institutes have more training grants than others?

Presently the FOT codes are not being picked up from the training forms and put into the database.

Walter Goldschmidt asked if the WETS group would agree with the recommendation to turn off the DSF code and make the FOT codes mandatory for the trainee appointment forms and the

fellowships. Rick Ikeda responded that they would agree in theory only. Since the FOT codes are not a requirement of reappointments, it needs to be investigated as to what will happen if there is a reappointment done on a record that has an FOT code. Maria Burowski said that she would evaluate the data and see how many records are reappointments and how many are new. She will also identify which institutes are putting in the FOT codes and which ones are not. She also suggested that a global warning go out to the community via the eRA newsletter stating that the DSF code will be shut off and then we could see how the community responds to it.

Action: (Maria Burowski) Evaluate data to see how many records are reappointments and how many are new. Identify which institutes are entering FOT codes and which ones are not.

Marcia Hahn remarked that the FOT on the appointment form is not required for reappointments- the system merely carries over the previously entered code into the new record. So we would continue to have potentially years of records where both DSF and FOT codes would be on record. The only way to avoid this would be to do data mapping between DSF and FOT and convert the data if/when such a decision was reached. Any action of this nature will need to be coordinated with the ICs, TAC, and GMAC.

There was discussion on opening up the highest levels of FOT codes for use or creating new FOT codes.

T35 Sweep

Linda Katzper reported on behalf of Elaine Sirkis that the T35s are not being terminated. There will be a sweep to terminate the T35s on file prior to June 10, 1993. Marcia Hahn also suggested sweeping the T35 predocs if the appointment has ended because there is no payback required.

Attendees

Burowski, Maria (OD)	Ikeda, Richard (NIGMS)	Sprick, Carin (DEIS)
Freese, Michelle (OD)	Katzper, Linda (OER)	Stecklein, Linda (OD)
Goldschmidts, Walter (OD)	Knipple, Joy (NIMH)	Turner, David (OD)
Hahn, Marcia (OPERA)	Schultz, Susann (NIMH)	Vann, Cecelia (OD)
Huffman, Barbara (NIAID)		Venable, Beverly (OD)